

Launch of a New Short Story Journal

Some of you may know me as the author of *Sirat*, *Engineering Paradise* and a couple of short story collections based on the Rainbow Man character, but more likely as the Prose Editor of Gold Dust Magazine since its inception in 2004.

For almost all of those years I have thoroughly enjoyed filling this role, but I feel that for me the time has now come to move on.

The next project I want to undertake is the launch of a new short story journal in paperback book format. It seems to me (and of course I could be wrong) that no matter how good you are as a writer of short stories there are very few outlets where you can hope to see your work in print, and, perhaps equally important, receive some kind of payment for it. When people ask me how to do this I usually refer them to competitions like the Bridport or the BBC's National Short Story Award or the Fish in Ireland, but let's face it, the chances of getting placed in something like that are pretty slim.

What I am hoping to set up is a regular (or irregular) short story journal, published through KDP (Kindle Direct Publishing) or a similar self-publishing company, with the sales income shared equally between all the contributors. I don't delude myself that the sales will be very great initially, but there's something a bit special about even a small amount of money earned as royalties, especially if it's the first time it's happened for you, and also about having your story in a professionally edited and produced book alongside other high quality work.

This will not be another scam to take money from people who want to see their work in print. I will at no point ask for any money whatsoever from people submitting to the new journal. All the movement of money will be in the opposite direction, from the journal to the contributors, and the amount will depend on how much has come in from sales, shared equally between all the contributors. Acceptance by the journal will also be far from automatic – I shall apply the same editorial standards that I did as Gold Dust Prose Editor.

I'm going to call the publication "Personal Bests" and that is exactly what it shall contain. As of now, for the first issue, I am asking for you to send me what you consider your very best short story (just one to begin with please), regardless of whether or not it has been published before, and (within reason) regardless of length. You must of course own the copyright and print publication rights and must not have signed these away to anybody else. Obviously there are a lot of details to be settled, but I would buy such a collection, even if I didn't have a story in it, and I hope other people will want to as well. If they don't, since there are no costs involved in publishing in this way, what will we have lost?

I would like to have the first issue available for sale by November, since that is the absolute best time of year for book sales of any kind. It will be an attractive looking paperback book, properly proof read and edited, and the standard of the stories will be as high as you and I can make them. If I include one of my own stories that will entitle me to an equal share in the royalties, if I don't I will have no such entitlement. The finances of the project will be open and transparent. When we see how well Issue 1 does we can decide how long to wait before bringing out Issue 2, and review the project generally.

What am I asking you to do?

1. Decide what your best short story is, whether already published or not. It must be one for which you still own the necessary rights.
2. Send the story in its publication-ready form to me at: <mailto:sirat@davidgardiner.net> Any Microsoft Word format would be best but so long as I can read the format I will be happy.
3. Include a short bio (around 150 words) and a short introduction to the story (another 150 words) if you wish.
4. Include a 'mugshot' for the bio section which can be any size (large file is best) in any image format, bearing in mind that it will be cropped and formatted to passport size black-and-white for printing.
5. Include the email address that is linked to your PayPal account for payment of royalties.
6. Include in your email the words: "I am the writer of [title of story] and the owner of all the relevant publication rights and hereby grant to the Editor of *Personal Bests Journal* the right to publish the work on one occasion in printed form. No other rights are granted or implied and the copyright remains my property."

That's all there is to it. I look forward to reading your work.

Best regards,

David Gardiner
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