

Magazine: Word Riot

Editor: Jackie Corley (Publisher), Nicolle Elizabeth (Poetry Editor), David Hoenigman (Interviewer) and Kevin O’Cuinn (Fiction Co-Editor)

Web Address: <http://www.wordriot.org/>

What They Publish: Short Stories, Flash Fiction, Novel Excerpts, Stretching Forms (Experimental), Creative Non-Fiction, Poetry, Reviews and Interviews

Submission Guidelines: Word Riot uses Submishmash as their submissions manager. Short stories should be between 1,000 and 6,500 words. Flash fiction must be under 1,000 words. Novel excerpts should not exceed 6,500 words and you must include a synopsis of the novel and an overview of the theme. Screenplay and novella excerpts may be considered here too. Experimental submissions should be no longer than 6,500 words. Non-Fiction can include personal essays that fall between 1,000 and 6,500 words as well as short pieces that are 650 words or less. Preference is given to stories that are strong in lyricism, wit, compassion or daring. No more than 6 poems should be sent in a single document. Reviews and interviews are better received if they are from small presses.

Description of Publication: Word Riot was started in 2002 and was formerly attached to the now obsolete online magazine, Communication Breakdown. They are interested in forceful voices and look for edgy, challenging and unique pieces.

Prose Per Issue/ Amount Published Annually: Online issues publish monthly. Interviews, reviews, novel excerpts and experimental fiction are not always in every issue, and their numbers vary when included. Around 2 flash fiction pieces, 2 non-fiction pieces and 2 short stories are published. Around 8 poems are included.

Prose Reviews:

*On The Line* by Lee Wright is a domestic, plainspoken, first person perspective of a man who works in a factory that makes clothing. The narrative starts by explaining the length and experience of working a shift in this factory. Wright shows us the man’s inexperience by mentioning his bleeding hands. The man compares himself to the other factory workers who are easy-going. He reflects on how his life has transitioned from academic to the realization that he will work in this factory for the rest of his life, just like his father did. Where he works he can see the spot his father died of a heart attack. As the blood from his hands soaks into the fibers he wonders how many people around the world are wearing his blood. By the end, the moment of reflection results in him messing up his position and realizing it was his last chance.

Wright has done a nice job of economizing his words and still fully telling the moment. We smell the oil of the machines. We hear the buzzer scream when he screws up. Sentences like, “No longer able to afford ambition, I will always be here, or someplace similar” inform us of how the character has gotten to this moment we are now seeing. The environment triggers the man’s contemplation. He stands only feet from where his father died young and he wonders if his father resented his son for having to work in the factory. For so few words, there are many layers achieved. Conflicts between father and son. School and factory. This is a quietly powerful piece.

*Blood a Cold Blue* by James Claffey is a poetic first person present tense story that finds root in its place; New Orleans. The storyteller flows from image to image in a stream of consciousness way. Thinking about collecting lint from his navel leads to using it to restring his tennis racket. Tennis leads to how healthy he is. Talking about the Cahill sisters leads to a story about the one with bird-like qualities who he encounters on the way to a

tennis tournament. He equates their meeting to a religious experience and talks about how he makes her feel. In the end, we get the sense that something sinister might have happened on the pier.

Following the storyteller's stream of thought will have moments of beauty and moments of complete and utter confusion. Lines like, "when she comes back home it is with a seagull's head where her own lovely one used to be" which gives a striking image and then there will be a sequence like, "stained glass windows, the sun in blue, in green, in red. Jesus falls a third time" that slip into the abstract. At that point we're not sure if he's just imagining them at a church or if they've actually gone to one. While the imagery has some stunning and thought-provoking moments, Claffey's avoidance of a set place causes some confusion over the sequence of events. I do love the hints at the end to something sinful happening. It's done with a delicious subtlety.

Rating: 9. It's a well designed website and there is a wide variety of ways to be published. It does publish a limited amount with each issue so they must be highly selective.