

Title of Magazine: Wigleaf

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Editor: Scott Garson

Web Address: wigleaf.com

What they publish: Flash fiction - under 1000 words. Two stories are published per week for nine months of the year (September - early May). From early May to August, their annual publication The Wigleaf Top 50 (Very) Short Fictions of the year is released.

Submission Guidelines: Submissions are open September through November (2012), January (2013), and the last ten days of May (2013). All submissions must be under 1000 words. Authors may send up to three stories in a single Word document to wigleaf.fiction@gmail.com with a subject line that reads: sub, LastName. Simultaneous submissions accepted.

Description of Publication: Minimalist Web site with a few well placed links that make the site easy to navigate. Recently published stories appear on the homepage, and are paired with eye-catching graphics and a teaser line of the work. The Archive offers access to the top 50 stories of past years as well as authors by last name. The site features work from experienced and emerging writers.

Prose per Issue / Amount Published Annually: 1 featured short is published at a time; Approx. 72 pieces per year

Prose Reviews:

*Guilt Names* by Ryan W. Bradley is a realistic plain spoken narrative in a domestic setting. The unnamed first person narrator struggles to understand and name the things he feels guilty about in the aftermath of his father leaving his mother. The narrator contemplates what his father used to say when he looked out at the storm: "There's always one on the horizon." The narrator comes to the conclusion that the horizon is what his father must have been looking for when he left.

The story relies on the emotional arc of the narrator to move forward and keep the reader engaged, and it does so successfully through a close first person point of view. Without relying on cliché, or overly exploiting the narrator's emotional state, Bradley is able to create a character that hurts deeply without ever once pitying himself. The language is direct, but poetic, as in this gothic description of landscape: "nothing good ever came of watching the snow whether it's sitting there glinting in a moment of sunlight or blowing like a white tornado erasing everything past the window." The author takes care in describing the yard the character looks upon, "the way flakes dance in the air, how when the storms kick up all heavy," using the place as a metaphor for the emotional state of the character. Dialogue is sparse, and is used only once, when necessary.

*Touch* by Leah Browning is a plainspoken close third person narrative in a domestic setting. The story follows Gareth, a hair stylist who returns to his unlit apartment, walking home in the cold of winter in "an old denim jacket," after cutting the hair of a woman on her way to a funeral. Gareth's roommate and his roommate's girlfriend return to the apartment while Gareth is in his bedroom next door and assume he

is asleep. Gareth hears “the sound of the lock turning,” and “a creak as one or both of them sat down on the bed.” He spends all evening trying not to think about the woman in the salon.

The story focuses on feelings of depression and loneliness. Browning creates this tone through the shortness of winter days, Gareth’s trouble sleeping, his breakfast for dinner (which his roommate may have said was a way of “living his life backwards”), and the woman in the salon who drifts away as Gareth tethers her down by cutting her hair. Vivid sensory details -- the creak of a bed, the turning of a lock, or the coldness of the air-- ground the reader in Gareth’s environment. Though he tries not to think of the woman, his thoughts will not leave her, and he feels as though he is still “doggedly trimming the ends of the woman’s hair” even as his roommate’s bed creaks next door; this ending leaves us with the same haunted feeling as Gareth.

Rating: 8. Wigleaf’s clean Web design and quality writing make it stand out in the vast world of online publications. The frequency of publications keeps one returning to their site on a regular basis, and the archives organize and preserve past contributors’ work. Though many contributors are experienced writers, emerging writers or writers with just two or three credits under their belt are also welcome. Though much of the fiction is traditionally narrative, Wigleaf also publishes more experimental, poetic prose.