

Fringe Magazine
Editor-In-Chief: Lizzy Stark

Ryan Buell – October 11, 2010

Web Address: www.fringemagazine.org

What they Publish: Fiction, Non-fiction, Poetry, Criticism and Art.

Submission Guidelines: All longer works of fiction must be 7,000 words or less, while flash pieces are to be 1,000 words or less. You may submit 1-3 flash stories, and are required to title your e-mail as “Flash Fiction” in the subject line along with your name and the story’s title. The body of the e-mail should again include the author’s name, the title(s) of the stories and a press-ready bio. All stories should be attached in a Word or RTF document. Any submissions deviating from these requirements will be ignored.

Description of Publication: This online publication provides excellent navigation from one story to the next, giving side links for pieces of the same genre along with links to explore other aspects of the magazine. Besides it’s convenience, the layout is artfully done. Recently published stories are displayed by large bold titles along with their beginning sentences. Issues are quarterly, though new pieces appear on the site the first three Mondays of each month.

Prose Per Issue/Annually: Fiction 30%, Nonfiction 30%, Poetry 20%, Reviews 1%, Essays 10%, Art 6%, Translation 1%, Audio 1%, Video 1%.

Prose Reviews:

Transponder by Kate Wyer is a poetically told, realistic story in a domestic setting. It is told through a subjective, first person narrator who remains unnamed. Driving through a tollbooth, the protagonist is immediately enraptured by the woman collecting the change, whose hands he describes as being “older than her face” though “both are open and ringed.” The following morning, he attempts conversation with her, asking if she is a mom. Wishing he could somehow spark a relationship between them, he takes her advice in purchasing an EZ pass transponder. When he realizes the transponder allows him to bypass the tollbooth, he parks his car in the middle of the highway and flings it back in the direction of the EZ pass office.

The narrator’s quirky attempts at romance make for an unusual love story. When talking to the toll booth operator, he relates his communication with her (or lack thereof) with that of ants, referencing “pheromones” and “feelers” that “taste my head for

signals”. Surprising details, such as the woman “throwing the M&Ms and extra pennies” from the narrator’s pocket “onto the highway” sustain the reader’s interest. Still, there is something that feels unfinished about the story. The narrator’s identity is too cloudy to make for a satisfying finish. The story stands as an interesting read, but fails to resonate any truth with the reader. At no point during this commuter’s tale do you forget that you are reading a work of fiction.

Swear by Justine Tal Goldberg is a poetically told, realistic story in a domestic setting. The narrator is a first person, subjective female of an unknown age and name who is reunited with her childhood sweetheart after the funeral of a close friend. After the burial, the two of them drive to a familiar spot on a gravel path to have sex. The sweetheart has a girlfriend, whose presence is made known by “an open pack of Parlments in my side-door.” Both of them know a great deal about each other and both seem conscious that they are violating their sense of morality in having sex again. This is made achingly clear in the sweetheart’s question, “Will you write this?” He knows she is a writer and is worried about his reputation, while she is so lost in the act, she fails to realize that someday she will break her promise and to put pen to paper.

The poetry of this story leaves the reader spellbound, especially the final line, “Cold hearts crossed, there’ve been so many promises between us.” Still, as in the former story, there is too much left unsaid. The reader is left asking who their dead friend was. Are the characters brought back to their hometown because of the death? Why is the protagonist “naked beneath” her “dress”? With more context, this story might have turned into something the old sweetheart *really* wished the author hadn’t written.

Rating: 6/10

The layout is reason enough to award points to **Fringe Magazine**. Anybody’s grandma could navigate this website. Not to mention, it’s easy on the eyes. While the ethos of the magazine is alluring, in that they publish works of fiction that may be seen as too obscure in the eyes of other editors, much of the writing seems to stand on the “fringe” of being completed. For this reason, I don’t think it would be difficult for an emerging writer to have a work of reasonable craftsmanship seriously considered by the publishers, as long as it stands out with some eccentricity in its voice or style.