

The Rejected Quarterly (print issue)

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Editor: Daniel Weiss

October 2007

Web Address: www.rejectedq.com

What They Publish: Fiction, humor, essays, opinion, artwork, comics, poetry

Submission Guidelines: Up to 8,000 words. If fiction, the submission must be accompanied by at least five rejection slips; other genres don't stick to this rule, though rejection slips are preferred. They can be xeroxed. Mail to: Black Plankton Press, P.O. Box 1351, Cobb, CA 95426

Description of Publication: Professional-looking literary magazine with a column format like a newspaper.

Published biannually.

Prose Per Issue: This issue, all prose—five stories

Prose Reviews:

DNR by Robert Goodwin is a realistic story in a domestic setting. Gwen's mother is a 93-year-old woman with a myriad of chronic illnesses. She was placed in Elmwood nursing home after her last release from the hospital. Gwen refuses to sign the do not resuscitate form, but in the end she comes to peace with what her mother did to her as a child, forcing her to practice piano for hours, throwing her down a flight of stairs, among other things. Eventually Gwen allows her mother to die.

This story is told in the third person, but reading it I think it could have come across better in the first. The story was very well written with vivid sights of characters, like the doctor who was always in a three-piece suit. I just continue to wonder what this story would be like if it was from Gwen's point of view.

No Story Here by Joseph E. Hulme is a magical realist story in a domestic setting. Kelly Parks is a 15-year-old girl walking home in the rain. She takes cover on the porch of a century-old abandoned mansion. A voice calls to her from behind the door and then suddenly Kelly decides to rebel. She talks back to the author writing her story and then walks off the porch at the end.

This piece of short fiction was extremely clever and original. I thought something dark and sinister was going to happen, instead Kelly looks up at the writer and says "I'm not going in there," and she doesn't. His own character rebels! I couldn't help but smile at the thought of it. The beginning seems like it's written in third person but in actuality, it's told in first.

Rating: 5. Most of the authors in *The Rejected Quarterly* have been published elsewhere; only one author had his first publication in this issue. Also the requirement of the five rejection slips tends to draw from more experienced writers. For writers who haven't yet submitted, I think this is a good quirky little magazine that shows a rejection might not be such a bad thing.

The Rejected Quarterly

Editor: Dan Weiss

Web Address: <http://www.rejectedq.com>

What They Publish: Fiction, Poetry and Art

Submission Guidelines: Fiction submissions are to be 8,000 words or fewer and accompanied by at least five rejection slips. Magazine pays \$10 and a contributor's copy. Send to: *TRQ/Black Plankton Press*, P.O. Box 1351, Cobb, CA 95426

Description of Publication: Offbeat and odd, yet professional looking journal. Publishes bi-annually.

Prose per Issue: Issues devote the majority of their pages to fiction, but longer pieces seem to prevail, limiting the amount of stories.

Prose Reviews:

My Mother's Lipstick was Jungle Red by Rosanna Nigro Koster is a plainspoken, first-person narrative in a domestic setting. The daughter of a single mother tells the emotionally blunt saga of her mother's new romantic interest, from whom she hides the fact that she has a child. Discovered by the new boyfriend when he comes to their house, Gerilyn tries to avoid her mother's wrath by hiding her true identity, instead telling the man that she's the maid. The man secretly arranges a date with her, to which she agrees, giving her an opportunity at revenge on her secretive mother and insight into the new suitor's unseemly side. In the end, it is revealed that the suitor is engaged, and mother and daughter converge on his fiancé's bridal shower for a final confrontation.

The voice of the spurned and abandoned narrator gives this story a specific honesty about the difficulties for both parent and child in a single parent household. The initially repulsive mother who hides her daughter like an ugly secret and barricades her from happiness is later revealed as a complex and desperate woman ruled by very human desires and passions. What works for, and at the same time against, this story is the tricky plot arrangement, allowing for continuing suspense and possible catastrophe throughout the story, and yet winds up avoiding an ugly and predictably tragic conclusion. There's a happy ending where it feels like there shouldn't be, where the bad guy gets his, but the mother and daughter avoid the potentially disastrous discovery of her deceit.

Blindsight Eclipse by Cody L. Stanford is a plainspoken story in a domestic setting about a blind woman who inadvertently meets a man whose touch allows her to see through his eyes. An overall storyteller tells of this man's discovery at one of the musicals she loves to go see, detailing her almost immediate plunge into infatuation with this stranger. But as she grows closer to this man, she begins to share not only his sight, but his thoughts, which reveal to her that he is not a potential suitor but instead a pedophile with designs on a cast member of the musical they continue to view. Heartbroken and alarmed, she hunts down the potential victim to somehow save him from this dangerous man, only to wind up in a final conflict where she discovers the true motivation behind his interests in her.

This is a well-developed story with the meticulous details necessary to bring the heroine to life on the page. The storyteller point of view stays so close with the blind woman that the story might as well be told in first person, and manages to instill the tale with emotional realism without sacrificing plot or impeding action with needless exposition. Language choices and spare use of detailed imagery combines cleverly with the obvious limitations of

Reviewer: E. Christopher Ott

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the medium of written word to truthfully create a story where the reader is afflicted with the same blindness as the principal character and allows for a stimulating piece which mixes just the right amount of character introspection and written adventure.

Rating: 6 out of 10. This magazine surprised me by giving me exactly what it promises, namely stories that you won't find anywhere else. Admittedly gimmicky, I found I was additionally attracted to these stories knowing that they had not found a home in the already somewhat outsider culture of the literary journal, and I thoroughly enjoyed that the magazine wound up having quality work despite the seemingly low-brow approach to acquisitions. I also was excited by the comparatively longer word count allowances, but was rather disappointed by the limited amount of works per issue. Definitely a dubious challenge for the frequently-rejected emerging author.