

Flash Fiction

“I usually compare the novel to a mammal, be it wild as a tiger or tame as a cow; the short story to a bird or a fish; the micro story to an insect (iridescent in the best cases).”

-Luisa Valenzuela

Cuando despertó, el dinosaurio todavía estaba allí.

("When he awoke, the dinosaur was still there.")

-Augusto Monterroso (1921-2003)

Hint fiction: 25 words or fewer

Requires the reader to fill in the gaps—open to multiple interpretations

Progress:

After seventeen days she finally broke down
and called him "Daddy."

- Joe Schreiber

Golden Years:

She: Macular. He: Parkinson's. She pushing, he directing, they get down the ramp, across the grass, through the gate. The wheels roll riverwards.

- Edith Pearlman

The Return

They buried him deep. Again.

- Joe R. Lansdale

Excerpted from Hint Fiction: An Anthology of Stories in 25 Words or Fewer edited by Robert Swartwood. Copyright 2011 by Robert Swartwood. Original contributions copyright by the contributor.

Flash Fiction-1000 words or fewer

Currents

By Hannah Bottomy Voskuil

Gary drank single malt in the night, out on the porch that leaned toward the ocean. His mother, distracted, had shut off the floodlights and he did not protest against the dark.

Before that, his mother, Josey, tucked in her two shivering twelve-year-old granddaughters.

“I want you both to go swimming first thing tomorrow. Can’t have two seals like you afraid of the water.”

Before that, one of the girls held the hand of a wordless Filipino boy. His was the first hand she’d ever held. They were watching the paramedics lift the boy’s dead brother into an ambulance.

At this time, the other girl heaved over a toilet in the cabana.

Before that, the girl who would feel nauseated watched as the drowned boy’s hand slid off the stretcher and bounced along the porch rail. Nobody placed the hand back on the stretcher, and it

bounced and dragged and bounced.

Before that, Gary saw the brown hair sink and resurface as the body bobbed. At first he mistook it for seaweed.

Before that, thirty-five people struggled out of the water at the Coast Guard's command. A lifeguard shouted over Jet Ski motors about the increasing strength of the riptide.

Before that the thirty-five people, including Gary and the two girls, formed a human chain and trolled the waters for the body of a Filipino boy. The boy had gone under twenty minutes earlier and never come back up.

Before that, a lifeguard sprinted up the beach, shouting for volunteers. The two girls, resting lightly on their sandy bodyboards, stood up to help.

Before that, a Filipino boy pulled on the torpid lifeguard's ankle and gestured desperately at the waves. My brother, he said.

Before that, it was a simple summer day.

From *Sudden Flash Youth*, edited by Christine Perkins-Hazuka, Tom Hazuka, and Mark Budman. "Currents" by Hannah Bottomy Voskuil, copyright © 2004 by Hannah Bottomy. All rights reserved.