

# **Raving Dove**









**An Online Magazine Report**

**by**

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**Spring 2008**

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## Fact Sheet

**Online Magazine:** Raving Dove

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

**Address:**

Raving Dove

P.O. Box 28

West Linn, O.R. 97068

**Email Address:** [editor@ravingdove.org](mailto:editor@ravingdove.org)

**Founded:** 2004

**Editor:** Jo-Ann Moss

**Frequency:** Triquarterly

**What They Publish:** Essays, fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and art

**Nonprofit:** yes

**Submission Guidelines:** Visit [www.ravingdove.org/submissions](http://www.ravingdove.org/submissions)

**Reading Period:** Year-round

**Simultaneous Submissions:** Yes

**Reporting Time:** Two to three months

**Contributor Payment:** None

**Mission Statement:** Striving to change the world by spreading messages of nonviolence, peace, and anti-war.

**CLMP Member:** Yes

## **Why I Chose Raving Dove**

I came across Raving Dove while looking through links on newpages.com. The name caught my eye because it had a sense of passion to it and it wasn't just another "...Review." I read through the founding message and was captivated by Raving Dove's ideas and goals:

"It's within our ability to evolve, but only if humanity speaks out... One day this thing called war will be part of our tragic past, not the blueprint for our future. A new stance will take hold, borne of a determination to solve differences and instill freedoms *not* with the use of horrific slaughter, but by profound thought and civilized action. Won't you share your creative angst and humanitarian visions with us?"

With the current situation in the Middle East especially, a wide range of people have been affected. Raving Dove provides an outlet of expression for those who have been directly affected by war and for those who just feel the need to speak out about it. I devoted my project to Raving Dove because their ongoing theme of peace, nonviolence, and antiwar often finds its way into my own writing and I felt an instant connection to the contributors and their art.

### Comparison of Issues Over Time

	Issue 1 Summer 2004	Issue 8 Fall/Winter 2006-2007	Issue 12 Spring 2008
Prose:Poetry	4:5	8:16	5:9
Prose Writers M:F	2:1	4:4	1:4
Protagonists M:F:No Gender	2:0:2	5:2:1	0:3:2
POV 1 <sup>st</sup> :3 <sup>rd</sup>	0:4	6:2	3:2
Author Credits Novel:Mag:First	1:1:2	1:7:1	0:3:2

One thing I noticed in this chart was that there's almost always more poetry than prose. My theory is that they probably end up getting more poetry submissions than anything and this is most likely because of the theme of the magazine. From what I've read outside of Raving Dove, most writing with themes of antiwar or peace is poetry.

Something else to note are the gender ratios of the contributors. I was surprised to see that the numbers were almost equal. In my mind, these numbers shatter the stupid stereotype of men being more "war-happy" than women.

## Story Reviews

Issue 1, Summer 2004

*Disconnected*, by Bryan Harrison, is a plainspoken, realistic story in a domestic setting. Most of the story is a phone conversation between a soldier in the Middle East and his mother. She's going on and on about how the family is so proud of him and so happy that he's coming home in a few days. He's a hero to them. Tommy, the soldier, is very distant and distracted and he keeps blacking out of the conversation and into flashbacks of a car that he and a few other soldiers blew up. They killed the family inside of the car, including a small child. Tommy seems to be in a state of shock and disbelief and he feels guilty and ashamed. His mother senses that something is wrong so she tries to reassure him by telling him to put everything that's happened there behind him and that they can just pick up where they left off. Tommy hangs up the phone.

I liked this story because it was well balanced. Without the flashbacks of killing the family, the phone conversation would be missing something. Without the phone conversation, the reader wouldn't get to see the result of what happened. The images were vivid and frightening but beautifully written and human emotion ran rampant throughout the entire piece.

*Shadows in the Alley*, by Ron Venable, is a plainspoken, realistic story in a domestic setting. The third-person narrator tells of a now homeless Vietnam veteran who is begging for money on the streets. He retreats back to his cardboard home and sits by his fire and tells how he ended up there. He begins to cry and finger his revolver as he remembers his first time on night duty in Vietnam. He remembers hearing someone lurking in the distance so he shoots at the sound. His entire crew wakes up to gunshots and his Sergeant makes them go out to see what he has shot. It's a little girl. His Sergeant makes him bury her where she lay so that he doesn't have to report it to headquarters, and from then on his nickname is "Crack-shot." Back in present-time, he decides that it is time to either take control of his life or just take it. He stands up and throws the revolver in the dumpster and walks out of the alley forever.

I liked the story because it seemed realistic to me. It showed “the other side” of being a war vet. It wasn’t predictable either. This man wasn’t welcomed home and compensated or treated as a hero. He was pushed out of society. I thought the flashback was efficient because it showed exactly how he got to be where he was.

Issue 8, Fall/Winter 2006-2007

*Fragments of Metal and Memory*, by John Q. McDonald, is a plainspoken memoir about his family. The author talks of his grandfather who was killed in an aircraft explosion right before landing on an island to begin his tour of duty. Shards of metal were imbedded in his body, and while he survived the accident, he died from the metal seven years later. His mother raised him in Vietnam times, dragging him to protests and refusing to let him play with toy guns. He finds himself amazed by his grandfather’s uniform and war items hidden in the attic. He writes about waiting to stand before the draft board and his days of protesting Libya, Grenada, etc.

I thought this story lacked focus most of the time. I was confused as to what exactly the story was about. Was it about his mother? His grandfather? His own protesting days? I was left wanting more of a narrowed down story, and I had too many questions.

*But for Grace*, by Bob Mustin, is a plainspoken, realistic story in a domestic setting. The first-person narrator, Alan, and his wife, Melinda, run into a homeless man that Alan had served with in Vietnam. Alan had eight minutes to get to a job interview which determined whether or not they had to sell their house and his wife was whispering tips in his ear and pushing him along to make it on time. The man stops them and Alan ignores his wife to talk to him. He ignores her because while the two men are very different now, there’s still that connection. They knew what happened in Vietnam; they knew and understood things that his wife never could. They speak of old times and Alan hands him ten dollars to help him out and they leave to go to his interview.

The story was good but it wasn't amazing. There was some good imagery but I wanted more about the place. You only got information about Vietnam through their dialogue. I also wanted to know more about their relationship in Vietnam and the short-lived friendships in war because of death and relocation. I think the author could've taken it further.

Issue 12, Spring 2008

*Like Snow, Like Ash, Like Tin*, by Lily Thomas, is a plainspoken realistic story in a domestic setting. The third-person objective narrator tells of Jen and her son Cody, who are alive after a recent nuclear attack on their country. While her neighbors are packing up their things and running for their lives, Jen thinks about her husband, who has their car, and how she is trapped. She thinks of herself killing her son and herself before the radiation effects get any worse. She goes to her husband's gun safe for the gun that will end their lives but because the lock's combination is her son's birthday, she changes her mind. She finds the stash of thyroid blocker pills for a radiation emergency, crushes up a few, and puts the powder in her son's applesauce with slight hope that this will save them. A few days later, they are barely still alive. Her son is throwing up blood and she is losing hair. He dies in her arms and she lies next to him in bed and eventually shoots herself.

I found this story very interesting but I wanted a little more. The decision between killing herself and her son or prolonging their deaths with pills that might not even work seems like something that should be given a little more space in the story. I think an entire middle could be written on this decision and the effects of radiation on a body and mind. For short fiction, though, I can understand the decision to leave that out. I had to choose between citing this as "realistic" or "surreal" and thinking about that really got to me. Nuclear war will always be a concern and it's always possible but not a lot of people really think of it that way. This story forced me to continue to think, even after I finished reading it, about what I would do in the case of a nuclear attack. This makes the story very personal and universal at the same time.

*Hiroshima Forty Years Later*, by John Wesick, is a plainspoken nonfiction essay about his trip to Hiroshima. The physicist is in Osaka for a conference and decides to visit Hiroshima, which is now a successful and busy city. He walks through Peace Park, snapping pictures and listening to "the peace bell's somber ringing." After donating \$20 for atomic bomb survivors, he visits the Hiroshima Museum where thousands of artifacts, art, and other things kept from the times of war are preserved. He stares at pictures that kids have drawn of melting bodies and corpses lying by the river and he feels a deep sadness because children's art should show none of these things. He looks at a folding screen that has a mushroom cloud and a symbol of compassion painted on two separate sides and believes that the artist only meant to say, "compassion exists even in the midst of destruction." He goes back to Osaka where he speaks to no one of what he feels and only listens to people who have not experienced the suffering of Hiroshima and have "missed the point."

This read like a journal entry to me. I was kind of waiting for something more than just his thoughts on everything and descriptions of art. I wasn't all that impressed because I felt like everyone who has visited Hiroshima could have these very same thoughts in their journals. I wanted a story, not just a description. I did, however, enjoy the poem at the end of the piece. It makes me think that the author should have made something out of that and kept this story in his journal.

## Interview with Jo-Ann Moss

*Everyone has their own likes and dislikes when it comes to fiction and nonfiction. What are yours and how do you get past your personal bias when reading submissions?*

Raving Dove's content is different from most in that it has a clear anti-war, antiviolence theme, with very distinct guidelines. If writing falls within these guidelines, it is reviewed fairly. I have no biases other than a preference for writing that adheres to the established guidelines at the site.

*What is your process for deciding whether or not a story is right for your journal? For example, do you read every story from beginning to end, withholding judgments until the end? Or maybe you know after reading one page of a story?*

I look for a crisp, solid opening, one with a hook that makes me want to read further. Online readers need to be drawn in quickly, or they'll surf to the next site. Short, powerful, and polished is desirable, as is writing that is moving but not overly soft. Antiwar writing sometimes falls prey to "bleeding heart" mockery. In order to appeal to a broad demographic, I try to select fiction that is somewhat edgy, and nonfiction that tells a story that really makes the reader think. I generally know within the first three or four paragraphs whether the writing will be selected for publication.

*After a story is chosen for publication, do you work with the author on revisions or do you tend to choose stories that are ready to be published as is?*

Stories need to be 99% publication-ready. Unfortunately, I don't have the time to work with writers, and I'm not a teacher by trade. I am, however, an editor/copyeditor by profession, so I tweak all prose for minor spelling, punctuation, and grammar gaffes. I generally leave poetry alone.

*What do you wish to see happen in Raving Dove's future? By any chance, do you see your journal coming into print?*

A print anthology is a goal, but not because online is inferior. Online is gaining steam. There are currently 380 million English-speaking Internet users (reference:

www.internetworldstats.com), so there is dramatic potential to reach a larger number of people online than in print. Still ... print commands respect. It's tangible. And it is a long-range goal. My primary goal, however, is to gain as large an Internet audience as possible ... through excellent submissions, advertising, and PR. And the larger the audience, the greater the chance that it will inspire other forms of activism.

*We all know this business can be competitive and almost payless. What keeps you motivated to continue doing what you do?*

Aside from the fact that there's such beauty in the English language, my motivation comes from knowing that 1) I've helped someone advance his or her career, and 2) I've provided a platform for someone who has been touched by violence or war in some way. One of the nonfictions published at Raving Dove was by a former Army nurse who served in the burn unit at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. Talk about powerful. Not only was she able to share her experiences, the piece was picked up by The Baltimore Sun.

My journal is an official 501c3 nonprofit. Each nonprofit has to have a mission that benefits the public. There are thousands of nonprofits in this country. No solitary nonprofit can solve all the world's problems, but we each enter the arena to work for a collective good.

*What are some of the difficulties in managing an online journal and how do you overcome them?*

The only disadvantage I can think of is the perception of online versus print, with the latter still perceived (in certain circles) as deserving of more respect. This is changing. The Internet is the future. The Green Movement is moving the world away from paper. In fact, many foundations to which I'm applying for grants are requesting grant applications on recycled paper, without any use of plastic. Many only want e-mail applications.

In terms of day-to-day management, I feel that online is more manageable than print. We have greater flexibility in journal length, we can make changes or corrections

at a moment's notice, and post news as it happens. HTML is an easy language to learn. Web management is easy.

Reading and replying to submissions in a timely manner is the most difficult challenge of all, but this facet of publishing is shared by online and print publications alike.

*A lot of your contributors have a few, small and large, publications under their belts. What advice could you give to emerging writers who are, essentially, competing with published writers to be noticed?*

Submit your best writing; make sure it's as polished as can be. Follow the guidelines on the submissions page very, very carefully. Believe it or not, I receive romance stories for what is clearly an anti-war journal. Reading and replying is time-consuming. We show respect for every single person who submits by reading and replying within the number of days specified on our guidelines. The writer should show the same respect.

*In your inspiring founding message you say "It's within our ability to evolve, but only if humanity speaks out." We as writers have the power to inspire these ideas of peace, just look at the songwriters of the 60's. I think it's safe to say that music was the center of the revolution during Vietnam. How do you feel about writers having this type of power, and do you feel like we as a community are speaking out enough?*

This century has seen an explosion in expressive writing because of the increased use of the Internet. We have social networking sites, blogging, RSS feeds, and a plethora of other types of Internet communication. But rather than ranting amongst ourselves, we need to make sure that the appropriate officials, the ones who can take action, read about our concerns. Writers can definitely be a catalyst for change if we hone our thoughts and channel them in the proper direction.

## **A Few Things To Keep In Mind**

Something to keep in mind is the theme of this magazine. Don't send writing that doesn't adhere to Raving Dove's ongoing theme of peace, nonviolence, and anti-war. Even though the theme is set, the writing is very different. Remember, Jo-Ann is looking for "crisp and solid" pieces to keep her online readers satisfied so don't be afraid to experiment a bit.

If you've read the magazine and feel that it is for you, submit! Just remember to show Jo-Ann respect by following submission guidelines to a "t." Jo-An is a great person with a huge goal of giving writers an outlet to help spread peace across this crazy world. If this is part of your personal mission then you've found the perfect online journal.