

The Serious Writer Tracks His Stats

by Kevin Myrick

The serious writer sat in front of his computer, a slave to the machine. He sat and watched, waited for the next ding from the speakers to let him know he had a comment on a story. A star for his good work was better than the best high.

He waited for the next message from a friend, an e-mail from a contact or the phone call from the editor full of praise. "What a fantastic story!" was all he needed to read or to hear from someone to know he was a good writer. He had to hear it to believe it from anyone and everyone.

He wanted, needed the numbers to go higher and higher day by day until everyone had read every word he'd ever written. It drove the man to the edge and pushed him over.

Every time the computer let out a loud ding he foamed at the mouth, perfectly trained in the Pavlovian way. Somehow the serious writer kept it up until finally the computer made a sound he never heard before one day; he watched the smoke bellow out from the insides like steam on a cold day from a fresh kill. He screamed so loud in agony at the loss a neighbor called the police with the thought that someone was being murdered. The officers kicked down his door and saw him half naked, the computer clutched against his chest. They carried him away in cuffs to the mental hospital as he yelled "I NEED STATS! PLEASE! JUST GIVE ME THE STATS!"

