

**Bartleby Snopes** (Online and Bi-Annually)Editor: Nathaniel TowerWeb Address: [www.bartlebysnopes.com](http://www.bartlebysnopes.com)What They Publish: Flash Fiction up to 1,200 words, Short Fiction up to 3,000 words, ArtworkDescription of Publication: *Bartleby Snopes* is an online journal that publishes fiction and artwork. The journal started in 2008 as a pet project of editor Nathaniel Tower out of a disdain for slow response times from other journals. Since then, *Bartleby Snopes* is ranked among journals with the fastest response times at about two and a half days. The journal “wants to publish the best new fiction” and give writers more opportunities to get published. For October, *Bartleby Snopes* is running their first themed issue, “Everything October.” Interpret as you see fit.Prose Per Issue / Amount of Published Annually: Two stories per week. Ninety-six stories per year. A bi-annual print edition of the journal’s “favorite stories.”Prose Reviews: “All the Sounds of China” by Leonora Desar is a surreal fiction story that tells the story of Diego and his saga trying to hear China under the water in his bathtub. Like kids do, Diego is told that he can hear China if he turns around in the bathtub three times and puts his ears to the bottom. Instead of hearing China, though, Diego hears his neighbors fight. The next day, he tries again and this time he hears his parents fighting. He sees his mother’s glossed-over eyes and the emptiness in their marriage. The third day, he sees the future; it’s “happy, happy” and his parents’ marriage is fixed. The vision is literally washed down the drain when the bathplug is pulled.

This flash piece is very concise in story telling. There is no time wasted in spelling out minutia and Desar moves the piece along with language and word choice that, though in a surreal piece, aren’t overtly heavy-handed. Desar takes a child’s view of his family and twists in images of smoke and water and oil to create this murky, bleak tale of what love and family can become. Diego is separate from the other kids at school and Desar shows this by focusing the story on Diego locking himself in the bathroom, listening for a world completely different than his.

“Nude” by Lia Swope Mitchell is a realist flash fiction piece using common speech. The third person narration starts with Tom being brought in to a room where a woman lies naked on a table. The woman is dead and does not have any identification, only a bar receipt with Tom’s phone number. The story jumps back a few days in time to a night where the woman and Tom met. It was a dark bar in a small town and the lady and Tom share a few beers and part ways. Tom is questioned and all he knew was that her name was Sarah. He is sent home but instead he sits in his car with his thoughts.

Mitchell gives us a very brief moment in time to relate feelings of life, death, and happiness. She starts her story at the end but is vague enough to get her readers to ask, “how did we get here?” The shift in time, making the majority of this story flashback, lends to a faster pace. In the morgue, Mitchell uses lighting to washout Sarah’s body. Once the body is under the spotlight, the use of subtle detail (e.g. the shape of her breasts after lying on them, dead; the color of her skin under the lights, after bleeding out; the flatness of her butt as she lies on a metal table; etc.) add balance to the images of lust and fun and desire that Tom originally saw in the woman when he met her at the bar. Very balanced in images, time, and pacing.

Rating: 9: This journal is an amazing place for new writers. September’s Story of the Year winner was a first-time submitter and that just speaks to the magazine’s love of new fiction. The high number of stories published offers more chances for young writer’s works.