

Mom Tri's Boathouse third annual short fiction contest

The Boathouse's third writing contest received an exceptional international response with submissions of great style and originality. It was a challenging task for writers to include the required keywords: Boathouse, Oasis and Regatta in their stories but all managed with a surprising inventiveness. Entries varied from nail-biting suspense stories and crime fiction to fantasy fairytales, science fiction and "real-life" experiences. The contest's judge, Simon Brown, writer of 10 books published a.o. by HarperCollins, had the difficult task of choosing the winners. First prize went to Alex Mellor of Hua Hin, Thailand for his story "Responsibilities".

1st Place – Responsibilities by Alex Mellor, Thailand (link to story as attached)

A satisfying story about the two females in the protagonist's life, one human and one machine. It comes with a neat twist in the tail – a hard thing to do right. If the psychology of the woman does not quite tally by the end, it's more than made up for by a clean writing style and a well-drawn, if not sympathetic, protagonist.

2nd Place – A Matter of Face by Daniel Chen, Australia (link to story as attached)

Another twist in the tail story, although it isn't essential to the satisfying way the author catches the few minutes it takes for the protagonist to carry out an unorthodox "hit" in an unorthodox way. The protagonist completes his task with a regretful but always resolute professionalism. Simply and satisfyingly told.

3rd Place – Dust in the Wind by Barbara Ransom, USA (link to story as attached)

A clever, witty story about two sisters trying to complete a difficult duty. The dialogue is sharp and feels right, and the writing ensures the situation, absurd as it is, never falls into parody or bathos. The interstitial material is unhelpful, and together with the title gives the game away too soon.

Honourable mention – Lek by Dr. Michael Moreton, Thailand (link to story as attached)

Makes the cut because of the way the author cleverly allows the protagonist to be self-serving and self-effacing at the same time. Slight structural and layout problems don't spoil clever dialogue and a bittersweet ending.

Honourable mention – One Week a Year by Deirdrea Lyon, USA (link to story as attached)

A plausible protagonist the reader wants to cheer on makes up for a somewhat stereotypical antagonist. The narrative wanders a little, and sentence structure could be better, but unexpected touches and a satisfying ending save the story.

Honourable mention – Finding of Fact by Eric Rosenkranz, Singapore (link to story as attached)

The idea behind this story needs a much longer work, but the author almost pulls it off by cleverly framing the narrative within a legal decision. The dry sense of humour and the humanity of the judge writing the decision come through, and the character the story is about flitters around the story like a moth around a light.

Out of Competition entry – The Old Man on the Terrace by Steve Rosse (link to story as attached)

Details of Mom Tri's Boathouse 4th writing competition with deadline February 2010 will be announced as soon as possible.

Simon Brown has written ten books, including two collections of short stories. His novels are published by HarperCollins and PanMacmillan in Australia, DAW in the US, and Toymania in Russia. His short stories have appeared in magazines and anthologies in the US, England, Poland, Japan and Australia. He is currently living in Phuket with his wife Alison, a teacher, and their two children, Edlyn and Fynn.

Mom Tri's Boathouse, Phuket Thailand, is a creation of famous Thai Architect, entrepreneur and artist Mom Luang Tridhomyuth Devakul known as Mom Tri. Built in 1989, it quickly became a favourite with discriminating visitors and appears on numerous lists of the world's best small hotels. The Boathouse has been distinguished with the first and only Wine Spectator "Best of Award of Excellence" in the Kingdom of Thailand since 2006. Mom Tri's new gourmet restaurants Oasis in Kata and Boathouse Regatta at Royal Phuket Marina opened recently.

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