



a r c a d i a m a g a z i n e

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Fact Sheet

Magazine: Arcadia

Web Address: www.arcdiamagazine.org

Address: 9616 Nichols Rd.

Oklahoma City, OK 73120

E-mail Address: arcadiajournal@gmail.com

Founded: 2009

Founding Editors: Chase Dearing

Current Senior Editors: Noah Milligan (Fiction), Roy Giles (Poetry), Aaron Alford (Nonfiction), Jake Foster (Art), Zach Hughes (Film & Music), RJ Woods (Comics)

Frequency: Biannual

Format: Print

What They Publish: Poetry, Fiction, Creative Nonfiction, Drama, Art, Online Sundries, Comics, Film, and Music

Submission Guidelines: Accepts simultaneous and unsolicited submissions via Submittable. No stylistic criteria for fiction, though only one short story allowed to be submitted at a time. Three to five poems per submission, all in one document, with the titles of the poems separated by commas in the title field. Nonfiction should be less than twenty-five manuscript pages with standard manuscript formatting and a cover letter. No more than one one-act or ten minute play at a time. There is no aesthetic for art or online sundries, comics, film, or music. Artists are paid for accepted work.

Reading Period: Open

Average Response Time: Three to six months

Contests: Annual Short Story Contest. Winner gets \$1,000 and publication in next issue. Annual Poetry Chapbook Contest. Winner gets \$1,000 and twenty-five copies of chapbook. Entry fee is fifteen dollars.

Why I Chose Arcadia

I chose to do my project on Arcadia because I happened across the magazine while searching for the *Poets & Writers* database for possible places to send a short story I felt fairly confident about. It was *Arcadia's* name that got my attention first. Arcadia is a region in Greece and also said to be the birthplace of the god, Pan. In Renaissance art in Europe, Arcadia was often depicted to be a place of unspoiled wilderness. I have studied European history and Greek mythology in classes and felt a connection to the title immediately.

I followed this instinct and came to *Arcadia's* Web site and was immediately taken in by their clean, yet eye-catching aesthetic. It felt like a welcoming place: professional, artistic, a place I would have loved my work to find a home in, but also a place I knew I wanted to explore more. I was most enchanted with the idea that they did not limit their submissions guidelines and work based on genre or content, but were willing to accept any piece of art should it take their attention. After reading some of their 'online sundries' I was taken with the magazine. I wanted to know more about the magazine and was intrigued that they were a print only magazine in an age where digital, free magazines are often the norm. I wanted to know how they were able to make the money to print their magazines and pay their authors. Like the name *Arcadia*, the idea is fancifully antiquated and I was very excited to learn more about the type of magazine I'd aspired to be in for so long.

Prose Reviews

Online Sundries:

It is Just Food is a plainspoken, realistic short story set in a domestic setting by Kate Kimball, a novelist and PhD candidate for creative writing at Florida State University. A mother writes a letter to her infant daughter, Eliza, at the advice of her daughter's doctors and nurses, to be given to the girl when she is older. The mother expresses her guilt over her daughter's diabetes and laments all of the things that Eliza will not be able to do because of it: trick-or-treat on Halloween, eat candied yams or Valentine's Day candies, or chocolate cake at birthday parties. The mother wonders if there was something that she could have done to prevent her daughter from getting sick, and ultimately comes to the conclusion that if her daughter cannot have those things, she shall deprive herself of them as well.

The letter structure allows Kimball to reveal Eliza's illness slowly. The mother is writing to 'you,' Eliza, who will know what her illness is as she gets older. The first clue comes when the mother writes, "There's something about telling you that you're going to be sitting out on Halloween, that instead of eating chocolate cake at another kid's birthday party—you are going to be in better shape if you pick an apple..." Later, as the mother tells Eliza about the Thanksgiving that she was diagnosed, another clue is dropped. She says, "When I picked you up, you were so wet—and even after changing you—you were wet again." A common symptom of diabetes is frequent urination, though every reader might not pick up on this. Later, Kimball adds that the mother has to 'take [her] blood' and 'give [her] shots.' Even readers who don't know much about the disease can deduce that Eliza suffers from diabetes. This slow reveal of Eliza's condition is extremely powerful, because it raises the stakes as the story continues and also heightens the mother's feelings of guilt and disbelief, because she cannot bring herself to actually write out its name.

Borrowed Time – The Black Hand – Part I: Pandora's Bag is a fictional, plainspoken short story in a domestic setting by Thomas Shane, a writer previously published in *Arcadia*. 'You'—a boy of seven or eight—and the seventh of eight children is fascinated with a Pullman bag in the attic that he has been told to never ever touch, by parents and older siblings alike. One day he overhears his older brother's talking about how the Pullman bag contains all of the evidence in it from a murder case their neighbor and grandfather were engaged in, known as "The Case of the Black Hand." The boy is so intrigued he is pushed to go and open the Pullman bag in the attic anyway, despite warnings about Pandora from his older sister, Mary. While trying to open the bag, his mother comes to look

for him in the attic. He hides and his mother shuts off the light and the boy is alone in the darkness with all of Pandora's demons.

Shane's use of the second person in *Pandora's Bag* is odd. It does not feel like a personal 'you' but a third person overall storyteller's point of view. Shane also frequently switches between story past and story present with only phrases like, "Sorry. Back up," to distinguish where the story is at. Why are things being explained when 'you' are doing them? Should 'you' not already know these things? These transitions not only draw the reader out of the story past or story present, but they also draw the reader out of the story entirely. Instead of the story flowing smoothly, Shane's prose is choppy and abrupt, leaving the reader feeling like they're being pulled one way and then the other by a rather sarcastic narrator up until the very last sentence.

An Interview with Chase Dearing

Megan Lantz: Why *Arcadia*? What is the significance of the name of the magazine?

Chase Dearing: We started the magazine while we were all working on our MFAs at the University of Central Oklahoma, which is located in a suburb of Oklahoma City called Edmond. Arcadia is the name of a lake and a small town just outside of Edmond. We liked it because it had a sense of place as well as some literary connotations (Arcadia pops up over and over again throughout Western literature). The magazine is now based out of Oklahoma City, so that sense of place is still there.

ML: Submissions have become known as the ‘slush pile’ in many literary magazines and publications. Can you talk about what a typical slush pile looks like?

CD: We use Submittable to manage all of our submissions, so it’s pretty easy to give you the breakdown on our slush pile. In 2012, we received 2,896 submissions. 48.79% of those were fiction submissions, 38.88% were poetry submissions, 3.56% were nonfiction submissions, and the rest were “other,” which includes art, drama, music, film, and some pretty random stuff.

ML: How do you go about tackling the slush pile, with such a large number of submissions?

CD: Our staff is divided up into departments, each of which is responsible for different genres. So, for example, there is a fiction department, a poetry department, a nonfiction department, etc. Each department is responsible for its end of the slush pile and is autonomous in respect to that. In other words, the fiction department can approach the slush pile however it wants, as long as I get the stories I need for the issue by the deadline.

ML: What is the general process for getting a piece from the slush pile to being published in an issue of *Arcadia*, generally speaking?

CD: The big departments (fiction and poetry) use relatively the same method for reading the slush pile. Associate editors read all of the manuscripts and pass what they like along to the editor, who, with the help of an assistant editor, makes the final decisions. Usually, if a manuscript is passed along, it’s reassigned to another associate editor or to the assistant editor for a second read before the editor sees it. So by the time the fiction editor considers a

manuscript for publication, it's on its third read. Smaller departments don't use this pyramid system. Our nonfiction editor, for example, reads all submissions himself and makes decisions on his own.

ML: You've just had your first themed issue for Issue 7 based around experiences that are post-traumatic. How did you come up with this theme? And why did you decide to have an issue based around a theme now, after six issues with a more eclectic nature?

CD: For a while we tossed around the idea of inviting a past contributor to work as a guest editor on an issue, and we finally decided to go ahead with that for issue 7. We invited Benjamin Reed, who is a fiction writer and one of our favorite past contributors (he had a story appear in issue 2). Ben is actually the one that decided to go with a theme and chose the post-traumatic. We'd never considered doing a themed issue before (it'd come up in conversations, but we'd all decided against it for various reasons), but since part of our guest editorship endeavor was to give complete editorial control over to someone else, we went with it.

ML: How much does the experience of a writer/artist have when you are considering entries for publication?

CD: Absolutely none. We're strictly interested in the quality of the story, poem, or essay.

ML: You are one of the few literary magazines I have seen that pays its contributors—how are you able to do this?

CD: We're only just now, after five years, able to pay our contributors, and right now it's still not very much. Our contests pay quite a bit more—\$1,000 for a story and the same for a poetry chapbook—but those are funded completely by the entry fees that come with the contests. Our payment to other contributors isn't nearly as much, but we've finally started going in that direction because we believe it's important to pay writers. Writers shouldn't be working for free. What they do is of value, and we're doing everything we can to make sure they're compensated for that. We've been able to do that because the magazine has continued to grow since the first issue, and our revenue has continued to increase each year. We don't pay much now, but our goal is to increase our payments to writers as our revenue continues to increase. Paying writers has become a priority for us.

ML: *Arcadia* is a beautiful print magazine. Can you speak to the process of putting the magazine together editorially and aesthetically?

CD: Putting the actual print magazine together has been a process that has developed over time. We've used a variety of different printers and even print and bound the magazine ourselves by hand for a while. The design of the magazine has continued to evolve, too. In fact, we didn't settle on a final format for the magazine until issue 7. The result has been a really eclectic physical collection of Arcadia magazines. Dimensions and formatting have changed each time. We've loved that process, too; it's been a lot of fun, basically experimenting with things right in front of everybody. We've gotten feedback on each issue and learned more and more as editors, so things have continued to change. None of us had any experience putting an actual print journal together when we started, which is the cause for this evolution. We were all perfectly qualified to talk about, choose, and find content for the magazine, but none of us had ever actually put together a print journal. So we decided to wing it, which is something I'm really happy we did. We've learned a lot just through the process of doing it. Trial and error. We've also received training in design principles, etc. in the meantime. From an editorial perspective, we've never placed a lot of emphasis on how things go into the magazine. I've met editors that pour sweat and blood into how the contents of their magazine are ordered and what that means. I've also met editors that put the titles of pieces in a hat and randomly choose the order of their content that way. We're somewhere in the middle, but we definitely lean to the latter. For us, it's a cost-benefit situation. Have you ever read a magazine and actually put any thought into why that story appeared where it did instead of somewhere else? I know I haven't. So why all that blood and all those tears for something the reader is probably not going to give a second thought? We do try to give the issue some balance in terms of genre and length, but that's about it.