

# Aieee

SN&R'S 2010 FLASH FICTION WINNERS KEEP IT SIMPLE  
DEFY SPELL CHECK AND SNEAK UP ON YA

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JASON CROSBY | INSET PHOTOGRAPHS BY RYAN DONAHUE

**H**ere we are with the sixth installment of SN&R's Flash Fiction contest. We had nearly 200 entries this year, and here are the best of the bunch: the first-, second- and third-prize winners; three honorable mentions; and 10 finalists.

The entries were first read by a panel of three in-house judges at SN&R. The highest-rated group of stories—this year, it was 16 instead of the usual 15, because of a tie—were sent to our guest judge, who made the final selection of winners and honorable mentions. The stories were judged anonymously at all levels.

In addition to modest prizes from SN&R, this year's guest judge, Valerie Fioravanti (see sidebar), will be inviting the winners to read at an upcoming Stories on Stage event.

"It was a treat to read the variety and depth of storytelling in these entries," said Fioravanti. "The winning stories truly did flash—they suggested whole, complicated lives from the stuff of moments."

## THIRD PLACE **79 Miles**

Annie stares at her dad's reflection in the rear-view mirror. "Daddy, where are we going to?"

The two-lane road carves through the vast evergreen landscape with precision, as if cut by a combine over the rolling hills. The crisp breeze carries a piney scent. Pete adjusts the rear-view and inhales deeply through his nostrils.

"It's a surprise," he answers. "A little trip, just you and me. It'll be great, I promise." He glances at his watch.

"Did you talk to Mommy? You're supposed to, right?"

Four years old and already a lawyer, Pete thinks. "I did, Boo. Everything's fine." Pete sees a sign—Vancouver, B.C. 79 miles. He smiles.

Annie holds up her teddy bear. "We love you, Daddy!" Suddenly she clutches the shaggy bear to her chest. "What's that?"

Blue and red lights strobe through the interior. Pete stares into the rear-view. His smile fades.

—Paul M. Mann, Sacramento

"This writer has a gift for subtlety. Nothing is overstated. The reader is nudged toward the answers by his elegant use of detail," said Fioravanti.