

What We Are Looking For

GENERAL

This is to give you some idea of what those who are evaluating anthology submissions are going to be looking for. These are guidelines only, and they are certainly not exhaustive. Nor is this a scientific process. There is certain to be an element of subjectivity when evaluating anyone's writing. Nevertheless, we hope you find this helpful.

Plot

This is about the actual story. Note that this usually applies to non-fiction as well as fiction:

- Is the story interesting/worth telling?
- Is it told well: clearly, concisely, with good pace and variation of pace?
- Does it take the reader on a journey: a clear story arc, with highs and lows?
- Are there elements of surprise?
- Does the story involve the reader emotionally?
- Are the characters well developed within the constraints of the format. (Note that this may or may not apply to non-fiction.)

Structure

This is about how the story is told, and concerns what might be called the 'movements' of the story (as in a symphony):

- Is there a clear beginning, middle and end? (Those these may not actually *be* at the beginning, middle and end!)
- Is there a sense of movement?
- Does the writer hold things back to create tension and suspense, and then reveal?
- Are there interesting temporal elements, e.g.: Does it start in the middle or at the end? Does it jump back and forth through time?

More technically:

Is there a good and appropriate use of

- Paragraphs?
- Dialogue?
- Tense?

Style

Does the writer

- use language well?
- demonstrate good and varied word choice?
- construct sentences well? (This not just about correct grammar.)
- vary the pace?
- break the 'rules' creatively?
- use poetic devices such as imagery, alliteration and assonance (well)?

Grammar

This concerns the bricks and mortar of the writing.

- Is the spelling good?
- Are sentences grammatically correct? If not, does the 'rule'-breaking seem intentional and is it effective?
- Are the correct words used?
- Are there many typos?

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I repeat that these are guidelines only and are not intended to be exhaustive. There will be overlap between the above broad categories.