

NaFFWriMo—A flash fiction story, every day of November

“Write a short story every week. It’s not possible to write 52 bad short stories in a row.” –Ray Bradbury

I read Ray Bradbury’s advice on writing, and remembered it wrong, but I got the spirit, if not the letter of it, right. I took the wisdom as, write a short story every day. It’s likely I was remembering his advice to read a short story every day.

For three previous years November has meant my participation in the NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) program. This year, I decided to give the same sort of effort, but instead writing short fiction.

I committed to myself to write one flash fiction story each day for the month of November. You might call it, “NaFFWriMo.” Flash stories are as short as a few hundred and up to 1000 words. That means a piece of flash fiction is shorter than the daily average words needed to complete NaNoWriMo, 1,667. Four or eight hundred words is enough for my “NaFFWriMo” effort.

I have now reached 11 days—11 stories, despite a day when I felt horribly sick, and a day when I felt angry and sad and wholly distracted because of the U.S. election.

What have I learned so far?

I expected and it has been true that most of the stories, for which I can only give about 40 good pre-dawn minutes, are rough, raw, and may not pan out. Some have a premise and a start, but don’t arrive somewhere. Some are wooden and uninteresting, even to me. But two or three show great promise, and several others may pan out with more work.

Thirty or 40 minutes is not much time for writing, but with a bit of inspiration, it’s enough for a burst of creative work, and a good raw start.

I had built and banked and continue to tinker with a list of 100 ideas for stories, which I rated on a 0, 1, 2, 3 scale of most to least appealing to me to write, generally based on the degree to which I know what the point of the story would be.

That list has proved useful, but, in fact, the stories still seem most often to just arrive at the tips of my fingers as I sit down to write. That bit of magic that happens is a mystery to me. But I think the act of list building is part

of the juice that goes into it, even if I don't always pluck a theme from the list and set to writing the list.

Is it good for my writing to do this?

Yes! Like NaNoWriMo, the "get it written" pace means you just create, you don't fuss, double back, edit, tinker, slave over structure, etc. This, like NaNoWriMo, prevents my worst habits as a writer from being allowed: researching junkets, restructuring while writing, losing the spark in some side journey in the process.

What will happen to all this work?

I will develop the stories that appeal to me, and work on them along with others I have written prior. I'll find critical eyes to share them with, and I hope to learn how to submit them for publication.

And I will report further here about the effort. The next test is Thanksgiving, which has its own distractions and delights. But the family doesn't get up as early as I do.

Here is the update: "[30 days, 30 flash stories – how it turned out](#)"