

## Merging of the Short-Story Genres

Irum Saeed Abbasi<sup>[a],\*</sup>; Laila Al-Sharqi<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>[a]</sup>California State University, San Jose, California, USA.

<sup>[b]</sup>Department of European Languages and Literature, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

\*Corresponding author.

Received 16 May 2016; accepted 8 July 2016

Published online 26 August 2016

### Abstract

Story writing craft evolved through the centuries before rising as a separate genre. Unity is an essential element of short story through which it exhibits singularity of effect, unity of impression, and the totality of interest. After the success of the short story, writers further shortened their narratives and eventually short fiction arose as a sub-category of short story. Short fiction further differentiated into a sub-category called the “sudden fiction” that referred to all shortened forms of short fiction. Having mastered artistic brevity, writers began writing even more condensed narratives, and the sudden fiction differentiated into two types: the new sudden fiction and the flash fiction. The new sudden fiction was akin to the traditional story comprising of up to 1500 words; whereas, the flash fiction was similar to the Hemingway’s classic *The Very Short Story* consisting of up to 750 words. However, the flash fiction later reconfigured to include all short-short stories comprising of 50-1500 words. This paper briefly overviews the evolution of the short story genre and reviews the delicate merger of the short story with the contemporary short-short story.

**Key words:** Brevity; Short-story; Flash fiction; Matthew; Poe

Abbasi, I. S., & Al-Sharqi, L. (2016). Merging of the Short-Story Genres. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 13(2), 1-6. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/7962>  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/7962>

### 1. MERGING OF THE SHORT-STORY GENRES

Brief stories have been told since the beginning of the world and also since the start of the storytelling craft (Matthews, 1907). The increasing predilection of writers and readers towards shorter condensed narratives gave rise to the short story genre. Matthews (1901) introduced the hyphenated compound word “Short-story” for a brief story that was much shorter than the novel. Short story arbitrates between the lyric and the novel and has close links to the letter, essay, cinema, photography, painting, and visual arts (Patea, 2012). After the short story fared well in the literary circles, writers mastered the art of brevity and offered further condensed narratives in the form of short-short stories. The short-short stories, also called prose poems, are a mix of prose and poetry. The short-short story represents a snapshot of reality that excludes sequential events and causal associations. Like a photograph, the short-short story separates a fragment from the whole and portrays only a moment or a series of moments from the scene. Patea (2012) notes that the fundamental component of the short form is not in the narrative structure, but in the moment of truth and realization. The short story is between 3000-5000 words, and short-short story (flash fiction) is between 50-1500 words (Batchelor, 2012). For the ease of understanding, writers compare the novel to a mammal, short story to a bird, and micro story to an insect (Shapard, 2012). An ideal short story signifies unity and is brief enough to be read completely in one sitting. The short stories and short-short stories are distinct on the basis of six essential narrative elements namely action, character, setting, temporality, inter-textuality, and closure (Nelles, 2012); nevertheless, the underlying common theme in both is the unity of the story.

## 2. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SHORT STORY

Artists offered miniature verbal stories, long before the novel, in the form of a parable, fable, exemplum, and fable (Nelles, 2012). Short story emerged from the medieval tale and owes itself heavily to the medieval literary story (Santos, 2012). Historically, Petronius wrote short-short stories in the ancient Rome, and Marie de France wrote short stories in the medieval times (Shapard, 2012). However, the credit of writing and publishing the first true modern short story goes to Walter Scott for *The Two Drovers*, which was released in 1827 in the *Chronicles of the Canongate* (Boyd, 2006). After Scott's first publication, novel writing dominated Britain, and the short story laid dormant till 1880. After the release of the first modern short story, writers like Balzac in France, Cooper and Hawthorne in the United States, and Pushkin and Turgenev in Russia followed suit. The first true short story was found in France and the United States in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Matthews, 1907). In the United States, the beginning of modern short story can be traced to the publication of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* in 1837. Rohrberger (2011) claims that Hawthorne wrote the first prototypical short story. The genre of the short story was established in the US by the 1840s and within two decades, the genre was rooted in Germany, France, and Russia (Baldwin, 1993). The short story went through various developmental phases before rising as a new genre in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Santos, 2012). Great writers like Flaubert, Maupassant, Chekhov, Poe, and Melville also turned towards writing short stories in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Boyd, 2006). The short stories of Guy de Maupassant are considered masterpieces of art because he depicted a "Greek sense of form, a Latin power of construction, and a French felicity of style" (Matthews, 1901, p.67). A prominent mid-nineteenth-century writer, Edgar Allan Poe, was the first proponent of the right of existence of the short story (Matthews, 1907). In his book, *The Philosophy of Composition* (1846), Poe advanced his short fiction theory. He also discussed the nature of the short story genre when he analyzed Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* in 1842 (Trussler, 2014; Santos, 2012). Following Poe, Herman Melville established the standard of what a short story can achieve. His stories were the earliest exemplars of the short story's strange powers (Boyd, 2006). In the 1880s, following the United States and France, the modern short story emerged and flourished in Britain with the writings of Robert Louis Stevenson, Wells, Bennett, James, and Kipling.

The revolution in the short story genre came through the writings of a Russian physician, Anton Chekhov, who fathered the modern short story and also indirectly fathered the contemporary short-short story (Guimaraes, 2012). In the 1890s, Chekhov transformed short stories by introducing new trends and techniques to short fiction.

Chekhov marked a new precedent by abandoning the manipulated plots that included a beginning-middle-and-end, by rejecting to judge his story characters, and also by neglecting to add climax or an apparent resolution to his stories. Although, short story genre was developing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Brander Matthews claims to be the first person to identify it as a genre distinct from the novel; he also takes credit for naming it "Short-story" (Guimaraes, 2009; Shapard & Thomas, 1986). Matthews (1901) notes that "Short-story in reality is a genre, a separate kind, a genus by itself" (p.77). Matthews differentiated between a true short story and a more carelessly composed brief tale in *The Philosophy of the Short-Story* as "a true Short-Story is something other and something more than a mere story which is short" (p.15). In 1937, a renowned Anglo-Irish novelist and a short story writer, Elizabeth Bowen claimed the short story to be a child of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Patea, 2012).

The brief works of fiction were stigmatized as early as Aristotle when he proposed that "size does matter" (Nelles, 2012). Matthews (1901) argued that "Short-story seeks one set of effects in its own way and the novel seeks a wholly distinct set of effects in a wholly distinct way" (p.73) and called it "a high and difficult department of fiction" (p.25). However, critics of the short story genre like Frank O'Connor pointed towards the destructive potential of the short story and defined it as the "lonely voice" of "outlawed figures wandering about the fringes of society" (Patea, 2012, p.7). Marie Louise Pratt also argues that short story only blossomed in areas where new groups sought to assert their voice in developing national literature or during the decolonization process. She, therefore, connected short story with locality, gender specificity, and political criticism. Other critics of short story also claimed that short story flourished in societies with no fixed cultural structure, like in colonial societies, and was concerned with marginal people who faced a sense of exile and existential isolation (Patea, 2012).

Despite the opposition of critics, the modern short story became very popular in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and writers like Borges, Kawabata, Dinesen, Walser, Cortazar, Kafka, Calvino, and Buzzati turned to writing very short works (Shapard, 2012). During those times, magazines paid enormous sums to writers for good short stories; for example, in the 1920s, the Saturday Evening Post paid Scott Fitzgerald \$4,000 for a single short story. In the 1960s, the short-short story gained popularity in fiction writing (Shapard & Thomas, 1986). Mary Rohrberger offered pioneering publications on the theoretical analysis of the short story (Patea, 2012). Furthermore, in 1977, an Australian scholar, Ian Reid, became an influential contributor to the study of short story genre through his famous monograph titled *The Short Story in Critical Idiom Series* (Winther, Lothe, & Skei, 2011). British short story literary history was provided by the work of Wendell Harris titled *British Short Fiction in the Nineteenth*

*Century: A Literary and Bibliographic Guide* (1979) and the work of Harold Orel titled *The Victorian Short Story* (1986) (Baldwin, 1993). Postcolonial perspective on genre developments was offered by W. H. New's *Dreams of Speech and Violence: The Art of the Short Story in Canada and New Zealand* (1987), which was followed by Gerald Lynch's *The One and the Many: English-Canadian Short Story Cycles* (2001) (Winther et al., 2011; Patea, 2012).

Until the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, two types of short stories existed: event-plot story (pre-Chekhov) and Chekhovian story (Boyd, 2006). Most of the short stories, even today, can be classified as belonging to one of the two categories. However, these two broad categories eventually begot other sub-categories like the modernist story, cryptic story, poetic story, autobiographical story, and so on. In the modernist story, which is the most dominant new form, puzzling ambiguity is deliberately added as its fundamental attribute. The cryptic story, also referred to as suppressed narrative, includes an encrypted text that requires decoding. The poetic story has a strong affinity with lyric poetry and attempts to escape Chekhovian style by defying easy summary. Dylan Thomas, D. H. Lawrence, and J. G. Ballard wrote tremendous short stories that conform to poetic stories standards. Furthermore, the biographical story includes stories that mask themselves as non-fiction and also include stories that introduce real people to fiction or include fictitious anecdote concerning reality; hence, through these stories, the line between fact and fiction is blurred (Boyd, 2006).

A series of research, beginning in the 1980s, explored short fiction in light of modernism and post-modernism. Books by Clare Hanson and Dominic Head examined the effects of modernism on the development of modern fiction through the substitution of the plot with mood, impressions, and the moment of awareness. Farhat Iftekharrudin's co-edited book, *The Postmodern Short Story: Forms and Issues*, further examined the post-modern evolution of the short story. Susan Lohafer further advanced the short story genre by documenting various approaches to short story in her books titled *Coming to Terms With the Short Story* (1983), *Short Story Theory at a Crossroad* (1989), and *The Tales We Tell: Perspectives on the Short Story* (1998). In 1989, the first international conference on the study of the short story theory was held in Paris, which subsequently turned into a biannual conference. Charles May established the field of short story genre through his revolutionary work titled *Short Story Theories* (1976), *New Short Story Theories* (1994) and *The Reality of Artifice* (1995). His books offer valuable conceptual clarity and critical history of the short story genre from its start to the present day (Patea, 2012). The year 1994 marked the inception of the first journal titled *Short Story* after which the short story genre

established itself as an autonomous field of study (Winther et al., 2011; Patea, 2012).

### 3. SHORT-STORY

A concrete definition of the short story genre is hard to formulate because of the multi-faceted diversity in the theme and nature of the stories. The short story genre is closely linked with the lyric, novel, letter, essay, cinema, photography, painting, and visual arts. Although, the short story is described in terms of precision, compression, unity, brevity, intensity, lyricism, theme, insight, vision, mystery, hybridity, fractals, tension, and closure (Patea, 2012); however, its unity is given epic importance.

Matthews (1907) notes:

The Short-story must do one thing only, and it must do this completely and perfectly; it must not loiter or digress; it must have unity of action, unity of temper, unity of tone, unity of color, unity of effect; and it must vigilantly exclude everything that might interfere with its singleness of intention. (para. 28)

Poe also notes that if the story cannot be completed at one sitting, the affairs of the world interfere, which destroy the totality of the short story and its totality of interest.

While reviewing Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, Poe says:

The ordinary story is objectionable from its length, for reasons already stated in substance. As it cannot be read at one sitting, it deprives itself, of course, of the immense force derivable from totality. Worldly interests intervening during the pauses of perusal modify, annul, or contract, in a greater or less degree, the impressions of the book. But simply cessation in reading would, of itself, be sufficient to destroy the true unity. In the brief tale, however, the author is enabled to carry out the fullness of his intention, be it what it may. (Matthews, 1901, p.78)

A short story is concerned with a single character, a single event, and either a single emotion or multiple emotions, which arise from a single situation. The short story depicts three elements from the classic French drama: "It shows a single action, occurring in one place, on a single day" (Matthews, 1901, p.16). Patea (2012) notes that the short story excludes everything that is not under discussion and disconnects its characters from their social ties and the larger social, historical, or existential continuance. Moreover, the short story is full of themes, symbols, and images, which are beautifully woven into the story with artistic brevity. The brevity of the short story is responsible for the inclusion of only concrete and meaningful details. The mystery is also an effect of brevity and progresses from the compression, intensity, and frugality of the short story. The mysterious elements are stimulated by the reader's insight of an unresolved situation that gets magnified due to the absence of explanatory details.

The short story genre is antagonistic to the traditional literary convention; it incorporates and contrasts stylistic features and linguistic methods from various literary genres instead of complying completely with a single convention (Guimaraes, 2012; Matthews, 1901). The dilemma of the short story is rooted in the difficulty of transforming a sequential story into a story that is comprised of a moment or a series of moments rather than the entire action. However, writers resolve this dilemma by alluding to implications and also by inculcating precision, concision, and compression in their writing. The compression and conciseness of the short story also cause the story to be fragmentary that describes moments rather than the whole action. Notwithstanding the unconventional nature of the short story, its structure should be logical, adequate, and harmonious with the main components such as compression, originality, ingenuity, and a touch of fantasy. Irrespective of whether the short story portrays a real or imaginary scene, it always retains a property of pointing towards some deeper meaning (Patea, 2012). Moreover, the short story must display a form by either conforming to a single shape or can be a combination of the following forms: personal narrative, an impersonal narrative, a mystery, or a mixture of letters, telegrams, and narrative (Matthews, 1901).

#### 4. CONTEMPORARY SHORT FICTION

In the last years of the twentieth century, short fiction was published in magazines and newspapers as a sub-category or a sub-sub-category of short story (Guimaraes, 2009). Short fiction paved the way for the short-short story, which soon got very popular in the literary circles. Poe encouraged a brief length story, signifying unity, which could be read in one sitting. The short-short story genre affirms Poe's objective in letter and spirit. The short-short story is a hybrid genre in which poetic condensation is merged with the fictional narrative and the journalistic writing style (Guimaraes, 2009). Two major critics and anthologists of the short fiction, Robert Shapard and James Thomas have published several collections of short-short fiction. James Thomas coined the term "flash fiction" for stories akin to Ernest Hemingway's classic *A Very Short Story* (up to 750 words); while, Jerome Stern coined "micro-fiction for even smaller sized stories" (Guimaraes, 2009). On further analyses, Shapard and Thomas (2007) confirmed two sub-categories of sudden fiction that stemmed from the short fiction and differed not only in length, but also in nature. The two sub-categories were flash fiction and new sudden fiction. Flash fiction included stories of up to 750 words and encapsulated a single idea or a single moment; they often portrayed a reversal of the story plot's initial circumstances. New sudden fiction included stories of up to 1500 words and shared features with the traditional short story. Nelles (2012) notes that the short-short stories under 700 words

length are not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively different than their longer cousins that range from 700 words to 2000 words.

The short-short story is continuously mutating; therefore, the concept of generic identity that requires strict boundaries cannot be laid down (Guimaraes, 2009). Matthews (1901) also argued that strict limitations for literary genres are fruitless because most genres get merged into each other. The current trend exhibited by short-short stories fulfill Matthews's contention. The short-short stories are labeled with various names that are used interchangeably. These labels include flash fiction, postcard fiction, sudden fiction, prose poems, micro-fiction, the minute-story, pocket-sized story, palm-sized story, and smoke long story, miniature tales, one-page fictions, micro-story, blaster, snapper, mini-fiction, fast-fiction, skinny fiction, quick fiction, nano-fiction, and hint fiction (Ferguson, 2010; Barenblat, 2005; Shapard, 2012). These names are also nationality specific. For example, flash-fiction is popular in the USA, micro-fiction in Latin America, nouvelles in France, and the smoke long story is famous in China (Casto, 2015; Gurley, 2015; Shapard, 2012). There is an arbitrary text length relegated to each short narrative by critics who qualify the short story as minificción (minifiction), if it is under 250 words; microfiction if it is under 300 words; flash fiction if it is under 750 words; sudden fiction if it is under 1500 words. However, the flash fiction now includes complete stories that vary in word count between 75 words to 1500 words (Gurley, 2015) or 50 words to 1000 words (Batchelor, 2012).

As a super short surge of narrative fiction, flash fiction offers writers a respite to conjure up flashes of insight. These insights are complete stories and not just sketches. Flash fiction is a short form of storytelling art; as a flash, the contents of a very short story are comprehended all at once (Thomas & Shapard, 2006; Stanbrough, 2007). Referred to as an "intellectually challenging blurb" (Gurley, 2015); flash fiction requires a quick burst of energy and its focus is comparable to a beam of laser light (Chambers, 2012). The success in flash fiction depends on the precision, concision, choice of words, rhythm, sentence shape, and also on subtleties that point to hidden meanings (Chambers, 2012). Moreover, brevity accounts for the short-short story's highly formalized style that depicts a highly patterned and stylized representation of experience (Patea, 2012). Moreover, an essential function of the flash fiction is to move the reader emotionally and/or intellectually; therefore, despite the brevity, the story must have depth (Batchelor, 2012). Black humor is a tone and effect attained especially in flash fiction (Guimaraes, 2012). Flash fiction can include a dialogue, a monologue, or a narrative discourse. The dialogue must reveal information to the readers, and it is through the dialogue that readers get direct information about the characters from the characters themselves, rather

than from the narrator (Batchelor, 2012). On the other hand, monologue is often used to unfold the plot. Due to limited word count, the particular story subject takes all narrative space making itself the only object of discussion (Goyet, 2014). Moreover, the narrative discourse in flash fiction incorporates elliptical, metaphoric, and metonymic strategies to compress the story and to increase intensity and tension.

Flash fiction is a complete story; albeit with a curtailed plot. Some critics claim that postmodern stories have become plot-less anti-stories (Batchelor, 2012); however, it does not affect the flash fiction because its intensity does not flow from the plot, but from the techniques that encompass point of views, effects of tone and imagery, and formal or stylistic economy (Patea, 2012). Flash fiction stories that are mysterious, elusive, paradoxical, and ambiguous are precise, compressed, emotionally charged, and rich in implications (Casto, 2015). Flash fiction must encompass all characteristic elements of a short story in a compressed manner. These typical elements include setting, character, tension, resolution, and suggestion. In flash fiction, some elements are given more attention than others; nevertheless, an essence of each element must be present. Setting in the flash fiction represents a platform of activity, and a single active sentence is sufficient to include relevant information regarding the physical setting of the story (Thomas & Shapard, 2006). The characters are the players of the story and do not necessarily need to represent humans or animals; they can also be implied, and at least one character is required to complete a story. Conflict is an important part of flash fiction through which intensity is added that keeps readers interested in the story. Conflict leads to the resolution that releases piled up tension. The resolution leaves many questions open for debate, which further encourages the readers to interpret the story based on their personal or impersonal experiences. An identification feature of flash fiction is a surprise twist that occurs either throughout the story or at the end (Casto, 2015). The ending of a short story is powerful as it attempts to connect two poles of antithesis (Goyet, 2014). Poe argued that the whole story is a preparation for its ending and suggests constructing a story with its ending in mind constantly (Batchelor, 2012). Therefore, the flash fiction offers its readers a window to look beyond what is written; the best flashes remain in mind much after the story is completed (Casto, 2015).

Lately, the English classrooms from elementary to the doctoral level have shown a predilection towards incorporating flash fiction in their syllabus. The flash fiction teaches students allusion, anthropomorphism, irony, and farce by focusing on abstract concepts (Batchelor & King, 2014). Students feel at ease with the short word limit, and the teachers feel encouraged with the prospect of students reading the entire story without skipping. The short story of about 5000 words may be perfect for reading and studying but is not ideal for

students to write because it requires sophisticated writing skills (Chambers, 2012). Therefore, many students display an inclination towards writing shorter narratives.

---

## 5. NEW PUBLISHING TREND

---

The modern day writing and publishing has changed radically due to technology (Kinberg, 2014). Computers, smartphones, and other gadgets have revolutionized interactions between the consumer and retailer such that more and more publishing, selling, buying, and reading happen digitally. Due to the reader's preference for an easily accessible short dosage of information, writers adeptly bypass publishers and create their following online (Batchelor 2012). The Internet invention has made the process of finding, selecting, and reaching the target reading population easier than ever. The publishers are now able to reach a broad consumer base through marketing and promoting their material on the Internet and social media. Resultantly, readers are more aware of the reading material and can easily read reviews and experiences of other readers in selecting the next title for purchase. These interactions also help authors gather valuable market sensing data. Interestingly, the authors are now also able to e-publish their work instead of depending on publishers for the marketing, and promotion of their work. Therefore, the authors are free to make business decisions on their own and market their work. Authors, however, have to give ultimate attention to creating a high-quality piece as marketing a bad piece would not succeed for long (Kinberg, 2014).

---

## CONCLUSION

---

The historic path taken by the short story genre led to the rise of a new genre of shortened stories. The delicate merger between the literary genres occurred due to the inundation of the electronic gadgets and the resultant changing attention spans and evolving reading styles of the Internet savvy readers. Subsequently, the writers successfully modified their stories to accommodate the unfolding reading habits. The short-short story genre, like the short story genre, incorporates a complete spectrum of narratives, albeit in a few words. A common core feature of the two genres is unity with a brief length so that the story is completed in one sitting to achieve the singularity of effect, unity of impression, and totality of interest. The short stories allude to deeper meanings that keep the readers engaged in the story beyond the completion of the story. The Internet era has not only revolutionized the reading and writing habits, but also has changed the dependency of the writers on publishers. The writers can now promote their stories by publishing them online on social media and/or specific blogs. It goes without saying that readers inclined towards the longer length narratives

object to the poverty of content and the absence of a clear plot and story structure delineated by the short-stories. Nevertheless, the proponents of the short-short story genres are happy in sharing their insights and creating an ever-increasing online following.

## REFERENCES

- Batchelor, K. E. (2012). In a flash: The digital age's influence over literacy. In B. Batchelor (Ed.), *Cult pop culture: From the fringe to the mainstream* (pp.77-88). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Batchelor, K. E., & King, A. (2014). Freshmen and five hundred words: Investigating flash fiction as a genre for high school writing. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 58(2), 111-121.
- Barenblat, R. (2005). Prose poems or microfiction? In *Posse Review*. Retrieved from <http://www.webdelsol.com/InPosse/barenblat.htm>
- Baldwin, D. (1993). The tardy evolution of the British short story. *Studies In Short Fiction*, 30(1), 23.
- Boyd, W. (2006, July 10). A short history of the short story. *Prospect*. Retrieved from <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/arts-and-books/william-boyd-short-history-of-the-short-story>
- Casto, P. (2015). *Flashes on the meridian: Dazzled by flash fiction*. Retrieved from <http://www.writing-world.com/fiction/casto.shtml>
- Chambers, A. (2012). Sparks of fiction. *Horn Book Magazine*, 88(2), 55.
- Ferguson, J. (2010). *Border markers* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <http://scholar.uwindsor.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=etd>
- Goyet, F. (2014). *The classic short story, 1870-1925: Theory of a genre*. Cambridge U.K.: Open Book Publishers.
- Guimaraes, J. F. (2009, August). *The short-short story: The problem of literary genre*. Paper presented at the International Symposium on Genre Studies, Caxias do Sul, Brazil. Retrieved from [http://www.ucs.br/ucs/tplSiget/extensao/agenda/eventos/vsiget/portugues/anais/textos\\_autor/arquivos/the\\_short\\_short\\_story\\_the\\_problem\\_of\\_literary\\_genre.pdf](http://www.ucs.br/ucs/tplSiget/extensao/agenda/eventos/vsiget/portugues/anais/textos_autor/arquivos/the_short_short_story_the_problem_of_literary_genre.pdf)
- Guimaraes, J. F. (2012). *The short-short story: A new literary genre*. Strategic Book Publishing, Texas, TX.
- Gurley, J. (2015). *Flash what? A quick look at flash fiction*. Retrieved from <http://www.writing-world.com/fiction/flash.shtml>
- Matthew, B. (1901). *The philosophy of the short-story*. New York, NY: Longmans, Green, and Co. Retrieved from <http://archive.org/stream/philosophyshort00mattgoog#page/n24/mode/2up>
- Matthews, B. (Ed.). (1907). *The short-story: Specimens illustrating its development*. New York, NY: American Book Company. Retrieved from [www.bartleby.com/195/](http://www.bartleby.com/195/)
- Nelles, W. (2012). Microfiction: What makes a very short story very short? *Narrative*, 20(1), 87-104.
- Patea, V. (Ed.). (2012). *Short story theories: A twenty-first-century perspective*. New York, NY: Rodopi.
- Rohrberger, M. (2011). Origins, development, substance, and design of the short story: How I got hooked on the short story and where it led me. In P. Winther, J. Lothe, & H. Skei (Eds.), *The art of brevity: Excursions in short fiction theory and analysis* (pp.1-13). Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Santos, A. (2012). The paratactic structure in the Canterbury tales: Two antecedents of the modern short story. In V. Patea (Ed.), *Short story theories: A twenty-first-century perspective* (pp.25-48). New York, NY: Rodopi.
- Shapard, R., & Thomas, J. (Eds.). (1986). *Sudden fiction: American short-short stories*. Salt Lake city: Peregrine Smith Books.
- Shapard, R., & Thomas, J. (2007). *New sudden fiction: short-short stories from America and beyond*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.
- Shapard, R. (2012). The remarkable reinvention of very short fiction. *World Literature Today*, 86(5), 46-49.
- Stanbrough, H. (2007). Sharpen your skills with flash fiction: Flash fiction is not only enjoyable to write, but a good learning tool for improving your work. *Writer*, 120(1), 34.
- Thomas, J., & Shapard, R. (Eds.). (2006). *Flash fiction forward: 80 very short stories*. New York: Norton.
- Trussler, M. (2014). Short story theories: A twenty-first-century perspective. *English Studies in Canada*, 40(2/3), 199-206.
- Wallen, A. (2009, December). Flash-fiction masters offer tips on the form. [Review of the book *The rose metal press field guide to writing flash fiction: Tips from editors, teachers, and writers in the field* edited by Masih, T.]. *Writer*, 122(12).
- Winther, P., Lothe, J., & Skei, H. H. (2011). *The art of brevity: Excursions in short fiction theory and analysis*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.