

Dogzplot Magazine

Liz Baudler

Editors: Barry Graham, Lauren Becker, Bill Bishop-James

September 2009

Web Address: www.dogzplot.com

What They Publish: Slightly bizarre fiction and creative non-fiction. They also include artwork, interviews and poetry, and a section for flash fiction. A novel excerpt was one of the pieces on the site.

Submission Guidelines: Flash Fiction should be emailed to bgraham@dogzplot.com, fiction to lbecker@dogzplot.com, and nonfiction to bbishop-james@dogzplot.com. Flash fiction should be 200 words or fewer, fiction 612 words or more. Name and type of submission should be included in email subject line.

Submissions should be a .doc or .rtf attachment. Multiple or simultaneous submissions are fine.

Description of Publication: Published quarterly; flash fiction bi-weekly. Sparse but easy to navigate site. Titles of pieces are easy to find and click. Most of the contributors are previously published, but not often and in smaller, less prestigious zines.

Prose Per Issue: About 66 percent, 11 fiction pieces and one novel excerpt.

Prose Reviews:

Amelia by Amy Halloran is a poetic, magical-realist story told in first person in a domestic setting. The story is laced with references to the narrator's conflict with her parents, and it follows an encounter with Amelia Earhart at the airport by the narrator's house, in which they play rummy, discuss flying, and walk to an older part of the airport where Earhart disappears. The narrator goes home wondering how to explain the encounter to her parents.

Images such as "hanging from the planet by a shoelace" and pointing out small details at intervals such as Earhart's "black leather jacket" provide welcome visuals in a piece heavy on internal monologue. The reader is constantly reminded of the narrator's parental conflicts, and everything is distilled through her self-absorbed lens. Though this doesn't make the piece un-enjoyable or difficult to read, such an internal point of view takes away from developing action and other characters, and events feel rushed.

The Man Upstairs by K. Walker Graves is a plainspoken, realistic story told in first person in a domestic setting. Don, the narrator's neighbor and a Vietnam vet, is grieving over the murder of his greyhound, Roland. The narrator and his girlfriend make a birthday present for Don. Don and the narrator have a conversation spawned by this gift, a diorama of the house they share.

The details chosen to introduce Don (that he likes to run marathons to forget and hoards ice cream) and the way they are portrayed ("distended grocery bags" and his "ragged T-shirts") convince us quietly but effectively that he is lonely and upset. The concluding dialogue, where Don is unable to appreciate the diorama because it feels like an "ambush" and compares his brain to an enemy base camp, only bolsters this impression, and invests new dimensions in Don as possibly mentally ill, although still sympathetic.

Rating: 6. It seems possible for an emerging writer to get serious consideration. The editors seem to appreciate more experimental fiction and will forgive writing flaws because of it.