

elimae (2007:10) – Online Journal

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Web Address: www.elimae.com

What They Publish: “Jargon-free, non-academic reviews and literary essays; English-language reviews and translations of works from other languages; travel essays of literary quality; and poetry and fiction of the highest caliber.”

Submission Guidelines: Submissions should be sent within the body of an e-mail, or attached as a plain text or rich text format, addressed to coop.renner@juno.com. Curly quotes and apostrophes should be replaced with straight quotes and apostrophes. Use single spaces only between sentences. Ellipses should be indicated with a sequence of individual periods, not with an ellipsis key or mark. Please indicate dashes with space/dash/dash/space: -- . So long as the work is of highest quality, any length or format will be considered for publication.

Description of Publication: The publication is a very simple website that presents most of its content in the form of basic lists. It began in 1996 and is published monthly, primarily featuring quality writing from emerging writers in a number of genres.

Prose Per Issue: 70%

Prose Reviews:

The Anguish of Houdini by Norman Lock is a realistic historical story told from the first-person point of view of an unnamed illusionist who has recently raised a man from the dead. When Harry Houdini discovers this, he flies to Africa to meet with the illusionist to convince him to reveal the secret of the trick. After offering the illusionist everything from women to money, his plane to the secrets of other tricks, Houdini is repeatedly denied. In an act of final desperation, Houdini buries the illusionist underground in a box that has a tube running to the surface so the man can offer the secret after he has had enough. But the illusionist faints and Houdini brings him back to ground, giving up, and admitting his greatest fear: “That death is irreversible: that there is no way back. I have made a career of standing on the brink, but never once have I crossed it.”

Lock structures his story like a folk tale, with Houdini obsessing over the secret of resurrection, his repeated attempts to discover the secret, and the final realization, in the narrator’s words, that Houdini, as must every man, “[resign] himself to the ineluctable end—the ‘tight spot’ from which there can be no wriggling, the final cabinet from which there is no escape.” This structure works very effectively to bring Houdini and the narrator to life, to convey the sense in which every person fears death, the uncontrollable end. The story moves quickly and engagingly, with believable dialogue that lends to the close spatial interaction of the two characters.

Grooming by Dawn Raffel is a realistic story in a domestic setting that is written in a close third-person perspective, primarily through dialogue between two characters, an aunt and her young nephew. The child is portrayed as being very impressionable, repeatedly asking his aunt “Why?” after everything she says. Out of frustration, she finally concedes to his questioning, gradually revealing that neither the child’s father nor mother have been present for a while. The story concludes with the final suggestion that the father has committed suicide, and the aunt, exhausted by the child’s questioning, says, “Listen... Why not ask, for instance, where she—that mother of yours—has up and gone?”

The story's power is achieved by the information that is not directly revealed, working as one of Hemingway's dialogue-heavy stories might. The father's suggested suicide, for instance, is exposed in the aunt's explanation of the wolf in the story of the three little pigs: "The wolf had a fervent desire, you see, to be received as, let us say, civilized. Dapper, in fact. Not coarse.... And so, despite an instrument of cutting that, now that I think of it, was dripping with blood—" The aunt's use of wordy sentences does not help the child's understanding, causing him to ask even more questions, but it becomes evident to the reader that the story is really about the aunt's coming to terms with the suicide, the mother's disappearance, and the future of the child. "Grooming" is a brief but moving story that reminds us how much power can be packed into a short work, how mere dialogue, even when it is mostly one-sided, can illicit so much emotion.

Rating: 8. Having published noteworthy writing for over a decade, *elimae* stands as an online journal worth investigating for the emerging writer. Though the site is not particularly attractive, its minimalist presentation—primarily displayed as black and gray text on a white background—lends it a simplicity that puts all the focus on the works themselves. Because the writers in Issue 10 are mostly young or have little publishing experience, and the work is anything but shoddy, and with anywhere from six to fifteen stories per issue, *elimae* is an excellent place to consider submitting new prose.