

Electric Velocipede (Fall 2006)

Reviewer: Matthew John

Editor: John Kilma

March 2007

What they Publish: Poetry, Fiction

Submission Guidelines: Extensive submission guidelines available at <http://www.electricvelocipede.com/htm/sg.htm>

Description of Publication: Electric Velocipede is a staple-bound journal on legal sized paper. Subscriptions are \$15 for four issues, individual issues cost \$5 each. Published Biannually

Percentage of Prose Per Issue: About 95% fiction, 5% poetry

Prose Reviews:

Tiger Tiger by Liz Williams is an objective third-person story in a fantastic setting. Vivian is an aging actress desperate to keep herself in the limelight during a time when studios seem to be looking for younger more attractive actresses. She decides that the best way to grab their attention is to have a tiger's tail surgically attached. Alas she is unable to find a doctor willing to perform such an operation. Desperate, she turns to her lover Bernard imploring him to find someone who can help her. Totally devoted to her desires, Bernard takes on this impossible task and miraculously, locates a doctor who has surgically attached a tiger's tail to himself. Vivian is beside herself with joy at the news, and sets sail to his lab. Once there however, Vivian learns that the surgery has a high price and an unexpected benefit. Should she get the surgery she learns she will become immortal. Not invulnerable to harm, but impervious to the ravaging effects of time. The cost of the procedure will be her soul. The Goddess Durga, tiger lady, will make Vivian a member of her court should she die. Vivian weighs the decision briefly, and almost immediately signs her soul away, accepting immortality and stardom.

The narration style is the heart of this work. Williams does a terrific job of keeping the action moving forward, while giving the reader enough internal narrative of the characters to keep things informative and compelling. The only complaint I have about the story is that I want more of it. It seems that the piece ends just when things begin to get good. It seems that it isn't truly complete without the consequences, good or bad, of Vivian's actions.

How to Get Rid of Your Monster by Scott William Carter: This is a subjective first-person story in a domestic setting. The story is told in the format of a series of Usenet, or message board postings. The narrator does not name himself. He informs the readers that he does his best to retain control of his emotions at all times, a quality that has caused his wife to leave him for her personal trainer. However, in the absence of his wife it seems a monster has appeared in his home. He often hears the metallic sound of a knife being sharpened during the night, and finds food missing from his refrigerator. Then one day he catches sight of the monster. He finds that the monster looks exactly as he does, except it wears an impish grin. The narrator attempts to communicate with the monster, leaving food for it, and speaking to it, but never sees it again after the first time. Finally, he leaves out a tape recorder and a note asking the monster to speak. In the morning the only words on the tape recorder are his own voice saying "Kill, Kill, Kill" in his own voice. This is less encouraging. Then the narrator wakes one day to find his neighbor's cat cut to pieces on his bedroom floor. He leaves the recorder out again, leaving a note asking how he can get rid of the monster. This time his voice speaks just one word, his wife's name. The narrator gets into his car, leaving the door open for the monster, then drives to his wife's house and opens the car door, letting the monster loose.

I had a bit of trouble following the narrator's logic during the story. I'm not sure why anybody would want to make friends with a knife sharpening, food stealing monster. I did however enjoy both the pace and the format of the piece. The decision to tell the story as message board postings really heightens the suspense, as the gaps of time between postings allow things to develop both on the page and in the reader's imagination.

Rating: 8. The contributors are quite varied, and it seems that the only real requirement for publication is a fantastic story. I highly recommend this journal to anyone with something a little unusual to tell.