

# Oklahoma Writers Federation, Inc.

READ ALL ABOUT IT

## The OWFI Contest

By OWFI President, Tony LoPresti

It is time for the annual Oklahoma Writer's Federation, Inc. contest. With the evolution of technology, our contest must evolve also. As we grow and change as writers and humans, the manner in which we send our work out into the world also changes. We try to reflect this in our contest. With this in mind, we have changed things once again this year.

This year, my staff and I have been visiting as many affiliates as we can. One of the things we are trying to respond to has been members wanting to be able to submit entries over time. This makes the OWFI contest not only one of the least expensive in the country, it is also, in my opinion, one of the friendliest.

Responding to what members have said they want, our 1st Vice President, Marsha Kay Oldham, has made changes to the contest. Please understand, everything has pros and cons. In this case, to the pros are the contest will become much friendlier. Contest Chairs will be able to review, and time permitting, allow resubmission (though no resubmissions will be allowed after the deadlines). It will also allow submissions to be sent into the contest over time.

While there is now more flexibility in the contest this will result in a little more effort in submitting. The submission process is no different than one we have used before so everyone should be comfortable with it. Each category will have its own email as will the entry sheet. This may seem like a lot of work, but it is the only way to allow the flexibility we need to allow entries over time and resubmissions. Behind the scenes, our VPs have put in safeguards better than any we have had in the past to insure manuscripts and submissions will not be lost to wander forever in cyberspace.

### What's Inside:

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Resource Guide
- 3 Contest Rules
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The rules are now posted on the website along with the category guidelines. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of the VPs for help. That is what they are there for.

How do you win the contest? There are several keys. First, make sure your entry is compliant with the rules. Many entries get DQed (disqualified) for infractions a little caution would

have prevented. Second, enter the correct category. This is very important. Each category is judged by the standards set for that category, if your work is not within the parameters of the category the entry will lose, not because of bad writing, but because it did not fit the category. Third, enter with time to make corrections if the Category Chairs thinks they are needed. Fourth, make sure your writing is very, very good. Do not blow off that it is just a contest. Many of our contest winners are published writers with reputations to protect. Be assured, these writers will not submit inferior writing.

Good luck to all and may the best writer win.

The only writer  
to whom you  
should compare  
yourself  
is the writer  
you were  
yesterday.

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## The Report: December 2015

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*The Report is the official newsletter of the Oklahoma Writers' Federation, Inc. It is published three times per year, in March, September and December. News deadlines are the first day of the month previous to publication (February 1, August 1 and November 1, respectively). Please send submissions or questions to [OWFINews@gmail.com](mailto:OWFINews@gmail.com). Please send address changes to [OWFITreasurer001@gmail.com](mailto:OWFITreasurer001@gmail.com). OWFI is a non-profit federation of writer's groups dedicated to promoting higher standards for the written word. Find us online at [www.owfi.org](http://www.owfi.org), **Facebook** at "Oklahoma Writers' Federation, Inc. (OWFI)" and Twitter @OWFI*

### OWFI Resource Guide

**Peter Biadasz**, Total Publishing and Media  
TotalPublishingAndMedia.com, 918-624-9300 / Professional services include author development, design, editing and marketing.

**Michele Chiappetta**, The Chipper Muse  
chippermuse.wordpress.com, chippermuse@gmail.com, 918-407-7476 / Writing, editing, proofreading, ghostwriting and more.

**Shayla Eaton**, Curiouser Editing  
curiouserediting.com / Expert editing, book development, and one-on-one consulting.

**Mari Farthing**, Mari Edits /  
Mari.farthing@gmail.com (include "editing query" in subject line / Writing, proofreading and editing services.

**Karen Marie Graham**, Books-A-Daisy  
Publishing, books-a-daisy.com / Offering traditional publishing services and

professional a la carte services for self-publishers.

**Mariana Llanos** offers proofreading and editing services in Spanish by a native Spanish speaker. 405-8875476 or mariana\_llanos@hotmail.com.

**Marisa Mohi & Kathryn Trattner**, Dominion House Lit,  
dominionhouselit.com / Digital literary magazine publishing flash fiction.

**Jan Morrill**, Connect with Jan  
connectwithjan.net, jymorrill@gmail.com / Assistance with setting up a blog or website and understanding various social media platforms.

**Jennifer McMurray**, LilyBear House  
lilybearhouse.com / A traditional publisher, currently looking for new authors.

**Jodi Thompson**, Submission Services  
thejodithompson.com, jodi\_thompson@yahoo.com (include "submission services" in subject line.) / Query makeovers, agent and market research, formatting, manuscript submission, social media assistance, and more.

**Maria Veres**, mariapolsonveres.com, mariaveres@att.net / Available to speak to writers' groups about writing, poetry, and creativity.

**Brandy Walker**, Sister Sparrow Graphic Design / sistersparrowgraphicdesign.com, sistersparrowdesigns@gmail.com

*This resource listing is by and for OWFI members with writing and editing related services. If you want to be included in a future listing, please send your information to [OWFINews@gmail.com](mailto:OWFINews@gmail.com) with "Resource Listing" in the subject line.*

## 2016 OWFI Conference: Pathways to Writing

### Contest Rules

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

The annual OWFI contest is only open to paid OWFI members and full-time students. For information on joining OWFI, see the Membership section of the web site.

The contest offers cash prizes in thirty unpublished manuscript categories, and trophies in four published book categories. Unpublished manuscript prizes are \$50 for first place, \$35 for second place, and \$20 for third place in each of the thirty categories. All entries are judged by published authors, agents, editors, or other publishing professionals. Judges are asked to provide feedback on each entry, either by completing scoresheets or by making written comments. Categories with less than ten (10) entries will be awarded a first place certificate but NO cash award.

Contestants must pay careful attention to format and word length. To facilitate fair judging, entrants' names MAY NOT appear on the manuscript.

Entries, entry fee, and official entry form must be uploaded on or before February 1, 2016. Contestants are urged to upload entries at least two weeks before the deadline to allow time for any rule violations to be corrected. Mail entry form and fee to the General Contest Chair at the address listed on the entry form. Email each individual entry, with cover sheet, to the appropriate category chair (addresses are on the website and in the newsletter).

#### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Entrants must be **paid** members of OWFI **or** full-time students. Students must provide verification of student status. Membership dues are \$20 per year for affiliate club members and \$25 per year for members-at-large.
2. No manuscript that has won a cash prize (1st, 2nd or 3rd) in a previous OWFI contest may be entered again — EVER.
3. Contestants who win first place in an OWFI contest category may not enter that same category the following year.
4. Unpublished entries for Categories 1 through 7 and Categories 9 through 30 must have been unaccepted for publication at the time of submission. (If accepted by a publisher after entry, the submission will be considered valid.) Works that have been posted on a blog, website, or other online venue (except for critique purposes), are considered published and are not eligible for entry in these categories. Submissions to Category #8- Blogs that have been posted on a blog website are eligible, however, it will be treated as an unpublished category.
5. Books entered in Published Book Categories 31-34 must have a copyright date of 2015. Print books can be sent by snail mail and e-books may be submitted electronically in the following formats, as a PDF file, .mobi, and .epub. All snail-mail entries

should be sent to the appropriate Category Chair along with an SASE. **Without an SASE entries will not be returned.**

6. Judges may not enter the category they are judging.
7. Category Chairs may not enter the category they chair.
8. If entries are co-authored, all members of the writing team must be OWFI members. The team will be considered a single entrant and must pay a separate entry fee for their co-authored entries apart from any fees they pay for individual entries. Published anthologies and compilations of work by multiple authors entered in the Trophy Award categories are considered co-authored entries.
9. Persons, whether entering as a team or an individual, may enter a category only once.
10. No manuscript may be entered in more than one category.

#### ENTRY PROCEDURES

11. Entrants must pay a \$30 NONREFUNDABLE entry fee, which covers administrative costs and awards. This entitles participants to enter as many categories as they want (see #8-10 above).
12. Manuscripts must be submitted electronically to the appropriate Category Chair. **NOTE: If using internet explorer and if it times out please try Google Chrome before calling for help.**
13. Entries must be postmarked by February 1, 2016. OWFI is **not** responsible for lost entries. All entries will get a message from the category chair acknowledging receipt of entry. If a work is submitted and an acknowledgement is not received in 24 hours, please contact chair and/or resubmit work.
14. Published books should be mailed in an envelope the correct size for the book.

#### MS PREPARATION AND FORMAT

##### ELECTRONIC ENTRIES MS MUST BE IN .DOC FORMAT

**FOR ELECTRONIC PUBLISHED BOOK CATEGORIES, THE BOOK MAY BE SUBMITTED IN .PDF, .MOBI, OR .EPUB FORMATS THE FORMAT MUST BE NOTED IN THE UPPER RIGHT HAND CORNER**

15. All unpublished manuscripts must be editor-ready. This includes the following:
  - Double spaced. (*Exceptions:* Poetry and book synopses may be single spaced. Spacing for book outlines, overviews, and tables-of-contents should follow industry standard.)
  - Place a header at the top of all pages except Page 1, listing the title and page number.

- Use an easy-to-read 12-point font such as Times Roman or Courier that results in approximately 250 words per page (about 25 lines per page). Manuscripts using small print which violate these conditions **will be disqualified**. Fancy fonts other than italics are not allowed.
- Play, film, or TV scripts must follow industry-standard formats.

For more information on manuscript formatting, consult a recent edition of *Writer's Market* (available at most libraries), or search "Manuscript Format" online.

**16.** For ALL ENTRIES in Unpublished Manuscript categories 1-30 (books, short works, and poetry): In the upper right hand corner of the first page, type the category number. Beneath the category number (upper right hand corner of the first page) type one of the following:

- Number of lines (for poetry entries)
- Number of pages entered (for book-length prose entries)
- Word count for short works of prose (picture books, short stories, articles, etc.). Calculate using word processor word count or average 10 words per line, 25 lines per page.

For multi-genre categories (see category descriptions), it is highly recommended that entrants note the specific genre in the upper right-hand corner below the word count or page count.

**17.** Entries over the maximum length or under the minimum length will be disqualified.

**18.** No author's name, pen name or other author identification may appear on any manuscript page.

**19.** A completed copy of the 2016 Official Cover Sheet must be attached for each submission. This should be sent with the entry and can be a separate attachment. The sheet must include: Category name, manuscript title, name of club, author's name, address and phone number. If not affiliated with any OWFI club, check Member-at-Large box.

**20.** For all published books in hardcopy, the envelope should be appropriately sized to fit the book. If you plan to pick up your entries at the conference, you may omit postage, but the self-addressed envelope is required. Use your own name and address for both addressee and return address on these envelopes. Paperclip the return envelope to the entry. Entries without return postage which are not picked up at the conference will be destroyed.

#### CAUSES FOR DISQUALIFICATION

- Entries after the February 1, 2016 deadline.
- Contestants or entries fail to meet the Eligibility Requirements (see above).
- Entries sent to the General Contest Chair instead of the Category Chair, or sent to the wrong Category Chair, though authors may resubmit before the February 1, 2016 deadline.
- Any manuscript that is not "Editor-Ready"
- Manuscripts which use smaller type that allows more than 250 words on a double-spaced page (approximate).
- Entries over the maximum length or under the minimum length.
- Entries that contain any author identification (name, pen name, byline, etc.) any place other than the coversheet.
- Entries without the proper return envelope (these will also be destroyed).
- Trophy Award (Published Book) entries with a copyright date other than 2015.

Any manuscript found not to be the original work of an entrant. The Executive Board or its designated committee will screen all winning entries.

#### *Looking for affiliate news?*


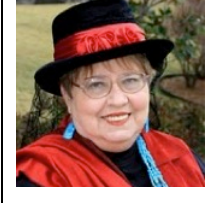


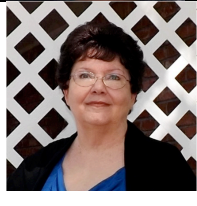
*Please visit [OWFI.ORG](http://OWFI.ORG) and click on the AFFILIATES tab to find a list of active affiliates and links to news and updates.*

*Information is updated bi-monthly and affiliate updates should be sent to [OWFINEWS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:OWFINEWS@GMAIL.COM) by January 15.*

Meet your conference staff!

	<p><b>Linda Apple</b> teaches writing workshops and presents to both writers' conferences and to women's groups. Linda is an accomplished writer and enjoys mentoring and helping others to realize their potential.</p>		<p><b>Larry Baker</b> is a critically-lauded author who has been named to the <i>Los Angeles Times'</i> Top 100 list and the American Library Association's Banned Books list.</p>
	<p><b>Noah Ballard</b> is an agent at Curtis Brown, Ltd. Noah specializes in literary debuts, upmarket thrillers and narrative nonfiction, and he is always on the lookout for honest and provocative new writers.</p>		<p><b>Stephanie Barko</b> has been presenting and helping American authors get reviewed and noticed for the past ten years. Her articles have been published in <i>Writers' Digest</i>, <i>Southern Writers Magazine</i>, and <i>San Francisco Book Review</i>.</p>
	<p><b>William Bernhardt</b> is the author of more than 30 books and is one of the most sought-after writing instructors in the country. His various accomplishments led to his being named Oklahoma's Renaissance Man by OSU.</p>		<p>2016 Conference Book Doctor <b>Mari Farthing</b> is a freelance writer and editor whose experience includes both media and traditional writing and editing. Mari also serves as the current OWFI newsletter editor and website admin.</p>
	<p><b>Arlene Gale</b> has 25 years of writing and speaking experience. She advises non-fiction writers on writing and publishing issues and has published multiple award-winning short stories and articles.</p>		<p><b>Holly Jahangari</b> is a writer and social media analyst. She was an internet addict before it was a thing and has published three children's books plus multiple short stories and poems.</p>
	<p>Conference Keynote Speaker <b>Steven James</b> is a national best-selling author whose book on the craft of writing, <i>Story Trumps Structure</i>, received the award for Best Storytelling Resource from Storytelling World.</p>		<p><b>Christine Jarmola</b> is known to many as the 2014 OWFI President, second-generation member, and the recipient of the 2015 OWFI Lifetime Member award. She has published two novels and multiple essays.</p>
	<p><b>Pam Johnson</b> is a self-proclaimed editing nerd who loves to discuss the importance of POV and debate the use of the Oxford comma. Pam is an editor and has edited all 15 of Steven James' novels.</p>		<p><b>Vicky Malone Kennedy</b> is a former President of OWFI, former VP of Norman Galaxy of Writers, a member of SoonerCon, and a co-founder of Rose Rock wRiters. She is the editor at 4RV Publishing.</p>
	<p><b>Jan Morrill</b> is the author of four books, including the award winning <i>The Red Kimono</i>. While working on a sequel and three children's books based on characters from <i>The Red Kimono</i>, Jan enjoys speaking, giving workshops and, of course, being a new grandma!</p>		<p><b>Eric Reitan</b> is a philosophy professor at OSU and 2008 OWFI Crème de la Crème winner. He has published poems, essays, short stories and an academic book named a Choice Outstanding Academic Title in 2009.</p>



	<p><b>Ally Robertson</b> has been an editor with The Wild Rose Press since they opened their doors in 2006. While she specializes in the Crimson Rose line she edits any genre and welcome speaking with authors about all their projects.</p>		<p><b>Carol Shenold</b> writes fiction and non-fiction, mystery and medical, respectively. She is a registered nurse and an accomplished speaker who paints portraits and teaches Zentangle in her spare time.</p>
	<p>Literary Agent <b>Dr. Uwe Stender</b> is interested in all kinds of commercial fiction (especially YA, MG, Mysteries, and Women's Fiction) and non-fiction projects. His tastes are eclectic, and he may love what you wrote!</p>		<p><b>Christine Taylor-Butler</b> is the award winning author of more than 75 books for children. She has spoken on national panels including the American Library Association, International Literacy Association.</p>
	<p><b>Vivian Zabel</b> has been an editor for over 40 years and an English and writing teacher for almost 30 years and an author of poetry, articles, short stories and novels. She's been the head of 4RV Publishing since 2006.</p>	<p><i>Please visit the OWFI website for more information on the 2016 conference and contest, including entry forms and full, updated information as it becomes available!</i></p>	

## 2016 Pathways to Writing Contest Categories

### Categories 1-30: Unpublished Manuscripts

**1. Poetry, Unrhymed-Short** Any theme, any form. A poem is characterized by intense, compressed language. Every word is carefully chosen. A poem can tell a story, create an image, or evoke an emotion. In all cases, it is an art form and should go beyond plain prose to evoke something deeper. **16 lines and shorter.** (Epigraphs and spaces are not part of the line count.)

**2. Poetry, Unrhymed-Long** Same description as Category 1 above, but longer. **17 lines and longer.** (Epigraphs and spaces are not part of the line count.)

**3. Poetry, Rhymed-Short** Same description as Category 1 above, but written in rhyme. Any rhyming form may be used. **16 lines and shorter.** (Epigraphs and spaces are not part of the line count.)

**4. Poetry, Rhymed-Long** Same description as Category 1 above, but longer and written in rhyme. Any rhyming form may be used. **17 lines and longer.** (Epigraphs and spaces are not part of the line count.)

**5. Essay (Any subject of contemporary interest.)** Essays are personal opinion pieces using narrative form to convince the reader of a certain point of view, or at least to better understand that writer's view. There are formal, fact-driven essays (George Will), and informal, lighter essays (Erma Bombeck). Bear in mind the quality and logic of the argument and how well the author uses facts, reasoning, and literary tools such as analogy to convince. Sometimes an opinion can be presented, a point of view expressed, an argument driven home, in a novel or unusual way: by telling a story or seeming to take the opposite point of view, or a fable with a clear moral at the end. Limit 2000 words.

**6. Technical and/or How-To Article (Any subject.)** This category is made up of two different genres that both aim to educate readers in different ways. Each style presents a problem, describes why it matters, then provides the solution—and sometimes offers a call to action.

**Technical Articles** generally are longer, and cover a narrow but serious subject in great depth and rely on more than one

expert (often including the author) to provide information that educates and informs a specific target audience. While the article may be scientific, it should also be readable and easy to understand and absorb. The reader should come away with useful information. **How-To Articles** often are shorter info-tainment (1500 words may be too long!) lighter fare that may rely on the expertise of the author alone. These articles not only educate and inform, they also provide specific and detailed steps for the reader to accomplish the stated goal (how to bake cookies, make a craft, prepare a devotional, write a novel). A central theme follows through to the end. *Help the judge by noting "technical" or "how-to" on your mss.* Not more than 3000 words.

**7. Feature Article: Nonfiction (Any subject.)** These are the articles listed prominently in a publication (magazine, newspaper, online, etc.) covering a subject of great interest to that venue's target audience. The article must clearly have a reason to exist and not simply serve as a vehicle for advertising. Nor

should it be a vehicle for presenting the author's opinion about a particular topic (For opinion pieces, see the "how-to" or "inspirational" or "essay" category descriptions). More than just the facts, a feature article uses a great hook, expert quotes, and a bang-up conclusion to convey its topic. The author's style or "voice" gives the piece life. Not more than 2500 words.

**8. Blog: Nonfiction** personal reflections, comments, opinion, or even reporting, posted to a website. Entries can be published or unpublished, however, all active links must be removed. **NOTE: the category will be treated as unpublished.** Submit one (1) blog of 1,100 words or less.

**9. Inspirational Article** Should concern a *personal* experience or struggle, which provides inspiration or hope to others. A profile or personal story should touch the reader in some way and/or impart a valuable message and/or educate the reader in some way. Not necessarily religious in nature, the piece should strive to *inspire and motivate* the reader. It may be a vehicle for presenting the author's opinion about a particular topic that has personally affected him or her, and may also include a call to action. The author's style or "voice" gives the piece life. Limit 3000 words.

**10. Memoir/Nostalgia: Short Stories** Memoir is first-person, narrative nonfiction that focuses on one specific aspect of the writer's life or experience. Nostalgia focuses on down-home occurrences reflecting the past; these pieces evoke a fond remembrance of a time gone by, or memories of childhood. Limit 4000 words.

**11. Flash Fiction** An extremely short but complete work of fiction. As with longer stories, a flash fiction story must contain the four elements of fiction: setting (which is usually implied rather than fully described), one or more characters, a conflict, and a resolution. Because of the length limitations, these stories often make use of suggestion and innuendo. This is fiction in its barest, most essential form; every word must move the story forward. Stories submitted in this

category should be targeted to an adult audience. Limit: 500 words.

**12. Short-Short Story (Adult): Fiction** A short-short story is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel. They often revolve around a single theme, one climactic event developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve, and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by story's end. Limit: 2000 words.

**13. Juvenile Short Story: Fiction** A Juvenile short story is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel with a subject matter aimed at children. They often revolve around a single theme, one climactic event developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve, and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by story's end. For readers ages 7-9. Limit: 600 words maximum. For readers 8-12, 1000 words maximum. **Must put age range with word count on page one of manuscript.**

**14. Young Adult Short Story: Fiction** A YA short story (subject matter aimed at readers 12-18) is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel. They often revolve around a single theme, one climactic event developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem

that the character must struggle to solve, and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by story's end. Limit **2000** words.

**15. Short Story (Adult): Fiction** A short story is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel. They often revolve around a single theme, one climactic event developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve, and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by story's end. 2000 to 4000 words.

**16. Sci-Fi/Fantasy Short Story: Fiction — Science Fiction** A novel in which futuristic technology or otherwise altered scientific principles **contribute** in a significant way to the adventures. Often the novel assumes a set of rules or principles or facts and then traces their logical consequences; **Fantasy**, A novel in which magical, otherworldly, or supernatural elements are a central part of the plot or setting. Many fantasies take place on imaginary worlds. Characters may be something other than human or may possess magical powers. A **Sci-Fi/Fantasy** short story (genres limited to Sci-Fi and Fantasy) is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel. They often revolve around a single theme, one climactic event developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve, and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by story's end. **Help the judge by noting "sci-fi" or "fantasy" on your mss.** Limit 5000 words.

**17. Horror Short Story: Fiction** A Horror short story (subject matter aimed at scaring the reader) is a brief piece of fiction pointed and more economically detailed as to character, situation, and plot than a novel. They often revolve around a single theme, one climactic event developing a single character in depth. Narrower than a novel, a short story contains these basic elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, climax, dialogue, protagonist, and antagonist. All short stories should present the major character with an important problem that the character must struggle to solve, and engage the reader in caring about whether the character achieves that goal by story's end. Limit 5000 words.

**18. Prose Humor: Fiction or Nonfiction** Prose humor is exactly that: a piece of writing meant to evoke humor. Everyday experiences can resonate with the reader, or common interest stories when written in a clever and entertaining voice bring forth a smile. The humor piece should also meet the criteria of its form: column, short story, article/feature or essay. Manuscripts submitted in this category should be targeted toward an adult audience. Limit 2000 words.

**19. Play, Film, or TV Script** One, two, or three acts. As in all categories, must be unaccepted at the time of submission, and never optioned or produced at the time of submission. **Help the judge by noting, "play" or "film" or "TV script" on your mss.** Format must follow accepted industry standards. Submit complete synopsis and opening scene(s). Complete submission limited to 30 pages (or less).

**20. Picture Book: Fiction or nonfiction (for ages 1-8)** Picture books are large art-filled books for children, which are primarily targeted to ages 0-8, but are also appealing to older kids and even adults. They are designed to bring information and/or entertainment to life for young eyes, and the text must be minimal. These books have a beginning, middle, and end. Picture books do not necessarily feature a character, but when they do, the protagonist must solve his or her own problem and the problem should be something significant. Often a picture book portrays

a concept such as numbers, letters, weather, colors, etc. Picture books may also evoke a mood, such as a bedtime story. These books should be engaging and present the topic in a fresh, child-like way. (Show, don't tell). Limit 750 words.

**21. Middle Grade Book: Fiction or nonfiction (for ages 8-12)** Same as Category 10, yet written for younger age children. For fiction, think *Hank the Cow Dog*. Submit first chapters, complete synopsis or outline, prologue if any and/or nonfiction proposal (per industry standard). Submission limited to 20 pages (or less).

**22. Young Adult Novel: Fiction or nonfiction for ages 12 and older** This category has the same rules as all books: for novels, write compelling stories with beginnings, middles, and ends. For nonfiction, provide accessible and interesting content that informs, inspires and/or educates. For **novels**, think *Harry Potter*; the main character should have an important problem he/she struggles to solve. The story should engage the reader in caring whether the character achieves that goal by story's end. These often deal with the tribulations of growing up. **Nonfiction** should focus on providing information that educates and informs the reader. Review the various novel and nonfiction book categories for further descriptions. **Help the judge by noting "novel" or "nonfiction" on your mss.** Submit first chapters and prologue, if any, with complete synopsis or outline, and/or nonfiction proposal (per industry standard). Submission limited to 20 pages (or less).

**23. New Adult Novel: Fiction or nonfiction** New Adult (NA) fiction bridges the gap between Young Adult (YA) and traditional fiction. Protagonists are generally between the ages of 18 - 25 and they face struggles unique to their age group. Leaving parents, going to college, financial independence, first jobs and serious relationships are popular themes in NA works. Much of the popular NA work is in contemporary romance, but it can be found in all genres, including speculative and historical fictions. Submit first chapters and prologue, if any, with complete

synopsis. Complete submission limited to 25 pages (or less).

**24. Mainstream Novel: Fiction** A successful mainstream novel tackles subjects of universal appeal, driven by characters and plots that find acceptance in the "mainstream" of readers. This category is large and diverse. Think Jodi Picoult, John Grisham, Harlan Coben, etc. Genre novels such as science fiction, mystery/suspense, romance, and historical should be entered in the appropriate categories. Submit first consecutive chapters including prologue, if any, and synopsis. Complete submission limited to 25 pages (or less).

**25. Romance Novel: Fiction** The romance novel follows strong, vivid characters on their journey of discovery and emotional conflict to a shared and satisfying conclusion. No plot point, setting, or event takes precedence over the one central theme: the relationship between the two main characters. The end must leave the reader believing the protagonists' love will endure the rest of their lives. This category includes **all** forms of romance including **historical romance**. Submit first consecutive chapters including prologue, if any, and synopsis. Complete submission limited to 25 pages (or less).

**26. Historical Novel: Fiction** Historical encompasses novels set anytime in the recent or distant past such as ancient Greece, the Middle Ages, or World War II. These novels are time capsules of an era and/or culture—the setting serves as a character itself. Submit first consecutive chapters including prologue, if any, and synopsis. Complete submission limited to 25 pages (or less).

**27. Mystery/Suspense Novel: Fiction** This category is made up of two broad categories. **Mystery Novels** are all about 'whodunit.' These books have a strong hook/murder and a cast of suspicious and compelling characters, and readers compete to solve the puzzle before the author reveals the answer. Whether told in first person or third, mystery novels showcase the main character as he/she follows a maze of clues and incidents leading to the Big Reveal. Detective and police procedural, espionage/spies,



amateur sleuth, series or stand-alones, a winning mystery novel is a tightly-woven question from beginning to end.

**Suspense Novels** and related **Thrillers** also require a strong hook that often includes a murder/death involving a strong main character and compelling cast. But unlike mysteries, suspense/thrillers more often focus on 'how-dunit.' The antagonist may be an individual, organization (government), or thing (virus) known to readers from the beginning but often hidden from the protagonist. Suspense novels and thrillers may be first person but more often third person, and often employ more than one viewpoint character. The main character may be the good guy or the bad guy. Whether a medical, psychological, techno, legal, or other sub-genre, the winning suspense novel is action-driven from beginning to end.

**Help the judge by noting "mystery" or "suspense/thriller" on your mss.** Submit first consecutive chapters including prologue, if any, and synopsis. Complete submission limited to 25 pages (or less).

**28. Sci-Fi/Fantasy Novel: Fiction** This category is made up of two totally different genres: **Science Fiction**, A novel in which futuristic technology or otherwise altered scientific principles **contribute** in a significant way to the adventures. Often the novel assumes a set of rules or principles or facts and then traces their logical consequences; **Fantasy**, A novel in which magical, otherworldly, or supernatural elements

are a central part of the plot or setting. Many fantasies take place on imaginary worlds. Characters may be something other than human or may possess magical powers. Submit first consecutive chapters including prologue, if any, and synopsis. Complete submission limited to 25 pages (or less).

**29. Horror Novel** Fiction intended to scare, unsettle or horrify the reader. Historically, the cause of the "horror" experience has been the intrusion of an evil, or occasionally misunderstood, supernatural element into everyday human experience. Any fiction with a morbid, gruesome, surreal, exceptionally suspenseful or frightening theme has come to be called "horror." Submit first consecutive chapters including prologue, if any, and synopsis. Complete submission limited to 25 pages (or less).

**30. Nonfiction Book: (Any nonfiction book)** This category is made up of an enormous range of divergent topics, which all seek to educate, inform, and/or entertain and sometimes inspire.

**Narrative Nonfiction** follows the form and style of various fiction genres (think *The Perfect Storm* and *First, Do No Harm*). Depending on style, biographies and autobiographies or family histories may fall under the narrative nonfiction umbrella, which basically consists of any "true" subject told in a narrative form. The author often has a personal stake or shared experience in the story. This form requires strong viewpoint character(s), story problems and satisfying

resolutions. Length of complete work parallels similar works of fiction. **Memoir** is first-person, narrative nonfiction that focuses on one specific aspect of the writer's life or experience. **Nostalgia** focuses on down-home occurrences reflecting the past; these pieces evoke a fond remembrance of a time gone by, or memories of childhood. **General Nonfiction** more commonly presents technical, self-help, how-to information, inspirational works, or otherwise fact-based material derived from an author's own expertise, author research, and outside expert sources. Style varies widely but in all cases content must be presented in a pleasing and accessible format. Chapters typically are broken up with sidebars, bulleted lists, photos/illustrations, tables and other value-added materials and may include direct quotes, footnotes, etc. Length of finished work varies widely, from short (under 20,000 words) illustrated gift books to encyclopedia-length reference books over 150,000 words. **Help the judge by noting "narrative" or "general" on your mss.** For **Narrative Nonfiction** submit *first consecutive chapters* (and prologue, if any) with full synopsis. For **General Nonfiction** submit **any representative chapters**, and include a chapter outline **OR** book proposal per industry standard (overview, market analysis/competition, table of contents, etc). Submission limited to 30 pages (or less).

## Categories 31-34: Published

### Books (Trophy Awards)

*Must have a copyright date of 2015. E-books, self-published books, and traditionally published books of any length are eligible.*

**31. Best Juvenile Book Award** — Published book of fiction or nonfiction for readers ages 1-18.

**32. Best Nonfiction Book Award** — Published nonfiction book.

**33. Best Book of Poetry Award** — Published book of poetry (chapbook or full-length collection).

**34. Best Book of Fiction Award** — Published book of fiction (novel or short story collection).

### Crème-de-la-Crème Award

A "best of contest" award will be chosen from among the first-place manuscripts in all 29 unpublished categories. The winner receives a trophy and an additional cash award.

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ADDRESS