

**Mississippi Review Online, Volume 16, Number 1**

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Editor-In-Chief: Frederick Barthelme

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

What they Publish: Fiction, flash fiction, non-fiction, essays, poetry

Submission Guidelines: Their submission requirements vary from issue to issue. It depends wholly on the guest editor. Writers should submit their work to the guest editor directly. Information regarding guest editors and themes on upcoming issues can be found on the News & Events page.

Description of Publication: An online literary journal that publishes quarterly. Each issue features a guest editor with a new theme. Past themes have ranged in topic from ekphrasis to hyper-extended families to television. The Web site is neat and orderly, featuring a full archive of every piece they have published with accompanying author bios. The print Mississippi Review does not take unsolicited materials, although they do offer a yearly contest that awards winners \$1,000 and a place in their winter print issue.

Prose Per Issue/ Amount of Published Annually: Volume 16, Number 1 contained 23 flash stories. Amount published annually varies year to year.

Prose Reviews:

*Map* by Carrie Spell is a plainspoken narrative set in Alabama and California. When the narrator and her brother were children they played (and invented) a game called Sock Ball. They hit socks across the living room with lacrosse sticks. She remembers washing their father's car and hitting each other while feeling no pain. Her brother now lives in California, but never goes to the beach. He sits all day in front of the computer probably firing people. She lives in Alabama but not near a beach. She fires people. The economy is horrible. She suspects she will be fired. Her brother has a son. She has a miscarriage. She only tells her brother. She bleeds the baby out for weeks at the job she is about to be fired from. She thinks of her brother and herself on a map. While bleeding on the toilet she thinks of being a child again when she and her brother hit each other because it did not hurt.

This flash story effectively spans a lifetime in a very short amount of space. With sparse and precise concrete sensory details, Spell is able to give us a whole scene in just a few words while not sacrificing the crux of the story. "We slammed our fists into each other's faces on the front lawn. Everything was green." The image of a map calls to mind the widening geographical expanse between her brother, her childhood, and her dreams.

*Today They Will Canter* by Randall Brown is a plainspoken narrative set at a horse-riding lesson. The narrator's daughter does not know the difference between pessimistic and optimistic. Even though it looks like it is about to rain, he tells her it won't. She thanks him for his pessimism. The father watches his daughter ride at her lesson. She is afraid since she broke her wrist riding over the summer. Her mother makes her literally get back up on the horse even though she was not there for the fall. She is eleven and she will not be scared or scarred. The wife sings Cabaret even though she has stage fright. Their daughter gets back on the horse and rides in circles. She looks confident on the horse. Later she walks in the stable petting the horse with her eyes closed seeing her riding in the show-ring.

This flash story zeroes in on a very specific moment while seamlessly flashbacking to times that are thematically relevant. Brown turns the cliché "Getting back on the horse" on its head, rendering it poetic, new, and

making it the reason for the story. Will his daughter get back on the horse? Should she? By putting us more in the anxious father's point of view we feel his fear, his anxiety, and the significance of the situation. We wonder what will happen next right along with him. The confusion over pessimism versus optimism gives us further insight into the moral of this story. Though his worries are pessimistic by nature he'll stand hopeful and optimistic with "fist raised, not twisted away, as if he's certain."

Rating: 7. This is a dependable, solid publication. It receives roughly 400,000 visitors a year and is attached to the notable print edition Mississippi Review. They have proved themselves a reliable journal by publishing on a pretty consistent schedule since 1995. The chosen themes seem like a natural place for emerging writers to flex their experimental muscles. Many of the authors featured are emerging writers. Check back regularly to see what they need for upcoming issues.