GLVWG 2023 Anthology – Editing Guidelines

Definitions adapted from online material available from Reedsy and Sandwriters Writing Tips, as well as, input from veteran GLVWG editors.

Context

GLVWG Anthologies go through one round of review at the time of submission and two rounds of editing once we enter into a contract with the author. Before accepting an entry, the Anthology Chair will review the work to determine whether it:

- Meets word/line count requirements.
- Fits the theme.
- Is free of any excessive violence, gore, or sex.
- Presents a professional impression.

That decision is not a once and done decree, but an exchange to determine if the Chair and the author can come to a mutual decision to proceed to a contract. This step is called Acceptance.

We perform two rounds of reviews after Acceptance, which we refer to as **content** and **line** editing. These guidelines will focus on the ways in which we conduct these editing rounds. They have somewhat different purposes, so different editing teams perform these duties for the GLVWG Anthologies.

Of the two rounds, content editing is broader and more grounded in the craft of writing – its results are more negotiable between author and editor. Line editing is more detailed and grounded in grammar / writing style standards. The line editing results are less negotiable and often a required part of a work's acceptance for publications like the GLVWG Anthologies.

What is content editing?

Content editing in our GLVWG Anthology sense, may be referred to as developmental editing in other venues. It is a thorough and in-depth review of an entire manuscript. It examines all the elements of the writing, from individual words and sentences to overall structure and style. In fiction, this edit will also address any issues related to what works or doesn't in the story's plot, characterization, point of view, and narration. Good developmental editing will bear the target audience in mind and assess the work in relation to industry norms and expectations.

How is content editing performed for GLVWG Anthologies?

Each member of the GLVWG Anthology Content Editing Team is an experienced author and developmental editor. They will review the submitted works differently for each category:

- Fiction
  - Does the story lead with the main character? Do all of the characters serve a purpose in the story? If not, can the lesser characters be eliminated and their lines given to a stronger character?
  - Does the story begin in medias res (in the middle of the action), or as close to it as possible? Do the opening lines pique reader interest?

- o Is there awkward or clunky writing that could be improved and is there an info dump that might be wasting precious words?
- o Does dialogue move the story forward? Small talk and meandering dialogue also waste words. Same with description.
- o Does the plot make sense from beginning to end?
- o Can the pacing can be improved?
- o Can action tags be used in place of dialogue tags for smoother prose?
- o Are there instances of passive voice that should be rewritten into active voice?
- o Are there cliché descriptions or dialogue that can be eliminated or revised?
- o Are there instances of weak verbs or an overuse of "-ly" adverbs?
- o Does the story come to a logical, or at least satisfying, conclusion?

- Essay
  - o Is there awkward phrasing that could be improved?
  - o Does the writer remain on topic or venture into tangents that muddle the essay's focus?
  - o Does the conclusion make sense given the essay's topic?
  - o Are there obvious cliches that can be eliminated or revised?
  - o Are there instances of weak verbs or an excess of "-ly" adverbs?
  - o Are there instances of passive voice that should be rewritten into active voice?

- Poetry
  - o Is the poem special/original?
  - o Is the meaning/message clear?
  - o Is the punctuation consistent? [less is more and a line break generally counts for a comma]
  - o Has the meaning of any line been sacrificed to manipulate the rhyme?
  - o Are there words or lines which could be eliminated without affecting the poem?
  - o Are there accidental repetitions / too many words like 'and' 'the' 'of'?
  - o Are the voice and tone consistent and authentic?
  - o Have you used powerful words at the ends of lines and stanzas?
  - o Do you need stanza breaks to let the reader absorb before reading on?
  - o If you write in rhyme, are you counting syllables for the rhythm?
  - o Are there childish words [like 'yummy'] in an otherwise 'adult' poem?
  - o Is your title memorable? [Titles such as 'Love', 'Summer' & 'Flowers' are not, nor is 'Untitled' – give your babies decent names!]
  - o Do the first lines make the reader want to read on?
  - o Have you checked for clichés?
  - o Are there feeble words, which can be replaced or omitted? [Words like 'very' 'really' 'nice' 'sad' 'fun']
  - o Does the resolution give a 'sense of an ending'?

What is line editing and how is it different from content editing?

Line editing ensures that the language in a piece of writing follows the rules of standard English and adheres to a preferred style guide. Although most types of editing have some overlap, there are crucial differences between content and line editing. Line editors are language technicians. They review from the perspective of grammar, punctuation, word choice, and consistency, *(e.g., did your character's eye color change between chapters?)*. While content editors are also concerned with these aspects of writing, they will tend to address them in a more macro sense. Line editing follows content editing and will involve a single-minded approach that ferrets out and offers solutions to problems like inconsistent tenses, weak or repeated words, over-zealous commas, and awkward phrasing.

How is line editing performed for GLVWG Anthologies?

Each member of the GLVWG Anthology Line Editing Team is an is a credentialed copy editor and is offered a fee for their efforts. They will review the submitted works differently for each category:

- General
  - Line edits are typically required, if a work is to be published.
  - Each line editor will use multiple sources, as needed, depending upon the category (see below), from the following list:
    - Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS),
    - Associated Press Stylebook (AP),
    - Webster's New College Dictionary (Webster's).
  - These sources provide the definitive verdicts in case of any questions, unless specified otherwise. Some of the often controversial calls that we will opt for in our Anthologies include:
    - Oxford comma?
    - Title capitalization?
    - Parentheses?
  - Some exceptions can be made, especially if the author is using something for effect, such as jargon or repeating words or phrases—and it works in the context of that specific entry. In those cases, discussion is welcome, if the editor did not already catch the intended effect.
- Fiction
  - Primary source: CMOS,
  - Secondary source: AP,
  - Third source: Webster's.
- Essay
  - Primary source: AP,
  - Secondary source: Webster's.
- Poetry
  - In lieu of a style guide that focuses on poetry, general edits still apply
  - Generally:
    - Spelling will be corrected
    - Some grammatically correct punctuation and capitalization rules may be suspended, if the context or structure of the poem supports the variance, such as not capitalizing the first word in a line, when it's a continuation of the previous line.

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