Keywords in Creative Writing

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enough money to finance publication of the entire issue. As a consolation prize, contestants typically receive a year’s subscription to the journal, another clever editorial tactic that boosts exposure of the magazine.

If the authors of this book sound skeptical of contests, it’s not because we haven’t been on the winning end. Both of us have won contests and been pleased when friends and strangers have recognized our accomplishment. We simply yearn, unrealistically perhaps, for a publication climate that is more communal than individualistic, that acknowledges shared achievement as fully as personal triumph. However, as long as writers continue to hunger for fame, and as long as editors and publishers (q.v.) at cash-strapped university presses, nonprofit presses, and small presses desperately require funds to produce their work, contests are likely to remain a staple of the literary landscape.

**Contributor’s Copy**

The contributor’s copy is the coin of the realm in the kingdom of the small and literary press. In exchange for the right to publish an author’s work, the editors of a vast majority of literary magazines “pay” the author with one or more complimentary copies of the magazine. While the standard payment is one to three copies, some publishers give their contributors up to ten or twenty copies and also provide offprints of the author’s piece. (Those journals that aren’t even willing to ante up a single contributor’s copy—even if they have legitimate financial reasons for not doing so—are generally shunned by writers with established reputations.) To many new writers, this situation is a source of grave wonder. They had assumed that when they were finally published the financial reward would be commensurate with their happiness at seeing their name in print. Alas, that is not the case, and the disappointment they feel is likely to be compounded by friends’ and relatives’ astonishment at the paltry compensation literature receives.

Yet, in a sense, this arrangement is beneficial to all parties. Writers have the pleasure of seeing their names in print, and they may attract the notice of more influential editors and publishers (q.v). Moreover, the contributor’s copy provides a writer with a window on the literary scene, helping him to assess the current market for his work. The minimal payment
Copyright and Intellectual Property

According to the World Intellectual Property Organization, which was founded in 1970 to promote worldwide protection of industrial property and copyrighted materials: