

American Literary Review

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Editor: John Tait (Editor), Ann McCutchan (Prose Editor)

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Web Address: <http://www.engl.unt.edu/alr/index.html>

What they publish: Fiction, non-fiction, and poetry.

Submission Guidelines: Reading period from September 1 to May 1. Will accept submissions through snail mail only with a cover letter. No maximum page length, but stories under 8000 words have best chance of publication. Simultaneous submissions allowed, but only one submission at a time.

Description of Publication: Publishes semi-annually (about one to two times a year). Most of the contributors are experienced MFA candidates or creative writing instructors, who have been previously published in respectable publications (*ACM, Prairie Schooner, Story Quarterly*). The journal is a professional, sleek looking publication with tasteful art on the cover and back. Their mission, as stated on the website, is “to publish poems and stories that reflect the kinds of writing being done in the various regions of America.”

Amount of Prose Published Annually: Publishes semi-annually, with approximately 4 pieces of prose per issue (4-8 pieces per year).

Prose Reviews:

Girlhood by Emily Daly Quinlan. Plain spoken realistic story in domestic setting. A subjective third person point of view tells the story of Leda, a middle aged, new mother who desires more out of her middle-class, middle of the road, ordinary life. She is a passionless woman in a passionless marriage, who finally takes it into her own hands to do something about it.

The story is very long, drawn out day in Leda’s life that fully illustrates middle class life in suburban America. Quinlan chose to trace every step of Leda’s life, which became long and tedious by the end of the story. There is a strong, internal point of view from Leda, which makes her the more sympathetic character to the reader, but also creates a very stagnant plot in a physical sense since there is a lot of back story given and not very much *happening* that seems pertinent to the narrative. Overall, it is a well written story that perhaps should have been cut down in length in order to hasten to the moment of action.

Green by Michael Czyzniejewski. Plain spoken magic realism in domestic setting. A subjective first person point of view tells the story of a woman whose husband invites all of her former lovers to their home for two weeks “just to clear the air”. All of the lovers accept the invitation and come, and after an initial awkwardness, all the men begin to settle in. After the two weeks, all the men leave except one, who had kept to himself the whole time and now trails after the narrator wherever she goes, causing her pain inside of her when he appears.

This is a short, to the point story that is lofty in ambition but does not succeed in execution. The magical realism tone of the piece is quirky while discussing how these hordes of men come to their home and hang out with the narrator’s husband, but in the final paragraph, when describing the man who chose to stay behind, sounds artificial and strained. This was a story that couldn’t seem to make up its mind whether it was trying to be an Eggers type essay or a poor attempt at magical realism.

Rating: 6 out of 10. The journal was your standard university press literary review, a simple, bound paperback book that was professional in appearance. The pieces in the journal were organized by type (Fiction, Poetry, Non-fiction), which made it easy to seek out the prose pieces. The stories in the journal were strong, most sparsely written with a lot of internal struggle experienced by the main character. Though the mission of the journal states that they desire to publish stories reflective of different regions in America, the predominant theme of the journal seemed to be middle class, middle-aged angst, with a lot of internal narrative. This was fine at first, until I realized that these were the only kinds of stories that they seemed to be publishing. Otherwise, a very respectable review with solid prose (though narrow in range).