



Sudden Fiction (Continued): 60 New Short-Short Stories

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Remember *Sudden Fiction International*—that bounty of short-short stories from all over the world? Literary folks loved them. Students carried the book around with them. And people on the run found the length of each story (no more than 2000 words) perfect respites from their busy lives.

Responding to America's love affair with the short-short, editors Shapard and Thomas consulted nearly two-hundred magazines and chose the sixty stories, written in English or translated, that they considered best. Ranging across countries and cultures, the selection includes a number of new stories from the Pacific Rim.

Well-known writers—William Maxwell, Margaret Atwood, Don DeLillo, Mark Richard—join lesser-known writers—Molly Giles, Andrew Lam, Judy Troy—who will be (or should be) better known. Each story revels in its own element of surprise; each, whether traditional or experimental, proves that a tale told quickly offers pleasure long past its telling. Students and lovers of literature take note: this is serious writing that's fun to read.

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Author : Robert Shapard (Editor)

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Jessica says

A lot of mediocre writing, but some pieces really shone, including:

Denis Johnson's "Out on Bail"

Molly Giles's "The Writers' Model"

Margaret Broucek's "Alvin Jones's Ignorant Wife"

Charles Baxter's "Scheherazade"

Kenneth Bernard's "Sister Francetta and The Pig Baby"

Bret Lott's "I Owned Vermont"

Robert Olen Butler's "Relic"

Lynn Grossman's "Cartography"

Daniel Lyons's "The Birthday Cake"

Catherine Alpert's "That Changes Everything"

Richard Plant's "Flatland"

crazy-book-lady says

I picked this up after reading its predecessor, Sudden Fiction International (which I loved). Right from the beginning, the stories in SFC didn't grab me as much, but it is still an okay collection of short fiction.

Denis says

I wasn't too excited by this book's prequel, Sudden Fiction, and was pleasantly surprised with the anthology, New Sudden Fiction, and for me this one rates somewhere in between, but closer to the former. There were several stories that excited, or evoked something in this reader, but far too many didn't. But still, Sudden Fiction is worth the read if this genre is of interest.

Jean says

Great stories, alternating with not so great stories. But opens your mind to other ways of telling a story. Also, good to have in the car when you are waiting for the kids. Gives you something interesting to think about!

Eric Hinkle says

3.5

A lot of great stories, a lot of interesting stories, and some that I was honestly grateful to finish, despite being

under 1000 words in length apiece. There's certainly a lot of different kinds of writing, something for everyone, including some great stories by authors who seem to be forgotten or short-lived (at least as far as Goodreads has documented their work).

I haven't read the other collections in the series, except for Flash Fiction, which is an excellent collection of even *shorter* stories: 750 words, I think. I'd recommend that one over this.

Sean says

I've had this book on the shelf for a tad over 20 years and finally got around to reading it. I shouldn't have waited so long. As the title indicates, "Sudden Fiction" is a collection of 60 different short stories. The fact that they all fit into just under 300 pages is due to the fact that these are "short shorts". Each of the stories is just a few pages long, the authors delivering their emotion, image or little bit of humor in powerful little packages.

There isn't a bad story in the bunch, though a handful are perhaps a bit dense and one or two a little bit disturbing. For the most part, though, the stories are delightful and rewarding, whether funny, beautiful or poignant.

Havovi says

I read this about 10 years ago. And never quite got over this genre. Perhaps it says something about my limited attention span or something, but I found most of these stories outstanding- I loved how so much was said in so few words. Of course, this was also the time when I couldn't get over the Imagists...when two line poems and haiku were the best thing after pink floyd :)

But this remains a book I strongly recommend

Sarah Gioia says

The last story in this book is great-especially for anyone who has ever read for a living. Otherwise, a handful of good ones, many not very good at all.

Gina says

I read the book. I liked it.

Joshua Rigsby says

A decent flash fiction anthology. As with any book with this many authors I liked some, tolerated some, and

abhorred others. The stories run the gamut from experimental to sentimental, literary to humorous. I think I'll keep it around and pick a story out at random from time to time.

[Http://joshuarigsby.com](http://joshuarigsby.com)

M says

A collection of stories all under 1000 words, this arrangement hits highs and lows. Engaging stories include "The Sundress", about a couple who move into empty homes and spruce them up before the owners return, "I Own Vermont," where a couple's fight leads to a man claiming the state of Vermont as his own, and "Jacob's Chicken" - where a young boy's odd drawing becomes a real animal. Some of the translated stories do not hold up as well, while others tend to be forgettable.

Hannah Jane says

A lot of so-so writing. I was thrilled with the first piece; it's almost impossible to go wrong with Margaret Atwood, but that thrill slowly dissipated until I read Traci L. Gourdine's "Graceful Exits." That piece was pretty darn remarkable. After that the book went back to being so-so.

Jenny says

This is my bathroom reader right now. For anyone who knows me well, I am already on page 98. :-)

I've finally finish this delightful book. Short stories are great to read when you are craving a conclusion.

I really enjoyed the following stories:

The Writer's Model, by Molly Giles

We Meet at Last, by David Leavitt

I Owned Vermont, by Bret Lott.

The Visitation, by Fernando Sorrentino

The Birthday Cake, by Daniel Lyons

Flatland, by Richard Plant

Arnie's Test Day, by Barry Peters

The Fish, by Steve Adams

Giving it Away, by Shelley Hunt

The Cat Was Dead, By Glen Warden.

Frostajax says

Brilliant. If you want to read some great modern short-short stories, go here (after reading the first volume, if possible).

While a few of these are on the lackluster side, the truly great ones make up for them. And there are no real failures in the lot.

I can't even begin to pick favorites..."My Life as a Bat?" "The Liberation of Rome?" "On the Rope?" "I Owned Vermont?" "Blue Hair?" "We Bad?" "A Bar in Brooklyn?" "Crossing to Abbassiya?" There's a kind of genius in each of these.

But don't overlook the final story, "The Cat Was Dead," a piece that only the long-suffering veteran of many, many writing workshops can fully appreciate.

Jessica Heck says

I use this book in my creative writing class. Short stories just long enough to go with a writing lesson to demonstrate a technique. I have to be choosy about which stories I use since some of them are a bit mature for high school students. But overall, a good example of what a good writer can do in a few well-chosen words.
