

## **Creative Writing: The Short Story**

### **Cover Letter Examples**

**Instructor:** David M. Fitzpatrick

**Web site:** [www.fitz42.net/cw](http://www.fitz42.net/cw)

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The following five example cover letters cover a variety of ways to write cover letters.

#### **Example #1 - HORRIBLE**

This letter is way too long. It is an “I love me” letter that gives away the entire story in ridiculous detail and highlighting every single short story ever published anywhere. It then gives way too much personal information and closes with ludicrous claims of the story’s perfection for the publication and the worst way to close a letter: “I look forward to an *affirmative response* from you.” If you ever write a letter this dreadful, you deserve the flat rejection or complete ignoring you get from the editor.

#### **Example #2 -BAD**

This is still horrible, although not as bad as #1. Most of the same problems; too much about the story, too many publication credits, etc. Keep it slim!

#### **Example #3 - OKAY**

This one is okay. Some editors don’t want to be told the genre and a VERY brief description of what the story is; most don’t mind, as they like to classify the stories first (they may have different first readers who read different genres, for instance). A few publication credits are appropriate; it is absolutely okay to brag a little bit about yourself, if for no other reason than because it really is easier to get published once you have been published. A lot of credits look good.

#### **Example #4 - GOOD**

Also a good example, this one is even briefer.

#### **Example #5 – DON’T BLINK, YOU’LL MISS IT**

This is very brief, used only as a basic professional cover letter when an editor doesn’t care about cover letters.

Wednesday, October 21, 2009

David M. Fitzpatrick  
123 Main Street  
Bangor, ME 04401  
(123) 456-7890  
email@emailaddress.com

RE: Short story submission

Dear Mr. Smith:

Enclosed, please find the story “Eating Fried Stones in July” for your consideration. This is a contemporary fantasy about a young boy's foray into a magic he disbelieves. Jimmy Barker is a 10-year-old boy whose aunt is a professed witch; the strange things she seems to be able to make happen certainly seem magical, but Jimmy refuses to believe it—until one day, when his life depends on it, she shows him otherwise. From then on, Jimmy's partnership with magic makes him a different person. This story is about faith and the willingness to open one's mind to possibilities one hadn't considered—or refused to believe in. It resonates with the typical lessons we all learn in life, but with the mystical forces of magic as a backdrop.

I have had over 40 pieces of short fiction published in such magazines as *Brutarian* (2), *American Atheist* (2), *Night to Dawn* (4), *Amazing Journeys* (3), *The First Line* (1), *NFG* (1), *COMBAT* (1), *Aoife's Kiss* (1), and *Blood, Blade & Thruster* (1). I have had stories published in such anthologies as *Unparalleled Journeys 1 & 2*, *Nemonymous 8: Cone Zero*, and the limited-edition hardcover *Bound For Evil: Curious Tales of Books Gone Bad*. By day, I am a staff Special Sections writer for the *Bangor Daily News*, which serves most of Maine; I work with two other writers writing and producing 100 Special Sections each year, many of which appear in other daily newspapers throughout the state.

I teach a weekly writing course at Bangor Adult Education in Bangor, Maine, called “Creative Writing: The Short Story,” in which students work to complete several works of short fiction. I will edit those works, which will appear in an anthology. This course will recur every semester, with a new anthology published following each semester course.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am sure you will enjoy this story, and that it will find a comfortable niche in your magazine. I look forward to an affirmative response from you.

Best regards,

David M. Fitzpatrick

Wednesday, October 21, 2009

David M. Fitzpatrick  
123 Main Street  
Bangor, ME 04401  
(123) 456-7890  
email@emailaddress.com

RE: Short story submission

Dear Mr. Smith:

Enclosed, please find the story "Eating Fried Stones in July" (8,400 words) for your consideration. This is a contemporary fantasy about a young boy's foray into a magic he disbelieves. Jimmy Barker is a 10-year-old boy whose aunt is a professed witch; the strange things she seems to be able to make happen certainly seem magical, but Jimmy refuses to believe it—until one day, when his life depends on it, she shows him otherwise. From then on, Jimmy's partnership with magic makes him a different person.

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Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

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I have had over 40 pieces of short fiction published in such magazines as *Brutarian*, *American Atheist*, *Amazing Journeys*, and *Aoife's Kiss*, and in such anthologies as *Unparalleled Journeys 1 & 2*, *Nemonymous 8: Cone Zero*, and *Bound For Evil*. By day, I am a staff Special Sections writer for the *Bangor Daily News*, which serves most of Maine.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

David M. Fitzpatrick

**EXAMPLE #4**

Wednesday, October 21, 2009

David M. Fitzpatrick  
123 Main Street  
Bangor, ME 04401  
(123) 456-7890  
email@emailaddress.com

RE: Short story submission

Dear Mr. Smith:

Enclosed, please find the story "Eating Fried Stones in July" (contemporary fantasy, 8,400 words).

I have had over 40 pieces of short fiction published in various print magazines and anthologies in the U.S., U.K., and Canada. By day, I am a Special Sections writer for the *Bangor Daily News*, which serves most of Maine.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

David M. Fitzpatrick

**EXAMPLE #5**

Wednesday, October 21, 2009

David M. Fitzpatrick  
123 Main Street  
Bangor, ME 04401  
(123) 456-7890  
email@emailaddress.com

RE: Short story submission

Dear Mr. Smith:

Enclosed is a story for your consideration. Thank you for your time.

Best regards,

David M. Fitzpatrick