

Monkeybicycle (2010 Collection)

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Editor: Steven Seighman

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Web site: www.monkeybicycle.net

What They Publish: "Flash" Fiction, Fiction, One-sentence Stories; poetry is also included in biannual print journal.

Submission Guidelines: All submissions should be submitted through their site and should not send multiple submissions. Fiction should not exceed 1,500 words.

Description of Publication: Contributors include emerging to veteran writers. Work is added biweekly with a collection of one-sentence stories posted every week. Site is easy to read, but since the work isn't collected into issues, the each year's pieces are listed in a long list. There tends to be an emphasis on the humorous in the pieces.

Percentage of Prose Per Issue / Amount of Prose Published Annually: 100% prose for website per year. Hard to judge number of prose since there is no set issues, but 2009 included about 90 stories with 12 collections of one-sentence stories.

Prose Reviews:

Shit List, by Thomas Cooper, is a plain spoken, realistic story in a domestic setting. Told from a third-person, objective narration, the story is about an unnamed man struggling with his anger. To cope with his problems, his doctor tells him to make a "shit list" of everything that makes him angry. The man goes through a number of drafts, from his parents to a humiliating childhood moment to his brother. He tears up each draft, however, when he comes up with new people with whom to start the list. The man finally deals with his anger as he did when he was a child: imagining those that wronged him apologizing and wishing that they could be taken off his "list."

The vivid depictions of the man's problems really carry the piece; a story that could otherwise be a depressing "pity party" are made entertaining and create the man's anger in just a few sentences. In the first paragraph, we start off with a realistic image of the man: "That way he won't end up drinking himself into a half-stupor and calling people at ungodly hours of the night. Or, worse, ambushing them in public places like the city's winter festival and making a spectacle, though that only happened once." The voice of the narrator, although detached from the man, shows a familiarity with its subject, almost as if watching a documentary.

The Buddhist, by Z.Z. Boone, is a plain spoken, realistic story in a domestic setting. The subjective, first-person narrator gives an account of his neighbor, Barry, asking him to destroy the wasp nest on Barry's house. Upon asking him why he can't do it, Barry tells the narrator that he has been a Buddhist for three weeks, and that prohibits him from harming other creatures. The narrator agrees, and when he arrives, Barry has two cans of Raid Wasp & Hornet Killer and points out the site of the nest. The narrator kills the wasps while Barry cheers him on, even describing the destruction as "Beautiful." The narrator can't help but question Barry's actions and shares his doubts with his wife, who is also intrigued by the entire incident.

Boone's voice comes across well in the description of the wasp-killing incident. He writes, "Wasps rain down onto the drop cloth, barely missing me as they tumble. They twist and writhe in the throes of death,

then fall as still as burnt embers.” We are given an objective look at the slaughter of wasps, while in Barry, this objectivity is replaced by excitement over the destruction. The entire story is a slighted look on religion: the narrator, who proposes to have no real opinion on religion, relishes in killing the wasps, while Barry, the Buddhist who prides himself on his lack of bloodlust, describes the slaughter as “beautiful.”

Publication Rating: 7. Although many of the contributors are established writers, an equal amount of authors are emerging. The writing is superb, and the high-volume of prose, including one-sentence stories, that are published gives good chances for writers of all kinds. The site could use a little work, however, such as bunching the stories by month so that it is easier to find particular works.