

Necessary Fiction (October 2010)

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Editor in Chief: Steve Himmer

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Web Address: www.necessaryfiction.com

What they publish: Short stories under 3,000 words

Submission Guidelines: Submit one unpublished story at a time, under 3,000 words via the submishmash link on their website. Wait a few weeks before sending another.

Description of Publication: Very basic webjournal from “So New Publishing” that publishes a new short story every Wednesday. Layout is black and white with 5 links at the top for news, story archives, a serial they’ve published, an about section and submission information. Latest story is featured on the main page.

Prose Per Issue/Annually: 4 to 5 per month, 52 a year (weekly journal).

Prose Reviews:

The Best Man by Timothy Raymond is a realistic story told in the first person, past tense in a domestic setting. It follows the night of a man who tags along with his new girlfriend to a wedding of her close college friends. He is later chosen to take the best man to the emergency room after he attempts to cut off his tongue with a steak knife. While Frank (the best man) is taken into an examination room, the narrator washes the blood out of his tux and finds note cards for Frank’s speech in the pocket. On them, Frank writes down the first time he met the bride. The note cards recall Frank’s first interaction with Rachel (the bride) doing yoga under a tree in the park, and summoning up the courage to say hi to her. They trail off to mention how the rest of the group formed, but ends with Frank recollecting Rachel’s smile. At the end of the story, the doctor tells the narrator that Frank probably won’t talk again for the rest of his life, but has been released and still won’t leave the examination room. Feeling inspired by Frank’s notecards, the narrator puts his jacket over his own, and goes back to examination room, knocking on the door twice.

Although we are immediately compelled to find out why the best man cut his tongue with the opening line, “Frank cut out his own tongue so that he wouldn’t have to give the best – man speech”, the reader learns more about the narrator before we find out about Frank. There is a strong sense of the narrator not wanting to be at the wedding, or possibly with his new girlfriend Kate, through Raymond’s use of internal dialogue. Another theme that Raymond pulls together from beginning to end is the downside of love, or unrequited love, while using a wedding as a back drop. The clearest image of this we get is when the narrator’s washing off Frank’s bloody jacket, and recalls a movie where a woman finds out her husband is a murderer and washes his bloody clothes and tools every night. Eventually he gets caught, and turns his wife in, whose fingerprints are all over the evidence. “These relationships are so hard,” the narrator comments afterwards. It isn’t until later we find out that Frank and the narrator, strangers before that night, actually have a lot in common.

Serial by Bonnie Zobell is a realistic story told in the first person, present tense in a domestic setting. The narrator describes a night at home with her husband, eating a turkey loaf dinner while watching documentary episodes about serial murders. After dinner, the couple reclines on their separate couches, or “‘boats’ as I call them” in the living room to continue watching. During commercials for diarrhea, better erections and depression, they ask

each other about their day at work while Rich, the husband, thumbs through the Bible. When the episode of the serial murderer is over, the story ends with the two embracing and the line, “In bed our hands crawl all over each other.”

In *Serial*, Zobell shows an interesting contrast between the horrendous acts of murderers and the common life of two ordinary people. The story opens with the line, “He beats the girl, stabs her 22 times, rapes her, then uses his fingertips to push her orbital sockets into the back of her head before killing her.” But although the couple seems unaffected by the episode as they continue talking about their jobs, some of its paranoia becomes apparent when “On the commercial, Rich gets up to use the toilet and locks all the doors on his way back.” Zobell ties the story together at the end with an interesting theme about the connection this couple has to the people documented on TV. It comes from a quote by Rich, when he reads from the bible “All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds — everything that moves on the earth — came out of the ark, one kind after another.”

Rating: 8 Most of the writers on this site are experienced writers, with publications elsewhere, MFA degrees, and/or various awards. However the site is updated weekly, giving new writers plenty of chances for publication.