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Come in...and be captivated...

Writers' Contest!

The 1st prize winner of the Autumn Writers' Contest, Shawn W. Thomas, won the opportunity of designing the contest featured in our winter issue.

With this installment of Writers' Contest, the featured winner of Shawn's contest, Abigail Walters, has won a \$25 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble bookstore! Enjoy her creative entry below~

We deeply encourage all of you to participate in our upcoming contests and to also use previous contests as personal writing exercises to get the pen moving!!!

For our next Writers' Contest challenge, we're handing over the creative controls~ to increase participation, we invite **you** to develop the next writers' contest and write an example version to go with it~ three winners will be chosen, giving the readership an opportunity to try their hand at **three different contests all at once!!!** These will be featured in the upcoming summer issue. **Send in your contest concepts to contests@thewriteplaceatthewritetime.org by June 1st**

Winter Issue Writer's Contest Rules- by Shawn W. Thomas

Story must include a reference to an eighties hit song, feature a phrase spoken in a foreign language and have a science fiction theme.

Narrator- A toaster who witnesses a murder.

Word Limit- 1,000

Submit

to: contests@thewriteplaceatthewritetime.org

Writers' Contest Winter Entry

By Abigail Walters

It seemed to me a barbaric, primal thing. Perhaps it stuck out so significantly because I'd become accustomed to the stream-lined-chrome-finish-digital-efficiency of the modern ice age. I don't use the phrase 'ice age' to compare 2050 to a time when saber-tooth tigers and mammoths roamed the earth; I mean to say that in a figurative sense this is age where convenience and immediacy are the golden standards and no one troubles themselves to any emotional extent, positive or negative.

Young mothers have no cause to raise their voices in frustration at their unruly broods; subliminal sound waves in i pods keep any tots behavior in check- they needn't learn, experience or think it out for themselves. Unsewn lovers don't rage over the end of a marriage. A digital account of every single item they

possessed from the words 'I do' halves it all equally in one day, so with money in hand, no need for litigation or last-minute hesitations, second guessing whether there truly should be a parting of their hands.

Tidy civilization. Do-it-for-you technology. No extremes. No traffic. Numb. Patches placed on the skin neutralize whatever might have moved you to tears.

Call me old-fashioned, but even if they were less perfect, I long for the days when human emotions still had a significant role in society. Give me the disgruntled housewife hurling a plate into the wall over the self-contained business woman who lets electronic media raise the children she rarely sees. She'd hardly know them at all if their statistics weren't charted and sent to her Blackberry. Let a husband rant over the newspaper on a Sunday morning, leaving the bread in the toaster too long, until he catches the grin on his wife's face and they both laugh together eating burnt toast.

Yet it's a frozen age and it is a piteously small victory when I'm thrilled over one black fly inconspicuously making its way into the pristine kitchen.

The sound disturbed the artificial quiet sandwiched between the glass and marble. It wasn't terribly loud, just terribly uncommon. Enough so to rouse the lady of the house from bath.

Walking the heated tiles into the kitchen, a plush robe tied tightly so as to prevent any excess moisture dripping to the floor, she peers in to see everything in order.

But wait-

Could it be a spot on the self-cleaning windows?..

The radio left on in the other room plays a re-make of the Tears for Fears oldy "Shout". The lyrics amp up the anticipation:

"Shout, shout, let it all out... These are the things I can do without..."

Normally, there would not be anything amiss or at least if there was, the click of a button could remedy it.

She stares, uncertain. The kitchen control panel responds to her touch and instantly a cleansing mist appears on the window. To her deep dismay, the dark spot is not washed away but rather has sprung to life!

Darting this way and that, agitated by the sudden damp, the fly is cruising at top speed, buzzing loud and proud.

There was no blueprint for this situation. Typically, insects were annihilated long before they set wing in the interior. This was unprecedented.

A survivor of the times gone by? A disturbance of the artificial peace?

"Allez-vous en!" she screams. *'Go away!'*

It might have been the first time in ages that she felt, truly felt something. It might have been anger. It might have been heightened annoyance. Yet whatever it was, it was certainly real.

My elation was short-lived.

A gargantuan frying pan of death took down the champion fly in twenty seconds.

It was a visceral murder. A primal reflex in a Novocain world.

But why should I waste time lamenting the fly's fate? I am a vintage toaster from 2010 and her intolerant gaze is sure to fall upon me soon...

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