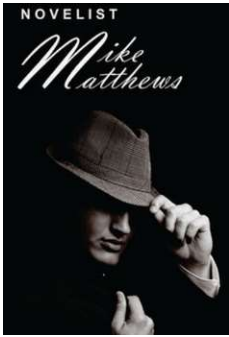


# Black & White

2019 Short Story Anthology

If a picture is worth a thousand words,  
just imagine what you will see in these  
award winning shorts?





About the 2019 Black & White Writer Awards...

In 1984, I founded the original Windy City Writers Club in order to pass the time during three detentions I had to serve. I was sixteen. Little did I know my passion for writing and the friendships I formed with the other four who came that day would inspire the coast-to-coast creation of clubs 35-years later. I am humbled. I am also the last surviving original member. *Black & White* is in their honor and memory.

During those honeymoon meetings, we realized that each one of us had something unique to offer the club. So, instead of assigning club officer titles, we each assumed a specific type of critiquing.

Matt had a gift of finding the little things in a story—*the whit*—and always provided the direction of how to make them bigger in order to convey the true wisdom of the piece. He was our athlete and died while serving in Iraq. That was in 2004 and when I decided it was time to launch North Avenue Publishing, The Athlete Award recognizes creative works that embodies whit, insightfulness, and wisdom.

Carl had a tremendous gift of perfecting prose with his mastery of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. He was our brain and later worked for a number of newspapers until he was killed by a drunk driver a few years after Matt passed away. The Brain Award recognizes creative works that exemplifies the highest levels of a true wordsmith.

Andrea's life-saving gift was finding continuity issues, plot holes, and sculpting away the redundancy. Her attention to those fine details were only matched by her God given artistic talents and crazy sense of adventure. She was our basket case and passed away a few months after Carl. The Basket Case Award recognizes creative works that personifies her insane spirit of living in the moment and attention to detail.

Marci's gift improved the romance, emotion, and dialogue of our creative efforts over the decades. She was our princess and passed away a few years ago from a blood clot that should have never been there in the first place. The Princess Award recognizes works with the romance, emotion, and dialogue that not even Marci could improve.

I was the bad guy—*the criminal*—charged with having to be brutally honest, unmerciful, but always magnanimous to the essence of truth being shared. The Criminal Award recognizes works with the raw and revealing honesty that will resonate with readers lucky enough to have experienced life in *Black & White*.

- Mike Matthews

## **Black & White Submission Guidelines**

- It is important to understand that the awards are bestowed upon the first entry that scores 100 points during judging, or the highest score per award category at the conclusion of judging.
- Submissions must be your work. Previously published and self-published works will be considered.
- Works limited to 2,000 words, but your initial submission can exceed this amount within reason. That means a single story can be up to 6,000 words based on our 3 title policy. So do the math! You can submit 1-3 titles as long as the total word count does not greatly exceed 6,000 words.
- Registration deadline is 5:00 PM (CST) Sept. 14, 2019.
- Judging expected to conclude Oct. 31, 2019 or sooner as noted above.
- Publication release slated for the week of Nov. 24 – 30, 2019.
- You can submit up to 3 pieces (including chapter excerpts) that adhere to the above guidelines and final word count parameters per piece. The benefit of submitting a chapter excerpt from one of your longer forms (such as your introductory chapter) is the increased visibility you can gain by reaching more readers who will want to read (and buy) your entire piece.
- There is a nominal \$25 registration fee per author (not title), which includes having your work(s) professional critiqued by one of our editors (contest judges) looking to discover and develop new talent. Please download the free files for complete details including helpful hints to score higher during judging, submission forms, and our Word Template.

## **How to Submit**

Email your file(s) with the subject heading **BLACK AND WHITE** to [Contests@NorthAvenuePublishing.com](mailto:Contests@NorthAvenuePublishing.com). PDFs are preferred, but Word files are acceptable. Include a cover page with your contact information.

When your submission is reviewed, you'll receive an email within 24-48 hours indicating which piece or pieces will advance to the final round for judging. If your work falls short of advancement in the preliminary stage, you will be given the chance to rework the piece(s) and resubmit for free.

The five Black & White Award Winning authors will receive cash prize based on the number of submissions, a custom wooden plaque and a dedicated 300-word bio page, complete with a photo in the publication. Titles scoring above 90 points will be published as Semi-Finalists with a 100-word bio. Scores of 80-90 points will be published as Honorable Mentions with a 50-word bio.

## **Black & White Contest Helpful Hints**

As you may have noticed by this file, the page settings are not your typical 8.5 x 11 size with 1" margins. We strongly encourage that you revise your work(s) to the following settings in order for you and our judges to see how your submission would appear in the final publication.

Adhering to this helpful hint will provide you with one last chance to see if there is anything you need to cut, or even add to a paragraph based on the available "real estate" left behind by one or two dangling words.

While the world won't end if your work is in the traditional format, all submissions received in this preferred format will automatically receive 50 points towards The Brain Award. Not to mention you can easily print 2 pages per sheet of paper to get a real sense of what your work will look like in published form.

### **Preferred Page Settings**

Page Size:	Width 5.5"	Height 8.5"
Margins:	Top .75" Right .75"	Bottom .75" Left .75"
Spacing:	Single line	
Indentation	First line .2"	
Font:	Times New Roman	
Size:	11 point	
Justification:	Full	
Pagination:	Window/Orphan Control (yes, check mark)	

Feel free to review the following sample chapter submission to get an idea of what our judges will be looking for in your work. Communes & Colored Pencils is the first chapter in my current novel in progress called *The Criminal*. Take note of not only how each page ends, but of the effective use of space and unclaimed "real estate" in each paragraph.

Thank you, and we wish you the best of luck.

## Communes & Colored Pencils

There's no real reason why it all started on February 4<sup>th</sup> other than me being a persistent piece of shit, unable to accept defeat, and serving three Saturday detentions for "speaking my mind" in art class when my teacher demanded I wash out all of the supplies. Even though I begged her, I couldn't risk getting paint on my new clothes I just got for Christmas. The bitch didn't care.

I checked in to detention on January 14, 1984 and learned I could do what I wanted in the library, provided it was relatively quiet and school related. I knocked out what little homework I had in the first half hour, then wandered the rows of books, until I came upon a gaggle of students sitting in a circle on the floor. Their legs twisted like pretzels. Their fingers rolled and resting on their knees, humming. It really was some seriously funny shit, and I imagined if maybe they had dropped some LSD as their tie-dye adorned leader talked them down with, "Now let the tension leave your body..." as their heads slowly swayed side to side.

"Is this a Woodstock reunion?" I grinned, genuinely curious about their covert commune in the back of the library. They all stopped humming, turning their heads to face me looking down on them. "Or are you all tripping on acid?" I quipped, making a few of them laugh until they caught their leader's scowl.

"It's our meditation club," the leader said, slowly unlocking his legs and then stood before adding, "Would you like to join?"

"Sorry, I left my tie-dye at home." My tone telling him I was more interested in giving them shit than joining their ostensive orgy of cosmic congruence. I pressed my palms together in front of me, and with a smart-ass grin, bowed my head then added, "Namaste." He took my insolent gesture for the *fuck-off, dude* that I intended and redirected his group to return to their happy place.

I went back to looking for the Flannery O’Conner collection we were covering in English class and felt lucky the first book I found contained *A Good Man is Hard to Find*. For some reason, that story seemed appropriate to how I was feeling; wanting to be taken out in the woods and shot. I didn’t even bother going back to the table and plopped down on the floor, giving it a quick read from somewhere in the middle. I’m not sure how long I was reading before being approached by the library warden and told to return to my assigned cell at the table marked DETENTION.

“I thought it was okay as long as I was quiet?” I retorted, quickly standing to the pins-and-needles sensation running up my right leg that had fallen asleep. He just shook his head and motioned for me to return with a hitch-hiker’s thumb. Then he continued patrolling the library for the FBI’s most wanted. I waited for him to turn the corner before I shelved the book three rows away from where it belonged, walked back to my cell, then sat down at the table.

I grabbed my writing journal and began to plug away at the recent events, trying to capture the moment and find something of value to share with the world someday. Though I was turning sixteen in a few weeks, I had always felt drawn to write from around the age of ten. Maybe younger if I count winning the poetry contest in first grade, but Flannery O’Conner I was not.

However, I did write a haiku that day for shits and grins. I even called it *Namaste*. I seriously considered giving it to the hippie commune as a peace offering. Not that I felt bad for being a prick, but more as a thank you for the idea I got to start a creative writing club to help me fill my next two Saturdays of detentions.

“Can you answer a quick question?” I asked approaching the warden who had now taken refuge near the magazine rack. He looked up from whatever issue of *Time* magazine he was reading and remained silent, not even blinking his eyes that were draped in dark bags from either age, lack of sleep, or both. He looked like shit and I felt rather sorry for him. But at least he was being paid to be there. “I wanted to know about starting a club?” I asked him.

“Talk to the dean,” he retorted, returning to the man of the year issue featuring Ronald Reagan and Yuri Andropov for some cold war bullshit called the Strategic Defense Initiative.

“Sure, but are clubs allowed here on Saturdays?” I persisted.

“Talk to the dean.” He flipped the next page dismissively, and I walked away feeling less sorry for his minimum-wage-tired-ass. I stopped at a table of girls working on some very cool drawings.

“Salvador Dali, right?” I injected into their frantic silence of colored pencil strokes, hoping to get the time of day.

“You know your shit,” the cutest one said. She looked up and smiled. Her face so familiar from the halls. “Are you a fan?”

“Of Dali’s, or yours?” I said without thinking. She blushed and returned to her drawing as one of the girls foolishly giggled, then received a kick from under the table. “Do you know how I can go about starting a club?” I persisted, unable to accept defeat.

“It’s easy,” the cute one replied, keeping her attention on her colored pencil strokes. “Is it a social or academic club?”

“No clue, what’s the difference?” I asked, pulling out the seat next to her since she seemed fine talking to me, as she continued working on her rendition of Dali’s *The Persistence of Memory*.

“Academic clubs are easier to start. They attract more students,” she put down her pencil. “Chess club is social,” she added, finally turning her hazel-green eyes towards me and smiled again.

“What would creative writing fall under?”

“Academic. You’ll get access to more resources ‘fer-sure,” she nodded, twisting her right wrist with a hang-loose-gesture.

“Bitchin,” I replied, playfully mocking the valley girl lexicon of our day, but still unable to recall her name from the PE class we shared last year. Thankfully, Giggles joined the conversation.

“Andrea-*aaahh*,” Giggles said, drawing out her name. “Make sure he knows to get a teacher, y’know, like to sponsor his club.”

“Yeah, Andrea-*aaahh*. Quit holding out on me.” She shook her head and nervously laughed. At what or whom, I didn’t know.

“Ask an English teacher. They’ll eat this shit up. My art teacher is our sponsor,” she said then turned, pointing towards the bulletin board by the library entrance. “Just put a sign up over there.”

“Any chance you could help me make one?” I flirted.

“*Fer-sure*,” she nodded with a sinister grin, then gave me three markers and two sheets of white poster board. “Outline the words, then color inside the lines.” She turned her attention back to her Dali project, which obviously was more important than speaking with me. “The lighting is better at your table.” Hint taken.



I dropped my head in temporary defeat and went back to my cell to sketch out ideas in my journal of what I wanted to put on the poster. Simple shit, like time, location, and club name. Saturdays were a given. As was the nine-to-noon time slot that coincided with my detention. But fuck me and my writer's block for trying to come up with a catchy club name. I refused to use anything like our mascot's name, school newspaper, or literary publication. I wanted my club to be bigger than our 3,500 suburban student body and found my inspiration as I watched the Chicago winter pummel the library windows with pellets of freezing ice and rain.

With nothing better to do, I casually spent an hour laying out and designing the poster, which was nothing more than repeatedly going over the words with a feverish free-hand lettering style. I kept thinking to myself *screw coloring inside the fucking lines* while weaving together a spontaneously sloppy selection of thick and thin letters until it resembled a little kid's cool-aid stand sign.

The club poster looked fucking awesome, except for the empty bottom half. At first, I thought I would cut it off and be done with it, but I still had an hour to kill. I just stared at the massive void. I couldn't think of a single fucking thing to put in the space as the *who*, *when*, and *where* were widely visible and clearly explained.

I got an idea for a logo and thought of asking Andrea for help; hoping to catch her eye as a possible date for the upcoming dance. But I was so absorbed with the poster, I never noticed the art club and Andrea were long gone. So, I drew my inkblot the best I could.

By noon, the warden began turning off the lights, starting with the back rows where I found the commune. I packed up my things, then realized I still had Andrea's three markers. I couldn't help but wonder if she simply forgot, or just didn't care about them. Or me.

I waited for the warden to release me as I continued admiring my *Windy City Writers Club* poster. The lights overhead me went dark. He finally shouted it was time to go as he slipped out the rear exit. I watched him trudge over to his ice-covered Ford Pinto as I started making my own escape. Although I probably needed some bullshit form signed in triplicate before I could display my poster, I took the initiative and put it up before I left. I smiled as I stood there, confident it would attract dozens of students to help keep me company during my detentions over the next couple of weeks.