
2025 LAURA Short Fiction Award Contest

The purpose of The LAURA Short Fiction Award is to provide a benefit exclusive to WWW members—separate and apart from The WILLA Literary Award and The DOWNING Journalism Award—to celebrate short fiction.

2025 Criteria and Rules

Contest Rules – General

1. WWW members in good standing are eligible to enter.
2. Each member may enter one short story per contest year. Short stories that have won or placed in previous LAURA contests are ineligible. The short story must be the author's original work, not contracted or under consideration for publication prior to the entry deadline, and not previously published in any form—print or electronic.
3. The short fiction story must feature a female protagonist and be set in the American West. For the purposes of this competition, the American West is defined as all of North America west of the Mississippi River and includes Alaska and Hawaii.
4. Stories targeted for juvenile or adult markets will be accepted. There are no separate categories for juvenile and adult entries.
5. Entries must be no more than 5,000 words.

Formatting Rules for Entries

1. Stories must be submitted as a Word document.
2. The story must be double-spaced, 12-point type. Preferred fonts are Times, Times New Roman, or Courier New, with one-inch margins on all sides, and ragged right margins.
3. To submit: At the bottom of the on-line submission form, is a “Choose File” button. This will allow you to browse your computer files and select your story document.
4. Your story will be uploaded and attached to your registration form.
5. The file name of the **attachment** should consist of the story's title and may be followed by more words as long as they **do not reveal the author's identity**.

PLEASE NOTE: If the author's name appears **ANYWHERE** within the attachment **the submission will be disqualified.**

6. In the event of disqualification, entry fees **will not** be returned.

Entry Deadline & Fees

1. Entry fee is \$25, payable via PayPal on the WWW website. **Deadline: May 30, 2025.**
2. Questions should be e-mailed to The LAURA Award Chair Suzi Minor at this email address: laura-pres-elect2025@womenwritingthewest.org
3. Entrant will receive e-mail confirmation of receipt of the entry. If confirmation of entry is not received within one week of submission, please e-mail The LAURA Award Chair.
4. Story critiques will not be provided.

Judging

1. The WWW President-Elect serves as The LAURA Award Chair. Other members of The LAURA committee are the WWW President and Past-President.
2. The LAURA Award Chair recruits three WWW members to serve as preliminary screeners. The screeners may not themselves enter a story in the contest in the year they serve as screener. The screeners remain anonymous to everyone except The LAURA Award Chair.
3. The LAURA Award Chair also recruits a final judge. The final judge shall not be a member of WWW. She/he may be a librarian, creative writing instructor, or non-member author who has published short stories. It is not necessary to provide the final judge with a rubric.
4. The screeners will score each entry according to a short story rubric provided them and submit these scores to The LAURA Award Chair.
5. The Chair identifies the stories with the **top five scores and submits these to the final judge, who will determine first, second, and third place.** The authors will be notified by email that their stories are finalists for the award. The titles and authors will be announced on the WWW website.
6. The authors of the stories will not be notified of their final placement prior to the announcement at the WWW conference.

Awards

1. Placement will be announced by The LAURA Committee at The LAURA/DOWNING Awards Banquet during the WWW conference.
2. Authors of the three winning stories will receive certificates, and their stories will be published in The LAURA Journal on the WWW website.