

**Literal Chaos** (Issue 1)

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Editor: Amanda Wells

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Web Address: [www.literalchaos.com](http://www.literalchaos.com)

What They Publish: Fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry

Submission Guidelines: Send all submissions as double-spaced Word attachments to [submissions@literalchaos.com](mailto:submissions@literalchaos.com). Subject heading should read "Submission" and the genre. Include contact information and 75-word bio in the body of the e-mail. 2,000 words or fewer for fiction and creative nonfiction. No previously submitted work.

Description of Publication: Literal Chaos is a bound journal with an accompanying Web site that offers different material than in the print version. It showcases prose, poetry, and art "of all types from non-coastal regions of the United States." It is a small stapled journal with a glossy color cover and black and white pages folded in half (cost effective, considering this is the first issue). That being said, the journal is neat and the layout is clean.

Prose Per Issue/Amount of Published Annually: 6 pieces of prose (3 in print, 3 online)

Prose Reviews:

*Mississippi* by Lisa Ebert is a poetic, first-person realistic story in a domestic setting. The narrator, Lisa, reminisces about a night when she, her friend Tonya, and a group of guys trespass into an abandoned house. As she and her friends run through the house, trying to avoid police searchlights, she contemplates these people. Lisa thinks about bad-boy Chris and cheating Tonya, knowing that these are people who will stay with her forever, and not the boy, Willie, who is her "practice boyfriend." But he "was enough," she thinks as she runs throughout the abandoned house, drinking up life.

Ebert captures the voice of a teenage girl as she experiences life, dealing with relationships and friendship and even mortality. She says: "When you're young, you'll pretend someone is your beau just for the practice." And the pacing of the story is quick, keeping up with the intense feelings of the narrator while she and her friends run and hide from the police. Ebert captures the frenzy and the excitement, and we feel our pulse quicken as Lisa's does. We're there with her and her friends in the house, hiding from the law.

*The Lure of a Wave* by Linda O'Connell is a poetic, first-person (although "I" is only mentioned once) realistic story set in a domestic setting. The narrator, on a beach along the Gulf of Mexico, observes surfers and beach bums in the days before Tropical Storm Fay arrives. Hoping for big waves, the surfers are disappointed with small ones. An old man with a sagging tattoo of pursed lips on his no-longer "youthful gluteus maximus" walks along the sand, a surfboard under one arm. Two old women, lounging in beach chairs, call over a young man and request that he surf for their own personal pleasure. The young man quickly runs into the water, shattering their expectations.

The whole story really seems to be about shattered expectations: the surfers are displeased with the waves and the beach dwellers are left unsatisfied, with no surfer to ravenously watch. But all of these unfulfilled desires are threaded together by the idea that the storm is coming, that something terrific and horrific is inevitable. O'Connell captures a sense of thrilling, imminent danger with the image of red flags, flapping in the pre-hurricane wind, foreshadowing a wicked storm. Instead of a *carpe diem* mindset, everyone wishes for what they can't have.

Rating: 7 out of 10. Although there are not many pieces of prose in Literal Chaos, the majority of its contributors are emerging writers. The work in Literal Chaos is strong, especially considering that this is a fledgling journal. I think, too, because this is such a new journal, that the editor might be looking for any quality writing, regardless of a writer's credentials, so the chances of an emerging writer to break into print here would be high.