

Post
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A Short Card About Writing Fishing Stories

words about fishing
scribbling enough to fill up a book)

9 ^{genuine} Readable short stories are about fishing are
damned hard to write. I know ~~something~~
quite a bit about this because I've written
three books about fishing and am working
on a fourth (which will include this essay
effort if I ever get around to ^{finally} finishing it.) and ^{it's} can
count on the fingers of one hand the years
that just might qualify as genuine short
stories.

all of
in them

it's
most unimportant

finally catches on, in rare cases,
writing fully rounded
doesn't catch

One of the big problems about fishing
stories is that almost any ~~fish~~ story about
fishing ^{almost} necessarily involves ^{one person} ~~many~~ an
pursuit of a ^{one} fish ~~as the~~ ^(usually a "big" one) ~~cost~~ of characters
which ^{it usually turns up} ~~he or she~~ ^(usually the narrator) ~~is~~ ~~elaborated~~.
This ^{naturally} ~~limits~~ both the action and ^{the} cast of
characters and tends to lend a quality of
sameness to ^{almost any} ~~most~~ fishing stories, most of
which ^{are} included.

Perhaps the "best" ^{story} short I ever wrote managed to write about fishing, occurred quite by accident, ^{most of which was true.} I was floating down a big trout stream one Sunday afternoon when, ^{slows} rounding a ^{sharp} bend, I came upon a fellow fisherman standing on shore near a little feeder stream, his reel bent into a crazy hump, latched on to a ^{really} big trout across the river from him.

I had ^{quickly} dropped anchor ^{well} above him until he'd finally waded me by (angling his straining reel and line and leader) and, ^{glancing back} as I rounded the next bend, ~~glanced back~~ and saw ^{him} he still looped on to the boggie and heard him hollering to "keep the place under my hat as he had to go take ^{home} away on a little trip."

Whether or ^{where or} when ^{or} ^{where or} under what circumstances I ever saw him again furnishes the heart of my story -- the "denouement" as they used to call it in school when I was a kid ⁱⁿ and was probably the closest I ever came, or ^{may} ever come, to writing a genuine short story about the pursuit of trout.

(one of my most reprinted)

The story was called "The Intruder" and it appears in my first fiction book, Fruit Madness, a book that prompted one stupid reviewer to ^{ironically} remark that my fiction stories were "among France's finest fiction" - a remark ^{my grandfather, after some non-fiction} which I, in ^{my} prefer to construe as quite a compliment.

Genuine honest-to-goodness
short stories ^{about fishing} are not easy to write. I know
quite a bit ^{about} ~~how hard they are~~
because I've written three books ^{about}
fishing, and am working on my ^{fourth},
and ^{yet} must confess that I can count on
the fingers of one hand the yarns that
just might qualify for that distinction.

There are many reasons why this
is so, one of the biggest being that
fishing for fun instead of money is
such an inherently solitary pursuit --
and this is so no matter how many fellow or lady
fisherfolk may ^{happen to} be in your ^{only} party.
Game-sport fishing, especially with a fly,
almost necessarily involves one person
in pursuit of one fish at a time. This
naturally ^{sharply} narrows and limits both the
action and cast of character, ~~either~~
~~the fisherman catches something or he fails~~.
Such yarns may be embellished ^{a bit} by
bits ^{of anecdote} about casting, types of water and flies
and hatches and the like. But essentially
most fishing tales boil down to an account
of whether your fisherman ^{here} caught the "big"
one or ~~the~~ ^{she} fell on his butt.

Perhaps the closest I ever came to
writing an honest-to-goodness short
story ^{which happened} involving fishing occurred quite by
chance. Most of the story I ^{later} spun about it
actually occurred ^{later} happened; at least
most of it.