

Title of Magazine: *PANK Magazine*

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Web Address: [www.pankmagazine.com](http://www.pankmagazine.com)

What they publish: “We will read whatever you want to send us.” All stories must be original and previously unpublished. Fiction in PANK’s online literary magazine is almost always under 1000 words. PANK online is about equal parts poetry and fiction.

Submission Guidelines: PANK accepts submissions through Submishmash only. Regular submissions are free and open during all months except December, May, June, July, and August. During this time, one can submit via “Tip Jar” submissions for three dollars. “This Modern Writer” is a submissions portal looking for “essays about writers that extend beyond writing” to publish on the PANK blog.

Description of Publication: “the nonprofit literary arts collective,” [PANK], publishes experimental poetry and prose monthly online and annually in print, as well as the Little Book Series of novellas and chapbooks.

Prose per Issue / Amount Published Annually: About 20 pieces (including poetry) per monthly issue; about 240 pieces per year.

Prose Reviews:

*Ripening* by Cameron Walker is a realistic, domestic story told in a plainspoken first person narration. The female narrator tells the story of her older, beautiful sister, Lila, and her sexually abusive father. The narrator takes us on a series of family trips-- cherry picking and to the Hawaiian Islands. On the family’s vacations to the islands, the narrator notices her father staring at her after a hula dance in the same way he stares at Lila, and wishes she could, “reverse myself, to walk backward onto the stage, un-swing my hips, sit down again and have no one notice me.” That night, her father approaches her in the hotel bed she shares with her sister, but her sister gets up instead. In the morning, Lila is gone. A month later, her father dies, and her mother puts pictures and the date of death in faraway newspapers, hoping Lila will see it and know it is safe to come home.

Though much of the language in the story is simple, Walker creates poetry in the details her narrator recalls. She recalls the way the “red marks at the corners of Lila’s lips turned her smile into a cluster of fallen petals,” and the way she was “still licking juices from the webs between her fingers.” These images, precise and often erotic, ground us in the twisted reality of the world of *Ripening*. Walker also uses absurdity to balance the dark tone of the piece. After eating buckets of cherries the narrator notes, “As we crossed the border an officer nodded as if we’d merely done our duty. Lila stuck her tongue out at him.” The story keeps the readers attention, never once releasing one, even when it is finished.

*Cinnamon Fire Hardtop* by Catherine Chiarella Domonkos is a plainspoken, first person narrative about teenage love in a Thunderbird. The female narrator tells the story of the spring she was seventeen and

fell for a boy who drove a 1972 Thunderbird. They got away with their long evenings parking on the cliff because they were “honor students, mathletes and Most Likely to Succeed, only an idiot would challenge [them].” The Thunderbird was the same car his father drove his mother to the hospital in when she tried to kill herself. It was the car where she first kissed him, and the car that drove someone else to the prom. It “delivers him to Cambridge.” Ten years later, the car is found on the edge of another cliff with him still inside, dead from “[chugging] whiskey and exhaust.”

Domonkos tells a love story and a suicide story at once, without relying on the clichés often found in either. She focuses on the way these things intersect with lines like, “He makes me promise, as he holds and kisses my clammy hands, we’ll die young together. We are just beginning and have an endless supply of days to throw away. Death is nothing I dread.” We get glimpses of the characters lives outside the car, but only from conversations they have inside the car. In the car they, “dissect Kafka, nukes and whether Stairway to Heaven is the greatest fucking song ever written.” (They agree, “It is.”) They also talk about his mother, who committed suicide. They kiss, they have sex, and they break up in the car. By setting the story in the Thunderbird, Domonkos quickly gets to the essence of young love, depression, and fading invincibility.

Rating: 8. PANK publishes a range of writers, from emerging to those with a few publications or a novel. They consistently publish quality work in a variety of styles, from plainspoken to experimental (verging more on prose-poetry). Their site is easy to navigate, with a well-organized archive of work, and is visually appealing. Some of the stories offer audio versions read by the author, making the work accessible to everyone while engaging an Internet audience. The addition of a print publication is also encouraging for writers who may hope to see their work on the physical page.