

ABCs of Flash Writing: Q is for Quiet

By **Cathy Ulrich**

Q is for quiet, for the spaces between the words.

In music, you're taught *play the rests*. That the moments of silence are just as important as the moments of sound.

The same is true in writing, especially in flash, where you have to say so much with so little. These moments of silence can be so very large, so very important. It could be something as simple as dropping some adverbs here and there, tightening up some dialogue, leaving some lines left unsaid. It could be something as simple as implying a larger world for the story with a few words: *After it happens, you go to the store.*

Look at Jacqueline Doyle's powerhouse story in Wigleaf, [Little Darling](#).

Her opening lines: *It was my idea. Not his.*

Those five little words. Only one of them has more than one syllable. There is a story in those words, and in the quiet between them.

The best flash writers are the ones playing the rests, letting the readers fill in those moments of silence with their own music, their own story.

Master those quiet moments, those unsaid things. Your writing will be stronger for it.

Cathy Ulrich is a writer from Montana. Her work can be found in a variety of journals, including Wigleaf, Jellyfish Review, Former Cactus, and Spry.

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