

Title of Magazine: **Bluestem Magazine**

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Editor: Olga Abella

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

What they Publish: Fiction, poetry, and nonfiction

Submission Guidelines: May submit five poems at a time, one short story, one nonfiction piece, or five black and white drawings. Fiction, prose, and essays should be no longer than 5,000 words. A brief bio of no more than 100 words must also be included. All genres welcome. Must submit through

[bluestem.submihmash.com](http://bluestem.submihmash.com). Simultaneous submissions are accepted, but work must not be previously published. Response time is around six to eight weeks, or longer if work is seriously being considered.

Description of Publication: Online issue is published quarterly (December, March, June, and September).

There is also an annual print issue. The website is simple, organized, and easy to navigate. Bluestem publishes mainly emerging writers, but also established authors. The magazine has been published since 1966 and is produced by the English Department at Eastern Illinois University.

Prose Per Issue/Annually: Approx. eight per issue/ Approx. forty annually.

Prose Reviews:

*The End of Everything* by Emily Koon is a plainspoken realistic story in a domestic setting. Sherilyn “Sherry” Cole is a subjective first person narrator who is struggling to get her life back together after being released from prison, serving time for her twin sister’s crime. Even though Sherry—a professor of temporal physics—gave up her life to help her troubled sister she still feels a separation between the two that has been in the works since they were in the womb: “Eva and I have been moving away from each other at something close to the speed of light.” At the end of the story there is no resolve and her sister’s state of mind continues to worsen.

The story heightens tension through the first person POV. Because the main character Sherry took much of the responsibility, her perspective shapes and informs the story: “I told her I killed someone with my sister’s car and that was a lot worse. I didn’t qualify that it was actually Eva because you can’t get into that sort of thing on a sales call.” By getting information that only she knows from her voice the story’s tragic tone is more genuine. The tension between the sisters is the main source of conflict within the story, as is the internal struggle Sherry faces. Because of this the incorporation of backstory is necessary and feeds into the narrative. The history between the sisters, starting from an accident on prom night informs readers about their complicated relationship: “I believe this was about the time the sane and insane branches of Eva’s personality finally had the guts to fork off each other. It has been a slow process, in action our whole lives. Sometimes I think she knew that after the accident things seemed to be speeding up.” Single lines that reveal backstory slips into the narrator’s present moment, which is one of story’s themes: You can never escape the past.

*Three Crows* by Doug Ramspeck is a plainspoken realistic story in a domestic setting. The main character is subjective first person narrator who is struggling with the raw emotions of having a

miscarriage. She is traveling to her mother's house in Arkadelphia, seeking comfort, according to her husband. Her mother claims to have the ability to sense the presence of the dead, a talent that the narrator envies. The story ends with the narrator planning on what she will say to her mother and the questions she will pose to her: "I will ask her what it is she thinks I have done to deserve this...I will tell her how much I resent the dead for the power they hold, resent her for imagining she is speaking to my dead son, for believing he exists half in this world and half in some other, as though his ghost is pressing forward toward my breast to feed."

The tone of the story is what drives the conflict. The narrator goes through a variety of emotions that is shown through her first person POV. The setting—the narrator driving alone to her mother's home—gives the narrative a stream-of-consciousness-feel: "I lost my own child—a boy—in my sixth month of pregnancy, and surely there was a dry creek bed somewhere in the world, many of them, in fact, enough to wither a host of children in the womb. I am not alone in my grief, in other words. Probably I sound bitter, and I know I am... but my mother and I will sit on her back porch and drink the sweet tea she learned to make as a girl in Mississippi, where she also learned that tragedies come in threes and you should spread the cut hair from your children outside the doors and windows of your house to ward off evil spirits." The solitary setting also makes readers feel as alone as the narrator does. Readers get a good range of the narrator's emotions as evidenced in the backstory. We get a sensation of loneliness, envy, sadness, loss, resentment, and longing in a very short piece. Rampseck pulls this off through the quick pace and direct, to-the-point prose.

Review: 7. Bluestem Magazine publishes emerging writers along with experienced authors. It is published quarterly therefore lessening the chance for writers' work to be accepted. There is no payment once your writing is published, but it is a credible magazine to get published in (especially since it has been around since 1966). The website and publications are organized, simple, and filled with quality work.