

The Copperfield Review (Volume 7, Number 4)

Reviewer: Don Bosan

Editor: Meredith Allard

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Web Address: www.copperfieldreview.com

What they Publish: Historical fiction, nonfiction, creative nonfiction, historically based poetry, reviews of historical fiction novels, and essays on the writing life.

Submission Guidelines: Stories must be of a historical nature and no longer than 3,000 words. Short shorts between 500 and 1,000 words are also accepted. Submissions must be pasted into the body of an e-mail. No attachments. Short, third person biography of the author must be included.

Description of Publication: Online magazine, published quarterly.

Prose per Issue: Approximately 7% of the last issue was fiction. 88% of the issue was reviews.

Prose Reviews:

Witness and Accomplice by Ajay Shenoy is a plainspoken, realistic story set in an exotic setting, told in the first person. An unnamed man, a foreign farm hand, finds himself removed from his duties of harvesting crops and is set upon killing specified people. He and his employer are eventually caught while trying to make a run for the Congo and he is put on trial for the murder of numerous Tutsis.

The details throughout the story are surprisingly sparse. Going in, I was left completely without a sense of place. In fact, until the end of the story I had no way of telling whether it was set in Argentina or Zimbabwe or anywhere in between. Given that it was written in English without any clues in language or dialogue, I was left to assume (incorrectly) that it was located somewhere in the United States. We are given next to no information about the main character except that he is not a local, he is bored by a man giving a speech in a soccer field, and that he feels nothing throughout most of the piece. Even if you ignore the grammatical errors, this story is still not ready for publication.

The Endless March by Christopher H. Potter is a plainspoken, realistic story set in a domestic setting, told in the third person. An American soldier in the Revolutionary War marches toward a hopeless battle against the British. When the soldiers eventually arrive at the location where they are to engage the Redcoats, they discover that the enemy has moved on and that there will be no battle. The march continues.

The Endless March does display some of the problems evident in *Witness and Accomplice*, though not in the same abundance. It is a stronger telling and does provide more visuals and references to prior events, such as the description of the flag: "It's shot through with bullet holes, and stained with the blood of the man who last carried it into battle." Still, it is missing some overall specifics which would really help the story along, such as setting. It is obvious that this story is set in the Colonies during the Revolutionary War, yet this only implies New England. The name of a colony/future state would have helped a great deal in pinning down location. While not as dire a circumstance as the previous story, I am still of the opinion that this story is still in need of a revision or two.

Rating: 4. The quality of the fiction published is less than superb but The Copperfield Review does appear eager to publish new writers, making it the perfect place for an ego-boost for the emerging historical fiction writer.