

“The flash novel is a political statement, a revolutionary act in the face of publishing companies disconnected from art.”

--Nancy Stohlman from “The Flash Manifesto”

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FF>> PRESS WANTS TO PUBLISH YOUR NOVEL!

Re-envision your mild-mannered novella or novel as a sleek flash novel! Flash novels retain the basic elements of novels, but are under 30,000 words, the compressed literature form of the future.

SUBMIT YOUR 20,000-30,000 WORD NOVEL
TO US BY OCTOBER 31, 2009.

- Ⓢ Winner receives publication with a standard contract, royalties, and a \$200 cash prize!
- Ⓢ \$20 reading fee, which also pays for your copy of the winning novel.
- Ⓢ Judging by Nancy Stohlman, author of the flash novel *Searching for Suzi*

🔊 See complete rules and details at fastforwardpress.org

WHAT IS A FLASH NOVEL?

Flash Manifesto

by Nancy Stohlman

A few years ago the National Endowment of the Arts put out a startling statistic: only 8% of the American adult population reads novels. For those of us who read, and especially those who write, this has become almost an unmentionable. We bemoan our un-intelligent citizens, our lousy schools, our television and video games, our 60-hour-work weeks, the merging of publishing houses, and the fact that it is harder and harder to sell a novel. We blame our sad, apathetic, non-reading selves. Publishing industries can't sell books to a population that doesn't read. Right?

Wrong. The decline of reading has less to do with our own apathy and more to do with a publishing industry committed only to the financial bottom line. More people than ever are writing books now, so why are bookstores like Barnes and Noble (conveniently owned by the big publishing houses) nearly devoid of innovative literature. The obvious problem is that an industry with very little interest in art has created a fast food product disguised as literature. It's not that revolutionary literature is not being written—just look at the explosion of the creative writing programs around the country, not to mention that twice as many novels are self-published each year than are published by the industry. No,

after a long, great tradition of literature, it is the publishing houses that have failed *us*. Art is not compatible with publishing monopolies.

Sadly, or perhaps not so sadly, the first thing we must do as artists is unplug from this machine that is killing the very thing that we love. We must admit that the New York Best Sellers List, Oprah's Book Club, literary agents, and glamorous book tours are the seductive promises of a sick system, a product of a money making machine not interested in art, or innovation.

If we unplug from the publishing industry and attempt to regain the standards we have willingly swallowed to feed our dreams of high-level success, where does that leave us?

Flash Novels

The flash novel is a political statement, a revolutionary act in the face of publishing companies disconnected to art. The publishing industry hates short novels, gives them degrading names like novellas and refuses to publish them (except perhaps in a collection). Why? Because you cannot charge \$20 for a slim novel. But flash novels are more affordable to *readers*, easy to carry in purses and briefcases, and, most importantly, less daunting to read (the average flash novel is 75-150 pages), delivering real literature in a smaller space.

Flash novels are also on the cusp of fashion, recognizing that the attention spans and daily lives of modern readers have changed over the last hundred years. If literature is going to survive it has to evolve, repackage itself, be expressed in a new and vital way. If there is to be a literary renaissance (which will happen), it will be a backlash against superficial art dictated by bottom line politics. It will be an artistic *coup de tat*, a

reclaiming of art from those only interested in money. And it will most definitely be controversial—remember that every great movement in art from the from the Romantics to the Impressionists, to the Modernists, to the Beats, to the Post Modernists were all once considered controversial. When the world changes, art must change.

If literature is going to survive, it will have to do it on its own terms. We cannot save art by working within the commercial publishing industry. We must allow art to do what art does. Flash novels are one important way that art is evolving within its own parameters, remembering and honoring that a true work of art should take up as much space as it *needs* to take. A work of art will tell its creator when *it* is finished, regardless of word counts or industry standards.

To free all art from the industries that control them is as vital as freeing spirituality from political institutions. Let the literary renaissance begin.

Call for submissions and complete rules and regulations:

FF>> Press is currently accepting flash novels for our first flash novel contest. Flash novels are compressed versions of traditional literary fiction from traditional to experimental. Our sole requirement for submissions is that they be between 20,000-30,000 words. Read Nancy Stohlman's Flash Manifesto for more details about how we envision the future of the flash novel. Flash novels have often been marketed as novellas or long short stories. Just a few examples that we would call flash novels: *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway, *Brokeback Mountain* by E. Annie Proulx, *The Pink Institution* by Selah Saterstrom, *The Lover* by Marguerite Duras, *The Subterraneans* by Jack Kerouac, *The Invention of Morel* by Adolfo Bioy Casares are just a few contemporary examples.

Send your previously unpublished, error-free flash novel to editorff@gmail.com. Manuscripts should be 12-point font double-spaced in Times New Roman or Courier and attached as a Word (.doc) or RTF (.txt) file. Please include your name, telephone number, email address, and word count on the first page only. On subsequent pages, please include the title of the book and page numbers in upper right hand corner. All submissions must include a \$20 reading fee, submitted via Paypal.

Submissions will be accepted until 11:59 PM on October 31, Halloween, 2009. We will contact everyone who has submitted by December 1, 2009. Final judging will be done by Nancy Stohlman. The winning writer will receive a \$200 cash prize and a standard contract for publication, including 15% royalties. FF>> Press will assume First North American rights. After the first press run, rights will revert to the author. If we choose to do a second printing, we will re-negotiate a contract with the writer. If we do not receive a manuscript that lives up to our expectations for publication, we reserve the right to re-open the contest.

Our first two collections of flash literature, *Fast Forward: A Collection of Flash Fiction - Volumes One and Two*, have been underground successes. *Volume One* was nominated for the Colorado Book Award, and *Volume Two*, hot off the press, published 62 stories from writers around the world. We are currently accepting submissions for *Volume Three*. See website for details.

FF>> Press is an independent press based in Denver and dedicated to publishing compressed literature in all its forms.

Nancy Stohlman Bio (feel free to fix this up)

Nancy Stohlman's flash novel, *Searching For Suzi*, is forthcoming from Monkey Puzzle Press in Fall 2009. She is also the co-author of *Live From Palestine* (South End Press, 2003), founder of "To Get the Words Right" manuscript editing and critique service, and co-founder of Fast Forward Press. "Flash novel" was a term first coined in her MFA thesis for the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa University.