

2021 OWL Adult Writing Contest Rules and Categories

Join us for another exciting year of award-winning writing. OWL members may enter as many of the adult categories for a flat fee of only \$15! NON-members may pay \$45 to include membership and contest entry.

Not a member yet? You are most welcome to join and submit your entry fee at the same time by check for \$45 or via the PayPal button.

Gratitude and Appreciation

First things first: We sincerely thank all our contest sponsors. Every category you see is here because a generous person or group donated the prize money. There would be no writing contests without YOU! Sponsors are listed with their categories.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

Best Book of 2020 (fiction and nonfiction) – Deadline is August 1, 2021

Everything else – August 31, 2021

What You Get for Your \$15 Contest Entry Fee:

1. A chance at a cash prize!
2. You may enter as many categories as you like, making it much more affordable than others that charge you per category or include an expensive three-figure conference!
3. You get motivation to WRITE.
4. The categories and themes give you some guidance, so you're not staring clueless at a blank screen.
5. You can use your entries in other contests or submit for publication afterwards.
6. Since we are a regional group and not a national one, your odds of winning something are higher!
7. Winning any prize, even an honorable mention, empowers you to use the brag-worthy accolade of "award-winning author" and a credit to add to your portfolio.

How to pay the contest entry fee:

You may pay online or via check.

Online: Use our handy PayPal button. Please note: There is a \$1 charge to cover the PayPal processing fees.

Snail Mail: Send \$15 if you're a member, or \$45 to include membership and contest fee (\$30 for student membership plus entry) to:

OWL Contests
c/o Russell Gayer
20053 Pug Gayer Road
Fayetteville, AR 72703

Please note: This address is ONLY for the contest/membership fee. Contest entries sent to this address will be disqualified.

Writing Contest RULES

General Guidelines

- No gratuitous or graphic violence or sex. Let's keep it clean.
- Only one entry per category is allowed.
- You may only enter a manuscript in ONE category.
- EVERY piece needs a title, including haiku.
- All entries must abide by the rules, including manuscript and submission expectations. Any deviation, such as a wrong font or font size, lack of a title, or missing author information, will result in disqualification of that piece.
- Physical entries (Best Book/Crawford) must be mailed to the contest coordinator. Contest entries mailed to the treasurer or anyone else in OWL will be disqualified.
- All entries, with the obvious exception of best published book, must be UNPUBLISHED at the time of submission, and be the original work of the writer. (If your entry has appeared in any written form, such as in a blog, website (like Wattpad), or other electronic outlet, it is considered published and ineligible for entry in any OWL contest.)
- Best Fiction and Best Nonfiction Book of 2020 are just that. Any book with a publication date other than 2020 is disqualified.
- Both Best Book categories require an ISBN, or they will be disqualified.
- Submit all entries except Best Fiction Book, Best Nonfiction Book, and/or Crawford Poetry Prize categories via email to OWL "dot" contests "at" gmail "dot" com. See Special Exceptions for those categories that differ.
- Payment of contest entry fee will be verified by the Contest Facilitator. No entry fee, no entry.
- Once published at the opening of the contest period, these rules are fixed and final.

Manuscript Formatting Guidelines

- Improperly formatted manuscripts will be disqualified. You should know your word processor's settings. If you do not understand how to set your margins, change your font to the standard, add a header, or set the line spacing to double, look it up and get it right before submission.
- **TITLE:** For the love of all things writerly, GIVE YOUR PIECE A TITLE!
- **WORD COUNT:** Word limit is just that. The title does not count toward your word count.
- **FILE TYPE:** All files EXCEPT for Best Book (fiction or nonfiction) must be in MS Word (.doc or .docs) format.
- **TITLE LOCATIONS:** The title must appear in 3 places: the filename, the header, AND on the first page of your submission. (Exception: Published Books)
- **STANDARD FORMATTING:** Use standard submission format and rules: Times New Roman, 12-point, double-spaced (except for poetry), and 1" margins.
- **FIRST LINE:** Put the contest ID and word count flush left on the first line. Example: N2 Memoir, 1200 words. Categories with no word count designation, such as haiku, poetry, and first page of a WIP, do not need a word count but still need the proper category designation.
- **HEADER:** Your page should have a header that includes Category ID & story title on the left and page number on the right. EXCEPTIONS: Haiku, Crawford Poetry, and Best first Page. DO NOT include your name.
- **EBOOKS:** Ebook entry for Best Fiction Book and/or Best Nonfiction Book must be attached to an email as either .PDF, .doc, .docx, .mobi or .epub formats. Full author information must be in the body of the email.
- **ATTACHED FILES:** The attached submission file(s) must have NO author identification details, but each MUST have the contest identifier (Like B1) and a TITLE. This means that in the submissions (file or files you attach), nothing identifying the author may appear. The only exceptions are Best Nonfiction and Best Fiction Book, which obviously have the author's name printed in it.

Submitting ELECTRONIC Entries:

1. The **BODY** of your email must have FULL AUTHOR CONTACT Information and SUBMISSION INFORMATION. That means:
 - Author Name
 - Pseudonym, if applicable
 - Mailing Address
 - Email
 - Phone
 - Submission ID, title and word count where applicable

EXAMPLES:

- B1–Best First Page of a Fiction WIP – Title

- N1–Magazine Article – Title, word count

YOUR FILES MUST INCLUDE THE **TITLE IN THE FILENAME**. Please label each **file** as follows: Contest Designation (Like N1) –Title,

EXAMPLE filename: B1 – Best Book Ever Written

2. Suggestion for your sanity’s sake: Put all your contest files into a folder on your computer and write the file names as follows: Contest ID, title. Example: “P1-MountainPoem.”
3. Email digital entries to OWL “dot” Contests “at” gmail “dot” com

Special Exceptions: Crawford Poetry Prize and the two Best Book Categories

- For **Crawford Prize**, send TWO (2) copies of your titled poem and ONE (1) cover page with the title and full author contact information to the contest coordinator.
- For hard copies of your **Best Fiction Book and/or Best Nonfiction Book entries**: Submit ONE (1) copy of your print book published in calendar year 2020 along with a cover page containing all author information **AND THE BOOK TITLE** as detailed below. Do not suggest on your submission sheet that “the book has all the information you need,” because no, it does not. Entry sheets that do not list the book title along with full author information are disqualified.
- DO NOT mail contest entry fee checks to the contest coordinator.
- MAIL your Crawford Poetry Prize &/or Best Book Award Entries to the contest coordinator. We need books by August 1, because the mail has been slow lately. Besides, your book was already published, so you aren’t pushing at the last minute to produce a book that was published last year.

Mail to:

**Ronda Del Boccio
3455 State Highway H
Lampe, MO, 65681**

Once again: SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

Best Book (both): August 1, 2021

Everything Else: August 31, 2021

The Rest of the Fine Print:

- You must be an OWL member to enter the contest. You may pay the \$30 membership dues plus \$15 contest entry fee for a total of \$45 in order to participate. Your membership includes information-packed conferences plus other benefits.
- Neither OWL nor the Contest Coordinator is responsible for misdirected or lost entries. You will receive an email to confirm receipt.

- **DISQUALIFICATION:** Late entries or those breaking any rule are disqualified.
- No manuscripts will be returned, and all will be deleted/destroyed after judging is final. Those entering Best Fiction end/or Best Nonfiction Book Award may have it returned if a mailer AND sufficient postage is sent with the entry. Otherwise, they will be donated.
- Qualified judges will conduct blind judging.
- Judges and sponsors, if OWL members, may not enter the category they judge or sponsor, but may enter other categories.
- Even if we receive three or fewer entries in a category, those will still be judged and awarded prizes.
- First Place winners may not enter that manuscript in any subsequent OWL writing contest.

2021 Adult Writing Contest Categories

NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, prizes are a certificate of achievement plus 1st \$50, 2nd \$30, 3rd \$20. Honorable Mention, if granted, receive a certificate.

S1 Humorous Short Piece

Go Ahead. Make me laugh but do it fast!

Limit 3,000 words

Sponsor: Russell Gayer

S2 Flash Fiction Story - EXACTLY 100 Words

Tell a complete story with a beginning, middle, and end inspired by the photo prompt in precisely 100 words.

Limit: EXACTLY 100 words.

Sponsors: Rochelle Wisoff-Fields and Jan Fields

S3 Inspirational Romance

Write an inspirational romance, set in any time period, that inspires the reader to be a moral fiber in a weather-worn fabric. Story must have the essentials of a romance, including a HEA (Happily Ever After) ending.

Limit: 2,000 words

Sponsor: Diane Yates

S4 “I didn’t see that coming!” O’ Henry Style Story

Write a story that concludes with a “wow I didn’t see that coming” ending.

Limit: 1,500 words.

Sponsor: Bud Hanks

S5 Paranormal Western

Tell a story that is both western and paranormal.

Limit: 1,500 words
Sponsor: Bud Hanks

S6 Western Short Story

Write a Western short story with a beginning, middle, and end. Must be set in America, in the frontier before 1900.

Limit 3000 words
Sponsor: Duke Pennell

S7 "Write the Old Stuff" Historical Fiction

Write a historical tale set before 1970. Historical figures may appear, but this must be a fictional story coming from your own imagination.

Limit 2,000 words.
Sponsor: Nancy Hartney

S8 Jeanie's First Love historical Western in honor of Jeanie Horn.

Write about a first love set in the old west. It can be a romance or the love for a horse, a place, or an atmosphere. Make me feel the emotion.

Limit: 2500 words
Sponsors: Bonnie and Richard Tesh
Prizes: 1st \$25, 2nd \$15, 3rd \$10

N1 Memoir & Creative Nonfiction

In memory of Black & Kiddo. An interesting true story or essay of something you have experienced or witnessed.

LIMIT: 3,000 words.
Sponsor: Brenda Black

N2 Nonfiction Article

Any nonfiction article that is targeted for a specific magazine may be entered. The targeted magazine must be listed on the manuscript. List source for any quotes. This is not an essay category.

Limit: 750 words
Sponsor: Veda Boyd-Jones

N3 Crawford Humorous Anecdote Prize

Write a humorous anecdote of about 1 page.

Limit: 300 words
Anecdote (definition): a short account of a particular incident or event, especially of an interesting or amusing nature.
Sponsor: John "Doc" Crawford
Prizes: 1st \$25, 2nd \$15, 3rd \$10, 3 HMs \$5

P1 Crawford Poetry Prize

The theme is "Courage in Crisis." This might include a portrait of a hero of a crisis. The form will be free verse.

Limit: 36 lines.

Sponsor: John “Doc” Crawford

Prizes: 1st \$100, 2nd \$50, 3rd \$25, 1st HM \$15, 2nd HM \$10, 3rd HM \$5

P2 Haiku

Set a vivid scene

While making me feel something.

In five-seven-five

LIMIT: 17 syllables

Sponsor: Jan Morrill-Vanek

Prizes: 1st \$25, 2nd \$15, 3rd \$10

B1 Best First Page of a Fiction Book in Progress

Share the first page of your WIP (work in progress) and be sure to pull us into your story. You can start near the top of the page. Be sure to give the book title.

LIMIT: 1 page

Sponsors: The Prose Squad: April Brock, Bonnie Tesh, Darrell Lacey, and Margarite Stever

B2 Best Published Fiction Book of 2020

Best fictional book in hardcover, paperback or ebook published during the calendar year of 2020 (book must show a copyright date of 2020 and have an ISBN).

Sponsor: Billie Holladay Skelley

1 prize of \$100

B3 Best Published Nonfiction Book of 2020

Best nonfiction book in hardcover, paperback or ebook published during the calendar year of 2020 (book must show a copyright date of 2020 and have an ISBN).

Sponsor: Veda Boyd-Jones

1 prize of \$100

Questions?

First, read carefully. Everything you need is in here. If you can't find it, email OWL “dot” contests “at” gmail “dot” com.

Get your motor WRITING!