



## Flash Fiction Exemplars From the Write the World Archives

As inspiration for this year's competition, we wanted to celebrate some noteworthy pieces in this genre—all coming in under 100 words and all written by wtw members! As you immerse yourself in these tiny tales, notice how much bigger the story is than what's on the page. Consider how the writer uses the power of suggestion to create a sense of character and plot, how language evokes mood, and how the writer uses the viewfinder to bring what's most important into focus.

### **he escapes from the earth - علم من يحرب - glass\_raindrops**

Yousef was expelled from his mother deformed. Water swelled his head to a cantaloupe, his eyes scrunched under the weight and his emaciated body dangled. His family came from the south, from bleached sky and baked earth. They had no money for surgery so they left him in the dim hospital to die.

At first I was repelled from his metal crib. I held his head gingerly, thin balloon stretched tight. He sucked feebly at the bottle and his weight settled over my heart; two months later he was gone. Yet another neglected child, eyes liquid brown, replaced him.

### **Two Mutts progress**

Wet stained the sidewalk dark as rainclouds; jacket didn't fit right, either. Mama's rosebuds're closed kisses-- whole world's locked up.

Sky's always spittin' when I need to get somewhere. Gotta call from Marmie at two; said she'd be around. Sounded real sweet-like. My girl! I unchained my bike and headed over.

Coming up on my girl's place: her pup's whimpering in the grass. Patched fur all matted,



browns bleedin' into whites. Eyes swollen, ears dripping off 's head. Shakin'.

Door's locked; no answer.

Just us, two mutts, drenched as ducks.

I wrapt him up and biked home.

Some Marmie.

### **Hiroshima**

**jasonstarlight**

The pilot carried the bomb to the target; those were his orders. Below him, empty waters stretched into grass, cities, lives. He listened. They wanted him to do this. He pressed buttons. He pressed all the buttons. Too many of them, always.

The pilot pulled up. He dropped the package.

The papers called it Hiroshima; he called it work. He went home that night. Kissed his wife, hugged his children. Went to bed, lying, dreamless. He'd forgotten how to dream.

So he slept, and wondered if the dead remember their killers.

He didn't think they did.

### **Frogs in the Tub**

**Hadiyyah**

Amir put the suitcase down on the floor.

The apartment was small enough for one person but big enough for two. Sadik leaned against the door, watching his father unpack. It all happened in silence. The moonlight lit the living room and Sadik saw his father's face wrapped in silky shadows. Amir glanced sideways at him and Sadik looked out the window. He couldn't move whenever his father talked to



him, or looked at him. The air around them was paralyzing. Sadik could barely turn his head.

Their eyes met. All at once, he knew Amir had died long ago.

**12:09 AM: Call of the Fawn**  
**AirCatcher**

‘God. I hit it. It just came out of nowhere.’ A call from a hysterical woman.

Experience means nothing - I still despair inside.

It’s just a baby; innocence led it to think the black tongue of tarmac to be safe. The fawn’s legs bend at every angle they shouldn’t. Too weak to move, it stares into my soul with eyes darker than the night around us. Crickets hold their breath, the moon hides.

When I put the barrel of the gun between those huge eyes, neither of us flinch.

I leave the body in the bushes, imagining a mother.

**People Lived Here**  
**Quixotica**

Fire, smoke, screams, and the sky reclaimed the Predator.

(Far away, the pilot squinted at the smoke through fuzzy screens and wondered if there was enough Xanax left to sleep tonight.)

In the crosshairs, the crime was signed in blood on scarred sand, its shattering pain writ in the char of bodies. A watching child sobbed.

After, as life retreated towards normal (sort of—smiles scarcer, graves more abundant, forgiveness less easy, a feeling more somber), he would remember his brothers incinerated before his eyes and ponder, sometimes, a way to strike back.



## **Channeling Loss**

**Ashley Chan**

It became clear to Lucina, having been dead a week, that she was not to be found.

Anchoring herself atop the riverbed, bloated and waterlogged, she went searching for her husband. He was lying on their couch, uncoiled, face obscured by huffs of cigarette smoke, and clouded as it was in the hospital months ago, when he had held their little ashen bundle in his arms. His dry hands which had let slip her living faith cradled now an apathy distilled into Heineken.

Exhausted, she returned to the river, the gravel lodged in her throat burying her own grief.

## **An Institution Called Family**

**vennylewis**

Four people seated in a round table, bound by blood, finally together again. The atmosphere awash with sounds of chatter and clattering of utensils; conversation of the past year crammed into a meal. One talking animatedly about settling into adulthood, all the partners and associates in a new company. Another blabbing away the joy and the pain of slowing businesses nowadays. The head appraising them, with minor interjections about financial issues. The last one just smiled and stared at her rice, yearning for a different bowl of rice, and wondered what went wrong.

## **Praying Type**

**SamanthaPaige**

Julie never considered herself the prayin' type, but she pretended for her mama. Her mama said it was good for the soul. So was chicken soup and Julie never liked that either. Still, religion made her mama happy. It glued their family together when papa left and the money was gone, but there was an abundance of prayers to go around.



Religion never did a thing for Julie, because it didn't blind her from their problems like it did her mama. She loved her mother too much to shatter the illusion; she dealt with their problems alone.

**Soy Fusilada**  
**MariposaHermosa**

And there it was. That inevitable moment.  
It had been seven months since I heard the violent banging on my door and I was forcefully removed from my home. I was only seventeen years old. Since then I've been living in this hell hole with hundreds of other innocent women, all waiting for this exact moment. My name had been read out along with 12 others.  
I was out in the night air. The tears rolling down my face felt cold from the wind's final kiss. I held my breath and waited to die.  
I am fallen.  
Soy Fusilada.

I have tried to make it clear but this is my take on a women's prison post Spanish civil war.  
Soy fusilida—I am executed (by firing squad).

**Aurelia Fell**  
**she's-got-a-story**

I'm not afraid of heights, yet my toes curl around the diving board, unwilling to let me fly into the unknown. I realize, like Aurelia did, all too late, that I am afraid of falling. The smell of sunblock stings my nose, and my throat's drier than the Arizona sidewalk because Billy Morris is behind me on the ladder—and the last kid who didn't dive was a laughingstock for weeks. I can feel the angry oblivion beneath the board. I take a breath, close my eyes, and blindly embrace the air. Aurelia jumped, and Aurelia fell...but I'm flying.

**Moving**  
**AscendingSeraph**



It was rather depressing to see the movers carry his things, neatly packed in boxes, into their waiting truck. He didn't know why his parents rushed this. They could've waited a few days before forcing him out of their lives.

But that's just how it was with them, wasn't it? Always trying to forget that their unruly child existed.

He watched silently as burly men hefted another box from his old suburban home, a sullen look crossing his adolescent face seeing his aging parents, wondering again why they couldn't have waited until after his funeral to move his things

### **Butterflies**

**Gracie Alexandra**

“D’you remember the butterflies, Alex?”

The image of Jamie, bent over the desk, driving metal points through the stiff black bodies had never entirely left Alexander’s memories. The butterflies weren’t dead, when she found them. He’d watched as Jamie trapped them beneath a honey jar, watched as she ended those tiny lives. The wings came away from the bodies so very easily; Jamie had separated them in the silence of concentration. She had laid them out across the tawny cork-board, and Alexander witnessed the beauty of finite, balanced life reduced to a number on a specimen chart.

“Not really.”

### **The Crime**

**paigepodesta**

This roller rink is a sacred place. in its neon lights, she is quiet and wide eyed and scared. she is an atheist praying for forgiveness to the fluorescent doodles on the dirty carpet. her crime is only attending the church of cheap pizza and bruised knees to see a blonde girl from math class. her crime is practicing for two weeks on her driveway and still crashing into the girl she was trying so desperately to impress. her crime is feeling butterflies as their noses brushed. her sacrilege in this holy roller rink is unforgivable.



### **What a Farm Boy Lays Down in a Field (October, 1943)**

**RenMarie02**

The barn's backbone wails when something's wrong.

Lou said that just now, once the beams started creaking. The rafters are grinding. Straw's stirring over floorboards.

It was wailing the time she caught her foot on a grain bag and pitched forward and landed on a nail come loose. It went through her palm like a worm through an apple.

It wailed when Daddy found his dog waterlogged with flies in her belly. When he left the farm last June. And it's wailing now, as the telegram boy passes us, going up to the porch, biting his lip.