

Denver Syntax Issue 19

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

What they Publish: Fiction up to 5,000 words but they prefer 2,000. 2 to 7 poems. Essays up to 3,000 words.

Submission Guidelines: Include a cover letter with a short bio. Include the word submission in the subject line of the email and submit piece as attachment. They accept simultaneous submissions include name, title, and email address.

Description of Publication: Provocative and witty fiction, poetry, essays, art, and editorials published online quarterly. The magazine concentrates their efforts on publishing stories with a strong voice. The Web site is attractive, hip, and easy to navigate.

Prose per Issue: 7 stories per issue.

Prose Reviews:

Breakfast by Amy Glassenapp is a plain spoken and realistic story written in a domestic setting. The objective third person narrator tells the story of an older sister visiting her younger sister. The older sister wakes up hung over, naked, and bearing her enlarged clitoris. There's a crack in the ceiling that the little sister sees with a tiny leak dripping. The older sister brought home a man her first night. He is asleep and fully clothed on the couch. The younger sister tells her the guy needs to be gone by the time she gets back from getting groceries. The older sister smashes a cup. The man wakes frightened, the older sister cries, and the man slips out the back door after a drip falls on his head. Walking down the street he runs into a girl he recognizes, he thinks from the club the night before but changes his mind when he judges her by her loose clothes, the kind of clothes a person who spends too much time indoors wears, but still he finds her attractive. He says to her that he's seen her before. She shakes her head. He asks if she needs help with the groceries. She says you're kidding right? He watches her walk down the block, and then up to the house he'd just exited. She balances her groceries on her hip, like a mother would do.

The prose is sharp and filled with hints. The hints are in the objects the author mentions which as images, the reader is forced to focus upon to linger for later. The diction is aggressive and the syntax is exciting but there is an unspoken theme beneath the sex, mention of mothering, the cracked foundation in the roof, the leaking, and the hint that the visit is after the little sister's abortion. That theme is loss. The imagery is strong and clear with specific references to the gesture of how the groceries are held, the leaky ceiling, and of course the enlarged clitoris, the broken tea cup, and the sisters head finding its way through the collar of an oversized shirt. There is no specific change but the situational and verbal irony makes for a story that resonates with the reader long after the piece is finished. This is because of the constant hinting toward the idea that what is familiar to these characters, what is unspoken is a long ongoing dysfunction that they have shared in their own denial, and are still misunderstood about what each other's responsibility is to each other. This misunderstanding is raked up by the author again when the man leaves the apartment only to hit on the sister and not realize where he recognizes her from. He doesn't see who she is, only what she is, and the author gives the characters flaws that are confusing to them but at the same time contemplative. The tone is a contrast between disturbing and endearing. The story is tragicomic.

In Answer to your Question by Phillip Gardner is a plain spoken story in a domestic setting. The story is a third person subjective account of a man (Hank) seeking revenge on another man (Darryl). Hank has Darryl's arm in

a vice grip, Darryl is beaten badly, and Hank is holding pruning shears while he is asking Darryl for the truth. Hank tells Darryl if he tells the truth than he can keep four fingers. He's taking the pinky. If he elects not to talk he's talking the pointer and the pinky. If he lies, he's taking the thumb too. Either way, he says he'll leave two in the middle even if Darryl lies. Either way, one finger is gone. Darryl is given the option to pick. Hank says he'll leave those because he won't take everything from him like Daryl did to him and so that Daryl can still wave Bye Bye.

The voice of the narrator follows closely to Hank. The vantage point is on Hank most of the time and the dialogue of Hank matches more with the rhythm and diction of the narrator than that of Darryl. Despite the painful following of a man who is beaten beyond belief and who is about to have his fingers cut off, Hank reminds us that Darryl has betrayed him. The reader never learns what Darryl did but that isn't the point. This is a close up on the dramatic action that has changed two friends to enemies. The mood is disturbing and despite the little character description the characterization comes through in the dialogue exchange. The story is visceral, tragic, and left open ended.

Rating: 7 There are no bios to check writers credits but based on the easy navigation of the Web site, the cutting edge writing, and the visual appeal of the graphics I'd say this is a good place to submit to.