Short Story & Poem Submission Guidelines for Nightshade Publishing® Anthologies

Thank you for querying with Nightshade Publishing. Below is a set of rules and guidelines about the query letter, document formatting, and story content. If a query falls outside of these guidelines it may not be up for consideration.

Story Content:

We are looking for short stories and poems that sit within the Young Adult to Adult categories. The anthology will be published for general market readership. Stories may be arranged or marked internally for age readership depending on the spread of pieces we accept.

Short stories and poems must align with the theme of the anthology: ***Haunted Waters***. So what exactly are we looking for? Short stories and poems where the main setting, and possibly character of the story, is a naturally forming body of water—that is to some degree haunted. Either by what's living in it, or its very being. Folktale and fairytale monsters encouraged! Of course, human-made scares are also allowed.

Short Story Word Limit: 8,000 Words (give or take)
Poem Word Limit: 600 Words (give or take)

We are not looking for open door romance, erotica, vore, gore, or intense use of swearing. Closed door romance is acceptable. Light swearing is acceptable.

Query Letter:

Queries are to be emailed to Queries@NightshadePublishing.com. In your query please address the Nightshade Publishing Team. Do not address only one member of the Nightshade staff. Doing so will result in an immediate rejection.

In your query letter please give us a blurb about your piece, a general query letter, and a one page synopsis (or as close to one page as possible) spoilers included (**not required for poems as they are shorter works**). At the start of your query please note the genre, subgenre if applicable; word count, and age category. Do include any links to author social media pages that you have. A high follower count is not considered when looking for authors.

You can get a free query critique on https://qtcritique.com/. Nightshade is in no way affiliated with QTCritique. We share this link at no benefit to ourselves as a company, it is purely for the benefit of the authors or agents querying us.

If this work has already been published, please do let us know, and let us know any requirements for republication given by previous rights holders.

Document Formatting:

Query emails and attached documents should be titled as following:

Query, Author Name, Story Name, Word Count, Genre, Date.

All documents must be formatted in 12pt with Times New Roman. Line spacing can be between 1.5 and 2. Indents are to be made using the rule bar and are to be set at .5 left, ***do not use the tab key***. Pages are to be set to letter sizing, 8.5”x11”. Please do not send any files with alternative page sizings.

Author name, piece title, genre, category, word count, date, and email address should be included in the header of the document, with a running page number at the bottom of the document. An example will be provided at the end of the guideline document.

Please submit the entirety of your short story.

Query Header Example:

Xanna Renae - Story Title that’s Totally Real

High Fantasy Thrills - Adult - 8,500 Words
October 31st, 2026 - YourEmail @ YourEmail . com

This heading can be located in the top right or left of the first page in 10pt or 11pt font. And a running page number is to be located at the same location, or central, on the bottom of the page.

Please do not email us for an update on your query position. We will respond to authors in due time (aiming for a four week span between receiving a query and sending a response, but that is not guaranteed). Submissions close March of 2027. An exact date will be posted on our social media accounts and in our newsletter.

We look forward to reading your queries,

The Nightshade Publishing® Team