

## **Identity Theory**

Reviewer: E. Christopher Ott

Editors: Andrew Whitacre (Fiction editor)

November 2006

Mara Naselli (Nonfiction editor)

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

What They Publish: Fiction, nonfiction, poetry, interviews, and reviews of music, books, and film

Submission Guidelines: Electronic Submissions only. Stories published are traditionally no longer than 4,000 words, and for nonfiction pieces, between 1,000 and 1,500 words is preferred. For fiction, paste submissions into the body of an email—no attachments will be opened. For nonfiction, do the same, but also include a Microsoft Word attachment. In both cases, include a 50- to 100-word bio including previous publishing credits. Formerly published pieces will be considered, but please be sure to mention it.

Send fiction to: [Fiction@identitytheory.com](mailto:Fiction@identitytheory.com) and send nonfiction to: [Mara@identitytheory.com](mailto:Mara@identitytheory.com)

Description of Publication: Ambitious online magazine published regularly and interested in literature, culture, and issues of social consciousness. Updated frequently, with little apparent schedule.

Prose Per Issue: The magazine is almost entirely prose, and seems to be updated whenever they feel they have something worth putting up. Stories can be posted on the same day or a month later, but the average output seems to be about two stories each month for both fiction and nonfiction.

### Prose Reviews:

*Demon Love Story* by Tree Riesener is a lyric piece of magical realism in a domestic setting. Through the use of a loose second-person point of view, the narrator tells the story of abandoning a long-term, comfortable relationship with Satan to pursue the excitement of a life of affairs and relationships with more suitable amorous interests. But after working through the end of the relationship with the Demon Lover in very real terms, the narrator's new life playing the field eventually finds the way back to a relationship with a changed, improved Satan, which is yet a life with Satan nonetheless.

The primary attraction of this piece is the skilful use of Satan to personify a relationship that, while mature and developed, lacks the romance that this life should embody. The narrative manages to capture very quickly the essence of new, vibrant love appearing for somebody already in a committed arrangement and contrast it against a pre-existing love of convenience. Particularly stunning is the detailed, contemporary feel of the everyday events catalogued to illustrate the end of a relationship and the adventure of entering new romantic frontiers as well as how, though all new love gives way to old love, the essential nature of a mature relationship can change with experience.

*A Hard Truth About Waste Management* by Sumanth Prabhaker is a plainspoken magical realist tale set in the most domestic of settings. It's a story of a suburban family that decides to start flushing all of their garbage down the toilet to avoid a city-imposed garbage tax, and how the family comes to enjoy the ritual so much that it replaces television as their entertainment. From a matter-of-fact overall storyteller's voice, the reader learns of the eventual arrival of a new family pet from the beloved oubliette, something that they cannot quite discern that they come to love regardless, but which eventually causes the downfall of this idyllic flushing family and must be sent back from whence it came, only to return in its true form as an alligator that eats them all.

Using very plain language and a simple tone, this story is a triumph of absurdist plot development, not once deviating from a feeling that this story is just an ordinary tale of an American family and yet creating a tale of cryptic, prolonged metaphor through a few well chosen devices. Through proficient use of commonplace imagery and an understated development of character, the reader finds himself at once sympathetic with the family and entirely engaged by the unfolding events, only at the end understanding the greater recriminations of what's happening on the page.

Rating: 7 of 10. The fiction published on this website is primarily well-written works of magical realism, which really strikes a tone with me. Something also should be mentioned about the website itself, which is particularly writer-friendly and even features a Q-and-A section where specific questions about submissions and publishing, as well as larger and vaguer writer's issues, are addressed. Featuring a wide variety of contributors from literary heavyweights with Pushcarts to writers only publishing their second piece, this online magazine seems to be a supportive entity for any emerging writer and a great boon for the literary community at large.