**Opening Lines**

Selected from a list compiled by the editors of American Book Review

 It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.

- George Orwell, 1984(1949)

It was a wrong number that started it, the telephone ringing three times in the dead of night, and the voice on the other end asking for someone he was not.

- Paul Auster, City of Glass (1985)

Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting.

- William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury (1929)

There was a boy called Eustace Clarence Scrubb, and he almost deserved it.

- C. S. Lewis,The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (1952

It was the day my grandmother exploded.

- Iain M. Banks, The Crow Road (1992)

I was born twice: first, as a baby girl, on a remarkably smogless Detroit day in January of 1960; and then again, as a teenage boy, in an emergency room near Petoskey, Michigan, in August of 1974.

- Jeffrey Eugenides, Middlesex (2002)

It was love at first sight.

- Joseph Heller, Catch-22 (1961)

Once upon a time, there was a woman who discovered she had turned into the wrong person.

- Anne Tyler, Back When We Were Grownups (2001)

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

- F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (1925)

I write this sitting in the kitchen sink.

- Dodie Smith, I Capture the Castle (1948)

In the town, there were two mutes and they were always together.

- Carson McCullers, The Heart is a Lonely Hunter (1940)

“The man in Black fled across the Desert, and the Gunslinger followed.”

- Stephen King, *The Gunslinger* (1982)

“All this happened, more or less.”

## - Kurt Vonnegut, Slaughterhouse-Five (1969)

“It was the afternoon of my eighty-first birthday, and I was in bed with my catamite when Ali announced that the archbishop had come to see me.”

- Anthony Burgess, *Earthly Powers*

"It is true that I have sent six bullets through the head of my best friend, and yet I hope to show by this statement that I am not his murderer."

- H.P. Lovecraft, *The Thing on the Doorstep*

Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much.

- J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone.*

"Far out in the uncharted backwaters of the unfashionable end of the Western Spiral arm of the Galaxy lies a small unregarded yellow sun. Orbiting this at a distance of roughly ninety-eight million miles is an utterly insignificant little blue-green planet whose ape-descended life forms are so amazingly primitive that they still think digital watches are a pretty neat idea."

- Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy.*

“We were somewhere around Barstow on the edge of the desert when the drugs began to take hold.”

- Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas.*

### And just for fun – some of the worst openings, as short-listed by the Bulwer-Lytton Prize, which invites writers to come up with the worst opening lines that they can think of.

### For more, visit <http://thoughtcatalog.com/2013/33-hilariously-terrible-novel-sentences-you-need-to-read/>

### 1. Sue Fondrie

Cheryl’s mind turned like the vanes of a wind-powered turbine, chopping her sparrow-like thoughts into bloody pieces that fell onto a growing pile of forgotten memories.

### 2. Ali Kawashima

As the dark and mysterious stranger approached, Angela bit her lip anxiously, hoping with every nerve, cell, and fiber of her being that this would be the one man who would understand – who would take her away from all this – and who would not just squeeze her boob and make a loud honking noise, as all the others had.

### 3. Chris Wieloch

She strutted into my office wearing a dress that clung to her like Saran Wrap to a sloppily butchered pork knuckle, bone and sinew jutting and lurching asymmetrically beneath its folds, the tightness exaggerating the granularity of the suet and causing what little palatable meat there was to sweat, its transparency the thief of imagination.

### 4. Janine Beacham

The fairies of Minglewood, which is near Dingly Pool, were having a grand revel with flower-cakes, and butterfly dances, looking ever so pretty, while Queen Bellaflora swept her wand o’er the waterfall’s foam, making it pop like the snot-bubbles on your baby sister’s face.

### 5. Molly Ringle

For the first month of Ricardo and Felicity’s affair, they greeted one another at every stolen rendezvous with a kiss — a lengthy, ravenous kiss, Ricardo lapping and sucking at Felicity’s mouth as if she were a giant cage-mounted water bottle and he were the world’s thirstiest gerbil.

### 6. Jordan Kaderli

Betty had eyes that said come here, lips that said kiss me, arms and torso that said hold me all night long, but the rest of her body said, “Fillet me, cover me in cornmeal, and fry me in peanut oil”; romance wasn’t easy for a mermaid.

### 7. Rephah Berg

On reflection, Angela perceived that her relationship with Tom had always been rocky, not quite a roller-coaster ride but more like when the toilet-paper roll gets a little squashed so it hangs crooked and every time you pull some off you can hear the rest going bumpity-bumpity in its holder until you go nuts and push it back into shape, a degree of annoyance that Angela had now almost attained.

### 8. Cathy Bryant

As he told her that he loved her she gazed into his eyes, wondering, as she noted the infestation of eyelash mites, the tiny deodicids burrowing into his follicles to eat the greasy sebum therein, each female laying up to 25 eggs in a single follicle, causing inflammation, whether the eyes are truly the windows of the soul; and, if so, his soul needed regrouting.

### 9. David S. Nelson

The Mushroom Men of Knarf were silently advancing on the unsuspecting earthlings, and their thin milky blood ran colder when they smelled spores from fungal toenail infections rising from many of the invaders’ feet, for to them it was a wondrous and shocking scent of kinship, homeland, and asexual reproduction.

### 10. Tonya Lavel

It was such a beautiful night; the bright moonlight illuminated the sky, the thick clouds floated leisurely by just above the silhouette of tall, majestic trees, and I was viewing it all from the front row seat of the bullet hole in my car trunk.

### 11. David Pepper

As an ornithologist, George was fascinated by the fact that urine and feces mix in birds’ rectums to form a unified, homogeneous slurry that is expelled through defecation, although eying Greta’s face, and sensing the reaction of the congregation, he immediately realized he should have used a different analogy to describe their relationship in his wedding vows.

### 12. Ron D. Smith

As the sun dropped below the horizon, the safari guide confirmed the approaching cape buffaloes were herbivores, which calmed everyone in the group, except for Herb, of course.

### 13. Elizabeth Muenster

Sterben counted calcium bars in the storage chamber, wondering why women back on Earth paid him little attention, but up here they seem to adore him, in fact, six fraichemaidens had already shown him their blinka.

### 14. Andrew Bowers

“Hmm …” thought Abigail as she gazed languidly from the veranda past the bright white patio to the cerulean sea beyond, where dolphins played and seagulls sang, where splashing surf sounded like the tintinnabulation of a thousand tiny bells, where great gray whales bellowed and the sunlight sparkled off the myriad of sequins on the flyfish’s bow ties, “time to get my meds checked.”