

Annalemma

Issue 5

Editor: Chris Heavener

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What They Publish: short fiction, creative non-fiction, art, and photography

Submission Guidelines: This bi-annual print publication and online journal publishes fiction and creative nonfiction up to 5,000 words. They have no genre restrictions, but prefer that genre fiction “show[s] something as yet unshown about the human condition.” They also prefer that all creative non-fiction submissions have “universal relevance.” They accept submissions year-round, and publish twice a year in print and weekly online. One submission at a time. Twelve point Courier with one-inch margins on all sides. No cover letters.

Description of Publication: Beautifully designed journal with stunning full-color photography and artwork accompanying each story. Work from both widely-published and emerging writers is accepted, and contributors are recognized in a full-color section with headshots and bios. Editorial staff displays their sense of humor in a hilarious Submission Guidelines section on the last page. Starting rate for unsolicited work is \$50.

Prose Per Issue: 100% prose (not including photography and artwork); Issue 5 contains 10 stories.

Prose Reviews: *Everything is so Goddamn Great* by Megan Stielstra is a plainspoken, realistic story set in a popular Chicago rock club. The narrator has forgotten about her abusive ex-boyfriend, Josh, and is having the time of her life until she sees him in the crowd. He looks better than ever and is with a skinny girl with perfect hair. The narrator is insanely jealous and goes into the bathroom to sit in a stall and bawl. She reflects on how she doesn't want Josh, anyway, and flashes back to a bar scene when he almost attacked her, but was restrained by the bouncer. When she heads to the sink to clean up, she sees the new, skinnier girlfriend, and in the fluorescent lights the narrator can see that both her eyes are black, caked with make-up. The narrator says nothing, but goes back out into the crowd where she decides she doesn't know what to do with the “stupid, stupid night” or her “stupid, stupid heart,” and starts to dance.

This story conveys a broad range of emotions in a short amount of time. The voice of the narrator flirts with being annoying, with her drunkenly insisting on the joy she is experiencing at the show, but then it collapses into a sober, lucid reflection after the narrator sees Josh. The new girl's black eyes justify the narrator's decision to leave Josh, but then the narrator is torn between feeling good for getting out and feeling bad that the new girl has found her way in. She can't reconcile the difference between those two feelings – a paradox which is brilliantly conveyed by the author – and finds that all she can do is try to forget about it all and dance.

Barber vs. Heart Disease by William Walsh is a plainspoken, realistic story in a domestic setting. The narrator, writing in the second person, tells the story of his life-long battle with heart disease. His great grandfather, grandfather, and father all died of massive heart attacks in their forties, and he decides at the age of thirteen the he is going to beat heart disease. He forms a plan, exercises, and keeps a good diet, unlike his brother, who also dies young. He learns that the two professions with the lowest occurrence of heart disease are orchestra conductor and barber, and he goes to barber college, and then starts a barber shop in his hometown. He cuts hair constantly, for profit and for free. He marries a woman whose child has a hole in his heart, and after the child dies, his wife helps

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October 2009

him start a foundation called Barbers vs. Heart Disease. Eventually, he has his first heart attack, but he doesn't die, and is empowered to keep on fighting.

By telling the story in the second person, Walsh allows the reader to directly relate with the narrator's struggle ("Your body is trying to kill its heart. You can't let that happen.") This works well, as the reader is entranced by the rhythm of the story, and brought in to the rollercoaster of emotions made bearable only by the narrator's sheer determination to keep on surviving. After experiencing the heartbreak of losing one's only child, who never had the chance to fight against heart disease as his father did, the reader eventually gets to experience the self-empowerment the narrator experienced in pulling through a heart attack calmly and collectedly, thereby proving that the war against heart disease is not easily won, but that it can be beaten one battle at a time.

Rating: 8. As long as submitting writers are producing quality work that meets this stunning journal's guidelines, they can be published either in print or online, regardless of their previous experience.