

Trading Punches with Grandma

By Allison S

Editor: Scott Miles

October 2005

Address: www.tradingpuncheswithgrandma.com

What They Publish: Fiction, art, poetry, creative nonfiction, photographs and interviews.

Submission Guidelines: Submissions are accepted through a form on their website. They have no preference of style, language, length or form, so long as the story is not about flowers, dead musicians or relationships.

Description of Publication: *Trading Punches with Grandma* specializes in the offensive, disgusting, overtly sexual and non-PC. It can be found on the web and in a quality print version, the same stories featured in both. It's published a few times a year, but not on a set schedule.

Prose per Issue: 80% prose / Approx. 8 prose pieces annually

Prose Reviews:

Handicapped Parking by Scott Miles. Plain spoken, somewhat realistic story in exotic setting. A subjective 3rd person narrator seems to hang over the shoulders of Paul and Randall, a pair of unmotivated 30-somethings who work at a dry cleaner and still live with their moms. After work, Paul and Randall go down to a strip club called the *Atlantis*, where they notice a shriveled, crippled man stuffing dollars into the g-string of stripper after stripper. They take a liking to him and first buy him a drink. Then they buy him a lap dance from a stripper they know will give the cripple some extra special attention. As they're leaving the club, they hear a loud boom and notice the crippled man has leapt out of his chair and strangled the stripper to death with his shriveled hands.

The first few pages of this story were somewhat rambling and lacking in narrative flow. The characters weren't doing much more than ordering drinks and refusing lap dances. But the descriptions of the place and the people were rich in nuance and told in a quirky, unexpected way. The dialogue was amusing and each character had their own vocal characteristics that helped the reader know who was speaking. However, the ending with the stripper's death was kind of a cheap twist. The third person narration was so disconnected from the characters, it made the reader want to roll their eyes in doubt and say, "yeah right".

Trial by Fire by Tomasz Wawzenek. Plain spoken, realistic story in a domestic setting. A subjective, 1st person narrator rambles on about his panic attacks, a nearby apartment building full of "hillbillies" that his father burns down, how he plagiarizes stories for a magazine about trains and voyeuristically watches a woman with a bathroom window parallel to his, until he sees her getting beaten by her boyfriend. At the end, there's a trite moral statement and an implication that he burns the woman's building down.

This writer must be friends with the editor. This story is crudely written and lacks structure of any kind. The verbs and descriptions are weak and cliché ("After he stormed out of the room, she slowly dried her face with the towel and walked out of the room.") At times the voice was strong and conversational, but mostly this reads like the journal entry of a high school student who's trying to be edgy.

Rating: 8 out of 10. The editor of *Trading Punches with Grandma* does indeed give each submission a good read. Legend has it his rejection letters often include invitations to parties. His acceptance letters include insightful

suggestions. While some of the contributors had previous publications listed, most of the bios were personal anecdotes like, “He enjoys laughing at the poor and unfortunate, taking advantage of susceptible foreigners, betting heavily on enema contests and long walks by the lake.” The issues come out fairly frequently and are distributed (free!) at many bookstores throughout the Chicago area. I’d say any writer with a story deemed “offensive” should submit to this magazine.