Setting Examples

Maximalist

[Bessie] sat n the bare box springs in the center of the boat, while Glen stood on a cross plank, working the long sweeps. They were plowing through a caramel river—thick, with a greasy sheen. It ran flat and smooth to the banks, which were bare and just high enough to block the views on either side. A deep ditch, really. A canal. Within it, the boat looked rather substantial: a flat-bottomed barge the size of a peddler's wagon, piled with supplies. A box stove, a .30-30 rifle, two cartons of bullets, crates of canned peaches and tomatoes and beans, rope and blankets. Bessie kept her things wrapped in oilskin: a box camera, twenty-seven dollars in a beaded purse—a sentimental object, frivolous for any occasion ahead—pencils, charcoal, a sketchbook, and blank diary.

--*Grand Ambition*, by Lisa Michaels
Novel about couple Glen and Bessie Hyde going down the rapids of the Grand Canyon in 1928

Minimalist

Together, they passed through Bangkok's vulgar, noisy, polluted streets. The traffic crawled along, people cursed each other, and the sound of car horns tore through the atmosphere like an air-raid siren. Plus, there were elephants lumbering down the street—and not just one or two of them. What were elephants doing in a city like this? she asked Nimit.

"Their owners bring them from the country," he explained. "They used to use them for logging, but there was not enough work for them to survive that way. They brought their animals to the city to make money doing tricks for tourists. Now there are far too many elephants here, and that makes things very difficult for the city people. Sometimes an elephant will panic and run amok. Just the other day, a great many automobiles were damaged that way. The police try to put a stop to it, of course, but they cannot confiscate the elephants from their keepers. There would be no place to put them if they did, and the cost of feeding them would be enormous. All they can do is leave them alone."

--"Thailand," story by Haruki Murakami, pub. 2000