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Poetry is Dead's Queer Issue Speaks Directly To Your Heart



Posted by **fonseca**
on November 26, 2012

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As a rule of thumb, I wait until I'm halfway through a literary journal before checking in with myself to see if I'm actually enjoying what I'm reading. Anthologies and lit magazines are a lot like dollar store grab bags. For every "This is amazing work," you feel after reading a poem or essay, there might be three items that make you sigh, "What the f-ck is this mess?" Assessing the quality of a literary journal is another issue: Do I go for a majority-rule and weigh the number of works I adored versus works that I loathed? But what about this one tremendous work which is still lingering in my mind? Is it worth calling this a "good lit journal" just because it introduced me to this fantastic writer whose career I will follow until one of us keels over?

When I received a copy of the Queer Issue of *Poetry is Dead* this weekend, I didn't have to ask myself any of these neurotic questions. I didn't have to "check in" with myself halfway through, either. My body told me everything that I needed to know. I nearly teared while reading the editor's letter. When I answered the phone or went to make a leftover turkey sandwich, *PiD* found its way onto the countertop beside me. I wasn't conscious of my hands turning the pages--just that I had to stop because there weren't any more. I enjoyed everything about it until the end.

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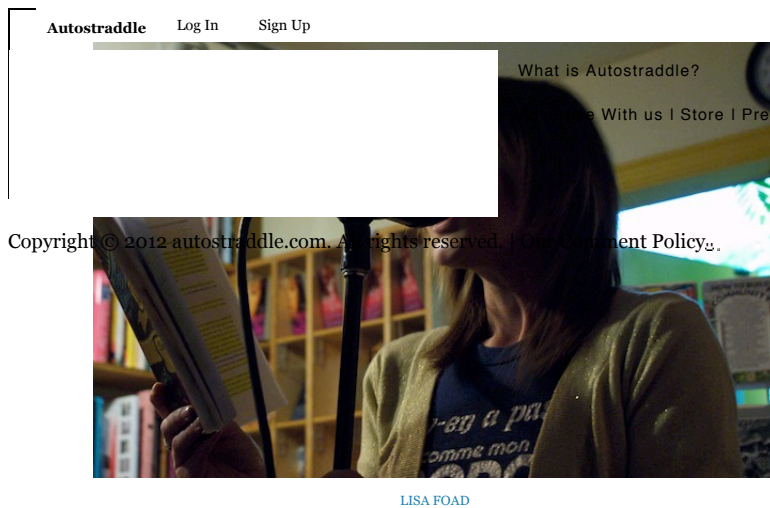
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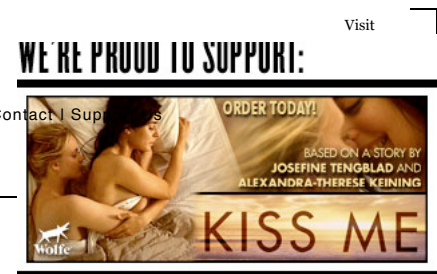


Despite its tongue-and-cheek name, *Poetry is Dead* is pleasant evidence to the contrary. When I began reading the first essay (a piece by [Lisa Foad](#) on her Jehovah's Witnesses' upbringing), it wasn't until I revisited the table of contents that I realized that I was reading an essay and *not* a poem. One, the page formatting is reminiscent of that for poetry. Two, the work is a fragmented narrative which is broken down into 15 sections. Three, it reads with the fluidity of a poem:

My grandmother hasn't read my book. It sits on a shelf next to her collection of Watchtower publications. She's proud of the spine that bears my name. But she doesn't want to know what's inside.



LEAH LAKSHMI PIEPZNA-SAMARASINHA

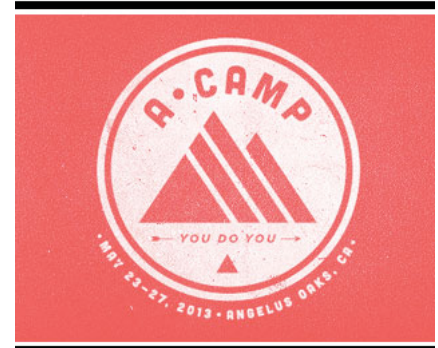


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[Samarasinha](#) writes about poetry being "the rock which everything rests on":

Chrystos said, "Poetry is the song of the people, not the painted bird of the academic machine."

Audre Lorde said, "The white father said, I think therefore I am. The Black mother inside--the poet--whispers in my dreams: I feel, therefore I can be free."

June Jordan, in her letters to her publisher, insisted that she was a poet first and always, regardless of her prodigious efforts writing nonfiction, essays, and kids books. And her editor (Toni Morrison) agreed...

Along with beautiful essays masquerading as poems, *PiD's Queer Issue* features plenty of poetry masquerading as poetry, including work by [Pam Dick](#) and [Oana Avasilichioaei](#), **Kierst Wade**, **John Barton**, **Steve Giasson**, and accidental Autostraddle sweetheart, [Leah Horlick](#):

*We are so busy counting everything that's been inside of me
since my last check-up: tampons, ex-girlfriend,
Diva cup, ex-girlfriend, yeast infection, ex-girlfriend
that I don't hear the doctor call my name.*

- Excerpt from "For queer grrrls who have considered silence/when the pap smear is too much"



ALEX SEBAG

For only being 64 pages in length, *PiD's Queer Issue* has so much to offer. Whether you're into

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(Wade) experimental email poetry (Dick and Avasilichioaei), scanned heartfelt poems penned onto receipts ([Alexander Sebag](#)) or poetic comic panels ([Sarah Leavitt](#) and [Jen Currin](#)), this tiny lit journal has as many forms of poetry within its pages as it does previously-inarticulated queer experiences.

PiD can be snagged [through the publication's website](#).

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Kate (member)

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ah! my boo marie's poetry is in this issue, everyone buy it and love it because queers + the written word = beauty every single time.

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