

Scott Edelstein
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About 5200 words

Gifts and Blessings

by Scott Edelstein

The footsteps paused outside their apartment door. Jacek froze, holding the lit match tightly.

"Light the candles," his mother said. "You'll burn your fingers."

"There's someone at the door," Jacek said. The footsteps had made him forget how the blessing began. He stared at the flame creeping up the match, feeling small and stupid.

"If whoever's out in the hall wants us, he'll knock," his father said. "Blow it out and start again, before you set the tablecloth on fire."

Jacek carefully puckered his lips, but before he could exhale, Anna leaned forward and blew out the flame. "Hurry up, Jacek," she said. "Don't make a big production

out of it. All year you've been begging Papa to let you light the candles, so light them already."

Jacek took another match from the box and scraped it hard against the graphite. It lit with a loud sucking noise, and he carefully lifted it to the closest wick. He began chanting: "*Baruch ata adonai—*"

There was a sharp, hard knock on the door, and the burning match fell from Jacek's fingers onto the linen tablecloth. Anna covered it at once with the ashtray to put out the flame, then uncovered it again and plucked it from the table. The flame had left a tiny black and brown spot.

"I told you seven years old is too young for lighting the candles," said his mother. "You couldn't have let him bless the bread instead? Anna, get the door."

His sister pushed back her chair noisily and left the kitchen, smoothing her hair and tucking in her blouse. A moment later he heard the door open, and a strange male voice said, "Are you Mrs. Ehrlich?"

There was a pause before Anna said slowly, "No. I'm her daughter."

"Are your parents home?"

There was an even longer silence before Anna said flatly, "They're eating dinner."

"May I come in, please? I'd like to speak with them."

"Papa!" Anna shouted in a high, sharp voice. "Come to the door, please."

Footsteps echoes from the entryway as Jacek's father got up from the table. He had gotten only halfway across the room when a figure filled the kitchen doorway.

He was the biggest man Jacek had ever seen up close, and he was wearing a brown soldier's uniform. The top of his head, covered with short yellow hair, came close to the top of the doorway. His shoulders were wide and his belly, large and round, stretched

One Cent per Word, \$300 per Book

Making a Living as a Writer in Early Nineteenth Century America

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About 4200 words

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Mason's Change

My ears tingle. Through the trees back behind us,
another twig snaps. Jim swings that big deer gun
around in a shot, then runs with a shout
how he got it, he got it. At last
I catch up, and there,
breathless, we see.

The doctor said just one more rib down, poor girl
might have stood a fair chance. I knew that face
from school, but we'd hardly spoken. The hole
deep. Dark. They lowered her in, Jim
locked tight behind his bedroom door,
white window blind pulled tight.

These years since then, out for bass last week, I caught
a rusty box. Inside, savings bonds, big fistfuls, dripped
against Jim's college list we'd worked on one night, hunched

close to our campfire, each star he'd marked sharp there
blurred ghostly now, drowned. Shut back, bubbling quiet,
it all sank down through the dark again.

Nice day, I say. Face turned, he pumps. Black gas hose
clenched tight, tighter yet, pumps more, till at last
the bell dings. Tank full. Time up. Christ,
three years. Not a word. Not a glance.
Just my change, clinking dull here,
still warm from his hands.

Letter to Accompany a Snail Mail Fiction Submission

(The email version will be identical, except that the writer's contact information will appear at the end; there will be no date or addressee information at the beginning and no extra vertical space between "Sincerely" and "Carla McNaughton" at the end; and there will be this subject line: Short story for Sample: "Opening Lines")

3444 Klein St., #12
Milwaukee, WI 53202
414-988-2009 (w), 414-290-0117 (h)
414-290-0128 (FAX)
carlawrites@earthlink.net

November 20, 2009

Tracy Macaulay
Sample Magazine
288 Conklin Ave.
Fort Smith, AR 72903

Dear Tracy:

I'm pleased to send you my newest short story, "Opening Lines," which I hope you'll want to use in an upcoming issue. The story concerns the first meeting of two cousins raised in very different subcultures; it is set in rural Arkansas, a location that I know has long been of interest to *Sample*.

I've been writing fiction seriously for well over a year, and have been a reader of *Sample* for at least a decade.

I'll enclose a hard copy of "Opening Lines," as well as a stamped business-size envelope; if you choose not to publish this story, simply let me know by letter or email, and recycle or dispose of the manuscript copy. Because some editors prefer receiving material via email, I'll also send a copy to you (along with this letter) electronically.

If you have any questions, feel free to call. Enjoy the upcoming holiday.

Sincerely,

Carla McNaughton

Enc.:
"Opening Lines"
SASE

Letter to Accompany a Snail Mail Article Submission

(The email version will be identical, except that the writer's contact information will appear at the end; there will be no date or addressee information at the beginning and no extra vertical space between "Regards" and "Alice M. Valentino" at the end; and there will be this subject line: Feature on surviving O'Hare Airport)

23019 Santa Barbara Drive
Evanston, IL 60202
312-224-9971
312-224-8886 FAX
amvalentino@aol.com

December 9, 2009

Jerry Wexler
Travel Editor, **Imaginary Life**
34 Spring Street, Suite 406
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Jerry:

Chicago's O'Hare Airport is the busiest in North America and the fourth busiest in the world. Unfortunately, for most travelers, O'Hare is about as familiar as the ruins of Machu Picchu and as easy to deal with as the programming instructions for their DVD players. Indeed, most adult Americans live in secret (if minor) dread of either hearing or having to say the words, "I'm stuck at O'Hare."

The enclosed travel feature, "Surviving O'Hare," is intended to provide relief. It's a user-friendly, hands-on guide to arriving at, leaving from, getting around, eating and drinking in, and generally taming the beast known as O'Hare.

I've been a frequent business traveler—usually in and out of O'Hare—for the past seven years, and have made negotiating that airport something of a personal mission for the last five.

I'll enclose a hard copy of the piece, as well as the usual SASE. I'll also send the piece—and this letter—via email, so you can have everything electronically.

If you have any questions—or if you're ever stuck at O'Hare and need some sage advice—give me a call.

Regards,

Alice M. Valentino

Assignment Pitch: Snail Mail

8 Hargraves Road
Omega, VA 22333
703-555-8660
703-555-8998 fax
gwtwriter@visi.com

November 29, 2009

Clara Hardwick
Employer Review
450 Product Court
Service, FL 33990

Dear Clara:

Each working day, American workers spend over 240,000 person-hours using water coolers. A recent study has shown that the average office worker spends nine minutes a day quenching their thirst at the cooler, walking to and from it, and stopping to converse with other employees during the trip. These water breaks can add up to a significant loss of productivity for corporations employing more than 1000 people.

Concern about this among management has sparked the development of a new product: the personal water cooler. Similar in design to a large, sturdy thermos, this inexpensive device keeps one gallon of water cold and ready to drink. Placed in an employee's work station, it can increase their productivity by reducing their number of trips down the hall.

Five manufacturers now produce and sell personal water coolers. Prices range from just under thirty dollars to just under fifty. Design, efficiency, and durability vary greatly. Some models are free standing; others must be placed on shelves, desks, or tables.

I'd like to write an article (tentatively entitled "The Personal Oasis") of 2500 words for **Employer Review** that introduces these products, explains why they are useful, describes the features of each model, and rates each model for efficiency, convenience, durability, and overall value.

My previous work has appeared in a dozen publications, ranging from **American History** and **Relix** to **National Business Review** and **Office Products Monthly**. I've published several pieces that rate office products, including electric staplers, personal lighting, and telephone headsets. My first book, **The World's Best Office Products**, is forthcoming from McGraw-Hill. I'll enclose a couple of samples of my work.

If you're interested in assigning me "The Personal Oasis," please get in touch. I've enclosed the usual SASE. I'll also send this pitch electronically, so you can read and respond to either format.

Sincerely,

Grace W. Ticknor

The Same Assignment Pitch: Email

Subject line: Assignment pitch: The Personal Oasis

Dear Clara:

Each working day, American workers spend over 240,000 person-hours using water coolers. A recent study has shown that the average office worker spends nine minutes a day quenching their thirst at the cooler, walking to and from it, and stopping to converse with other employees during the trip. These water breaks can add up to a significant loss of productivity for corporations employing more than 1000 people.

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If you're interested in assigning me "The Personal Oasis," please get in touch. I'll also send this pitch via snail mail, so you can read and respond to whichever format you prefer.

Sincerely,
Grace W. Ticknor

703-555-8660
gwtwriter@visi.com
8 Hargraves Road
Omega, VA 22333

Sample Assignment Agreement

The Hypothetical Journal

34 Fleet Boulevard

New York, New York 10109

Phone: 212-555-6600 Fax: 212-555-6620

Email: info@hypotheticaljournal.com

January 17, 2009

*Rose Dominguez
4420 North Federal Highway, Suite 756
Boca Raton, FL 33487*

Dear Rose:

*This letter formally assigns you the piece we have discussed, "From Antiques to Ikea," for publication in **The Hypothetical Journal**. This feature will be 3000 words and will examine the tendency of baby boomers to split into two aesthetic directions: the very old and the ultra-modern. The feature will be a combination of factual data, interviews with boomers, and, primarily, your own cultural criticism.*

*You agree to deliver this feature in finished form, as both an electronic file (in Microsoft Word) and hard copy, no later than April 7, 2009. In exchange, **The Hypothetical Journal** will pay you \$1000 no later than 60 days after its receipt of the feature, provided it is publishable in our sole reasonable judgment. We shall own first world rights to the feature in both print and online form.*

If the feature is not acceptable, we will notify you within 30 of our receipt of it and provide you with clear guidelines for its revision. You shall then have 45 days to deliver a revised version to us. If this revision is also unacceptable, or if you do not deliver a revision to us within 45 days, we shall have the right to pay you a kill fee of \$300, revert all rights to the feature to you, and cancel this agreement, at which point neither of us shall have any further obligation to the other.

If these terms are acceptable, please sign and date both copies of this letter, and return one to me.

Sincerely,

*Clark Cohen
Senior Editor*

I agree to the above terms: _____ Date: _____

Rose Dominguez

Chin Communications

233 Armitage Lane
Albuquerque, NM 87108
Phone: 505-555-9221 • Fax: 505-555-9446
Email: nanchin@aol.com

April 22, 2009

Bert Carroll
Albuquerque Style
23 El Cholo Blvd.
Albuquerque, NM 87101

Dear Bert:

I've been enjoying *Albuquerque Style* since its first issue two years ago, and am pleased to see that it has achieved a wide readership throughout the state.

For the past four years, I've been writing freelance articles on assignment for a variety of magazines, newspapers, and websites, including *Parents*, the *Albuquerque Journal*, the *Denver Post*, *Organic Gardening*, *New Mexico*, *Southwest Profile*, and *Private Colleges*. Many of these pieces have dealt with people, places, institutions, and events in Albuquerque.

I'm interested in doing some freelance work for you on assignment, and am open to virtually any topic dealing with Albuquerque or New Mexico. I work fast, do thorough research and interviews, and am scrupulous about meeting deadlines. As you'll see in the enclosed samples, I can modify my style to suit just about any topic or readership. I've lived in Albuquerque for the past eleven years, and don't want to live anywhere else.

If this prospect interests you, please get in touch.

Sincerely,

Nan Chin