



Be different: buy direct
from the author or
tslbooks.uk

INSTEAD: A SHORT STORY COLLECTION

INTRODUCTION

I had written a lot of full length fiction – mostly for children and teenagers – when I began exploring short stories for adults. The result was *RAVELLED*, a diverse collection that was well received by many authors I respect. It was a while before I came across the phrase *transgressing boundaries* and realised that quite by accident I had explored ways of doing this and was inadvertently on trend! To my delight, a creative writing tutor said he would use it with his students because it was “a masterclass in short story writing.”

WOKEN followed a year or so later. It seemed that I was hooked on the short form, having discovered quite how much it can do in a few thousand words. Perhaps this second collection was a little darker as well as more political – beginning with environmental activists and ending at the first Women’s March on London. But in between there were stories of many different kinds and moods. Jeremy Vine’s verdict was, “Bewitchingly beautiful... so well written.”

I now have more than 30 titles, including two charity picture books for *People not Borders*, but I found that ideas for short stories kept presenting themselves. With one exception, the stories in *INSTEAD* were written while my son and daughter-in-law were expecting their first child, now my grandson Nathaniel Paul. The last story emerged when he was a few weeks old. It became clear to me that if this collection has any thematic unity apart from the love and loss that form my default position as a writer, that linking thread is babies. Here we have different kinds of pregnancies, a grandma not unlike me, sexual infidelity, missing parents to trace, and parents present but struggling to relate to a son who doesn’t conform. Babies redefine lives as they have a habit of doing, and adults look back on the early years that shaped them.

There are stories set in the past and in the present, and you will notice a range of styles – but no fairy tales or fables this time, no fantasy or magic realism. With *INSTEAD* I’m keeping it real. Whatever the arc, genre or seed of each story, I believe they all offer hope as well as humanity – because if we are to make a better world to share, then humanity is where hope lies.

<https://www.suehamptonauthor.co.uk/>