



Guide to form – Short Story

If I can write in any form, which should I choose? This is the question we are most often asked. There is no ‘better’ or ‘worse’ form but the brief notes below may help you decide.

Short and sweet. The **short story** usually focuses on the simple experiences of a character in two or three episodes. Often the protagonist will go through some significant change of attitude or outlook, perhaps as the result of a minor event, sometimes called an epiphany.

Orwell himself illustrates this perfectly in ‘A Hanging’, about the execution of a man in Burma:

It is curious, but till that moment I had never realized what it means to destroy a healthy, conscious man. When I saw the prisoner step aside to avoid the puddle, I saw the mystery, the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting a life short when it is in full tide. This man was not dying, he was alive just as we were alive. All the organs of his body were working - bowels digesting food, skin renewing itself, nails growing, tissues forming - all toiling away in solemn foolery. His nails would still be growing when he stood on the drop, when he was falling through the air with a tenth of a second to live.

Read an extract from Orwell Youth Prize 2021 Winner, Max Baker’s dystopian short story, ‘The Quiet Revolution’ here:

12th August 2097: Before they knew what was happening, it was too late. Social media had already begun spreading but when COVID (and then the other diseases) swept across the globe, reality went digital. No one saw the Network clot together. Fascinatingly, its rise was neither forceful nor resisted. Empty streets continued to be empty. Soldiers remained self-isolating in their barracks. It was paranoia which held each citizen hostage.

And here’s a quote from Max talking about his writing process:

“George Orwell’s writing was always inspirational to me as it was simultaneously artistic, down-to-earth, and politically profound. His proactive approach to research and writing inspired me to explore the social and cultural trends I’ve observed during the pandemic.”