

**Blood Orange Review, Volume 3, Issue 3**

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Web Address: [www.bloodorangereview.com](http://www.bloodorangereview.com)

What they Publish: Blood Orange Review publishes fiction, poetry and non-fiction. It seeks work that is “precise, fierce, and unusual.”

Submission Guidelines: Fiction is accepted up to 3,000 words. Creative nonfiction, personal essay or stand-alone memoir excerpts are accepted up to 3,000 words. Blood Orange Review only accepts unpublished work.

Simultaneous submissions are accepted. Multiple submissions are not accepted.

Description of Publication: Blood Orange Review appears online 6 times a year. Its goal is to provide a forum for work that “pleases and challenges.” Its website is pleasantly colorful and easy to navigate.

Prose per Issue/Amount of Prose Published Annually: Roughly 30 pieces of prose are published annually.

Prose Reviews:

*A Pebble from the River for Annie* by Douglas Bruton is a poetic story in a domestic setting told in the objective third-person. The story opens as Annie has just given birth to a baby. No details about the setting of the birth are provided, and it is implied that she is alone when it happened. It’s implied that Annie is unwed and/or there are scandalous circumstances surrounding her child’s conception. The narrative follows her as she clandestinely takes the baby to the river and baptizes it. She also finds a pebble that the river has polished and takes it with her. Finally, she brings the child to a bakery where heat radiates from the back entrance. She leaves it just inside the door, places the pebble in her shoe and hobbles away.

Bruton’s deliberate lack of character development and focus on intimate details (rather than broad, context-building images) makes *A Pebble from the River for Annie* seem like more of a long-form poem than a piece of short fiction. Continuous repetition and a clear line-by-line cadence also lends to the poetic feel. “Annie cross with the minister, cross with god, cross with all men...” However, when read as it’s billed—as a story—the overall movement of the piece seems lacking.

*Grave-Digging Machine* by Taylor Pavlik is a plainspoken story in an exotic setting told in the objective third person. The story opens with a description of the grave-digging machine, a fantastical, solar-powered creation that ceaselessly digs graves. The machine excavates thousands of them daily and can maneuver around trees, boulders and other objects using a complex system of sensors. The narrative follows the path of the machine as it wanders from soft, rural ground to the unwavering concrete in an urban area. The machine is unable to dig through the concrete but tramples several “obstacles” in its attempts. It is quickly made apparent that the obstacles in question are actually people. “The sound of a ribcage caving in under its tread was like the bow of a tree breaking, although the machine had no means of knowing this.” In the end, the machine finds an area with both soft soil and concrete, where small “objects” are hit and fall directly into freshly dug graves.

The question of what the grave-digging machine symbolizes strikes the reader. Perhaps blind consumer culture? Or, maybe it has political meaning? One cannot be sure. The lack of explicit explanation of the metaphor

renders the story classically allegorical. The on-going description of the machine's activity and movement make it seem human-. However, the narrator continually refutes this description by explicitly stating that the machine knows not what it does. While the story's movement is ultimately effective, it seems that less ambiguity surrounding the machine's meaning would have made it more so.

Rating for Emerging Writers: 5. After reviewing several pieces of prose, it appears that *Blood Orange Review* publishes within a specific stylistic niche: prose that is short and precise but also—and some would argue *conversely*—rather poetic. One gets the idea (based on the prose and submission details found on the site) that the editor is selective with these elements in mind.