

The logo for the BookLife Prize features the words "booklife" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. "book" is orange and "life" is blue. A horizontal line with a star at each end spans the width of the text. Below this line, the word "PRIZE" is written in a tall, thin, uppercase, sans-serif font.

booklife PRIZE

Title: Forty Ways to Square a Circle

Author: Neil Hummasti

Genre: Fiction/General Fiction (including literary and historical)

Audience: Adult

Word Count: 95,000

Assessment:

Plot: This bittersweet story commits to its poeticized realism, relying on the everyday and the unspoken to further conflicts. It is when the unspoken manifests itself that the story acquires new levels of depth, and the light touch the author utilizes is commendable.

Prose/Style: While at times overwrought, the stylized prose lends itself to the comedic yet downtrodden tone of the story, and the author proves themselves a capable-enough craftsman to make it work when others might fall victim to pretension.

Originality: In theory, there is nothing wholly original about the premise of this novel. However, the execution, and specifically the author's refusal to guarantee any characters a happy ending that a lesser writer might hand to them, elevates the proceedings considerably.