

# News from SF writer Lance Robinson

## Short Stories or a Novel?

For fiction writers, novels, not short stories, are where the money's at.

I mean... relatively speaking. Gold coins are not raining down on every published novel. But to make a living writing short stories, you need to be a storyteller on the same level as Scheherazade.

(If it took you a few seconds to sound out that name, don't feel bad—I needed to look up the spelling, and I'll say, I never would have guessed *Scheherazade*. Got it now? Shah-hair-azad—the 1,001 nights storyteller?)

Anyway, as I was saying, it has long been the case that it's difficult to earn a living writing novels. But it's nearly impossible to do it writing short stories. I suppose Scheherazade was well-motivated by the fact that her life was on the line.

One reason to write and try to publish

short stories is to establish credentials—to be able to say to publishers, literary agents, and eventually readers, "Hey, I've published short stories in magazines X, Y, and Z, and in this prestigious anthology, so why don't you take a look at my novel?"

But the short story stands on its own two feet as an artistic medium, providing readers with an experience distinct from what a novel does. I also experience short stories and novels differently as a writer. In writing a novel, I get to explore a world in depth, and to create characters that take on lives of their own and evolve through extended journeys of learning. In writing short stories, I get to craft perfect little sculptures that I can hold in the palm of my hand. I enjoy both.

So, last year I decided I would alternate my time between the two forms, imagining that I would spend six to eight weeks on the novel, then six to eight weeks on short stories, and then back to the novel. For



Outlining this novel has been a process that's half **planning** and half **figuring it out as I write**.

instance, in December last year, I polished and finalized a couple of short stories I had developed earlier in the year. Then in late December and early January, I wrote a new story. I then returned to the novel I'm working on, a prequel to my *Writers of the Future* story "Five Days Until Sunset."

And then I kept working on the novel *for eight months*. So much for my plan of alternating back and forth! But I felt like I was making good progress on the novel and didn't want to interrupt my flow, so I don't mind that I didn't quite follow my plan.

Eventually, I did need a break, and so for the past six weeks I've been working on short stories. I've been writing about Saskatchewan, rangeland ecosystems and boreal forest ecosystems, genetic diversity, cultural diversity, and resilience in the face of oppression. And of course I'll let you know as these stories are published.

## Latest Publication

The November-December issue of *Analog Science Fiction & Fact* is out (even though it's not November yet), and it includes my latest short story, "One Step Away". It's the first hard science fiction story I've written in which the focal science is meteorology. Of course it's not *about* meteorology; it's about my hope that the world will soon get its collective act together. This is my third story to appear in *Analog*.

## Coming Soon

On October 30<sup>th</sup>, a new "Year's Best" anthology is being launched. Veteran editor Joe Stech reviewed hundreds of stories published in 2024, and selected the sixteen best concept-driven, near-future ideas about people interacting with technology. [Think Weirder, Vol. 1](#) will include my story "Money, Wealth, and Soil."

## How to Support a Writer

If you've read my work and enjoyed it, please consider doing one or more of the following:

- If you've read *Chasing New Suns*, *Think Weirder Vol. 1*, or *Writers of the Future Vol. 40*, write an honest review on Amazon, Goodreads, or some other platform. Reviews drive the algorithms of these platforms and help other readers discover me.
- Go into a bookstore or library with the *Chasing New Suns* ISBN number (978-1-0688724-0-2) and ask them if they have it in stock or can get it.
- If you've read something of mine and liked it, don't be shy to send me a note telling me what you liked about it.



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