

The Best

IN

The Book Smuggler's Den

July 2020

FLASH FICTION

BOOK REVIEWS

WRITING
PROMPTS

CONTESTS

FICTION | ESSAYS | POETRY | INTERVIEWS | BOOK REVIEWS

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Letter from the Editor

I've always been into 'fast-paced, don't bore 'em, keep it moving along, stick with the story.' You know: tell a story the way I want to hear a story. - James Patterson

It takes a creative mind to tell a story. It takes an even more creative mind to tell a story in 500-words or less. As James Patterson points out, sometimes getting right to it, makes the reader want to read the entire piece. As I've learned with freelancing and blogging, people have a short attention span. You can blame it on social media. You have 280 characters to express an opinion or tell a story in a Tweet. Other social media outlets like Facebook and Instagram are much more forgiving, but the issue becomes the dreaded "See More..." People are less inclined to "see more" if you don't get to the point right away.

The other issue we as writers run into today is creating an interesting title that will peak a reader's interest enough to click or buy. Additionally, it has to be something unique. How many times do you see, "The Top # ____ of 2020." Fill in the blank with whatever you choose; books, movies, outfits, apps, etc. That's tough too!

That's why flash fiction is so much fun to read and write! Writing a title for a short piece without giving away the story is difficult. This makes flash fiction all the more challenging. A good challenge, but enjoyable nonetheless. Always keep your eyes peeled. There are a lot of flash fiction contests to submit to. We were recently contacted by the creators of the Annual Barren Flash Fiction Prize. They are currently not accepting submissions, but the Book Smuggler's Den keeps in contact with the contests listed at the end of this publication to keep our readers and writers up to date on where to submit their work.

We received a lot of submissions for this month's magazine and are so grateful to see interest in submitting to us! There were so many that we weren't able to get to them in time to publish. We will continue to read through the submissions and will contact you if we decide to include you in our August issue.

You'll breeze through this publication in no time. Enjoy!
Dani & The Book Smuggler's Den Community

The Supporter

by Reayah Lundquist

I always want to be supportive, I do.

Sometimes it's hard—you know, sometimes the person isn't deserving of your support. Whether they just had a bad day—which I can understand, being who I am, whether they're always like that is difficult to tell. Still, I always try. To be supportive.

It's not my fault they may get uncomfortable, or stay too long and rise, complaining about stiff limbs and lost time. It's not my fault they had something gastronomically deprecating for lunch—and they're not the only ones who suffer the consequences. Still, I try to be supportive. I mean, I have bad days, too.

I have days when I wish I had any other job—any other job. In fact, there are days when I've just heard one complaint too many—smelled one digestive problem too many, that I just want to explode, and take them down with me. But that's a very rocky road to travel.

I could get fired, and have to spend the rest of my days sitting alone, with no one to support, no one to talk to me, and relax and take a minute.

Because there are good days, too. Great days, when I've felt I do my job well.

A pat, a good-natured complaint of having to leave instead of staying with me, a feeling that they truly relaxed and got comfortable. Then, it's easy to be supportive.

###

I've lived with the same person my whole life and supported him and whomever he asked me to. I always support, them, too—even if they're not as kindly as he is. That isn't to say he's always genial—like me, he has his good days and bad days, too. On his bad days, I can always tell. He rants and raves, worked up before he finally comes home. It's hard for him to relax, then. But when he does, finally, it's nice for both of us. He has a saying that he always says when he is at ease with me. He says, "Man, I love this chair."

Blacky Jean

by Brittany Oppenheimer

My Dad is a racist.

He hates my best friend Blacky Jean. Blacky Jean never likes to give attention. It's only when BJ is given something important that she shows her affection for other people. Dad hates how Blacky Jean steals other people's stuff without any common courtesy. Dad also hates how BJ constantly has sex with other random boys.

Blacky Jean likes to sleep.

Blacky Jean likes to fight.

Blacky Jean likes to cause mischief.

Blacky Jean *really* likes catnip.

And most of all, Blacky Jean is no fool.

Were you fooled into reading this differently?

Sara

by Jacob Rivard

Do you remember the time we shared a cigarette at the gas station? I don't even like smoking, but I loved the way it tasted when it passed from your hand to mine. It was like inhaling your way of the world: baking, bars, and boundless curiosity. You weren't much of a talker, you told me. I begged to differ. The smoke, passing from your lips, brought with it secrets and stories you shared with no one, of childhood toys you missed and times you felt sorry for kicking a can down a road. Every word swelled with conviction, filling the air with a strange sense of purpose. I never wanted that cigarette to go out.

~ The only thing I can vividly recall from the drive to the Bridge were your shoes.

You were in flip flops. You planned to step out of your house for just a moment. Neither of us expected it. One kiss and \$20 in our pockets saw us embarking on a six-hour journey to see the sunrise. We threw caution to the wind that night, using your dimly lit phone as our guide to a new dawn. As buildings gave way to forests, and forests bowed to the beaches, I realized it could never be. We were the only ones to set foot on the sand that morning. Pioneers of passion, I called us. Our first order saw us conquer a bench, throwing rocks absentmindedly into the water. Neither of us wanted to face the reality. Once the sun rose, we had to return to our old worlds. And I would carry our kiss to the grave.

~ When we sat on the roof of my home, I knew something had changed.

This time, our hands seemed to blur as we shared our cigarette. We interlocked fingers, forming complex patterns to complicate a simple act, as if doing so would ensure a greater sense of unity between us. When we slept that night, we melted into one another. I never wanted to let you go. I wasn't sure if it was hubris or some heroic sense of purpose, but I thought I could protect you. Maybe I was different. Maybe I could break the cycle. Something within my soul urged me to keep you safe. I never realized that I was the birdcage.

~ When it ended, I lost myself.

I blamed you. You, I told myself, were the reason I couldn't stop smoking. You made me this way. Now, I had a reason to act out. For the first few months, you were my catch-all. In a sense, I felt vindicated knowing I had a source of blame. As I sunk deeper and deeper, I found a familiar light within the mire. Was this where you found it, too?

~ It always amazed me that, even through the haze of the highs and the sobering clarity of the lows, you were always able to see me for who I was -- who I am. I wish I could write this with more clarity. You would always giggle when I couldn't find the proper words. I guess this is your way of getting the last laugh, isn't it? Maybe some endings are better left wordless. In a way, it almost makes it all the more powerful. Whether it's good or bad, all you can do is feel.

Purple Dreams

by Rubin A Rubina

He meets me every night; in my purple dreams. Purple dreams you know, the dreams you have just before you fall asleep and start to dream. The dreams that feel more real... Purple Dreams. The darkness of night starts changing its colour as the prince of my dreams descends from the fairyland above. He slowly nears me, so much so that I even hear his breath, the perfect rhythm of it. He says nothing but says it all by just moving a bit more close to me. He swiftly turns to my back lending the breeze of his scented breath to my hair, and they get intoxicated. He touches me nowhere but a current flows deep down merely by his presence. To me it feels like the perfect romance. And I begin to frown at all those faces I meet everyday who think 'who can romance this unattractive face?', which they have at times mentioned to me as well, quite rudely I must say. But they are unaware of the perfect romance I have in my purple dreams. If I'm dreaming of it then it must be happening somewhere in real. In some other dimension. Who knows what reality is?

Therefore, I smile. For, I have what I need; my Purple Dreams.

You're a Savant, Son

by Scott Stimler

"Happy birthday, son!"

"Thank you, mother! I do love these splendid decorations. Today is a momentous occasion, and I've always wanted to try lemon meringue cake."

"Why, son, your father and I have got a marvelous gift for you. One that we should've given you long ago."

"Well, what is it, mother?"

"It's some news."

"Some news? Well, what is it?"

"You, my son, are - "

" - Adopted?"

"No - "

" - Being financially and socially cut off from here on now?"

"No, no. You are - "

" - Really Uncle Burt's love child from a fling you two had in Cancun?"

"No, that's preposterous! Don't be silly."

"Well then, what is it?"

"You, my son, are a savant!"

"A savant?"

"Yes, a savant! You have a magnificent gift that comes naturally to you, unbeknownst to you, of course."

"Really, mother?"

"Yes, really!"

“Oh, wow! So, I’m an incredibly skilled footballer?”

“No...”

You’re a Savant, Son.

“Wait, no, I’m super quick at cleaning the floors?”

“No...”

“Oooh, oooh, I know! I am an exceptional singer!”

“Far from it, son - You are the biggest and bestest idiot your father and I have ever seen! And no one could ever take that away from you...”

Brain Waves

by Audrey Wick

Her back pressed flat against the surgery table. Cocooned into position, a hive of activity swarmed around her, led by the neurosurgeon.

This wasn't her first surgery with him. But it was her first time seeing him in glasses. What did that signify about his ability to see details? She closed her eyes and told herself not to worry about his Clark Kent frames. She lay still, giving herself to the hands of medical personnel that she hoped were skilled enough to successfully complete the task.

“Breath in.” The surgeon instructed in a hypnotic voice. “Hold it.” She did as she was told, petrified to perform any less than what was required of her.

“Don't move.”

“Don't swallow.”

“Don't exhale.”

A warm liquid coursed through her femoral artery, from the top of her leg, through her torso, across the right side of her head, and into her brain. Technology captured images of her aneurysm, contained by platinum coils which had saved her life six months earlier.

“Good.” The surgeon was satisfied. “Now breathe.” She blew out hot air before readying to complete the process three more times.

Each time was important.

Each time was dangerous.

On the last two passes, flashes of bright, jagged lights painted the inside of her eyelids. A brilliant pattern of neuropathways lit themselves to her in unexplainable messaging. She had seen her own brain. And when the neurosurgeon announced the procedure's ultimate success, she couldn't speak for shock at the gift she had been given.

Repentance by Andrew Lam

Reviewed by Cara LaVigne

“Kodomo no tameni... It means, ‘for the sake of the children.’”

Andrew Lam’s *Repentance* unravels the life of a dysfunctional family as he reveals the secrets of a soldier fighting during WWII in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a segregated unit composed of Japanese-American soldiers. The title of the book, *Repentance*, is echoed by the main character’s father as he bears the weight of his past actions on his shoulders his entire life, as well as on his son, Daniel Tokunaga, as he begins to realize that his own actions are causing his family life to rip apart. Lam begins his novel in 1998, introducing the readers to Daniel’s astounding skills as a surgeon and a little bit of his family life. He then sends the reader to the year 1944 when the 442nd Regimental Combat Team was fighting against the Germans in the foothills of France. The novel continues to flip back and forth between 1998 and 1944 as the secrets of Daniel’s family begin to surface. *Repentance* takes readers on a journey through the eyes of two different generations and causes them to reflect on how their own actions can affect others, while also demonstrating the true meaning of self-sacrifice and love.

Daniel Tokunaga, the main character of the story, is a world renowned heart surgeon. As he is sending his twins off to college, he receives an unexpected call from his father, who informs him that his mother Keiko was in a car accident. Daniel quickly rushes to California, and realizes that his family’s past is not what it seems. He discovers that his father was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross while serving in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and the Department of Defense has been calling numerous times to discuss the award his father received. As Daniel learns more information of what happened in the foothills of France, he questions his father’s actions and struggles to see him as a hero until he gathers all of the pieces of the puzzle. As each new bit of information is revealed to him, he realizes how much guilt chained his father down, how much he sacrificed to recompense his actions in WWII, and how much love he had lost after the war was over. As Daniel heals from the emotional turmoil he went through because of his father, he works to create a better relationship with his family.

The way in which Andrew Lam reveals the past of Daniel’s father is like putting together a puzzle. Daniel listens to the accounts of multiple people who know different sides of the story, but not the story as a whole. He is the person who receives all of the information. It takes a huge toll on him emotionally as secrets that he was never supposed to know are uncovered. Certain accounts cause him to question his father’s actions, and he sees him as a cowardly person who destroyed several peoples’ lives because of a selfish act. However, as the full picture is revealed, he understands that his father sacrificed his own happiness in an attempt to make up for the past, though he did end up hurting more people with the path he took. This book causes the reader to be more aware of the actions they perform in their daily lives. It forces the reader to think about how they affect others around them. One simple action can change someone’s life forever. While Daniel’s father was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross for his overall actions in France, he will never forget the mistake he made, and how it cost people their lives. Even Daniel realized

how he was affecting his family by never being around and ignoring their needs when he was in their presence.

Lam's novel takes the reader on a journey with Daniel. As he learns information, the reader is just finding this out as well. The flashbacks to 1944 only reveal so much before the main character begins looking into his father's past. Anyone reading his book will understand that something bad is about to happen to the characters that will cause Daniel's father to regret his actions for the rest of his life, but they do not know the situation until the secrets begin to unravel. Rather than Lam disclosing details straightforwardly, the reader unravels the mystery right along with Daniel. Through this method, the readers build a connection with Daniel and his father at the same time, and they can use this connection to look at their own lives and decide if they have remorse for actions that have hurt those around them.

Parisian Lives, by Deirdre Bair, Nan A. Talese/Doubleday

Reviewed by Martha Patterson

In this shining and hard-to-put down memoir, journalist Deirdre Bair writes of interviews she conducted with playwright Samuel Beckett (WAITING FOR GODOT) and feminist Simone de Beauvoir (THE SECOND SEX) in Paris during the 1970s and '80s, while completing biographies of both.

Bair had never authored a biography before, but Beckett, his interest piqued by a letter she wrote to him, agreed to be her subject. But she didn't expect his wiliness in making arrangements for their meetings and being slowed in her progress towards completion of her manuscript. And Beckett was, apparently, miffed when she was introduced to other friends of his during her research, since he wanted to keep these acquaintances to himself.

De Beauvoir could be gruff and intimidating with her no-nonsense approach to being interviewed. Upon their first meeting, which happened on de Beauvoir's birthday, and for which Bair had thoughtfully brought an armful of flowers, de Beauvoir told Bair, "What is a birthday anyway but just another day? Shall we get to work?" *

Beckett and de Beauvoir didn't even like each other, despite both being celebrated authors and only living blocks from one another in France's capital, and Bair's awkwardness in letting each of them know of the work she was doing with the other caused a few instances of delicate treading on her part.

Between provisions made for the care of her husband and kids back in America, frequent flights back and forth to Europe, and being hit on sexually by male contacts in the publishing world, Bair manages to salvage telling and humor-filled material anyway from her encounters, and this book belongs on any budding journalist's bookshelf, or the reading list of those enamoured with Paris and bestselling writers.

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* Footnote, page 217 of PARISIAN LIVES

Jarkata by Rodrigo Márquez Tizano

Reviewed by Desiree Willis

Jakarta focuses on the life of an unnamed narrator in a dystopian society where the virus Z-bug has caused nearly the extinction of the human race. Where he resides, his partner Clara holds a strong connection to a glowing stone; which holds powers that allow for the narrator to view past memories. The plot is submerged by threats of violence within the city; the narrator describes the world around him with vivid imagery. The narrator continues switching from past to present perspective, applying concepts he has learned throughout his life. The variety of style and tone is consistent throughout the novel, keeping the reader engaged through each beautifully constructed sentence.

The tone of emptiness and being lost through what feels like the narrator's stream of consciousness. The lack of quotation marks between the characters' dialogues makes the memories appear even more distorted. In one section of the story, he recalls his carpenter teacher, who he criticized negatively for his false encouragement of the students' work in class. He states, “any enthusiasm we encountered, any upbeat individual, we learned to shun as though it was the Z-Bug incarnate.” It suggests that the life you’ve been given has already been decided by you from the implications of society. These concepts become more relevant as people age, at some point they must decide whether they let the world influence their actions or their own.

This notion of false hope and encouraging dreams of without providing proper guidance is the downfall of many young adults. The carpenter teacher exemplifies false hope, by not expressing constructive criticism and not showing proper methods in expanding upon his students' skills. They don't elevate to a higher point in their lives, so they're unwillingly stuck. The students are unaware of this issue and it restricts them from reaching a level of progression that will allow them to exceed beyond what they've imagined. They then become a product of their society, not utilized effectively to implement change. This novel is beautifully thought-provoking and constantly has the reader wondering what is going to happen next. This is just some of the many underlying messages within the novel that make aspects of this story truly intriguing.

Writing Prompts via Reedsy

As mentioned in my note, writing prompts have been one of the best ways to get my mind off of the news and to a planet far, far, away. These are some of my favorite writing prompts. We hope to see submissions that use them for June's edition, that we will publish on time! And for more prompts like these and submit to a writing contest, check out what Reedsy is all about!

Comedy

- The dog ate my homework.
- A sudden BANG! and puff of smoke emerged from a garage in a quiet suburban neighbourhood.
- In the midst of writer's block, an author goes to sit at a bus station looking for inspiration. They get more than they bargained for.
- It was the highest stakes game of rock-paper-scissors ever played.
- It was the kind of Friday that gave new meaning to the phrase TGIF.
- Make the absurd absolutely and completely normal.
- That night, the action backstage was even more dramatic than the story unfolding onstage.

Creative Nonfiction

- Write about someone (or something) you loved that you shouldn't have.
- Write about a date that was so terrible you'll never forget it.
- Write about your most unique experience at, or in, a wedding.
- Write about a time when a broken heart led to something you'd never have expected.
- Write about a secret that you've never told to the person you love.

Drama

- Had I known I was going to have guests at 4am, I would've tidied up.
- I'd like to buy a plane ticket to your furthest destination today, you told the airline employee.
- A double agent is assigned by both of the countries they work for to capture their alias.
- A group of travelers are exploring a deep, dark, remote cave when they find a computer and a lunchbox.
- A winter night in the city.
- A writer is fighting with writer's block. They reminisce about the last time in their life they felt inspired.
- As they rode away from their old life, they knew they'd never look back.

Fantasy and Science Fiction

- I remember the last spring. It was 18 years ago.

- I wish I could skip next week, you think as you get into bed that night. In the morning, you wake up 100 years in the future
- They found out about us. They're coming. They were the words the kingdom had feared hearing for thousands of years.
- You're early, said the Grim Reaper, with a hint of surprise.
- I suddenly realized my survival depended on...
- A child has befriended the monster that lives under her bed.
- A day in the life of a ghost.

For Kids

- Write about your favorite birthday present. Why is it your favorite?
- Imagine you owned a pet monkey for a day. What would you do with it?
- If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?
- Imagine you and your best friend hanging out ten years from now. What has changed? What hasn't changed?
- Write a story about a person who is only one inch tall.
- You're packing your bags to climb the tallest mountain in the world. What do you pack?
- Imagine you became in charge of your school for one full week. What would you do?

Fiction

- A character experiences déjà vu so strong they almost fall over.
- Describe each day of the week as if it were a person. Give each one personality traits, a job, and a goal. Write a story about them.
- This was the weekend you'd been waiting for for the past three years.
- Write a short story that ONLY uses dialogue.
- Write a story about a 100th birthday party.
- Write a story about a misunderstanding.
- Write a story about a plane crash. Your main character is the sole survivor. What happens next?

Historical Fiction

- You had one job, he said to the young squire who had been tasked with delivering a scroll — and failed spectacularly.
- 1930. The travelling circus is in town. The first performance night would be rife with scandal.
- A bard falls in love with the monarch who employs them.
- A duo of time-travelling detectives.
- A family sit around their brand new radio for the first time after dinner.
- A famous historical person packs for a trip.
- A love story between the boy who delivered milk bottles to the neighborhood and the girl who delivered newspapers.

Mystery

- As you're paying for your groceries, you mention to the clerk, There's a mess in aisle 16. They give you a puzzled look and reply, There is no aisle 16.
- Write a story about a character waking up to something completely absurd.
- Write a story about a character waking up to the best news of their life.
- The detective didn't realize they were being foiled by a competing detective.
- The first day you opened your own office as a private investigator, you didn't expect it to be busy. You were wrong.
- You're shaking hands with a stranger at a networking event when you ask for their name. I have no name, they reply.
- A genius serial killer has been killing successfully for a decade. His only weakness is that he can never, ever lie. He finally gets caught and is facing trial for all murders in court. Yet, he walks, acquitted of all charges.

Romance

- A fortuneteller falls in love with their client who has their palm read every month.
- It wasn't love at first sight. But now you were starting to see them in a new light...
- Someone with anxiety falls in love with someone extremely adventurous.
- The lives of two people are changed forever when they coincidentally meet and engage in a weekend-long affair.
- They lived in a world where PDA is forbidden. One day, they slipped up and held hands on the street.
- Two characters who are perfect for one another are foiled by bad timing.
- Two mortal enemies fall in love when they're trapped in an elevator together and begin to see the other person's perspective.

Thriller and Suspense

- Guard this with your life.
- A loved one confides in you, but the secret could damage someone else you care about. What do you do?
- As you're browsing through a rack of sweaters, someone approaches you and says, I need you to listen to me very carefully.
- She has been walking for hours. Her feet are starting to bleed. But she can't stop moving... she can't let him find her again.
- The morning after a blizzard you make your way outside and slowly start to realize everyone has disappeared.
- You find a hand-written note on your windshield that says Drive west for 100 miles.
- You wake up in a jail cell, crusted blood covering your hands. You have no idea how you got there. The cell door clangs open, and an officer walks you to an interrogation room where two detectives wait to question you.

Contests

Writing contests are one of the ways the Book Smuggler's Den encourages writers to gain confidence and get your work in front of as many readers as possible. Contests are also a way of building a report and can help you attract the attention of an editor. Plus, contests are a blast! Below are some upcoming contests that we encourage you to submit to.

Sign up for The Book Smuggler's Den e-newsletter to get the inside scoop on our latest contest announcements.

Essay

The Diana Woods Memorial Award in Creative Non-Fiction Creative nonfiction essays of no more than 5,000 words on any subject, are eligible for consideration for this award. Works must not have been published elsewhere. Award winners are required to submit a 100-word biography, recent photo and a short note thanking the Woods family for their generosity and support. Deadline: February and August of each year Fee: None Prize: \$250 and publication in Lunch Ticket

Erma Bombeck Writing Competition The Erma Bombeck Writing Competition, sponsored biennially by the Washington-Centerville Public in conjunction with the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop, pays tribute to Erma Bombeck, one of the greatest humorists of our times. Previously unpublished personal essays of 450 words or less that capture the essence of Erma's writings will be accepted in the humor and human interest categories. Entries are accepted from anywhere in the world, and all will be blind judged by a panel of accomplished authors, columnists, screenwriters, stand-up comedians and writing teachers. Bill Bryson, best known for his humorous books on travel as well as a variety of other genres, including the English language, science, history, and non-fiction, will serve as the finalist judge for the humor essays. Jess Montgomery, a columnist and author of historical mysteries, will serve as the finalist judge for the human interest essays. Deadline: Current not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

Fiction

2019 Accenti Writing Contest The contest is open to prose works. Entries can be fiction, non-fiction or creative non-fiction. Entries must be previously unpublished and not under consideration by any other publication. Entries must be original and not a translation of a previously published work. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

Annual Barren Flash Fiction Prize Our first annual flash fiction contest. Rules and instructions are listed on our website. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

Chicago Tribune's Nelson Algren Literary Awards A nationally recognized contest for original short fiction, named in honor of the Chicago literary great Nelson Algren. The contest has been held annually since 1981. The award has been presented to a number of distinguished authors, including Louise Erdrich and Stuart Dybek. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

Daisy Pettles Women Writers Writing Contest The Daisy Pettles Women Writers Writing Contest is open to women writers, age 40+, published or unpublished. Fiction or Non-Fiction writing projects are eligible. Poetry is excluded. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

Dream Quest One Poetry & Writing Contest Open to anyone who enjoys expressing innermost thoughts and feelings into the beautiful literary art of writing a story that's worth telling everyone! Welcome to all, having the ability to dream. Write a short story, 5 pages maximum length, on any subject or theme, fiction or non-fiction (including essay compositions, diary, journal entries, short screenplays, and screenwriting). Also, all entries must be either typed or legibly hand-printed. Deadline: 8/15/2020 Fee: \$10 per short story Prize: \$500

fresh.ink (that's an intentional lowercase), a new platform that connects writers with beta readers. Submissions will be judged by readers on the fresh.ink mobile app, based on how many people finish reading your work and how they rate it. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

New Voices Award This award is given for a previously unpublished children's picture book manuscript (of no more than 1,500 words) written by a writer of color. The 2019 deadline has passed, please check back for updates Fee: None Prize: \$1,000 cash and a standard publication contract

Halloween Flash Fiction Share a Halloween Horror story for this writing contest. But the catch is you only have 500 words (or less) to do it. Share your horror story by Halloween to enter this flash fiction writing contest. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

Scribble Short Story Contest for Beginning and Emerging Writers The Editors of Scribble welcome those who have never been published and those who've had short fiction published up to several times to submit for the chance to win a cash prize and publication in Scribble's January 2020 edition. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

ServiceScape Short Story Award For this award, any genre or theme of short story is accepted. All applicants should submit their original unpublished work of short fiction or nonfiction, 5,000 words or fewer, to be considered. Deadline: 11/29/2020 Fee: None Prize: \$1,000.00 USD, and the winner will have his or her short story featured on the blog

The Writer 2019 Fall Short Story Contest Submit your very best fictional short story in 2,000 words or less. Any theme, subject, or genre is fair game, as long as it falls under 2,000 words. Deadline: 3/3/2020 Fee: \$25 Prize: \$1,000

This Story Starts With This Sentence Write a story with the sentence: We heard something. You can write about anything – just start the story with the provided sentence. Cash prize to the winner. Deadline: 7/15/2020 Fee: \$9.95 Prize: \$100

Virginia B. Ball Creative Writing Competition The contest is open to students who are in grades 8–11 during the 2019-20 school year. Students must submit writing samples in at least two of the following genres: fiction, poetry, personal essay/memoir, screenwriting, playwriting, and hybrid genre. You should submit no more than 5 pieces total. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

Writer's Digest Competitions One of the longest-running writing competitions, this contest spotlights up and coming writers in a number of categories, including Memoirs/Personal Essay, Print or Online Article and Genre Short Story. Deadline: See link for multiple deadline Fee: start at \$20 Prize: The Grand Prize winner gets \$5,000, a feature in Writer's Digest magazine, a paid trip to a writing conference and more

Write the World Each month Write the World holds a new competition, developed around a particular idea or genre of writing, such as poetry, fantasy, sports journalism, or flash fiction. Competitions encourage you to dig deeper into the writing process, try out new genres and share your work with a sea of eager readers. Deadline: Monthly Fee: None Prize: The winning entrant receives \$100, and the runner-up and best peer-reviewer receive \$50. All three winners will be featured on our blog, with commentary from our guest judge

General

The Borgen Project & The Daily Dosage The contest is open to all high school and college students (including undergraduate and graduate students) across the world. The prompt is as follows: With respect for the 785 million people who lack access to clean water, in 785 words or less, describe what it means to be a responsible global citizen in the field of science. Feel free to get creative! You can tell us a short story, write a poem, draw on the lives of historical figures or your own experience, compose a short script, or write a standard essay. Deadline: June 14, 2020 at 11:00 p.m. EST (starting date and time) —July 25, 2020 at 11:00 p.m. EST (ending date and time). Fee: \$5.00 Prize: Publication on the official Daily Dosage website, \$100 cash to the winning author, and an interview to be featured on The Borgen Project's State of the Union Page and Facebook page

Poetry

15 Syllable Writing Contest Write a poem that only has 15 syllables to enter this poetry contest. You can write about anything. You can write a poem of any type. The only requirement is that

the total number of syllables in your poem is 15. What can you write when you only have 15 syllables to work with? Deadline: 8/6/2020 Fee: \$9.95 Prize: \$100

2020 Sonia Sanchez-Langston Hughes Poetry Contest

Each year, Split This Rock sponsors a national poetry contest which serves to raise the visibility and prestige of poetry of provocation and witness. Formerly known as Split This Rock's Annual Poetry Contest, the contest was renamed in 2017 as the Sonia Sanchez-Langston Hughes Poetry Contest. The new name honors two poets significant to Split This Rock: Langston Hughes who penned the poem "Big Buddy" from which Split This Rock takes its name and Sonia Sanchez who opened the very first Split This Rock Poetry Festival in 2008 and served as guest judge for the 2018 contest. Contest winning poems are published on Split This Rock's website and in The Quarry: A Social Justice Poetry Database. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

3 Line Poetry Contest Share a poem that only has three lines to enter this poetry contest. The syllable count for your poem should be 5-7-5 or 5-7-7. So the first line has five syllables, the second line has seven syllables. The final line either has five or seven syllables. The topic is open – so write about anything. Cash prize to the winner. Deadline: 7/24/2020 Fee: \$9.95 Prize: \$100

The Brunel University African Poetry Prize The prize is open to African poets who have not yet had a full-length poetry book published. Self-published poetry books, chapbooks and pamphlets are exempt from this stipulation. Only poems written in English are accepted. Poems translated into English are also accepted with a percentage of the prize going to the translator. Each entrant must submit 10 poems to be eligible, no more and no less. There is no stipulation as to the content of submitted poems but no poem should exceed 30 lines in length. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

Faith Poetry Contest Share a poem of faith. How does your faith impact you? Your lifestyle? Write a poem of any type. Deadline: 7/19/2020 Fee: \$9.95 Prize: \$100

Halloween Poetry Contest Share your Halloween Poem for this poetry contest. Write a poem of any type – but keep in mind the theme. Cash prize to the winner. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

ZenGarden.club

We invite you to create a very short story (350 words or less) based on the picture prompt on the contest page. Use your imagination, and see what stories you see in this picture, entitled "Scary"!

Tanka Poetry Contest What's a Tanka? A Tanka is a poem that only has five lines. Each line has a specific syllable count. That count is 5-7-5-7-7. So the first line of your poem will have five syllables. The second line will have seven. The third line will have five again. The fourth and fifth line will have seven syllables. Cash prize to the winner of this poetry contest. Deadline: 7/31/2020 Fee: \$9.95 Prize: \$100

The Tufts Poetry Awards Based at Claremont Graduate University and given for poetry volumes published in the preceding year – are not only two of the most prestigious prizes a contemporary poet can receive, they also come with hefty purses: \$100,000 for the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award and \$10,000 for the Kate Tufts Discovery Award. This makes the Kingsley Tufts award the world's largest monetary prize for a single collection of poetry. Deadline: The 2019 deadline has passed, please check back for updates Fee: None Prize: \$100,000

Two Line Poem Our two line poem is fun and a bit of a challenge. Write a poem that only has two lines. The twist is that there should be an internal rhyme and an end rhyme. See an example in the contest announcement. Deadline: 7/3/2020 Fee: \$9.95 Prize: \$100

Wingless Dreamer Poetry Contest This is an open letter to all the aspiring writers around the globe to participate in our Wingless Dreamer Literary Contest 2019. After a huge success of our first edition, "Passionate Penholders" we are happy to announce that we are seeking submissions for the second edition of Wingless Dreamer. We give emerging writers a platform to gain recognition through their Literary submissions disregard of their nationality, gender, age, disability or race differences. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

Dream Quest One Poetry & Writing Contest Open to anyone who enjoys expressing innermost thoughts and feelings into the beautiful literary art of poetry. Welcome to all, having the ability to dream. Write a poem, 30 lines or fewer on any subject, style, or form, typed or neatly hand printed. Also, all entries must be either typed or legibly hand-printed. Deadline: 8/15/2020 Fee: \$5 per poem Prize: Poetry First Prize is \$250

Publications

The Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards recognizes outstanding works that contribute to our understanding of racism and our appreciation of cultural diversity. Awards are given for fiction, poetry and nonfiction. Books must be written in English and published and copyrighted in 2019 to be eligible for the 2020 prize. Deadline: 12/31/2020 Fee: None Prize: \$10,000

Cabell First Novelist Award Seeks to honor first-time novelists "who have navigated their way through the maze of imagination and delivered a great read." Novels published the previous year are accepted. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

Minotaur Books / Mystery Writers of America First Crime Novel Competition

Writers 18 and older who have never had a novel published (in any genre) are eligible for this prize, awarded for an original book-length manuscript where murder or another serious crime or crimes is at the heart of the story. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

Friends of American Writers Chicago Awards Each year FAW recognizes new emerging Midwestern authors or those whose novels or non-fiction writing are set in the Midwest. Each

year the Literature Awards Committee reads and reviews dozens of books for selection of the current year award winners. The author must be a resident (or previously have been a resident for approximately five years) of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota or Wisconsin; or the locale of the book must be in a region identified above. The books can be fiction or creative non-fiction. Self-published (vanity press) and e-Books are not eligible. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

Tony Hillerman Prize for Best First Mystery Set in the Southwest Competition Each potential entrant must not be the author of a published mystery novel and must not be a party to any agreement with a publisher pursuant to which a mystery novel written by the entrant may be published. For purposes of these Official Rules, "mystery novel" means a book of fiction in which murder or another serious crime or crimes is at the heart of the story, and emphasis is on the solution rather than the details of the crime. of at least 40,000 words and "published" means a work that has been published or made publicly available, in whole or part, as a print book, e-book or in any other media. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

W.Y. Boyd Literary Award for Excellence in Military Fiction This award honors the best fiction set in a period when the United States was at war. It recognizes the service of American veterans and military personnel and encourages the writing and publishing of outstanding war-related fiction. Submissions may be adult or YA novels. Deadline: Annually Fee: None Prize: \$5,000

Screenplay

BlueCat Screenplay Competition The BlueCat Screenplay Competition, now in its 22nd year, is open for submissions for its 2020 competition. BlueCat remains committed to the undiscovered writer and continues its tradition of providing written analysis on every script submitted. BlueCat accepts features, shorts, and pilots and awards over \$40,000 in cash prizes each year, including the Fellini Award, which gives \$2,500 to the best script written by an international writer. Deadline: Currently not accepting submissions. We'll update you as soon as they reopen again.

Contact us today if you have a writing contest you'd like to feature here!

Contributors

Cara LaVigne is a third-year student at Bridgewater College double majoring in English and Professional Writing. She currently works as one of the Writing Consultants available to other students at Bridgewater. Her longer works focus primarily in fantasy and realistic fiction, while her poetry has a broader topic range. Her fictional pieces are heavily influenced by fairytales and a deep fascination of mythical beasts and the unknown.

Reayah Lundquist has been working on novels and writing short stories for years, one of which was featured on the podcast 'Story Pirates' in the summer of 2019, and another published in the Penultimate Peanut magazine in April of this year. You can follow her on Twitter @bookscrutiny, and Instagram @lundartee.

Brittany Ann Oppenheimer is a writing studies major at Bridgewater State University. She loves animals, music, rusty basement smells, and writing for fun. Brittany hopes to graduate with her bachelor's degree in the spring of 2021. She cannot wait to return home to see her dog Kassie and two cats Loki and Binx after the end of each semester. So far, Brittany Ann Oppenheimer has published a piece called "Where The Light Takes Me" in Holyoke Community College's Pulp City Journal. She has also written for The Y Syndrome Magazine and the Bridgewater State University newspaper called "The Comment" from spring 2019 to fall 2019. You can follow her on Twitter @OppenheimerAnn

Martha Patterson writes poetry, plays, fiction, and essays. Her work has been published by Smith & Kraus, Applause Books, the Sheepshead Review, Silver Birch Press, Pioneer Drama Service, Syndrome Magazine, and others. She has degrees in Theatre from Mt. Holyoke College and Emerson College, and lives in Boston, Massachusetts. She is addicted to National Public Radio and loves being surrounded by her books and laptop. You can learn more about Martha over on her website <https://mpatterson125933.wixsite.com/martha-patterson->

Jake Rivard an award-winning writer based in Detroit, Michigan with published works in satire, hockey journalism, and activist journals. You can find my work anywhere from the world's largest hip hop satire site to grocery stores throughout the Midwest.

Rubin A Rubina is an actor and writer who believes in one creator and one huge creativity cloud. That's the reason behind art transcending all barriers. Writing is the connection to that vortex of the limitless.

Scott Stimler a 21-year-old British undergraduate student studying psychology in New York and an avid writer in the making. The playful banter that exists between my parents and myself on a daily basis inspired this piece of writing. You can follow Scott on Goodreads at "Scott S."

Audrey Wick is a full-time professor of English at Blinn College in Texas. There, she is a writing teacher who writes, with four traditionally published novels from Tule Publishing. Audrey's writing has also appeared in college textbooks published by Cengage Learning and W. W. Norton as well as in The Houston Chronicle, The Chicago Tribune, The Orlando Sentinel, and various literary journals. She believe the secret to happiness includes lifelong learning and

good stories. But travel and coffee help. She has journeyed to over twenty countries—and sipped coffee at every one. Readers can connect with her at her writing website of audreywick.com, and on Twitter and Instagram @WickWrites.

Desiree Willis is a Bridgewater College Student, who is currently enrolled in her sophomore year of college. She majors in Professional Writing and minors in Computer Science. She resides in Dumfries, VA and plans to be a Technical Writer.