



PRESS RELEASE

4 January 2023

Can you write about '*Light*' in a 50-word Festival competition?

Derby Book Festival is challenging children and adults to write a story or poem in up to fifty words on the subject of 'Light' for its 2023 Flash Fiction Writing Competition launched today (4 January).

The eighth Derby Book Festival will be held from 19 - 27 May 2023. The winning stories will be printed on a set of bookmarks and will be distributed across Derby and Derbyshire to promote Derby Book Festival.

In previous years, people have been invited to tackle a variety of themes: 'Love', 'Secrets', 'Journeys', 'Space', 'Our World' and 'Home', attracting hundreds of entries each year. The theme can be interpreted as widely as the author wishes, so long as the story or poem is no longer than fifty words.

Derby Book Festival Chair, Liz Fothergill DL, CBE explained why the theme of 'Light' has been chosen: "We want to have as wide a range of original stories as possible. 'Light' can be interpreted in so many ways: the light that is all around us and changes throughout the day, the feeling of being light or the weight of an object, the action of creating light – a fire or a candle. We look forward to reading all the inspiring stories that the competition always generates!"

The Flash Fiction competition has three age categories: 11 years and under, 12 – 17 years and 18 years and over. Entries for all categories will be judged by a panel of local writers and creative writing specialists and there will be one winner in each category with a prize of a £50 book token. There are also separate categories for HMP Foston Hall and HMP Sudbury.

Liz Fothergill, Chair of Derby Book Festival explained: "Our annual Flash Fiction competition is always an extremely popular part of the Festival and it encourages people of all ages to be creative and use their imaginations to write a story or poem."

“This year the 11 years and under category invites poems on the theme of ‘Light’ as we are encouraging schools to focus on poetry as we are inviting them to meet the Children’s Laureate, poet and author Joseph Coelho, at our Festival in May.”

The Festival’s key funder, the University of Derby, will be running a competition for their Illustration course students to illustrate the winning entries.

Professor Keith McLay, Provost - Learning & Teaching at the University of Derby, said: “George Orwell in his essay, ‘Why I Write’, compared ‘good prose’ to a ‘window pane’, which, of course, lets in light, an interpretation of the theme of this year’s Flash Fiction Competition; but it is one reading of a theme, which is varied and lends itself to critical appreciation. A university embraces at its core diversity of thought and critical opinion and thus it is why we are delighted to be a principal partner of the Derby Book Festival and, in particular, to be involved in promoting the Flash Fiction competition.”

The Festival website has some helpful links to those who are interested in writing Flash Fiction but are not sure where to start.

The set of bookmarks will be printed for the start of the Festival on 19 May and will be distributed widely across bookshops, local libraries, venues, cafes and arts centres.

To enter the competition, visit the Festival website and submit your story using the online form: <https://www.derbybookfestival.co.uk/flash-fiction>

The closing date for the competition is **9pm on Wednesday 15 February**. The terms and conditions for the competition can also be found on the website, where you can sign up for more information about the Festival.

You can also follow the Festival on Twitter at: @DerbyBookFest and ‘like’ the Festival on Facebook: www.facebook.com/derbybookfestival

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For further information contact:

Sian Hoyle, Executive Director, Derby Book Festival by email

at:sian@derbybookfestival.co.uk

Or

Jackie Carpenter, Volunteer Lead on Flash Fiction Competition, on 0779 213 2658

Note for Editors:

Information about Derby Book Festival

Derby Book Festival is now in its ninth year and will hold its eighth Festival from 19 – 27 May 2023.

Each year the Festival features internationally acclaimed authors and celebrates local writing talent with the aim of bringing Derby's residents together in a love of books and inspiring new readers to appreciate the pleasure and power of reading.

The Festival generally holds two events each year: a nine day Festival in late spring and a weekend Festival in early November.

The programme includes a broad range of events and activities aimed at all ages and interests from children's activities and book related crafts, to author talks, discussions, live performances, films, writing workshops for budding writers and the annual Book Quiz.

The Festival is organised in partnership with all the major arts, cultural and educational partners in the city: Artcore, Déda, Derby City Council, Derby LIVE, Derby Museum & Art Gallery, Derby Theatre, Landau Forte College, Marketing Derby, QUAD, University of Derby and Waterstones, who will all be hosting events.