

Zoetrope All-Story (Spring 2007)

Reviewer: Justin Hoffman

Editor: Michael Ray

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Web Address: <http://all-story.com>

What they publish: Fiction and one-act plays.

Submission Guidelines: Editors read between Jan. 1 and Aug. 31. From Sept. 1 to Dec. 31 they only read contest submissions, which are also considered for the magazine. Requires first serial rights and one-year film option rights. Simultaneous submissions accepted. Send only 2 submissions (one at a time) per period, each under 7,000 words, to: *Zoetrope All-Story* Fiction Editor 916 Kearny St. San Francisco, CA 94133

Description of Publication: Glossy literary magazine published quarterly. \$6.95/issue, \$19.95/ annual.

Percentage of Prose per Issue: 95%, 6 or more stories.

Prose Reviews:

Calisthenics, Poison Ivy, Final Cut by Woody Allen is a plainspoken realistic story set in a domestic setting. It is told through a series of first-person letters between a camp leader, Varnishke, and the father, Snell, of a child who attends the camp. The story begins with Snell writing a letter to Varnishke, in which he refuses to share any part of the movie deal that came from his son's film project at the summer film camp. The letters turn meaner until Varnishke reveals that he has kept the original negative, which forces Snell to suggest a payment of 10% to Varnishke. In the final letter the camp leader states his wife requests the payment to be 20%.

The form is very interesting for this story. Allen has chosen to write with letters because of an inspiration from letters written in the back of a magazine. I don't think the story could have been told any other way, and it is refreshing to see a shift in form. There is so much told about the two men when they throw around names, both as insulting and as trying to show they know more than the other, and then they slip into foolish, childlike insults—making fun of the son or the wife of the other. It is a simple battle of egos, turned fun with the sport of money and family.

The House of the Two Three-Legged Dogs by Elizabeth McCracken is a plainspoken, realistic story set in a domestic setting. It is told through an objective, distant third-person point of view. Tony bought his son a cheap, broken down car for a Christmas present. As the story continues, the reader learns more and more about the family. Tony's son, Malcolm, buys a parrot from a friend for his father, paying only half of the price. Sid, a friend, of Malcolm's then tells Tony his son has left the country and is selling the house. Tony is going to sell the car and the parrot dies in the front seat from carbon monoxide poisoning. In the end, he realizes that he's not the only desperate person in the world.

I really enjoyed the way this story unfolded the past, giving it away in little bits and pieces, but never really giving it all away. Slowly you learn all about the family in the middle of the story that is being told. The past is more important than the story going on now and makes the story worth writing about at all. There's something amazing about this technique to me. Reading stories like this, which use it, are always a treat. I also really enjoyed the tone because it is dark; the kind of story that sticks in the mind for a while.

Rating: 3. The writing is high quality, intriguing prose. This magazine would be an excellent place to be published. The authors have all several previous publication credits. There are quite a few stories published every year, but

competition is extremely high (over 12,000 submissions per year). This would be a good place to try out with a few publications under your belt.