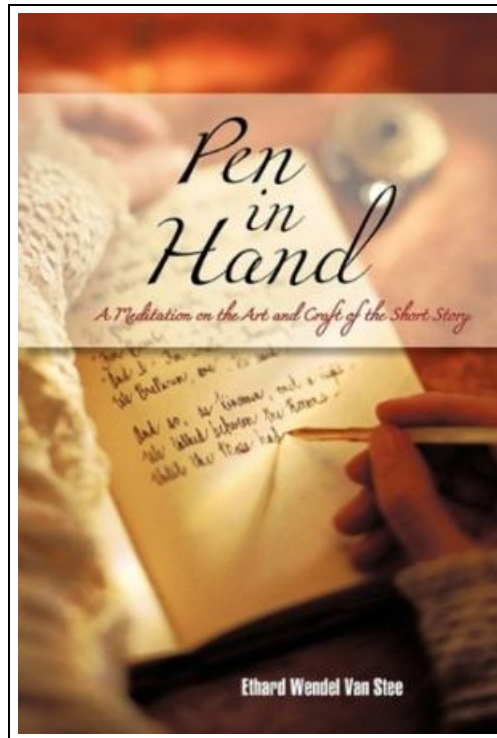


## Pen in Hand: A Meditation on the Art and Craft of the Short Story



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The connection which I have shown in this lecture to exist between the energy of the heart's contraction and the length of the muscle fibers, enables us to understand not only the marvelous power of adaptation of the heart to the varying strains of everyday life, but also the condition of this organ in disease, when from overstrain or morbid alterations in its muscles or valves it fails to carry out its functions with efficiency. What a beautiful sentence. It was delivered by the eminent physiologist Ernest H. Starling near the end of his Linacre Lecture given at Cambridge in 1915. When I was a young man editing manuscripts for technical journals, I was appalled by how poorly so many young scientists wrote. As the excerpt from Starling illustrates, scientific reporting was at one time rendered in well-crafted prose. So, what happened? Style in scientific writing, as elsewhere, grew so transparent as to disappear altogether. My personal journey put me on a decades-long path from technical to creative writing. Good writing is good writing, wherever it is found. My goal is to help you become a sculptor of words as you pursue the art of fiction. Some of what I have gleaned over the years, as heir to an older tradition, I offer to you in this extended essay.



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