

Chiaroscuro

Editor in Chief: Brett Alexander Savory

Fiction Editor: Paul G. Tremblay

Address: <http://chizine.com/>

Publishes: Dark Speculative Fiction & Poetry

By Tom Mula

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Submission Guidelines: 4,000 words or less; submitted as an .rtf file or .doc attachment; simultaneous submissions ok as long as you tell them it's simultaneous; approx. 3 mos. response time. Payment: 7¢ a word. Submit to: savory@rogers.com

Description of Publication: A high-class, slickly designed horror/fantasy webzine; published quarterly; approx. 32 stories per year.

Prose Reivews:

Sins of the Father by S.E. Ward. An antiquely-voiced folktale told in third person from the perspective of Rasid bin Wasi, a Muslim *ghul* in France in the Middle Ages. Bin Wasi has begun to rot, and leadership of his tribe must be passed to his spoiled son, Mu'tasim. Bin Wasi travels to the next village to bring his son home. He finds his son too late—Mu'tasim has drunk from a human woman, and killed her.

This is a very sophisticated story. Ward creates an entirely new mythology—that of devout Muslim ghouls, living in France beside their Christian and Jewish human neighbors. The details of ghoulish biology and sociology—that they rot late in life, and drink human blood to forestall that rotting; that they live alongside humans, vampires, and faeries (all brilliantly, creatively re-imagined by Ward)—are secondary to a family tale of a loving father who has spoiled his son.

Dream Caused by the Flight of a Bee around a Pomegranate by Stephen M. Wilson. A collage of bee-biology and physiology, how-to, recipes, science fiction, and dreamlike, first-person folktale. What we know as the Sleeping Beauty/Briar Rose folktale is the mythic survival of an alien colonization that combines human biology with that of bees, creating human/bee “queens” to breed an alien race.

This story is subtle and brilliant, told almost entirely through implication. We must piece together the sense of what's going on through the tantalizing pieces that Wilson gives us: recipes for honey-mead and royal jelly; biology lessons about bee anatomy, hive behavior, reproduction, and the creation of the hive's queen; the repetition of the Briar Rose story (the pricking of the finger is a bee-sting); and a science fiction tale of aliens looking for reproductive hosts. Horror in the vein of Machen or Lovecraft; horror implied rather than overt. Excellent.

Rating: 5 out of 10. These are smart, subtle, slick, elegant, well-written stories; most of the writers have previous credits. Make sure your work is competitive.

