

**JERSEY DEVIL
PRESS**



Jersey Devil Press Report

By Mary Reid

Table of Contents

Jersey Devil Fact Sheet.....	2
Why I Chose Jersey Devil.....	3
Comparisons of Issues Over Time.....	4
Story Reviews.....	5
Interview With Founder and Editor Eirik Gumeny, and Laura Garrison, Associate Editor:.....	8

Fact Sheet

Web site: Jerseydevilpress.com

E-mail Address: [info at jerseydevilpress dot com](mailto:info@jerseydevilpress.com)

Founded: 2009

Frequency: online 12 x year

Editors: Mike Sweeney, Monica Rodriguez, and Laura Garrison.

What they publish: Flash fiction up to 1000 words and short stories-1000-4200 words.

Submission Guidelines: They want voices that push the envelope and are desperately seeking a strong female writer. Online submissions only, simultaneous submissions okay, but do not submit multiple pieces.

Reading Period: Year round.

Average Response Time: 1 week.

Contributor Payment: None.

Reading Fee: None

Why I Chose Jersey Devil

Jersey Devil is a stand alone magazine that stretches the boundaries of science fiction. They attract writers who would have a hard time finding a home for their stories because it operates outside the realm of popular fiction. The magazine publishes emerging writers alongside writers who are on their way to establishing a name for themselves. A few of the contributors have won awards such as the College Green Literary Prize 2010, won by Graham Tugwell. This magazine would be a great place to for writers attempting to get published the first time; artists whose work would be categorized as experimental, or artists who like to genre-bend. They have also published a number of Columbia College students.

Comparisons of Issues Over Time

	Issue 26	Issue 31	Issue 34
Total Pieces: Prose, Art	6:5:1	13:12:1	7:6:1
Male:Female Writers	6:0	10:3	5:2
POV: 1st, 2nd, 3rd	3:0:2	6:0:6	4:0:2

Prose Reviews

Issue 26 January 2012

“We Left him With The Dragging Man,” by Graham Tugwell is a plainspoken, first person, magical realist story that takes place in a domestic setting. The story opens at the height of this horror story, and it’s told mostly through scene. The narrator describes his crew as, “Friends because no one else would have us,” setting up a breakfast club type tone that drifts into science fiction. The boys try to out-run “the dragging man,” but only three of them get away, leaving poor Alby Gorman’s fate up to the reader. After spending a while in the narrator’s head, your imagination goes several different ways. Although the narrator doesn’t say his name, he inserts model tellings of the characters throughout the story seamlessly; you barely recognize the story has slipped from scene into summary.

The way this story is told makes you want to hold your breath while you’re reading it. It was like being in a movie because the story is visual. Tugwell uses choppy sentences to heighten drama and it leaves you anxious to get to the next scene. The story has a circular structure and it ends exactly where it began, but you’re left with a cliffhanger: what happens to Alby? This reads like a portion of a larger piece. Tugwell doesn’t date the place of the story, but the atmosphere is nostalgic of the 1970s anyway.

“Night of the Living” is a plainspoken, third person narrative, placed in a horror setting. Just as the title suggests, it’s a throwback to the *Night of the Living Dead* movie from the eighties. The mayor declares the city is in a state of emergency, but co-workers who stayed in their offices, working, and die and become brain eating zombies. They’re gnawing away on some people when they look outside, only to see a normal person walking toward their building. They try to hold their composure as they anxiously await an opportunity to eat fresh brains.

The story is a little disjointed because of the unique enunciation of the dialogue. The author reaches to try to create an authentic, zombie-like accent but I’m still not sure if I made out the words the author intended for the story. The sense of place is carried out well through objects, but the story takes place in one area never moving. We don’t get a look at the neighborhood or a feel for the community where this tragedy takes place.

Issue 36 September 2012

“In The Drink” is a plainspoken narrative told in first person. The story opens with the nameless protagonist sitting on the beach with his best friend Toofer. He’s there not only to comfort a friend going through a divorce, but also to monitor him, a former alcoholic on the verge lapsing. They casually talk on the beach as waves yip at their feet, making the protagonist leery about staying. Toofer walks off, supposedly for a bathroom break, returning with a case of beer. The author tries to persuade him to stop to no avail, deciding in the end to return home to his wife, seeing his friend as a lost cause.

The author uses scene detail and gesture to move the story forward. Although there is plenty of dialogue, it doesn’t dominate or play a major role in the story. The author frequently pauses adding backstory for him and his antagonist, but it never interrupts the mellow flow. There’s a sense of dread hidden between the lines that draws the reader in to a very relatable story.

“Dad’s Barracuda” is a plainspoken first person narrative taking place in a domestic setting. The storyteller is the daughter of a man losing his mind or suffering from Alzheimer’s. The daughter tries to comfort the father who believes someone swiped his Barracuda. By the time you reach the middle of the story you see that these antics of his may have well been taking place before his mind drifted towards insanity. The daughter believes the method of his madness may lie somewhere in their homeland of Normandy.

This story could be seen as historical fiction since there is historical detail about Normandy throughout the story. “Our cultural roots lie in western Normandy — and in that very interesting region, the Roman influence came late.” That line is very intriguing and the compare and contrast method may have been used intending to leave the reader wondering what Normandy was like before and after.

Issue 31 June 2012

“Bonnie and Clyde” is a plainspoken, third person narrative with comical elements of magical realism. The title is delightfully deceiving. The story opens up in a scene where Clyde is roaming around a room anxiously waiting someone’s arrival, “He rolls onto his back, arms and legs in the air, and wriggles on the floor like there’s an itch in the middle of his spine. No. Too cute.” Soon the reader is let in to the fact that he’s waiting on a girl. Through tension, placed in

gesture, the readers await the arrival of Bonnie just as eager as Clyde; only to get to the end and find out that they're both dogs.

The author of this story has skills, hands down. Even when I re-read the story she used gesture in a tricky way, where you wouldn't think whether the character was human or not. But after the second read it's clear that it's a dog's point of view. He hates the neighbor and mailman: hilarious. There's no dialogue but the author uses inner monologue to express what the character is feeling. This is a story that everyone could enjoy, but animal lovers would love.

"Paper Heart" is a plainspoken, third person narrative emerged in magical realism. The protagonist, Narin, was born to Turkish parents, with a paper heart. At first she's hailed as a miracle child sent by Allah to bless the community where she was born, but when Narin meets a drifter, Damla, who's seen as demonic-because he can't stop crying, the village turns on them both.

This story is told through a poetic flow that captures the reader with its beautifully written details, "Even when he smiled, even when he slept, glistening tears, dripped down his face, staining his skin, like a river corroding rock." Although the story seems to be about love, it holds a bigger theme of social conscious and how Muslims view the world. The author almost seems to take subliminal jabs at the culture while trying to say that people who are different are not holy, and should not be coveted but allowed to live.

Interviews with Eirik Gumeny and Laura Garrison

(Conducted November 2012)

Mary Reid: Once Jersey Devil was created how did you go about getting distribution and attracting writers?

Eirik Gumeny: With a great amount of uncertainty and luck. I knew where I personally went as a writer for news about new publishers and submission calls, so I reached out to those sources and then just hoped for the best. I had a few writer friends I leaned on as well, and we encouraged the first contributors to spread the word, but those first couple of issues were really a roll of the dice.

MR: What are some early struggles with starting a press?

EG: Finances, time, and, again, uncertainty. You can actually do the majority of online publishing for little to no money, with the exception of the initial website setup. That always takes a chunk out of your wallet – and in the beginning, it's 100% your wallet. There's no sales or advertising to offset it.

Starting a press also takes up a lot more time than you think it will. Between shouting your existence into the dark corners of the internet, reading through submissions, emailing, proofreading, formatting the magazine, learning how to format the magazine, learning HTML, second-guessing everything you do... It's a time-devouring endeavor.

In addition, especially in those early days, there's a nagging fear that tends to accompany everything you do. You don't know if all your time and energy is going towards anything. You have no proof anyone's reading; you don't know if those who are reading actually enjoy it. You go two weeks and the only submission you get is awful, but you don't reject it immediately because you don't know if you'll get another one. You spend a lot of time wondering if starting a press was a good idea.

MR: How much do you work with the authors with their stories? Can you give a recent example?

Laura Garrison: We prefer stories that are very polished by the time they get to us. We know how much work—cutting, rewriting, proofreading, etc.—goes in to making a story feel natural and easy to read, and we expect writers to make serious attempts to whip their stories into shape before submitting them.

That being said, if we really like a particular story but sense it hasn't quite reached its full potential, one of our editors may embark on a collaborative revision with the writer. But typically what you see in our pages is more or less what the writer sent us.

MR: What was the expectation for the magazine in terms of scope, longevity, etc.?

EG: I started JDP as a haven for other writers like me. Stories that were kinda sci-fi, kinda humor, kinda this, kinda that. We didn't quite fit in with the science fiction magazines or the literary journals. I had no real expectations for any of it. I figured there were at least a few writers who would be interested and we'd get a few issues out of it. The attitude toward the magazine's duration was very much "wait and see." It wasn't until I started getting emails from writers thanking me for starting Jersey Devil Press that I realized it might have some legs.

MR: What has been your biggest reward from publishing Jersey Devil?

LG: Publishing a monthly magazine is like living in an imaginary castle where people are constantly knocking on the door and offering entertainment in return for shelter. It is our privilege to host a colorful array of fascinating guests. Some of them are funny, a lot of them are weird, and a few might even be dangerous, but the variety keeps things interesting. Of course, our ultimate goal is to find an audience for the stories we publish, so nothing makes us happier than having lots of readers drop by to tour the grounds and meet our eclectic residents.

EG: This is going to sound incredibly cheesy, but it's the friends you make. There are a number of writers I wouldn't have interacted with if it wasn't for JDP that I now talk to regularly. One

literally lives down the street from me. My wife and I go out to dinner with her and her family all the time.

MR: Now that you're established what continues to be some of your biggest challenges?

LG: A continual source of frustration is reading a lot—a LOT—of submissions from people who clearly don't know or care what we're about at Jersey Devil Press. It doesn't take long to read our guidelines and skim an issue or two to get a sense of whether your story would be a good fit here. So one of the biggest challenges continues to be finding the kinds of stories we want to publish. That, and making the time to read and publish them at all; we all have day jobs and families.

MR: You publish one, sometimes two issues per month, how many submissions do you receive monthly? What is the reading process?

LG The number of submissions can vary based on the time of year and whether we are accepting submissions for special issues. It tends to average out to about eighty submissions per month. We each find times here and there during the week to read and vote on submissions, and we do our best to respond as quickly as we can to each one. If we reach a quick "yes" or "no" consensus, then we can respond right away; the "maybes" tend to linger the longest in the slush pile.

MR: Do you feel like you're gaining a bigger audience publishing so frequently?

LG: We like to think quality is a bigger factor than quantity in attracting and maintaining a dedicated audience, which is why we concentrate so much effort on promoting our writers.

MR: Your submission guidelines is the most creative guideline page I've come across. What are one or two things that will surely get a submitter tossed in the garbage?

LG: If rejection is your goal, ignoring our guidelines is the surest way to reach it. An obnoxious cover letter can also help by making us cranky before we even start reading your story.

MR: For writers getting published for the first time, how valuable do you believe publishing in a magazine can be? Can you describe the thrill of discovering and publishing an unpublished writer?

LG: For a writer, the most valuable aspect of an acceptance is the sense of validation it brings. It's exciting to find out someone liked something you wrote and wants to share it with more people; it lets you know you are connecting with others.

As publishers, or even more broadly as readers, all great stories are equally exciting discoveries to us. We will gladly accept someone's first story if it delights us, and we have turned down more than a few writers with impressive lists of publication credits because their submissions just weren't what we were looking for at the time. It always comes down to the particulars of each individual story.

MR: The editing style of, "We left Him With the Dragging Man," was very unique. The shortened sentences heightened the drama, and really carried this piece, giving the reader a sense of urgency as it was read. Was that creativity on the part of the artist or the editor?

EG :Graham Tugwell is an amazing writer; "We Left Him..." was all his effort. While we will work with writers on occasion, we like to let the artist be the artist. With someone like Graham, that's not hard.