

## **Cranky Literary Journal**

Reviewer: Melissa Esparza

Editor: Amber Curtis

March 2007

Web Address: [www.failedpromise.org](http://www.failedpromise.org)

What they Publish: Prose, poetry, creative nonfiction, book reviews, and interviews

Submission Guidelines: Accepts submissions via e-mail only, which must be accompanied by a brief cover letter and a bio of 50 words or fewer; editors are not interested in seeing a list *all* of your previous publications. Cover letter, bio, and submission should all be included in one e-mail. Does not open attachments—paste everything into the body of the e-mail with “Poetry Submission” or “Fiction Submission” in the subject line. Send up to five poems or up to two prose pieces under 2,000 words each. Does not accept simultaneous submissions or previously published works. Payment is one copy of the issue in which your work is printed.

Description of Publication: Publishes triannually. Looking for work which displays music, wit, and a fondness for language and word play. The editors note that they have a “fondness for the ironic” and appreciate work with a unique perspective. Web site offers lots of cool bonuses such as an e-mail list to join, a chapbook contest, and literary links recommended by the editors

Percentage of Prose Per Issue: Varies; this issue contains 67% poetry, 23% prose, 5% interviews, and 5% book reviews

### Prose Reviews:

*Floating in the Middle of It* by Kama Falzoi is a domestic short piece told through the eyes of a nine year old girl. The piece begins with the narrator learning the news that her and her father are moving to a new neighborhood. Upon arriving at their new house, the narrator meets their new neighbor, whose son is mentally disabled. The narrator quickly becomes friends with Billy, the neighbor boy, and the story chronicles their relationship through a rough winter storm and the onset of springtime. Throughout the piece, the narrator alludes to the way the other neighborhood children view Billy and how she knows that they’re wrong. The piece ends with the narrator observing Billy from afar, realizing that he is more than everyone else thinks.

Falzoi’s piece is told in a very simple first-person, present-tense narrative that does a fantastic job of mimicking the mindset of a nine-year old girl. The pacing of the narrative is slow and steady, making each word seem heavy and important on the page. Although the voice of the narrator is young and naïve, the author’s wise intention is obvious in the subtext and tone. Overall, the author did a good job of conveying that life-changing moment of feeling grown-up for the first time.

*Gunter, Winged* by Ben Stein is a magical realist tale of a bookbinder who suddenly finds a feather sprouting from his arm. One morning, while binding books and watching the sparrows in the sky out his window, Gunter feels a strange nub sprouting from his elbow. The next morning, a feather has appeared. Gunter takes painstaking care of this feather in hopes that more will sprout and wonders what it would be like to be a flying-man. Gunter, however, waits days, months, and years, but the feather remains solitary, and Gunter continues to bind his books.

The heart of this story is in the language. This piece borders on a prose poem with its heavy imagery, fragmented sentences, and repetition. The fragmented sentences lend the piece a unique rhythm (you could probably

tap your foot to its beats). With little introduction or conclusion, the piece speaks volumes about living in the moment and the monotony of waiting for something that might never come.

Rating: 7. Although every contributor in this issue holds an MFA and/or has been previously published in a variety of high quality literary publications, the quality of work is not unreachable for emerging writers.