

Hobart (Online) – February '08

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Editor-in-Chief: Savannah Schroll

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Website: www.hobartpulp.com

What they Publish: Fiction. In themed issues, fiction, essays, creative non-fiction.

Submission Guidelines: Prefers stories to be under 2,000 words. Send all submissions to websubmissions@hobartpulp.com

Description of Publication: Nicely-designed online journal publishes four stories and a feature interview or review each issue. Each story is accompanied by an original photograph and the site is updated monthly.

Prose per Issue: 100% of the four titles was fiction.

Prose Reviews:

Daddy, by Michael Hemmingson, is a plainspoken, realistic story set in a domestic setting. Told from an objective third person, it shows a scene in which a nineteen year old woman visits her father in the hospital. He is unresponsive and only stares at the TV in his room. As the daughter speaks of her fears of losing him, of not knowing what to do, especially since her mother is dead, she resolves she's going to get pregnant once he dies so the father can reincarnate himself into her child.

This piece intrigues me because of the dichotomy of perspective. While we hear the daughter's voice through dialogue, the father's internal point of view is accessed through his thoughts. With the daughter uncertain whether he can really hear her, we learn that he can—"He looks at her and tries to say something"—and this adds an compelling level of complexity to the piece.

Yesterday, by Nick Ripatrzone, is a plainspoken, realistic story in a domestic setting. The first-person narrator is an 18-year-old boy who prefers to spend his summer doing puzzles at home. His burn-out older brother, Tate, convinces the narrator to come out with him at night, against his father's wishes, and partake with his friends in drinking and debauchery. Wishing he were safe at home, the narrator tags along as Tate stations himself in a field, fills a bottle with lighter fluid, throws it into a fire and shoots a rifle, creating an explosion. Even after a scolding from their father, Tate is still able to convince his younger brother to go out with him again, later that night.

This story is carefully paced to unfold the brothers' relationship by detailing an entire summer day. The author spent time to dwell on striking images, such as nipples that looked like burnt chocolate chips and the explosion that looked "like a goddamn rocket crashed into the ground." The uneasy but accepting voice of the narrator left me to believe that these events happen quite often, creating an empathy for the boy who is too often dragged around by his brother. The story is left open-ended, and I think that's what's needed to create the feeling that some things never change.

Rating: 6. Hobart is a professional publication that seems to insist on quality fiction. All four contributors in this issue did have admirable publication credentials, though, so while it never hurts to try, this journal might be better once you're a little more experienced.