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Kostelanetz: Short Novels

SHORT NOVELS

Richard Kostelanetz

He relished paternity suits not as threats upon his integrity but as opportunities to publicize his potency.

I've just been handed a news flash that says, "There will be no more news."

A virgin at twenty, she was a snob at thirty and a spinster at forty.

In the story a that is palindrome is that a story the inn.

I'm a man inside a man inside a man inside a woman all wanting to get out.

He spent the day listening in sequence to all the versions he owned of J. S. Bach's *Die Kunst der Fugue*, crying every time the last triple fugue ended in mid-phrase, signaling the composer's death.

Obsessed with your face, I see you everywhere I go; I see it everywhere I look.

Better to make us performers seem ethereal, he filmed only our reflections on water.

Soon after he thought himself gay, he had the good fortune of meeting the man with whom he would spend the rest of his life.

She married the sort of man who her wealthy parents wanted for her husband and then divorced him in favor of another man who would be, she thought, even more acceptable to them.

He changed his home address so often that I no longer know where he is, or was.

Any word I write can be interpreted in seven ways, or seventy-seven, or seven hundred seventy-seven.

Thinking she could cure every philanderer of infidelity, she wouldn't forgive herself for ever being wrong.

I write a sentence and rewrite it, and then rewrite it again, until I have a string of words as perfect as the one you're now reading.

The road on which he traveled receded precipitously before him.

He stood on a spot from which everything important to him in the world was equidistant.

As long as he made it his principal interpersonal strategy to tell his superiors whatever it was they wanted to hear, he would never emerge from behind their shadow, disqualifying himself from ever becoming a leader.

He could tell from how she clasped her arms across her chest, moving them up and down as she was talking to me, that she must be taking an interest, a serious interest, in him.

They are a million, and we are only three.

Whenever I begin a novel, my wife invariably rewrites and writes until she completes it.

On the same day that he married his ex-wife's daughter by a later marriage, his ex-wife married his son from his first marriage.

Founding companies that required her constant attention, she spurned the leisure her inheritance afforded her by buying herself into workaday slavery.

Authoring a book-length autobiography that is unauthorized, I expect, once it appears, to file a defamatory suit against myself.

He lied because his colleagues lied, he cheated because they cheated, and he stole because he could see everyone around him successfully getting away with theft.

She wired the fence around her house to shock not only animals and burglars but relatives who hoped they would not be forgotten in her will.

Returning home for the first time in two decades, she was continually surprised to discover that most of the people she heard on the streets were speaking the language of her dreams.

What he wanted to do was exploit his wife's instinctive sadism by putting her in charge of surreptitious assassinations.

Allowing no self-pity, he refused compensation for injustice.

The "bottom line" in literature is not how much money you earn before you die but how many readers you have after you're gone.

She preferred being married to a man who lived and worked in another town.

He was such a compulsive, intimidating beggar that every night with him resembled Halloween, and every woman beside him looked like a witch.

While the doctor mentioned the names of my past lovers, several electronic measuring devices, attached by wires to different parts of my body, registered different responses that the doctor then recorded in his book.

Though he took a year to paint a picture, he shot each day a photograph of himself before his work in progress, knowing that the snapshots would be exhibited chronologically beside the painting.

He took a perverse pleasure in getting to the office before any of his employees and then staying later than they did, even though his mid-days were customarily spent sleeping with one of his three secretaries.

What he hadn't anticipated, in his greatest vision for his family, was a son who would never marry and thus never have any children, a son who would dissipate his inheritance in homosexual charities.

You can observe a lot by just looking.

As a fake professor who was also a professional faker, he was full of ruses to keep us from recognizing how ignorant he was.

Nothing plus nothing equals nothing, while something plus something equals more than something.

She worked as a fair-weather birdcage cleaner.

I feel like I've spent my life waiting by the telephone for women who were scarcely interested in calling me back.

Her new lovers had to rearrange their daily schedules if they were to stay lovers at all.

My father showed up with a new girlfriend one weekend and another the following Saturday, both of whom would spend the night with him in our guest room; it was hard for us to remember their names.

Even though she was a full professor at a well-known college, no one respected either her writing or talking.

Overhearing the scheme for a monstrous crime, I left my newspaper where it was likely to be found—with the men at the airport, sitting on their suitcases and looking at the ceiling as though they were waiting for their savior to come.

Every day, for fifty years of their marriage, they set up a tripod and took a photograph of themselves smiling at each other.

I belong to a secret society about which I can write nothing more.

He wrote two thousand different poems in an hour.

So great was his power over women that wives would leave husbands, parents, and children, as well as homes, possessions and friends, to go away with him.

Her academic scorecard showed that she received an A in every college course she ever took.

She stole his best ideas and called them her own—even the idea of stealing his best ideas and calling them her own.

You'll know the millennium has come when vinegar turns to wine.