

## **Black Clock**

Noelle A. Hufnagel

Editor-In-Chief: Steve Erickson

October 2007

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

What they publish: Fiction and Poetry

Submissions Guidelines: Submissions strictly accepted July 15 to Sept. 30. No submissions via e-mail.

Simultaneous submissions accepted. Response time can take up to a year. All manuscripts (except poetry) must be double-spaced. SASE required with submissions.

Description of Publication: Edgy design and modern layout with attention-grabbing cover photography. Published semi-annually. Content of collected works varies by issue.

Prose per Issue: 85% prose. Most recent issue contains 25 short stories and four poems of varied lengths.

### Prose Reviews:

*Apology* by Tara Ison is a plainspoken, realistic story in a domestic setting. The story is told through an objective third-person close narrator and explores the complexity of marriage after a spouse has committed adultery. The wife struggles to apologize for her affair. She cooks him an extravagant dinner. She burns their bed sheets and donates their bed, replacing it with a brand new one. She even goes so far as to tattoo her breast with the words, "I'm all yours, forever." We learn at the end of the story that she will spend the rest of her days apologizing, but may never earn forgiveness from her husband or children.

The third-person narrative weaves naturally in and out of the wife's thoughts, pulling together the intricacies of this couple's past and present marriage, while hinting to the future state of their marriage and family. We feel the desperation of the wife through all the various ways she attempts to win back her husband. The story successfully evokes sympathy for the children, the husband, and quite often, the wife.

*Invisible Box* by Brian Evenson is a plainspoken experimental story in a domestic setting. The story is told through an objective third-person limited narrator. The story follows a woman who, after sleeping with a mime, believes she is trapped in an imaginary box. Unable to sleep, she decides that in order to remove the box she must either sleep with the mime again or else she must kill the mime. The reader is left wondering which she will choose, though we are told they are both losing situations.

Although the plot of the story is bizarre, the third-person narrator gives the story a necessary authority. We are shown the woman the morning after "smeared with white face paint, as well as a few loops of black, like bruises, from his lips." We see images of the mime "moving inside her, shoulders hunching to avoid the ceiling of the imaginary box, white face floating like a buoy in the darkness." With a dark humor and vivid imagery, Evenson successfully drops the reader into a imaginary box right next to his main character.

Rating: 6. I am impressed by the variety of stories included in *Black Clock*. There is a common theme carried throughout all of the pieces, yet each story maintains a unique and individual voice. There is a good amount of work published from its own editors and students at Cal Arts, which could add a level of difficulty for outside beginning writers. However, *Black Clock* does an excellent job of laying out the journal to make room for an expanded selection of stories. The final publication looks professional and is very entertaining to read.