

# Short Fiction in Theory and Practice



ISSN 2043-0701 | Online ISSN 2043-071X  
2 issues per volume | First published in 2011

'The health of the short story', guest-edited by Lucy Durneen,  
University of Cambridge

'Storytelling is like a disease'  
Graham Swift, *Waterland*

'We tell ourselves stories in order to live'  
Joan Didion, 'Slouching Towards Bethlehem'

The short story has long functioned as an examining room, psychiatrist's couch, emotional balm, case study. It provides a supportive crutch for dangerous, unstable times; reflects the physical and psychic wounding of war; maps the fractured spaces of the mind; acts as a barometer of a nation's socio-political health. Inside its boundaries, wallpaper moves, women transmogrify, pathologizing grief, doubt and anxiety until their cure become something other than medicine. Sometimes the short story takes us right to the place where the veil between worlds is thinnest, collapsing the boundaries between life and death to make us question the very fragility and privilege of health; at garden parties, at elegant dinners, while the snow falls, while waiting for a train in the noonday sun. The ordinary experiences of living – and dying – that typically populate the short story help us make sense of the origins, treatments and prevention of illness, or to better appreciate the rarity of good health, even if they do not always offer the resolution of recovery.

As the humanities continue to extend wider debates surrounding wellbeing, mindfulness, a growing mental health crisis, eco-anxiety and the global pandemic of a 'novel' virus, we ask, what does it mean to write of health in an ailing world? How and why might (short)storytelling be a natural reaction to illness? What is the impact of chronic illness or pandemic on the writing (and reading) process? How might we make visible the invisible conditions that compromise standardly received notions of 'health'? The very word 'health' deliberately encourages dialogue with its counterparts 'illness', 'disease' and 'dying' but here we might also question what we understand by 'healthy.'

And alongside this, the short story's own wellbeing appears under consistent review, casting it variously as a victim of an anxious publishing industry, potential beneficiary of new media technology, and victorious frontrunner in the constant battle to attract the attention of distracted and time-limited readers. To speak of its Renaissance implies that at one stage or other we have witnessed its death, or at least dragged it from the gallows, and revived it from the brink of extinction. How do we assess its vital signs?

The international, peer-reviewed journal, *Short Fiction in Theory and Practice* (Intellect Books) is inviting submissions for a special issue on this topic, to be published in Spring 2022. We welcome critical articles, short fiction and reflections on practice that interrogate and interpret the notion of health in the context of short fiction, across eras, genres, and languages.



## Principal Editor

Ailsa Cox  
Edge Hill University, UK  
[coxa@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:coxa@edgehill.ac.uk)

## Associate Editors

Alison MacLeod  
University of Chichester, UK  
[A.MacLeod@chi.ac.uk](mailto:A.MacLeod@chi.ac.uk)

## Guest Editor

Lucy Durneen  
University of Cambridge, UK

CALL FOR  
PAPERS

 To order this journal online visit our website: [www.intellectbooks.com](http://www.intellectbooks.com)

 @IntellectBooks

 @IntellectBooks

 intellectbooks

 Intellect Books

Suggested topics might include, but are absolutely not limited to:

- **The Absence of Health:** Disability; Chronic illness; Critical Illness; Terminal illness; Invisible illness; Mental Illness; Complications of Pregnancy, Miscarriage and Baby Loss; Children's Health; Phobia; Hypochondria.
- **Optimization of Health:** Enhancement; Technology; Sports; Prosthetics; Augmentation; Dieting; Concepts of Beauty; Constructions of Identity; Cyberpunk.
- **The Landscape of Illness:** Comparative global representations of health; Representations of institutions, hospitals and health professions; Healthcare communities; Eco-health; Post-human or non-human concepts of health; Specific environments of infection/recovery.
- **The Politics of Health:** Public Health; Reproduction and Fertility; Biopolitics; Bioengineering; Normative concepts of health; Concepts of maternity and paternity; Morality of parenthood; Abortion; Surrogacy; Sexual health; Assisted dying; Futuristic living.
- **Threats to Health:** War – as combatant/non-combatant; Addiction; Eating disorders; Age; Injury; Accident; Infection; Torture; Stress, isolation and loneliness; Eugenics; Pandemic; Technological threats and developments; Climate change.
- **Alternative Spaces of Health and Healing:** Rehabilitation; Mindfulness; Stories-as-medicine; The short story as therapeutic instrument; Homeopathy; Cyber solutions; Global storytelling cultures; Literature and the institution.
- **The Framework of Health:** Technology as a tool for developing/ disseminating the short form narrative; Hybrid forms vs. the classical short story; Authorial health – short stories as autofictive documentation; The wellbeing of the Writer; Stories as self-help.
- **Economic Health:** The publishing landscape; Short stories and the Internet; The short story as viral phenomenon; Netflix et al. and productive reception; The twenty-first-century short story 'revival'; The short story and marketing; The health of the competition; Prognosis for the genre.

For style guide and submission details, please see

<https://www.intellectbooks.com/short-fiction-in-theory-practice>.

For further enquiries, please contact the editor, Professor Ailsa Cox, [coxa@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:coxa@edgehill.ac.uk). **The deadline for submissions is 1 July 2021.**



#### Principal Editor

Ailsa Cox  
Edge Hill University, UK  
[coxa@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:coxa@edgehill.ac.uk)

#### Associate Editors

Alison MacLeod  
University of Chichester, UK  
[A.MacLeod@chi.ac.uk](mailto:A.MacLeod@chi.ac.uk)

#### Guest Editor

Lucy Durneen  
University of Cambridge, UK

CALL FOR  
PAPERS

---

 To order this journal online visit our website: [www.intellectbooks.com](http://www.intellectbooks.com)

 @IntellectBooks

 @IntellectBooks

 intellectbooks

 Intellect Books