

**Lodestar Quarterly**

*An online journal of the finest gay, lesbian, and queer literature*

Elizabeth Earley

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Editor: Patrick Ryan (founding), Aaron Jason (prose), Frank Farm (managing)

Web Address: <http://www.lodestarquarterly.com/>

What they publish: Fiction, Poetry, and Drama

Submission Guidelines: Simultaneous submissions and previously published work are not accepted. Send no more than 5 poems at a time. Submit up to 3 short stories and/or novel excerpts at a time. If your work is longer than 5,000 words, query them first. Send submissions to [editors@lodestarquarterly.com](mailto:editors@lodestarquarterly.com). Prepare your manuscript either in the body of the message or as an attachment. At the beginning of the manuscript, include your name, mailing address, telephone number, and a one-paragraph biography. Within a month, they send an acknowledgment of receiving your submission and try to respond within 4 months. Check site before submitting.

Description of Publication: *Lodestar Quarterly* in an online journal that welcomes the work of established and upcoming writers. The editors consider fiction, poetry, and drama by gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered writers. New issues are published on the first day of summer, fall, winter, and spring.

Percentage of Prose per Issue / Amount of Prose Published Annually: 25% prose per issue; 16 stories published annually.

Prose Reviews: *The Possiblist* by *Jan Clausen*. A poetic, experimental story in a domestic setting. It is told in a first person narrative in the voice of Sonja, an Oriental lesbian. The story seems to take place in future Oregon, where the narrator is part of a cult-like community called the Organism. She is home from work, depressed, alone, and goes to bed. Listening to the rain outside, she thinks about her sadness until she hears her lover, Liz, knock on the door, then open it. They proceed to go out on the balcony and smoke a joint while groping each other and laughing under a large umbrella. Following this, they return to Sonja's bed together to have long, vigorous sex and a simultaneous touchy conversation that lasts until morning.

The language is the driving force of this story. It is careful and precise. As much attention is given to the language would be in any good poem. The plot is somewhat unclear and the conflict is lacking. I assume the conversation during sex is about a future world that is in trouble and about to end, but it is hard to tell. These characters could be mental patients, members of a strange cult, a different species, or a parallel universe. Who they are and where they are in the context of time is not apparent. The story is therefore hard to follow and a bit confusing. The language, however, does hold it together and keep it interesting all the way through

*The See-Saw Family* by *Jess Wells*. A plain spoken, realistic story in a domestic setting. The story is told in a first person narrative by a single lesbian mother. The story is broken apart into thirteen different short, separately titled pieces of varying lengths. The narrator has broken up from a twenty-three-year relationship with a woman and has been dating, but can't find any women interested in having a family. She is worried that her children are getting

hurt by the women coming and going, wants to give them a stable environment, and does not want to be alone. She ends up with a single father, thus calling herself bisexual, and having to come out of the closet all over again.

The structure seems unnecessary. The titles do not make sense in most cases and the narrative continues on uninterrupted from the previous section anyway. The story needs more scene, it is mostly summary and reported dialogue, which I found difficult to stay engaged with. The story is a series of anecdotes about how she struggles with the transition from a long part of her life spent in relationship with women to a sudden and unexpected relationship with a man. Although she claims at the end to love her mate, she writes about it as a relationship of convenience. She was unable to find a woman to take on her children, didn't want to be alone, so she settled for this man. The story leaves much to be desired.

Rating: 5 out of 10 as a good market for emerging writers. This literary journal has some quality writing but there were only four fiction stories in the current issue and all four writers were very accomplished, having several publishing credits including at least one book.