

CARVE

MAGAZINE

2007 Anthology

"honest fiction"

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Named in honor of Raymond Carver, *Carve Magazine* is an online literary magazine published quarterly. Subscription is by email only. Subscription is free and allows notifications of new issues when they premiere on the website, www.carvezine.com.

Dedicated to the electronic format, *Carve Magazine* chooses to feature the full text of each issue online. By publishing online, the stories and their authors gain more exposure to the public than if published by a print magazine that is only available with a paid subscription.

Submissions for the magazine are accepted year-round. *Carve* accepts fiction submissions only. Complete submissions guidelines are available at the website. In addition, there is an annual Raymond Carver Short Story Contest. Winners receive a cash prize and publication in a predetermined issue for the year.

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MAGAZINE

2007 Anthology

The Complete Stories from Volume VIII, Issues I-IV

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Fall / Winter - Melanie Graves

2007 CONTEST JUDGE

Ben Fountain

"Writing is the only profession where no one considers you ridiculous if you earn no money."

-Jules Renard

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*Nominated for Pushcart Prize

Spring 2007

Volume VIII, Issue I

March 31

Stories By:

Nate House
Stephen MacKinnon
Alyssa Morris
Michael Schiavone
David Andrew Stoler

Letter From the Editor

March 31, 2007

Dedicated *Carve* readers,

It's with both great excitement and intense anxiety that I present the newest issue of *Carve Magazine*, indeed the first one in nearly six months. What a long wait, and what a long time for the pressure to mount.

As always, your patience is appreciated, but now I hope it's rewarded. These stories, at first, may not be what you expect. A son discovering his father's lustful obsession for a teenage neighbor; a Yugoslavian woman who finally breaks free from the prison of her husband's shop; an apathetic man who is helpless to his emotional wife; an electrician who is trying to find himself within a place called Paradise Cove; and a man whose dreams are both erotic and destructive. These are stories that run the gamut from poetic or graphic to beautiful or heartbreaking.

But what they all have in common, and the very reason I chose them for this new issue, is that they are all *honest fiction*. The emotions are real, the jeopardy of the characters are palpable. There may not be any fairy-tale "happy endings" (who wants that in lit fiction anyway?), but there are moments of grace, of reflection, of awe.

I have spent much time with these stories. I hope you do, too.

Sincerely,

Matthew Limpede
Editor, *Carve Magazine*

The First Fire

David Andrew Stoler

for Laurence Hawser

Apparently my father, in his later years, developed a taste for being penetrated rectally by young boys. Not *particularly* young, I should say, and not plural “boys,” either. For all I can tell, in fact, it was just the one: Timothy Carroll, a seventeen-year-old sophomore who lived around the corner from us and whose older brother Brian had been my classmate at New Dorp High.

I discovered this the day after my father’s funeral. The service itself was what I’d expected, the baking hot synagogue dotted with temple old-timers, a couple of unanticipated and ancient second cousins, my dad’s engineering contemporaries from over at the institute, and lots of my mom’s friends. We drove out to Baron Hirsh Cemetery in a solemn line, lit headlights brown in the bright summer sun, and laid the man next to his mother and father in a plot that no one in my immediate family had seen since my grandmother’s burial twelve years earlier. It was the only time I’ve ever ridden in a limo. I wore my one suit.

That afternoon the traditional hard-boiled eggs and lentils sat untouched next to the more popular non-secular items: the onion dip, the almond cake, the quiche. Everyone had coffee in our den, my mother sitting on the couch in a black Chinese cheongsam-style dress, flinching visibly at every piece of cemetery dirt tracked across our beige carpet by my father’s oblivious colleagues. It had been one of my mother’s rules, strictly enforced since the new carpet was laid fifteen years before: Shoes Off Immediately Upon Entry. My mother knew she couldn’t insist on this rule now, and that was probably the worst part of the whole thing for her. She’d have to rent a steam-vac.

For me, putting my rubber soles down on the thick plush for the first time was almost erotic, a little electric thrill running

through me when I thought my mother might see and be unable to comment, if only for propriety's sake. Soon though, shame creeping up on me, I took my shoes off anyway, then brought her a refill of coffee that was mostly just Kahlua. After tasting it, she looked up at me gratefully.

During my third whiskey I stumbled to my dad's stereo and put on Casals doing Bach's Cello Suites, even though there wasn't supposed to be any music. The rough-hewn cello felt like autumn, all papered leaves and the peace of being inside while a wind might twist against the windows. The music was out of place in the dead summer air, but still, it was my father's favorite, and that seemed appropriate.

When the service was over, the guests gone, my mother immediately set to straightening up the house. Still in her dress, her teeth clenched, she attacked the floor on hands and knees with carpet spray and sponge as viciously as if she were sanding wood, only looking up occasionally to reach for her drink. Without saying a word, I put all the dirty dishes into the sink, then went upstairs, hung my suit and fell asleep naked in the overwhelming heat.

The next day was even hotter, and I woke up late and drenched in sweat, my head and tongue heavy from the day before's whiskey. Downstairs, my mother told me her friends were coming over for lunch. After coffee I went to clean up, but she was already in the bathroom putting on her makeup and fixing her hair. So I went to the basement to use the shower there.

I hadn't been down the rubber-lined stairs in years. As a kid the basement, all spider-webbed corners, was too scary to spend any time in, and if my parents told me to go and get a spare light bulb I'd plead with them not to make me. My father would send me anyway, telling me not to be such a baby. I'd be terrified, and when I'd finally find the bulbs I would turn and run back upstairs as fast as I could, sure that I was being chased by whatever monsters lived there.

But when I got to high school the basement became more appealing. I set up my own den, complete with an old couch, a TV, Nintendo. During summers my father spent every day in his air-conditioned office, so of course it was fine if we were the only

Fall 2007

Volume VIII, Issue III

September 17

Stories By:

Ezra
Jaren Watson
Yuvi Zalkow

This One Thing

Jaren Watson

Carlton is huge. Even for a Great Pyrenees, known for their size and snowy fur like a fresh avalanche, he is colossal. Serious heft. Ample beef scraps from the table and a lackluster exercise regimen has ballooned Carlton to nearly 200 pounds. Not only is he the biggest non-livestock animal I have ever seen in my life, he slobbers like a baby with a jaw full of candy. Susan and I keep three mops in the house to swab his drool.

Don't even get me started on his droppings. Suffice it to say, a dog the size of a horse can produce some mammoth turds. If our house didn't sit on an acre and a half of ground, I'd seriously consider taking him for the long ride in the country. Even with a lawn as big as ours, walking through it is still like negotiating a minefield.

One summer evening the year after we got the dog, Susan and I tried playing croquet in the backyard. We were on some kind of kick to get more active. After the first errant ball slopped through one of Carlton's lawn bombs, we boxed up the set and pitched it in the trash. No biggie. Who wants to play croquet? We've resigned ourselves to sipping lemonade on the patio and watching it pile up. The bright side is that our grass is as green as a golf course, though I wouldn't recommend putting around. And that's the crazy thing: the stuff that kills the neighbors' grass is the very stuff that's making ours worthy of a turf-builder ad. We've got our problems, sure, but the lawn is fine.

It was Susan's idea. After studying for the bar twice, I had finally passed and recently hired on with Johannsen, Smith, and Jo-

hanssen, a one-stop shop in town. I was in the home office, straightening papers on my desk and Susan walked in the room and said, “Mark, I think it’s time.”

If there’s one thing I know, it’s Susan. So I knew what she meant, and even though I wasn’t sure I was ready, we talked about it and agreed that everything fit. Our college days were looking pretty small in the rearview. We were settled in a new house with a huge lawn and the money was finally stable. Susan didn’t even have to work, but spent most of her days sculpting clay angels that she would or would not sell to the local boutiques. She stopped taking the pill the next day. Who decides the time is right based on how the lawn looks? I don’t know; it just felt right.

Susan was as giddy as I’d ever seen her. I mean she glowed. I tried to tell her to wait until we knew the gender at least, but she said we could buy unisex. We drove downtown in the rain and strolled the baby aisles of every department store we could find, buying twenty or so tiny outfits in gender-neutral reds and greens. We also got the crib, the stroller, and an old-fashioned rocking bassinet made from hand-tooled maple strips. It cost \$375 and I was jealous. The baby wasn’t even here yet and it already had the nicest furniture in the house. Maybe we did get a little carried away, but we were having fun.

There’s something to be said about decorating your own child’s nursery. I’ve found that fathers-to-be have to be involved in these little projects. Susan felt the motherly bond building as soon as she peed on the strip and it showed positive. But for me, I noticed that I had to do something hands-on. The shopping was nice. But when I was covered in both pink and blue splotches of paint—we were covering our bases, just in case—I was Daddy.

I think Susan is brainwashing Carlton. I’m the one who feeds and waters him. I’m the one who hauls out the huge steel tub and bathes him every Saturday. And I’m also the one who carts the wheelbarrow out back, shoveling badger-sized mounds of Carlton’s goodies each fall. And what do I get for my efforts?

Rob Bass is a writer/musician living in Austin with his wife. He writes songs and stories and reads comic books and novels as fast as he can.

Marcy Campbell's short fiction appears most recently in *Pearl and Parting Gifts*, and a new story is forthcoming in *Another Chicago Magazine*. Her poem "Traffic," as a winner of the "Moving Minds: Verse and Vision Project," was recently "published" on nearly 1,000 buses in metro Cleveland. She teaches writing at the College of Wooster and is working on her first novel.

Stephanie Dickinson has lived in Iowa, Wyoming, Texas, Louisiana, and now in New York. Her poetry and fiction appear in *Cream City Review*, *Green Mountain Review*, *Chelsea*, *Brooklyn Review*, *Fourteen Hills*, *Nimrod*, *Iron Horse Review*, *Inkwell*, *Ontario Review*, *Water Stone*, *Columbia Journal*, *McGuffin*, among others. Along with Rob Cook, she published the literary journal *Skidrow Penthouse*. Her *Road of Five Churches*, a short story collection, was recently released by Rain Mountain Press. She is a 2006 Fellow in Fiction from the New York Foundation for the Arts.

As former director of the Writers Voice literary center in St. Louis, **Julia Gordon-Bramer** has worked with luminaries in literature such as Ken Kesey, Allen Ginsberg, and Gloria Steinem, to name just a few. She is a 2002 finalist for the national William Faulkner Pirate's Alley Novel-in-Progress Creative Writing Award, a board member of *River Styx* literary magazine, a long-time Member of Distinction with the St. Louis Writers Guild and author of a memoir, *NIGHT TIMES*, currently seeking publication. A graduate student at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Julia is working toward a MFA in Creative Writing, and holds a Bachelor's degree in English from Webster University. She teaches English at St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley.

Nate House has been published in *Troika Magazine*, *Chesapeake Bay Magazine*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Roadbike Magazine*, *The Philadelphia Weekly*, and *The Philadel-*

phia Tribune. His novel, *Float*, won the Frances Israel Award for fiction, and he currently teaches English at Community College of Philadelphia.

Ezra was born in West Berlin but has lived just about everywhere. Most recently you'll find him checking a trail map in the Japan Alps, or writing a novel along the banks of the Mekong.

AC Koch lived in Pusan, South Korea, in the mid-90's, where he learned the awesome power of kimchi. The spiciness of Korean food drove him to explore further horizons of fiery cuisine, and he ended up settling in Mexico for a decade. He recently returned to his native Colorado where he teaches English and trolls the specialty corner stores for snappy ingredients to stir into experimental recipes that recall lost worlds. His fiction has been published in *Exquisite Corpse*, *Mississippi Review*, *River City*, *Night Train*, and previously in *Carve*. Today he is at work on a young adult novel set in Europe, Asia, America and points between.

Stephen MacKinnon's work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Armageddon's Buffet*, *Conte*, *Fugue*, *Ontario Review*, *Plum Biscuit*, *Rosebud*, *The Southeast Review*, *The Talking River Review*, and *Whistling Shade*. He has received award recognition from *Carve Magazine*, *Rosebud*, *The Southeast Review*, and *Ontario Review*. He is at work on a novel titled *Mercy's Wake*.

Alyssa Morris is a writer, wife, and superhero. She graduated from the University of Texas at Dallas with B.A. in Art and Performance with a focus on Creative Writing. Since graduating, she has worked more actively to involve herself in the writing community, and she currently has multiple writing projects in progress. However, she requests no great expectations until she finishes tackling her most challenging undertaking thus far, pregnancy.

Marc Phillips won the 2004 Fish Short Story Prize with "The Mountains of Mars", and was named a Notable Writer of the Year (2004). He has twice been nominated for a Pushcart Prize

and inclusion in Best American Short Stories anthologies. In 2007, his "Caye Caulker Tides" appeared in the Crime Writers Association Knife Award anthology. He regularly publishes fiction, poetry, articles and essays in the US and abroad.

Michael Schiavone's short fiction has appeared in *Carve*, *New Letters*, *Mississippi Review*, *Reed Magazine*, *Connecticut Review*, *GSU Review*, and the *Tariffs 2 Fiction Anthology*. His novella, *Skin*, was a finalist for the 2005 Peter Taylor Prize and the 2006 Miami University Contest. He lives in Gloucester, MA, where he just finished his first novel, *Call Me When You Land*.

Liz Skillman lives in New York City, where she writes and teaches high school. Her short story "Rachel's List" won first place in the 2007 Paul Gillette Writing Contest and in the same year was published in an anthology put out by the Aspiring Authors contest. She is currently working on her first novel and is a former singer-songwriter.

David Andrew Stoler is an award-winning journalist whose work has appeared in alternative weeklies across the country. He was named New York Times Fellow in fiction at New York University in 2000, and he received his MFA there in 2002. Currently, he teaches creative writing to at-risk and special needs kids in New York City public schools through the Teachers & Writers Collaborative, and to young cancer survivors through the NYLife Lab. You can reach him at dstoler@gmail.com.

Craig Terlson has been an illustrator, drawing for magazines and books for the past 20 years. His work has appeared in the Boston Globe, Psychology Today, Florida Trend, and many others. Out of a desire to tell stories more than a few panels long, he started an alternate career as a writer. His fiction has appeared in Hobart, Bound Off, Laura Hird Showcase, Thieves Jargon, Thirst for Fire and other literary journals. He was finalist for the Glimmer Train 2005 New Writers Award. He was recently awarded an arts council grant to complete his short story collection, "The Plate Spinner."

Jaren Watson lives with his wife and children in Tucson, where he is working toward his MFA at the University of Arizona. He writes fiction during the day and spends his nights hiking in the desert with his family, photographing wildlife. He is a member of the BHC writing community.

Kami Westhoff's work has appeared in such journals as Meridian, River City, Phoebe, Third Coast, and various online publications. She received her MFA from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and is a Lecturer Professor at Western Washington University.

Yuvi Zalkow's work has been published in Rosebud, Ellipsis..., storyglossia.com, The Clackamas Literary Review, and other magazines. He is currently working on a novel (while also trying to trick someone into publishing his short story collection). You can reach him at www.yuvizalkow.com.