

Fairy Tale Review



Alyssa Fuerholzer
Literary Magazine Report
Spring 2014

Table of Contents

Fact Sheet	3
Why I Chose Fairy Tale Review	4
Prose Reviews	5
Interview with Laura Miller	8

Fact Sheet

Fairy Tale Review

Editor and Founder: Kate Berneimer

Managing Editor: Laura I. Miller

Web Address: www.fairytalereview.com

What they publish: Fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, artwork

Submission Guidelines: May submit up to thirty pages but exceptions for longer works can be made. Send your best fairy-tale work. May be mainstream or experimental, fabulist to realist.

Only previously unpublished works are considered. All submissions are sent through the submittable web application.

Description of Publication: *Fairy Tale Review* is an annual review of fairy tale related prose and art wishing to spread awareness of the value of fairy tales as an innovative art form. Each issue has a theme or color (i.e. The Red Issue, The Emerald Issue) and varies in length. Occasionally a deeper theme will emerge based on submissions, such as Little Red Riding Hood, or other such classics.

Frequency: One issue annually

Contributor Payment: Two complimentary copies

Reading Fee: None

Why I Chose *Fairy Tale Review*

I chose to do my market research on *Fairy Tale Review* because I have always loved fairy tales and I love reading new retellings of old tales or stories inspired by the classics. I was drawn to *Fairy Tale Review's* dedication for publishing both new and emerging writers, including Donna Tartt, who is one of my favorite writers. I was also drawn to their arrangement of the issues and how most issues have a theme. For example, the Grey Issue is a collection of pieces related to The Lost Boys of J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*. There are plenty of magazines in the literary community that strictly publish realistic pieces, and I think *Fairy Tale Review* is unique in that it publishes magical realism fiction stories and poetry, as well as essays and artwork all related to fairy tales.

Prose Reviews

The Blue Issue

Appleless by Aimee Bender is a magical realism story told in a domestic setting about the fairy tale *Snow White*. It's about a young, beautiful girl who refuses to eat apples, even going out of her way to avoid orchards because she doesn't like to look at them. The unidentified narrators of the story try to convince her to eat the apples but she won't do it, so they sit in the orchard day after day, eating the apples before they fall from the trees. When they see her walking by, they notice how beautiful she is and how lonely they are and they attack her. She cries, and when they are done she hurries away, never to be seen by them again.

This story is told in the collective "we" point of view, which makes it difficult to distinguish who the narrators are. The language is lyrical, which gives the story a dreamy, fairytale feel. At the same time, the imagery and action is ambiguous, so that I wasn't quite sure what was happening. Since this story is in the vein of *Snow White*, I could infer the dwarves were the ones narrating, but it was difficult to know for sure. The narrative was hinting at sexual assault, "She is weeping into our arms, she is crumpling down and we are inside her clothes now and our hands and mouths are everywhere." There were many nods to the traditional fairy tale, especially the apples and Snow White's avoidance of them, but I still thought the language and imagery could be clearer.

From Barrie to Stevenson by Donna Tartt—recent winner of the Pulitzer prize for her novel, *The Goldfinch*—is a poetic memoir about family heritage and the stories passed down between generations. The piece starts with a memory of Tartt's grandmother reading to her when

she was very little. Both she and her grandmother were fascinated by J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, a book that heavily influenced her writing. After reading Barrie, Donna Tartt became interested in the works of Robert Louis Stevenson, especially *Treasure Island*.

This creative nonfiction piece is written with Tartt's signature lyrical language, and it evokes a sense of nostalgia and warm reminiscences of her Scottish grandmother. It's evident from the tone and content of the memoir that the stories Tartt read as a child have inspired her long into adulthood, and that if she hadn't read Barrie or Stevenson during her formative years, she would not be the writer that she is today. It was an enjoyable read for me because Donna Tartt is one of my favorite writers and it also made me think about the stories I read and loved as a child and how those stories have affected my writing and myself.

The Aquamarine Issue

Hansel by Kim Addonizio is a poetic magical realism retelling of the well-known tale of *Hansel and Gretel*. It's told in the first person from Hansel's point of view, detailing how he and his sister did not stop at the witch's cottage as they did in the famous fairy tale, but instead ventured on in the woods, guided and kept alive by their intense and ravaging hunger. Eventually Gretel is eaten by a "creature" when "something dragged her out and half-devoured her." Hansel continues on by himself and now knows not to take any food for granted.

The story is told in stilted sentences and grammatically incorrect language, which gives the piece the feeling that a terrified little boy is telling us his "testimony" as he calls it. There is no dialogue, only a hurried account of what happened to him and his sister on their adventure into the woods to find food. It's told mainly in summary, which stays true to the traditional structure of folktales.

The Grey Issue

Sanctuary by Maile Chapman is a plainspoken story told in a realistic domestic setting about love and forgiveness. The story details a man whose eldest daughter, Annabel, died when she fell off her horse. The narrator is angry with the children's nanny who told his children about the ovens of fire that awaits them after they die, painting a very vivid and horrifying picture of hell that scares Annabel and makes her believe that she will burn for eternity. The narrator needs to learn to forgive the nanny for frightening his daughter and making her believe such a thing.

The story is told in the first person from the point of view of the father of Annabel who remains nameless throughout the narrative. The structure of the story lends itself to jumping around in time so that we see pieces of Annabel's childhood and parts of the nanny's life and marriage to a religious man, all from the perspective of the distressed narrator. It uses plain, straightforward language, which grounds it in realism even though a ghost appears at the end of the story.

An Interview with Laura Miller, Managing Editor of *Fairy Tale Review*

Alyssa Fuerholzer: Each issue of *Fairy Tale Review* has a different fairy tale-related theme, but I noticed the upcoming issue—The Mauve Issue—doesn't have a theme. How do you choose a theme? Or how do you choose *not* to have a specific theme?

Laura Miller: In truth, only some of the previous issues have had a theme from the onset. The Red Issue, for example, has a Little Red Riding Hood theme, and The Grey Issue has a Lost Boys theme. For most of the other issues, the theme emerged from the content more organically, or we asked for work with a yellow (or violet, or blue, or white) *feel*. In some cases, it's up to the guest editor to decide what that means. In other cases, Kate Bernheimer suggests an impression she receives from the chosen color, and she'll often include that in the call for submissions or else in the editorial letter, after the content has already been chosen.

AF: How many submissions do you receive during a reading period?

LM: The number of submissions we receive varies wildly. For The Emerald Issue, we had about 400. Whereas, for our current issue, submissions have only been open for about six weeks, and we already have nearly 500 submissions. So the number can range from the hundreds up to 1,000, which we saw for The Red Issue, one of our most popular. The theme plays a large role in this fluctuation—not as many people will have Oz-themed work on hand, for example, as work that relates to fairy tales in a more general sense. I should also mention that we typically only open submissions for two or three months, unlike many journals that remain open ten or twelve months out of the year, so these numbers are for the submissions we receive in that short time.

AF: How do you know when something isn't right for the magazine?

LM: Like most established literary journals, *Fairy Tale Review* looks for work that shows a masterful grasp of writing as a craft—that is, work that contains surprising imagery, rhythmic sentence structure, emotional resonance, and some knowledge of fairy-tale techniques. We want to be excited about the stories as new works of art that are in conversation with the old tales and that measure up to our standards for innovative storytelling.

AF: Of all the pieces in *Fairy Tale Review*, which has stood out the most to you? What about it makes it stand out?

LM: I'm afraid that's an impossible question to answer! So many of the stories and poems have had a tremendous and lasting impact on me as a human and a writer. In our latest issue—The Emerald Issue—I'm quite fond of Gabriel Thibodeau's story, "Paint Chips." I especially love how he weaves the mythic and the modern, and the main character's pain radiates off the page. There are so many lovely scenes in this story, and so much color and vibrancy. But the complex emotional state of the main character really attracts me to this particular story.

AF: You've published works by well-known writers such as Donna Tartt and Aimee Bender. What is your relationship with established and emerging writers when it comes to submissions?

LM: We're very fortunate in that both emerging and established writers submit to us through our Submission Manager—that is, without solicitations from Kate or the staff. This isn't typically the case for most journals, and we're proud of the fact that we rarely solicit material from well-known authors. Kate Bernheimer has a reputation for fabulism in a realism-dominated literary world, so authors like Aimee Bender seek her out, and the guest editors will sometimes bring writers they admire into the mix. Now that *FTR* has a paid editorial staff, the journal has devoted more time to soliciting submissions, but the majority—around 80%, I would venture to say—of the content comes straight out of the slush pile.

AF: What is the editorial process like at *Fairy Tale Review*?

LM: The editors at *FTR* have many tasks—from grant writing to event planning—and the process of putting together the journal is constantly evolving. We have a group of volunteer readers, pre-screened by Kate Bernheimer, who read submissions during our open reading period. The editorial assistants read also, and together we decide what to pass along to Kate and to the guest editor (when we have a guest editor, this year we do not). Kate has final say on all the work included in the journal; she's very hands-on when it comes to the overall aesthetic. After submissions close and all pieces have been decided, we begin the hard work of compiling the pieces, organizing them, sending out contracts, gathering author bios, proofreading, working with the authors on any edits we'd like to see, choosing small design details like which dingbat we'll use, communicating all this with the designer, and generally making sure everything is perfect before we send the final documents to Wayne State University Press for production.

AF: *Fairy Tale Review* is almost entirely run by MFA students. How do you balance your responsibilities to the magazine with doing your own work?

LM: As editors for *FTR*, we're very lucky because our work doesn't feel like work! We read and research fairy tales, which comes as a breath of fresh air compared to other jobs and responsibilities many people balance while attending graduate school. There are times when the editorship gets hectic leading up to AWP for example, but we're fortunate to have a very respectful boss who values our time. She makes it easy for us to thrive in this environment.

AF: How has editing affected your process as a writer?

LM: Probably too much to recount here, but two things have really stuck with me from an editorial perspective. First, cover letters. We read them all, and we appreciate when the author takes the time to say a little about the journal and why he or she thinks their work would make a good fit. There's a lot of room for error here—too long and you risk sounding pompous, too short and you risk sounding flippant—so striking that balance is something I've tried harder to achieve after serving as an editor. Second, first impressions. For fiction and nonfiction especially, the first page has to set the work apart from the rest. A solid first page won't save you if the rest of the piece doesn't live up to its standards, but as editors, we want to know up front what the author is bringing to the table.

