

Review: *The Shortest Distance* ...

At school, we were all taught that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, and it's this idea -- of the shortest distance -- that Miriam Ruff is exploring in her latest collection of stories.

In order to present a different view of the world, Miriam has invented (or discovered) a new genre, which she's dubbed the "ultrashort," and the object is to focus on a single moment in time. Each ultrashort is restricted to 150 words, but must contain all the "normal" elements of a traditional short story i.e. a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Sounds easy?

If you think it is, try writing an ultrashort yourself, and then get a copy of Miriam's book to compare the two ...

As a test of the genre's effectiveness, Miriam has included two versions of the same story, "Trapped in Amber." One is in the ultrashort 150-word format, and one in what she's called "mini" short stories of between 400 and 600 words.

I think you'll find that the ultrashort is a winner!

The topics of the stories range from everyday life and its problems (getting your first car, dealing with body image issues, facing divorce and more), to love and anger, and then on to some wonderful science fiction.

Truly, there's something for everyone in this collection!

Jennifer Stewart

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