

55 Fiction Redux | <http://www.newtimesslo.com/special-issue/8/55-fiction/>

55 Fiction has been called "terse, teasing, and occasionally surprising entries [that] boil drama and plot down to the most basic elements." The origin of 55 Fiction can be traced to a short story writing contest organized by New Times, an independent alternative weekly in San Luis Obispo, California, in 1987.

This was a mini project last year that had great student feedback and buy in that I wanted to expand upon. It is also a nod to the great work Diana does with her spoken word project in freshman year.

Writing rules:

1. Fifty-five words or less (A non-negotiable rule)
2. A setting
3. One or more characters
4. Some conflict
5. A resolution (not limited to moral of the story)
6. The title of the story is not part of the overall word count, but it can't exceed seven words.

"I love you, Sam," Susan whispered with a kiss as she rushed out the door to her own wedding shower. Head on, a drunk driver collided into her BMW. Pinned down, cuffed, and thrown into the back seat of the cop car, he was asked, "Sir, what's your name?" The driver responded, "I'm...I'm Sam." [55 words]

Though the words stung even as they passed through his lips, he knew they were rightly said. She knew, too; he could tell by the look in her eye. There was sadness, but not surprise, certainly not anger. It simply had to be this way. The words? "I think we should just be friends." [55 words]

Amir laid his mat and wicker basket on sandy earth. Squatting, the bony hands lifted the lid. The bustling market place opened attentively. His pipe droned seductively; the cobra emerged. Man's gaze met Serpent's glare, the charming rhythm impeccable. Beautiful Amrita slithered into his thoughts, his focus faltering. Amateur mistake – the snake struck in victory. [55 words]

ASSIGNMENT:

Individually, you will create multiple original mixed media collages and corresponding stories. Collectively, we will design a book. On themes, you will each read your piece publicly.

EXHIBITION:

We will have an art exhibition and reading at a public art gallery/space at the end of September.

Related art/references:

Nick Bantock's Griffin and Sabine Trilogy
various collage artists, including John Heartfield, Wangechi Mutu, Pablo Picasso, Fred Tomaselli, etc.

What Else?

