

16th Annual Oklahoma Literary Arts Festival

East Central University

Thursday, November 10, 2011

WRITING CONTEST – FLASH FICTION

I didn't have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead.

~ Mark Twain

It's not easy being short. It's not easy writing short, either. *Flash Fiction* is the misunderstood genre. As it grows in popularity, it suffers from an identity crisis. Some call it postcard fiction, micro-fiction, or even short-shorts. No matter what it's called, though, it's more challenging to write than one might expect. Elusive, often contradicting, definitions don't help. Depending on the contest, it can range from 50 words to 1500 words. For this contest, think of *Flash Fiction* as the place where poetry meets prose, where storytelling is not viciously whittled down to its bones but slowly simmered into a sweet, simple syrup, with all the elements of a short story concentrated into one page of writing in which every word, character, and image is essential.

Story Guidelines:

- It must tell a story, with character(s), setting, plot, and theme—adjusted, of course, to the brevity of the situation.
- It must obviously be prose, but poetic language is encouraged. (It cannot be a narrative poem, though.)
- The topic (not necessarily the setting) is **a sweltering Oklahoma summer's afternoon**. *What happens? How has this heat created a conflict for the character(s)?* The story must incorporate this topic and focus on a brief moment in the main character's life, but the story can also go in any direction your creativity wants to take it.
- It cannot be more than one page (typed according to the Submission Guidelines below), and the word count must fall between 150 and 300 words. Outliers will be disqualified.
- The title should be gripping but should not be included in the word count.

Submission Guidelines:

- Original work, never published
- Typed in 12-point font (e.g., Arial, Times New Roman, etc. but nothing fancy)
- Double-spaced with one-inch margins, not exceeding one (1) letter-size page
- Title centered above the first line of the story; word count left-aligned below the last line
- Sent electronically to trothrock@ecok.edu, as an attachment
 - ~ in either Microsoft Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf)
 - ~ only identifier on this single-page attachment is its title
 - ~ Subject Line: **2011 OLAF Flash Fiction entry**
- The text of the email must include
 - ~ the title of the flash fiction (must match the attachment exactly)
 - ~ student's name and grade,
 - ~ the school, the sponsoring teacher, and the school's phone number

All entries (1 per student) must be received no later than **5:00 P. M. on Thursday, November 3, 2011**. Judging will be conducted by ECU faculty, and all results are final. Students must attend Oklahoma Literary Arts Festival workshops and closing session to be eligible for the contest.

If a confirmation email has not been received within 48 hours of submission, please contact Dr. Rothrock at (580) 559-5439.

NOTE: Submission to this contest give permission to Oklahoma Literary Arts Festival and East Central University to publish the winning works along with author's name and school on its web site.