

Amarillo Bay

By Allison S

Editor: Jerry Craven

September 2005

Address: www.amarillobay.org

What They Publish: Amarillo Bay publishes fiction, poetry and creative-nonfiction. They look for imagery-laden, well-written work of various genres.

Submission Guidelines: They prefer to receive submissions electronically. Work should be sent to the editor, Jerry Craven, copied and pasted into the body of an e-mail. They usually respond to submissions within 2 months.

Description: Amarillo Bay is a web zine that seeks to make literary fiction accessible to the Internet reader. They showcase experimental pieces that may not find a home in traditional magazines in an online format that's friendly and easy to navigate. New issues are posted the first Monday of February, May, August and November. Past issues are available for browsing on the Amarillo Bay website.

Percentage of Prose: About half of Amarillo Bay is prose. Of the prose, half is fiction and half is creative non-fiction.

Prose Reviews:

Distance by Terry Dalrymple. A plain spoken, realistic, minimalist story in a domestic setting. An objective third-person narration of a drunken liaison between a nameless married woman and a nameless man. They meet in a bar, confess their frustrations with lust and relationships, then go back to her place for sex.

It's a plot that's been done uncountable times. The standard tale of infidelity, "I won't tell if you won't." What sets *Distance* apart is the sensory detail. The hum of conversation in the bar, the scent of the morning's coffee, the warmth of a lover's hand. The language in this piece is rhythmic and flowing, the images heavy in gesture and nuance. It's a quick and satisfying read, fits well on a computer screen.

Odd Harvest by Daryl Scroggins. A closely narrated, somewhat poetic nature memoir by writer/teacher Daryl Scroggins. The subjective first person narrator highlights the hidden and sometimes creepy inner workings of his backyard garden; the bugs, the birds and the zen of making things grow.

Like *Distance*, *Odd Harvest* is quick and intense, using strong voice and imagery to tell the story, making it ideal for a computer screen. Obscure metaphors turn the narrator's backyard garden into a mystical place. However, the overuse of adverbs and gimmicky last line (*I don't know what killed the tree.*) stuck out like rotten petunias.

Rating: 4 out of 10 for emerging writers, though most of the writers featured on the web zine are either educators or have published a significant larger work, like a novel or poetry collection. The quality of the work is high but simple. On the site, the editors claim they are simply looking for the best writing.

Amarillo Bay comes out frequently, but only publishes about 6 prose pieces per issue, which may sound a little discouraging. But the friendly and easy-to-use demeanor of this web zine, with it's simple submission guidelines, makes it a welcoming place for new writers to submit. I even sent them a story of my own.

Amarillo Bay

By Jess D'Amico

Editor: Jerry Craven

September 2005

Address: www.amarillobay.com

Publishes: Fiction, Creative Non-fiction, and Poetry

Submission Guidelines: No word count, previously unpublished work. Publishes fiction, poetry, CNF. Mainstream literary fiction most wanted. Online submission. Seeking work from both unpublished and established writers.

Description of Publication: Nice, clean design with easy navigation of current and past issues by issue number, year, title, or author. Releases four issues a year. After reading a piece, readers are encouraged to comment on it and the comment is passed from Amarillo to the author.

Percentage of Prose: about 3 fiction pieces per issue, 4 issues a year. Approximately 12 pieces of fiction published annually.

Prose Reviews:

Love in Dead Languages by Andrew Geyer. Plain spoken with some poetic overtones realistic story set in domestic circumstances. The narrator, a bartender, attempts to explain irony to an unknown audience named Annie. Story within story form as narrator tells about a college friend Ben, who knows ancient Greek and Latin, but cannot play basketball while the narrator is the stated opposite. The story follows through their first, and last apartment, and a nasty infestation of rats.

What took me in about this story was the first line. "If you're looking for irony, Annie, you're not gonna find it here." The story starts with the bartender narrator speaking to other guests including Annie, in jumbles to assemble a setting. Once we actually see the narrator's college life and are introduced to Ben, the main character, the story slows to an agonizing pace, and reminiscing of dorm life. The characters next transition to their first, ratty apartment is when we finally glimpse what the narrator was attempting to put forth the whole time, the idea of irony as karma. In the end, the narrator is changed from the experience and the story has finally come full circle. However, there is so much extraneous information in between, the story fails to be gripping as the author seems to intend.

Blue Summer by Toby Schwartz A third person blue-collar prose realistic story dealing with domestic issues. Mitchell, known as Blue, wants to spend more time with his father. Blue starts by finishing the school year and starting the summer playing with friends who are all just entering puberty. Blue finds his father's paycheck and determines in the ten weeks before school to save enough money by working odd jobs to enable his roughneck father to spend time with him.

Once again, this story had a gripping first paragraph only one where the contents are never mentioned again. The subject matter is fairly hackneyed and not dealt with in any fresh or new manner here. The author is a filmmaker and although this might have made for an interesting visual feat, as a short story you keep thinking you've read this somewhere before. A very open ending helps to bring the story to more realistic terms.

Rating: 5 out of 10. Prose ranges from very experienced to new writers, but the majority is well experienced. A good place to showcase your work after you have a few publications.