

Smoke Long Quarterly (Issue 25 6/25/2009)

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Editor: Randall Brown (Lead Editor)

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Web Address: www.smokelong.com

What they publish: Flash Fiction

Submission Guidelines: Flash fiction no more than 1,000 words. Make sure to leave two spaces between each paragraph. Submissions accepted via an online form found on Web site. Simultaneous submissions accepted; e-mail the editor immediately upon the work's acceptance elsewhere. Multiple submissions (two) are allowed, but not recommended. No work accepted if previously published online. Previously published work in print may be accepted.

Description of Publication: Smoke Long is a quarterly online magazine that publishes flash fiction exclusively. Most work includes "language that surprises, pieces that add up to something (oftentimes) meaning or emotional resonance, and honest work that feels as if it has far more purpose than a writer wanting to write a story." Most pieces in this issue appear to be literary fiction or magical realism.

Prose Per Issue/Amount Published Annually: 100%, 18-20 pieces per issue.

Prose Reviews:

Rats by Z.Z. Boone is a plainspoken, realistic story in a domestic setting. It is an objective first-person narrative. On a regular Friday night, a seventeen-year-old girl and her father, go to the dump to shoot rats. Afterward, her father takes her to pick up some fast food and talks about her mother and the divorce.

Rats is simple in its descriptions and elegant in its stark honesty. The details of the quiet, odd activity that causes bonding between a father and daughter are striking and experiential – standing in the darkness waiting until just the right moment and then flicking the flashlight on, the beam illuminating the rat for her father to shoot. Throughout the piece there is this divorced sort of pity that the audience feels for the father and even, to an extent, for the daughter, which is exacerbated when we find out that the absent mother to this nuclear family left with another man, one the father knew. The piece does a magnificent job of not pretending to be anything else, of stating the happenings of those Friday nights as fact alone.

Good Friday by Steven Gullion is a plainspoken, realistic story in a domestic setting told in the first-person. A child has locked herself in her closet, presumably after her father said something about the Easter Bunny not being real. The piece follows their conversation as he tries – unsuccessfully – to convince her to come out on Good Friday.

At first glance, there appears to be a lot of unnecessary information included in this piece, for example, "My neighbors hate me because Sparky craps on their lawns and because of the brush fire." We never find out what the brush fire is or what that even means, so it seems unnecessary. Upon further reflection, such details are what give this piece its sense of history and normality, a sort of quiet desperation. The little girl has colored her fingers orange with a highlighter, carrots for an Easter bunny her father mistakenly said he didn't believe in. We get the sense that there's more tension in their relationship than simply believing in Easter, that there may be an absent mother or other tragedy in their past. More than description, this piece uses effective dialogue like, "You're a big fat liar. The Easter Bunny heard you say what you said," to point the reader toward certain conclusions.

Rating: 7. While it certainly seemed as though many of the authors featured in this issue had published before, there is note that they enjoy publishing emerging authors and there was at least one author who was published for the first time. Considering the simultaneous submissions and quarterly publishing schedule, this magazine seems a good choice to submit work to.