

Title: Betwixt

Issue: Issue 11

Editor: Joy Crelin

Web address: <http://betwixtmagazine.com/>

What they publish: They publish speculative fiction of all sorts, especially if the story breaks the confines of a genre or reimagines classic genre tropes. They also publish speculative artwork.

Submission guidelines: Open to submissions from April 1-May 31. Word limit 4,000-7,000 words. (No specificity on format; assume double-spaced Courier New font.) Simultaneous submissions not accepted. Send stories through email as .doc, .docx, and .rtf files; they do not accept paper submissions.

Description of publication: Website layout is effective in its simplicity. Easy to find information about the current issue, back issues, submissions, and editor information. All the issues and the stories published within can be read on the site, but you can also buy them.

Prose per issue: ~6 prose stories per issue, 12 fiction stories annually

Patterns: Fantasy stories are far more popular than science fiction here, and both of the stories read had a creative twist to a medieval-esque setting.

Prose review:

“Phantom of the Purple Dunes” by Kyle E. Miller takes place in a seemingly fantasy setting where a city is overcome and eventually buried by self-replicating purple sand. The main character, Skypotter, loses her daughter to the sand and, to the city’s rebuke, becomes a nomad among the dunes. She speaks with the cheery advertisement voices that emanate from the sand and seeks to gain wisdom from them. She eventually finds a doorway in the sand, which is an elevator, collapses against the wall inside, and descends below the purple desert.

The concept of this piece was wonderful, but the long back-history opening, lack of full scenes (there were only micro-scenes), and sparse dialogue made it a dry read. The settings were illusory due to an absence of good detail and spatial establishment, and the few interactions felt unimportant due to all other characters having little or no identity. To the story’s credit, there were some moments of description where the author combined strong sight and touch to make images pop.

“A Map to Camelot” by Rose Biggin is a how-to story that offers step-by-step advice on how to successfully journey to Camelot, providing instructions on topics such as saying goodbyes; avoiding duplicitous castles; and avoiding love triangles, parallelograms, and other geometric shapes.

This story was great. The format allowed for a fresh, comedic take on the medieval fantasy genre, playing off several tropes while using the vernacular of that time period. The author also sprinkled in modern-day constructs such as multiple-choice questions on tests, buy-one-get-one-free deals, and broadband internet connection to further bend this approach to fantasy. There were even some moments when the prose became self-aware, which, depending on interpretation, shifts the story onto the audience as a metaphor for navigating the reader’s own life journey.

Rating: 6. Despite the submission window coming once a year and lasting for only a month, the magazine has generous word limits and allows you to check up on your submission if you haven’t heard back within two weeks. And though some talented writers contribute to this magazine, some lower-quality stories stand a chance at publication here.