



A Magazine Report

by

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## Swill:

(noun)

liquid or partly liquid food for animals, esp. kitchen refuse given to swine; hogwash.

kitchen refuse in general; garbage.

any liquid mess, waste, or refuse; slop.

a deep draught of liquor.

contemptibly worthless utterance or writing.

(verb without object)

6. to drink greedily or excessively.

(verb with object)

to drink (something) greedily or to excess; guzzle.

to feed (animals) with swill:

## Table of Contents

♠	Swill Fact Sheet.....	4
♠	Why I Chose Swill.....	5
♠	Comparison of Issues.....	6
♠	Story Reviews.....	7
♠	Interview with Rob Pierce.....	9
♠	Things to Keep in Mind.....	11

## Fact Sheet...

**Magazine:** *Swill*

**Web Address:** [www.swillmagazine.com](http://www.swillmagazine.com)

**E-mail Address:** [editors@swillmagazine.com](mailto:editors@swillmagazine.com)

**Founded:** 2006

**Editor-Founder:** Rob Pierce

**Frequency:** Annually

**What They Publish:** Fiction for the Ill Literate. Literary fiction, noir, pulp, short stories—with the occasional poem or two. Stories that don't require examination. Sex. Violence. Stories where people might actually die and where the jokes are actually funny. You know. Stories.

**Submission Guidelines:** Ever changing. View website for details.

**Reading Period:** There is a deadline for each issue. See website.

**Simultaneous Submissions:** Yes

**Reporting Time:** ASAP

**Contributor Payment:** Currently non-paying

**Mission Statement:** We don't expect anything nice.

We know beauty is out there, waiting to betray us.

We know we should have faith in our fellow humans. Because they tell us we should and they've proven themselves so trustworthy. Uh-huh.

We see a world wanting to self-destruct and we see ourselves as part of it.

We see love everywhere, as evidenced by lovers killing out of jealousy, and followers of one God of truth and wisdom eager to annihilate followers of another.

We see hope and know our vision is marred by a desire to see what we want.

We return to cynicism, we return to hate, we return to those emotions we can trust.

We want some of you to like what we do; we don't give a fuck if any of you like who we are.

We are Swill.

**CLMP Member:** No sir

## Why I Chose *Swill*...

Honestly, my first comfortable choice didn't respond to my e-mail. After surfing through numerous literary websites, I stumbled upon *Swill*, which had a pretty sweet homepage that was easy to navigate and pleasing to look at. After reading their mission statement and a few clips from both of their issues, I felt rather hooked on *Swill*. I read all their excerpts and wanted more.

That was how it began.

## Comparison of Issues...

	Issue one	Issue two
Author m:f	10:0	8:3
POV 1:2:3	6:0:4	4:0:7
domestic:exotic setting	8:2	10:1

Neither issue is said to have a direct theme, however most stories deal with abnormal circumstances found in domestic settings. I also found it interesting that Issue One had two stories involving clowns (*Clownkiller* by Bucky Sinister and *Clown Love* by Assistant Editor Sean Craven) In Issue Two, I discovered three stories with important scene involving buses (*Pee* by Nina Alvarez, *Malcolm Gets Fired* by Doug Draime and *First Floor Apartment* by Randy LoBasso).

No writers published through Swill mention being emerging writers and most have reasonably sized platforms. Editor-in-Chief Rob Pierce and Assistant Editor Sean Craven are published in both issues.

## Story Reviews...

### Issue One

*The Guy Who Ate His Sister* by Dan Donche is a realistic story in a domestic setting. The nameless subjective narrator tells the story of a young man named Planter Glühoern who, as the title implies, ate his sister. The story is told like a memoir and involves little scene or dialogue; however it is blossoming with ripe imagery and bold character description. The audience finds out at the end of the piece that Planter had eaten his twin sister while still in the womb.

This piece was extremely entertaining and I read it in just a few minutes. Despite there being close to no dialogue or physical actions throughout the entire story, it flows easily and naturally, and in the end is a very satisfying read. The main character is beyond interesting, and the narrator's humorous tone and voice makes you laugh out loud. Planter is a character that can easily be related to, despite the fact that he ate his sister.

*Clownkiller* by Bucky Sinister is an experimental story in an exotic setting. The main character lives in a parallel universe where phobias are real-life dangers. Vampires, werewolves, monsters in the closet, and clowns are horrific creatures bent on destroying man. The main character kills a herd of clowns and is confronted by a federal zoologist who accuses him of killing clowns for bounty and selling their noses to black market skin care companies.

Sinister creates a frighteningly real story where seemingly silly fears are made very real. His descriptions of the clowns themselves are extremely convincing, and the story flows flawlessly from one scene to the next. Very entertaining and has excellent novel potential.

*The Ugliest Whore* by Rob Pierce is a realistic story in a domestic setting. The main character is a subjective narrator with a twisted fixation on a grotesque prostitute he sees outside his apartment window daily. He takes her into his home where he attempts to get to know her story, her American dream, find out if she wanted to be a movie star or something. He pays her for sex and afterwards becomes so disgusted by the fact that he knows so much about her and yet she knows nothing of him that he kicks her out of his apartment. Sitting alone in his room, he regrets having made his only companion leave.

Pierce does an amazing job painting the horrific image of the old worn whore that the main character invites in to his home. I kept my lip clamped between my teeth throughout the entire read. His descriptions are hard-hitting and raw and the thoughts that go through the narrator's lonely and desperate head are very believable. A quick read that leaves you feeling cold and complete.

## Issue Two

*Pee* by Nina Alvarez is a realistic story told in a domestic setting. The main character is a subjective and saucy young narrator who just wants to take the bus. She steps on without incident and finds the perfect seat in the back. Upon sitting, she immediately knows that she has just set her bag down in a puddle of piss.

The story is very short and reads more like a scene than an entire story, however we get enough story through the attitude and internal thought of the narrator that the audience is satisfied in the end. We do not know that the girl is only a second-grader until the very last sentence of the story so there is a slight loop at the end that leaves you with your jaw open and a “What the hell?” look on your face. The story lacks overall narrative drive and is carried through mainly on character and sensory details. Humorous and highly entertaining.

*Centre for Addiction and Mental Health* by Owen Roberts is a realistic story in a domestic setting. This is a piece of flash fiction about a man who mistakes a drunken and potentially unstable woman’s glance for attention. He is attracted to her simply because she has arms and legs and breasts that might not be nice, but at least they’re there. When she stares at him in utter disgust, he realizes he was rather mistaken.

This was an interesting story that I would have enjoyed more had there been more substance to it. It read easily and the characters were easy to see, however I wanted to know more about the main character and why he was in the “Center for Addiction and Mental Health.” I enjoyed the details associated with the woman, however I would have liked to see more of the narrator.

*Malcolm Gets Fired* by Doug Draime is a realistic story in a domestic setting. Told in third-person, the main character Malcolm wakes up in a trailer in Hollywood with a horrible headache and no idea as to what happened the night prior. Later he finds out that he had become thoroughly intoxicated and was fired from his band. When searching for money in his apartment, a Don Knotts look-alike and his niece show up and demand to speak to him. While in the doorway, the girl passes out and later dies in the hospital of a brain tumor. The Don Knotts look-alike is a member of a cult lead by the infamous Bubba Da Sid and is now set upon revenge for Malcolm killing his niece.

This story was absolutely bazaar, but I believed it. The tone was very matter-of-fact despite the humorous and yet dangerous situations Malcolm was found in. I read through it very quickly and the cliffhanger ending was almost a disappointment as it fell at our feet so neatly and suddenly that it couldn’t have been natural. I think that this story has great novel potential, perhaps a novel in stories as Malcolm is an extremely interesting character. Draime did an excellent job of constructing his characters and showing the other-other side of Hollywood.

## Interview with Rob Pierce...

*I see that you are published in both Issues One and Two. How did you transition from writing to editing, and how does this affect your writing process?*

I was in a writers' group and we got to a point where we wanted a publication of our best work. That resulted in *Monday Night*, a journal I still edit for. Reading a lot of stories as an editor has emphasized for me the things I don't like in my own writing, especially a lack of narrative drive.

*What is a typical day for you as an editor?*

Editing is something I do at night. (My days are pretty well filled with a job that pays money.) What's typical depends on where we're at in the editing process. Early on I do a lot of quick reads, marking stories as "Yes," "No," or "Maybe." As we get farther along, Sean (my co-editor at *Swill*) and I go through the stories we like best. When we settle on what we're accepting, we independently line edit each story. After comparing edits, a completed version is sent to each author, who agrees or doesn't until we're in agreement on the finished copy.

*How much do you work with writers following their acceptance (or rejection) from Swill?*

I always think my edits are correct. So I try to work with the authors we've accepted until they agree with me. They don't always, and when it comes down to it they don't have to. I won't risk losing a good story over an editing decision (it happened once, but it was really the writer's choice). I have sent work back to writers prior to acceptance with suggestions as to what the story needed. One of the best stories in our upcoming third issue didn't get accepted until about the fourth time we saw it (and there were additional edits afterward). But we knew from the first read that we wanted to publish the story; it just wasn't ready yet.

*You stated that Swill started because the literary community wasn't as entertaining as it could be. Do you think this has changed, or are you still receiving coming of age stories brought about by fatherly hunting excursions?*

1) Entertaining literature still has to be hunted down. It exists, but mainstream magazines don't publish it much. I find really good stories in really obscure places and I wonder why the "literary" magazines don't publish anything this good. They just aren't all that literary. Unless literature is defined as an insomnia cure.

2) We don't get many traditional coming of age stories. Which is good, because I think personal epiphanies make terrible endings. A bad day of *Swill* submissions can be damn depressing to read, though; a lot of suicides, people with AIDS, sociopaths, one story after another written well enough to make you read to the

end, not well enough to make you want to publish it, or to read anything else ever again. Of course, this is what I asked for.

*What type of work do you think best characterizes what can be found in Swill?*

Twisted. It's often dark, and we certainly don't avoid violence or sex. There's a lot of humor in it too, and that also often involves violence or sex.

*Are there any specific turn-offs that make a submission lose its appeal? How do you know if a piece is right for your journal?*

I don't think we'd publish anything where you'd capitalize the "L" in literature. Anything that relies on cleverness is almost certainly not all that clever. I wouldn't recommend sending us poetry either, but we've published some, so if you've read Swill and think it's right by all means send it. Every issue Sean and I pick the stories that we both like, and it usually has a pulp feel to it but that's not a qualification. I care a lot more about plot and character than about setting and description.

*As an editor and writer, how do you feel the rise of the online journal is affecting the success of bound publications?*

Don't much care. I assume it hurts sales, but I like online journals (at least as a concept) and I'm not trying to make money at this anyway. Anyone who publishes good writing should be encouraged to do so, and the more in print the better, but I think an extremely high percentage of bound publications print nothing but crap.

*What does the future hold for your publication? Have you considered an entirely web-based journal?*

To quote the Sex Pistols, "We're the future/No future." We don't want to be entirely web-based, but we're out to publish the best writing we can, and if publishing costs force us away from hard copies, we'll adapt. I like technology and I like *Swill*; I won't let one defeat the other.

*How do you feel about the pressure to write the next Kite Runner or Harry Potter is affecting unpublished writers?*

If you're writing to get rich you're probably screwed anyway. The last I checked, seven writers we've published at Swill have books out. I own only a couple of those myself. Artistic success is rarely rewarded financially.

*Do you have any advice for emerging writers looking for their first publication?*

Submit to a magazine you actually like. If your tastes are similar to the editor's, your odds go way up. And if you don't like anything, submit to *Swill*.

## Things to Keep in Mind...

If you want to be published in Swill, you need to have an attitude. If there's one thing that ties these stories together it's eccentricity. These stories are meant to entertain. Rob Peirce has followed through with his rebellion against boring "Literature."

This journal is easy to navigate, easy to read, and easy to purchase. If you have any questions, e-mail [editors@swillmagazine.com](mailto:editors@swillmagazine.com), and you are guaranteed a speedy response. We're all readers and writers here, so get connected and submit.