

## **Lorraine and James**

By Andy Duggan

Editor: Jasai Madden

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Website: [www.lorraineandjames.com/](http://www.lorraineandjames.com/)

What They Publish: Lorraine and James publish fiction, poetry, and non-fiction.

Description: Lorraine and James is a literary journal dedicated to the theme of 'urban literature,' this includes, but isn't limited to, stories set in urban settings. Submissions are read year round. L&J is a tri-annual print journal 'whose mission is to till the urban landscape in search of new writers and give attention to the noncommercial work of established writers from the United States and around the globe.'

Submission Guidelines: Their guidelines are few. No genre work, No length cutoff to fiction pieces but they reserve the right to establish one. Twelve week waiting period. Submissions via email only. All documents should be sent as 'word' attachments and include a ready-to-publish bio, and contact info in the body of your email. Simultaneous submissions are okay. Payment upon publication. L&J is looking for good writing. It is an emerging writer's journal. All of the stories, poems, and works of creative non-fiction are presented with a title page for the author where it states the name of their piece. L&J is thick filled with more stories and poetry than anything else. The design isn't over the top, merely classy. The quality is of any literary journal you could pick up, from Glimmer Train to Oyez Review.

Prose Reviews:

*A Treatise On The Power Of Reading* by Mark Budman

A first person storyteller, conversational, witty, charming. The piece is a short-short under two pages. The narrator is reflecting on how he likes to read, from childhood until the present, and how this leads to the eventual suicide of the narrator in a bookstore. Each time relating reading to different instances in his life.

A first person narrator takes the details of his life and rolls them into a story. Something the narrator loved. I say loved because at the end of the page and a half he is dead. Most paragraphs in the story begin with the familiar, 'I like to read.' This repetition is almost like a prose poem. Repetition, a poetic device, is used here not to shock but perhaps to reveal the narrator's neurosis. His isolation and perhaps his obsession that he doesn't feel 'normal' leads to his shooting himself inside a bookstore, dying with his love. I enjoyed this piece because it had a world to say in just two pages.

Pieces like this remind me it doesn't have to be a long entangled mess to get its point across. I love this piece just for its witty way of handling situations, by giving instances that aren't something readers would like to be a part of in their lives. Then how the narrator says, by heading each new thought with, 'I love reading', that somehow this is all okay and the reader blindsided by the way he can lose himself inside a story, though it leads to a gun and a bookstore. The sense of immediacy doesn't let me stop reading until I'm devastated in a nonchalant way.

*Sweet Potato and Coconut* by Pamela MacIsaac

A third person story-teller about a main character who is struggling with his recent divorce and raising a six year old daughter, along with the dangers of the city and his tiny apartment which comes to trouble him. The conflict comes when a boy who lives upstairs hit the main character in the head with a rock which drives him to coming upstairs to bang on the boy's apartment door and try to get his grandmother to come out to talk to him. It

doesn't work but his anguish is remedied when the old woman comes downstairs with her grandson and a bowl full of potato patties that are made with sweet potato and coconut, to which the boy apologizes and the situation is resolved.

Our main character McGregor, is a recently separated father in the stages of thinking everything he and his wife bought together are still his. The description lulled me. 'As he watched, another missile, grazed the end of Eva's thick brown ponytail and hit the cement with a metallic clang...' Smells, sights, gestures, these are all woven in with a conflict ridden story of a man trying to come to grips with a simple universal: change. McGregor changes a bit in the end, one can tell he is a man that lets things fester inside him and get the better of him. The movement of this piece is slower because of its amount of description, though it doesn't hinder the flow of the piece, it's just there to tell the story as round as possible. There's a good sense of voice in the piece as well. I have a little trouble with the six-year-old daughter's voice. Other than that the piece works with me. It arcs beautifully.

Rating: 8 out of 10. I'd like to submit to L&J because of their mission statement, their contributor's agendas, and the content of their journal. All this leads me to believe that if I fork out a solid piece of work that isn't too over the top, I could have a good chance of being published here.