



John Crowley

Novelties & Souvenirs
ISBN13: 9780380731060

About Writing Stories **by John Crowley**

Stories, as we have learned in our classrooms from writers like Poe and Hemingway, and in our reading of Carver and Updike and O'Hara, have or ought to have a number of distinct fictional qualities — singleness of effect, unity of means, things left unsaid or undone and yet made clear, a single motion of a single soul in a distinct span of time, etc. Not all writers of stories aim for all of these things, but there are writers whose natural bent is toward them. I don't think I'm one of those. I haven't written many, and the ones I have written often seem to be to be compressions or facets of longer or larger or less restricted things, or they are deliberate attempts to write a story of a certain kind just to see if

I can follow its rules: a traveler's tale like *Antiquities*, or a ghost story, or a science-fiction story on a standard theme, like *Gone*. I like the sensation of tying up the small package of a story neatly — but not too tightly — and getting the just-enough, not-too-much equation right (it's a sensation both like and unlike the sensation of reading a story that gets it right) but it often seems I could have just gone on, and strung more beads with this one, till a bigger thing was made. Which doesn't mean I am not satisfied with — even proud of — these smaller offspring. I remember the pleasure of their conception and birth, and I like to have them all gathered together. I hope others will like it too.