

Title of Magazine: **Every Day Fiction**

Reviewer: Mahjabeen Syed

Editor: Carol Clark, J.C. Towler, and Joseph Kaukman

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Web Address: www.everydayfiction.com

What they publish: Flash Fiction

Submission Guidelines: Submitted stories may be no more than 1,000 words and as long as a complete story is told, any word count below 1,000 is accepted. They are seeking previously unpublished work and accept no more than three multiple story submissions. Simultaneous submissions, however, are strongly discouraged and will not be considered for publication.

Description of Publication: The Web site has a simple layout and is easy on the eyes with clearly presented tabs for easy navigation. *Every Day Fiction* publishes short shorts of every genre including those that do not fall under a particular genre. They publish one story per day and discourage the use of excessive and unnecessary profanity as well as the submission of children's stories seeing as their readership consists of adults. Due to their aggressive publication schedule, you must accept to their terms and agreement when submitting, which includes them having First Rights as well as an option on First Anthology Rights for 18 months. A token payment of \$3 will be given to the author via PayPal upon acceptance.

Prose Review:

The Shoplifter by Jez Patterson is a plainspoken subjective third-person flash piece told in a domestic setting. Mary Jenkins has been a store detective for twenty-three years and is observing a new shoplifter as she sits in a room with a one-way mirror. As she is staring at this woman, in her mind she is going through the different kinds of women she has come across with various reasons and excuses for why they decided to steal or do something out of character. There was the woman who constantly hurt herself doing electrical chores around the house for attention after her kids moved away. Or perhaps it was a vengeful act like the woman in, "last week's tabloids who'd emailed a nude shot of herself to everyone in her husband's workplace after he'd taken a mistress." After staring at the woman for quite some time she notes from years of observing people that the woman was in her early fifties and long married but cannot figure out why the woman shoplifted. The story cuts to the opposite side of the mirror then, where the store manager and security stands. They also stare at Mary Jenkins, wondering what led their store detective of twenty-three years to shoplift.

There are so many reasons why this story works as well as why the readers are left with a sense of longing to know more by the end of it. The specific details and examples of what Mary Jenkins has noticed to be the cause of female erratic behavior is the glue that essentially holds the story together. Through these instances, we not only find out the types of stories and experiences Mary is surrounded by, but also the kinds of things she chooses to remember that allows her to do her job and do it well. The ending is in a league of its own. Patterson does not let on that the shoplifter is in fact Mary Jenkins herself although it does explain why she could not place her finger on why the person (her reflection) did what she did. The punch line is indeed at the end when the dialogue between security and the manager commences. We never find out why Mary did it but as the security guard put it, "I expect she's asking herself the same question."

The Backup Bartender Prefers to Keep his Thoughts to Himself by David Macpherson is a plainspoken magical-

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realism flash piece told in first-person in a domestic setting. Liam and Phil run a bar called O. Onions, in an area where people known as the Flipswitch folk (people with extraordinary gifts) frequent the bar. Folks like reanimators; who can bring back the dead, and mindreaders, “freaked out potential employees,” so naturally, they were ecstatic when they found a third person, Danny to fill in for the weekend shifts and for when either Phil or Liam needed a day off. But there is a certain mystery to Danny. He knows what he’s doing when it comes to drinks including how to flip the bottles and make a fancy show of it. Through a series of questions, Liam finds out that Dan learned to mix drinks and do bottle-tricks because it was the only way he could block his mind from mindreaders because he was so focused on something else. But it was the day his distant grandmother passed away that caused Dan’s move. That night he couldn’t conceal anything and the mindreaders around him all at once turned to him and he knew he had to leave. Working at O. Onions was a fresh start with new people.

The world that Macpherson creates in such a short amount of time with such few amounts of words is captivating. His first paragraph is almost a preface to the world that he leads the readers into and he does it so gradually that the world doesn’t appear as if mismatched with the rest of the story. The use of dialogue works exceptionally well within this particular story because it does the job of not only moving the story forward by revealing Dan’s past but because his story works within the context of Liam’s original tale of needing a new hire. The story reveals some vagueness when addressing the end just like Jez Patterson’s *The Shoplifter* does, hinting that either I am too critical of surprise endings within flash pieces or that Every Day Fiction really digs that sort of format.

Rating: 6. Their Web site doesn’t have a strong design, really basic colors with no artwork, although it is easy to navigate. The writing displayed in *Every Day Flash* is captivating and punchy but lacks inclusive fluidity and it is also a bit off-putting that there are a few but noticeable grammatical and punctuation errors within the polished pieces. The fact that they publish one story per day makes them a very appealing market because the chances for a story being accepted for quick publication or one at a later time are much higher. *Every Day Fiction* can give only \$3, which wouldn’t be very appealing for well-established writers, but for emerging writers, it is a good way to get your name circulating.