

Pindeldyboz (Sept. 24, 2007)—online edition

Reviewer: Jon Fullmer

Editor: Whitney Pastorek

October, 2007

Web Address: www.pindeldyboz.com

What They Publish: Fiction, creative nonfiction, and occasionally artwork

Submission Guidelines: Submissions should be fewer than 2,000 words. Genre fiction is discouraged unless particularly unique. Simultaneous submissions are okay, but multiple submissions are not accepted unless it is imperative that the stories go together. Stories should be sent via email to submissions@pindeldyboz.com either as an attachment or pasted within the text, with the word “submission” and the title of the story in the subject line. Also include name, email address, and phone number in the email. Stories may also be mailed as a file on a floppy disk or zip disk, accompanied by the author’s name, address, phone number, and a SASE.

Description of Publication: A simple but attractive website that is easy to navigate and maintains a great sense of humor. It is published bi-weekly (with some occasional slight variations) with six new stories in every issue. Experimentation is encouraged, and special issues are periodically published, such as for holidays and specific themes.

Prose Per Issue: 75%

Prose Reviews:

Dark, Hovering by Jonathan Messinger is a realistic story written in simple prose in the present tense, with a close third person perspective. The story follows Sammy Sosa’s former chauffeur, Gil, during a cold winter morning in Chicago during the baseball off-season, at a time when Sosa’s return to the sport was questionable. While he waits for one of his new clients to return to the limo, Gil meets with his friend Martin at a nearby café. There, he learns Martin has joined a collective that helps men identify their umbra, “a dark spot on his soul that prevents him from growing spiritually,” the proper attention to which will help them attain true happiness. As Gil doubts the reliability of Martin’s discovery and finally hears on the radio that Sosa has signed with another team, he questions his own future, now a “sparkling ring of confusion.”

Though the story is written in clear, sharp prose, Messinger’s themes of unhappiness and the uncertainty of the future are dealt with a little too neatly considering the brevity of the story, relinquishing the story’s emotional and artistic potential. The opening paragraph jumps directly into Gil’s problem, that he has lost Sammy Sosa, his biggest client, and ends with the statement that he is left with “a feeling of failing too soon.” After hearing about Martin’s recent New Age discovery of happiness, he is torn between telling his friend he is wrong for believing in such a thing and feeling jealous for his having discovered some sense of meaning. By the end of the story, Gil hears that Sosa and Scottie Pippin, two athletic “old-timers,” have decided to return to their respective sports, and as indicated by the rings of sunlight and his new client’s “hands raised in wonderment and exasperation,” he realizes he must face the future of his own career. While the story is otherwise balanced and written well, moving quickly and clearly through Gil’s morning, the themes are bold-faced to a fault, deterring from its overall artistic integrity.

Whisper to Scar by Brian Allen Carr is a dark, realistic story written in the first person and set in a domestic setting. The unnamed narrator is the father of Timmy, a retarded thirteen-year-old who is close to 300 pounds and has recently had his hand amputated after severing it on a can of soup. While Timmy's mother, now divorced from his father, spends eighteen months in jail under conviction of neglect (being blamed for the boy's accident), the narrator begins dating Jennice, the single mother of a mentally handicapped girl. He does not expect the relationship to last after Jennice tells him how to parent his child. The story ends with a flashback to a day when the narrator, weary from trying to raise his son, takes Timmy on a boat and tells him his hand is in the water, vainly hoping Timmy might fall in and drown, thus no longer being his problem.

Carr's story, though at times dark, manages to incorporate humor to keep things light, such as in the narrator's initial description of Timmy: "Pale thick fat slapped around him, as if God was making a snowman, but used fat for snow." By functioning as a series of memories, the story steers clear of a traditional plotline while still managing a forward motion, an effect that is achieved by suspense and the final recollection of the father's hope for his son's death. "Whisper to Scar" is an engaging story that ultimately shows that hope can sometimes be found in the most unordinary circumstances, a theme that is often difficult to portray in stories this dark and funny.

Rating: 8. Although *Pindeldyboz* has recently done some downsizing (its final print issue will be printed in the fall of 2007, and its first and only poetry issue was just released) it still offers a lot of publishing opportunities for emerging fiction writers — the online edition of *Pindedyboz* has already published over 1,000 stories by more than 600 authors in the past seven years. The majority of its contributions have been from emerging writers, many of whom have since made a name for themselves, some of whom have received awards for their publications in the journal. The stories published in the current edition are given priority on the site's homepage, and the site is easy to browse and enjoyable to read. Considering the assessment above, along with the journal's emphasis on new voices and experimental fiction, *Pindeldyboz* would be a great place for an emerging writer to consider submitting his/her work.