Opening examples

#1: If I’d have known Pearl was going to be at the Sparta Pub for the celebration,I’d have just stayed home and not celebrated, and told Barrel to give her my regardswith an upraised middle finger—which he was the type of person would do it, not because he and I have a special bond, but because he has that “fuck you, world” quality I wish I had.

#2 On the edge of the wave foam bubbled and blew away, beyond which its humped back rose and fell. The prow of the board broke through it, water sluicing down her back, but the cold of it and its weight wasn’t working and she knew it wasn’t any good. She needed to walk back up the beach. Talk it out. Silence above breaking water was not how this was going to work. She turned back to shore.

#3 Waking up to the sound of a pig’s anxious cry, Janny’s mind began to ruminate once again over whether she should stay or go home. Her mosquito net made her feel safe, but the geckos racing across her ceiling made her feel out of place. The warm sun entering through the slats of her nipa hut said welcome, but the roosters’ constant sharp cry said go home. Maybe it was time to leave the Peace Corps.

#4 I can breathe through my nose and cut off my sense of smell at the same time. On the third Wednesday in August at almost seven o’clock in the morning I gently push open the door to my son’s room. I stand at the entrance. Today is the first day of his last year of high school. It is my first day of leave from my job as a Family Physician. The first Monday since kindergarten that I do not have to be somewhere. Since he was about twelve and a half hiis room has emitted a tomotao-onion-soup smell that my best fumigation efforts cannot seem to destroy. Ever. I take a deep breath and engage the muscles in my nose and the upper palate of my mouth that allow me to not smell. I am fortunate to have inherited ability of the selected sense of smell from my mother. It is one of the very few useful gifts my mother has given me.

#5 Active Summary” It was. No dream had ever been that tactile. Although walking on nothing wasn’t exactly tactile. Furthermore, he hadn’t woken in a bed but suddenly plunged from the nothing, falling for what felt like miles until he’d landed in Bur Oak, one of the thousands he’d planted fifty over years.. It caught hi the drip line and released him like an acorn. His first thoughts were of time. It was too cloudy to tell.

#6 Pulling weeds with the same firm thrusts as she braided her daughter’s hair, Vivian Linnson Jacobson persisted until every intrusive shoot was gone. The intense activity buffered her from four young children’s never-ending demands. Overhead, a bird cawed when her eldest appeared as if fallen from a cloud, yanking at her mother’s apron. Viv dropped her trowel, wincing at the sudden ache in an oddly tender left breast, and tightened the sling that lodged her swaddled sleeping infant. Reflexively, she loosened her grasp on the hard-won greenery, the thick bunch of bindweed, buckthorn, and Creeping Charlie fluttered down among fledging green pepper, carrot, and tomato plants. Would she ever coax a garden to grow in this barren suburban soil? At least, she hadn’t dropped the baby.

#7 I stood, my body twitching in a perpetual flinch, my mouth agape, staring at the back of the door. It remained open, just a crack, after he slammed it. Banged against the jam too forcefully and fast for the latch to catch.

#8 Click. More eyeglasses. Magnifying eyeglasses today. A tortoise shell pair, squared cats eye, with blue arms, cobalt. 1.75 magnification. Another? Green, a forest green , inside the metallic car paint green. 1.50x. The sunglasses were due to arrive today. They would be peach, creamy, looking like sherbet on a hot summer day. Two pairs were here. She still could make no sense of his note, or the look on his face the day before.

#9 Ruby longed to be off to Chicago but she tripped over the watering can in her backyard and plunged headfirst into a big pile of leaves. Her cell phone flew out of her hand, disappearing into the pile, rotting and musky-sweet in the late September air. She’d been so preoccupied with worry about whether Sarah would follow through on her adoption—and furious that her daughter hadn’t yet called—that she hadn’t been paying attention, gripping her cell in one hand, raking with the other, the sun sneaking over her top of her brick gabled house in northern Indiana, blinding her vision.