



CREATIVE NONFICTION AWARD



We're looking for factual, true stories that are presented in compelling and engaging ways. There are many ways to present real facts and events besides reports and charts that can lean...well, a bit dry. With dialogue, and description, and other literary elements too often reserved solely for fiction, we can tell gripping stories about real people, and real places, and real events. We're talking accurate information bundled into a riveting tale.

There are many subcategories that fall under the creative nonfiction umbrella: biography, autobiography, literary journalism, travel writing, nature writing, personal essays, interviews, etc. Each of these has the potential for blending careful research with creative story-telling.

TIPS AND INSPIRATION

- By tapping into your own experiences/research and putting pen to paper, you can create engaging, moving pieces that explore real history, whether it's your own personal history, that of another person, or that of a certain place, thing, or event. At the center of the history you're exploring, there must be **facts**. When telling your own story, it's important to remain as true to what you remember as possible. If it's possible, refer to diaries, correspondences, etc. for added authenticity. When telling the history of another person, or place, etc., **research, research, research**.
- **Play with person.** You have wiggle-room here to experiment with your writing style. Consider shifting from first person to third, for example, when writing about your own experiences. Or write in first as you tell someone else's carefully researched story. This can give you and your readers some new perspective.
- **Follow emotion.** In some nonfiction, it's important to avoid emotional qualities, such as in textbooks or news articles. One of the major differences when it comes to creative nonfiction is that writers can and should listen to their emotions and allow their feelings to affect their writing.

WRITING PROMPTS

- Explore a scene or story from your memory by reimagining it from an alternate perspective. Write the event from the point of view of a passing bystander, another person close to the event, a pet, or even an inanimate object.
- The Missing Ingredient: What is one thing most people forget or overlook when making or doing something?
- Recall a moment in which you felt a strong spiritual or unidentifiable energy. Describe the scene in vivid detail, with special attention to the senses. Connect that scene to your relationship with your own religious beliefs or lack thereof.
- Choose a location that you've come/came to know as a teenager. Compare how you interact with this setting now to how you interacted with similar settings when you were a child.
- Choose an event in your life that someone else remembers differently. Describe both memories and debate the differences. Who do you think is right? Why do you think you remember it differently?
- If you could throw five items into the fire, what would they be and why? To be clear, by throwing them in this fire, there would be no trace of them left anywhere, even if it's something on the Internet or a memory. This is a very powerful fire. What would the consequences be?
- Write about experiencing the craziest natural event you've ever seen — tornado, earthquake, tsunami, hurricane. Alternatively, research a particular natural event and write about it from the perspective of someone who may have experienced it.
- Tell the story of the most important person that has shaped your town and its culture (research, research, research). How did the activity of that person influence the way you grew up or live currently?
- Recall a scene in which you chose to remain silent. Whether it was your boss's racist rant, or just an argument not worth having, explore the scene and why you chose not to speak.
- Every once in awhile, someone comes into our lives for a short while and fundamentally changes us. Has this ever happened to you?

Questions? Send us a note: support@storyshares.org

