**Reviewed with the Short Story**

* **Concision:** Don’t “start to run,” just “run.” Don’t “proceed to” or “begin to,” just do it!
* **Punctuation for dialogue:** The identification of the speaker is part of the same sentence as what he or she said so use a comma inside the quote and no caps for the pronoun.
  + “Will you quit your yakking,” he said.
* **Keep the Tense Consistent:** Don't change tenses mid-paper.  Present tense can create a sense of urgency, but it is difficult to maintain, and it does not allow for reflection that can give a story depth.  Most stories use past tense, and it reads like present tense for a reader.  Edit your papers to make sure the tenses do not change arbitrarily.  Use past tense unless you have a very clear reason for using a different tense.
* **Kill the Adverbs:** Use stronger verbs rather than prop up weak ones with adverbs.  Change "he said loudly" to "he shouted," and "she replied weakly" with "she whispered and put her head in her hands."  "He said" is better than "he said sarcastically." Use strong nouns and verbs to show the reader.
* **Complete Stories vs. Story Chapters:** Some of these stories read more like chapters or sections of longer stories. Sometimes it's a fine line between the two, but a basic rule of thumb is a complete story shows a change in the main character somehow (the emotional arc).
* **Rough Drafts vs. Complete Stories:** Short stories are hard to write.Some of these show major revisions that transformed rough drafts or ideas for stories into complete and satisfying stories. Others read like rough drafts that don't quite pull together despite a strong effort by the writer or don't pull together due to a poor effort by the writer.
* **Avoid Clichés:** Some phrases are so overused, that lose their ability to create vivid picture or freshly present ideas. They seem as if they were welded together ("Curl up in ball and cry" "in record time") like the original clichés. Cut these or choose fresher language instead (or tweak them).