

Chiaroscuro

Reviewer: Latasha Woods

Editor in Chief: Brett Alexander Savory

April 2007

Web Address: <http://www.chizine.com>

What They Publish: Fiction, Poetry, and Book Reviews

Submission Guidelines: Work must be dark, well-written, and under 4,000 words and not previously published elsewhere. Simultaneous submissions are okay as long as you notify them. No multiple submissions. Allow three months for a response.

Description of Publication: The Chiaroscuro Webzine is a quarterly online publications specializing in unique, dark and unordinary literature and poetry. It received a 2004 Bram Stoker award and is sponsored by *Leisure Books*.

Percentage of Prose Per Issue: About 25 percent of the magazine features fiction. The other half is either poetry or reviews.

Prose Reviews:

The Burial of the Dead by Lavie Tadhur is a plainspoken magical realism story in an exotic Asian setting. The subjective first-person narrator is a man who tells of inviting others to play a card game in which he offers them drinks and turns them into statues that he collects. He continues to play the card game to collect the lives of the victims which he inevitably digs a grave to bury them in.

This story had a definite macabre feel. The events follow an unchanging pattern with the narrator's duty to entrap these card players in a card game that leaves them transformed into statues. This wasn't my personal favorite because the plot was not very unpredictable. No challenge for the narrator. He always manages to get what he sets out for. I did like that it upheld an originality that made me want to find out what would become of these characters and discover an ultimate motive.

The Teacher by Paul G. Tremblay is a plainspoken realistic story in domestic setting. The subjective first person narrator is a student who tells of experiences with a cool teacher who teaches his students with unorthodox methods of live demonstrations and weird films. At home, the narrator describes the everyday simple conversations with her family about missed baseball games. When the narrator is in class this teacher begins to show more bizarre video clips that become weirder everyday. The main one is a video with a boy getting thrown across a room. He skips frames, but never actually getting to the end. In the end the narrator has an epithemy about her life in relation to the video that never seems to reach a conclusion.

At first I could not tell where the story was going but it piqued my interest with the teacher's bizarre demonstrations to his class. I figured that eventually it had a defining point, and in the end I was far from disappointed, as it compared it to the narrator's everyday life. I was amazed at how the two parts coincided with one another to arrive at an open ended meaning. This was a great story with quirky and bizarre elements.

Rating: 8. This magazine is looking for writing that is unorthodox and bizarre, which helps its rating. All authors seem to be fairly credited for past work, but the editors do not discourage emerging writers from submitting their writing. In addition to this, the awards that the publication has received makes for an highly ranked publication.