

ROMEO FORBES CHILDREN’S STORYWRITING COMPETITION 2006

“Elias and His Trees,” the maiden book published by CANVAS inspired the creation of an annual writing contest which seeks to produce original storybooks for children, here in the Philippines and abroad. Last year, this contest attracted substantial interest and over 80 Filipino writers from all over the world participated – including at least five past Palanca awardees, one of whom won the award. We are hopeful that it will soon evolve into one of the major writing competitions – and the accompanying art exhibition, one of the most anticipated annually – in the Philippines.

The young and extremely talented artist who illustrated Elias passed away early this year, and his honor and memory, CANVAS has decided to rename this annual contest the Romeo Forbes Children’s Storywriting Competition, which will fittingly showcase and recognize the potential and talents of young artists and writers everywhere.

We therefore invite you to join and submit an entry to possibly see your written text rendered in full color in a children’s book. This year, the CANVAS fellow is fittingly a young and fast rising artist, Rodel Tapaya. The book launching for the winning entry together with the art exhibition, is scheduled for June 2007.

Rules and Conditions:

1. The Romeo Forbes Children’s Storywriting Competition is open to all Filipinos.
2. Entries must not have been previously published, and all entrants must warrant the originality of their submitted entries.
3. Writers may submit only one entry, in English or Filipino, which shall be of 2,000 words or less.
4. There is no particular theme, other than the use of this year’s contest piece, a new work by artist Rodel Tapaya (also viewable at the CANVAS website – www.canvas.ph) as the inspiration or basis for the entry.
5. The CANVAS children’s story writing competition shall be awarded points by a select panel of judges based on the following criteria:
 - Originality and Relevance (30%)
 - Quality of Writing (30%)
 - Extent to which the story may be appreciated by children and adults alike (30%)
 - X-Factor (Judges’ discretion) (10%)



6. CANVAS shall shortlist the five to ten best stories from which a panel of judges shall collectively choose the final winner, although the judges shall also be given the option of reading all submitted entries.

If the judges cannot come to a consensus on the winner, they shall take a vote and the entry that gains the most number of votes shall be declared the winner. The CANVAS Fellow may be consulted, but shall not be entitled to vote.

Neither the judges nor the CANVAS fellow will see the entrant's name until winner is chosen.

7. Entries must be submitted by email, as a Microsoft Word attachment, to canvas.ph@gmail.com with the subject heading ROMEO FORBES CHILDREN'S STORYWRITING COMPETITION. Entrants must include a cover sheet with their name, mailing and email address, and telephone number. Only the story title should appear on all pages of the entry.
8. The deadline for submission of entries is 5:00 p.m. (Manila time), 16 May 2006. Entries received after the deadline, even if sent earlier, will no longer be considered for the competition.

CANVAS shall not be responsible for entries which are not received, or which are received after the deadline, due to technical failure or for any other reason whatsoever.

9. Subject to Rule 14 below, by submitting an entry, all entrants thereby agree to authorize CANVAS to post such entries on its website, as CANVAS deems fit, and free from any payments, royalties or fees whatsoever.
10. There shall be only one winner, who shall receive a cash prize of PhP 30,000.00 for his/her entry. The winner shall be responsible for all applicable taxes.

The winning writer shall also be entitled to five (5) free copies upon publication of the book.

The winner shall grant and transfer to CANVAS all intellectual property and publication rights to the story, including any translations, adaptations or modifications thereto.

It is hereby understood that the cash prize to be awarded to the winner shall include consideration of such intellectual property and publication rights to the story, and the writer shall not be entitled to any other royalties or fees from earnings, if any, that may result from future publication of, licensing of, or other transactions on the same. *(Please see our note below on why we have this rule.)*

11. Except for the right to publish any received entry on its website, CANVAS shall not retain any other rights to entries that are not selected as the winner, except where separate agreements are reached with the writers.

12. CANVAS shall exercise full and exclusive editorial and artistic control over the publication of the winning entry and resulting book.

While, it is the full intention of CANVAS to publish the winning entry as a full-color children's book, CANVAS reserves the right not to publish the same for any reason whatsoever.

13. The winner of the CANVAS storywriting competition will be announced on or around June 30, 2006 on the CANVAS website. The winner will also be notified via email on the same announcement date.

14. CANVAS reserves the right not to award the top competition prize in the event that the judges decide that no entry was received that is deserving of the top prize. In such event, however, CANVAS shall have no right whatsoever over all entries that were received; and shall not publish any entry, in its website or in any other venue, without the prior written consent or agreement of the author.

15. The decision of the competition judges shall be final, and no correspondence or inquiries into the same – including requests for comments/feedback on received entries – shall be entertained.

16. Employees of CANVAS, and members of their immediate family, as well as the CANVAS Fellow's immediate family, are disqualified from participating in the competition.

A Note on Why We Ask for the Transfer of Rights

CANVAS rules clearly state that the winning author should agree to transfer all rights to CANVAS and *"...shall not be entitled to any other royalties or fees from earnings, if any, that may result from future publication of, licensing of, or other transactions on the same."*

This rule has understandably raised quite a few eyebrows in the writers' community... and this note is just to clarify where it is that CANVAS is coming from.

Simply put, the transfer of rights will give us more flexibility and space to liberally share and give our consent to anyone who may ask for permission to use the winning story.

Long term, we are interested in setting up a formal mechanism for placing all our stories into the public domain for everyone to use freely and fairly. Just as we were fortunate enough to have been given permission to adapt "The Man Who Planted Trees," into

“Elias and His Trees,” we hope that the stories that we work on will inspire similar creativity.

Unfortunately, it is not a simple matter of simply declaring that CANVAS' stories are now in the public domain. For one, if we want the books to see the light of day, we have to work with publishers who presently require the transfer, or at least sharing of rights. As you might expect, they are a bit uncomfortable with the idea of publishing a story that is open for everyone to also use.

A second reason why we ask for the transfer of rights is that CANVAS is a small NGO, and is not equipped to document and track royalty shares that ideally should accrue to authors and artists. In fact, we only rely on and trust our publisher to remit to us our own royalty shares. It is for this reason that our prizes (we think), are quite substantial and approximates (if not exceeds) what writers would normally expect to receive in royalties.

Finally, we are also trying to be financially sustainable. We rely on a small amount of grant funding to conduct our activities, including co-sharing the publication costs of the books. We can only hope to recoup the expenses so that we can do these activities on a continuing and recurring basis in the years to come.

So, we have to take our time in resolving how we are to *formally* balance our desire to contribute to the public domain in a manner that is also fair to the writers and artists, on the one hand; and our need to also be fiscally responsible with the grants that have been entrusted to us, and to the publishers that we partner with, on the other.

CANVAS is a young nonprofit, only a little over a year old. Hopefully, with more feedback, and lessons that come with experience, we will be able to find the ideal balance at some time in the near future.