

## ZW10 Editors' General Comments

A typical ZW entrant wants to communicate something significant. Each piece conveys the sense of a genuine writer behind the scenes who is a creator, not a bored artisan. There is vigour and variety and inspiration. It is a privilege to read your work.

Part of the writer's journey is finding which approaches communicate best for different genre. Technical skills don't change sincerity or purpose; they help a writer be better understood.

Some thoughts from this year's editors:

ZineWest leans towards writing that goes beyond mere good description or a recount of events (no matter how interesting). The better pieces have a strong original voice, one that draws the reader in and does not continually shout or lecture. Editors are also impressed by work on popular subjects eg family life, that lack cliché and bring new perspective.

ZineWest does not give a prose piece much space! This can handicap some writers. The more memorable entries usually work as *stories*, whether memoir or fiction. Generally they take a central character or number of characters, develop a plot that is a sequence of events, and reveal something that quickly grabs and holds the reader's interest.

A poem might also tell a story, or it might share something important to the poet by painting a picture, by conveying emotion and mood. A poem can impart a sense of something to come or foreboding. "A poem can tell us about the world we inhabit through the thoughts of the poet."

These listed points of advice are nothing new!

1. A strong start attracts the reader. Readers like a good last line too. Make your bookends clear even if they're surprising. (This issue regularly comes up at editors' meetings)
2. Good grammar helps convey your meaning. Be honest – do you need a cold-hearted nit-picker to check your work before sending it out? PS Mum may not be the best choice...
3. Wise paragraphing can help a story be read more easily. Smart use of stanzas and line breaks in poetry can also assist the reader's appreciation.
4. Whether it's really about you or a fictional character, be sure that you keep perspective. Move on from a *recount* of events to a more imagined, dramatised tale.
5. If your story is set in the past you might use the speech of the past for *dialogue* to give the authentic touch but avoid sounding like you *wrote* this piece in the past.
6. Passion is good, but control hyperbole. Vary the tone for better effect.
7. What you tell your best friend or your diary might be great material for your next piece of writing if you experiment with point of view and remember the old adage: show, don't tell.

If your work was not included in the print zine this year, remember that the overall standard is good. You may have just missed out and your entries might succeed in a different competition.