

## Online Literary Magazine Rant

by: Christopher Malo

So I am here in Paris, and more than being here and having a wonderful time, it's great to just have time. To sleep, to eat, to not be in front of a TV or behind a desk or juggling all the things I am accustomed to doing.

One of the things I have wanted to devote more time and energy towards is writing. Mainly short story and creative non-fiction. My lack of a schedule here allows for that and I am taking advantage of it. (Not as much as I would like, but I have been writing fairly consistently, which is a huge step in the right direction.)

And like any good writer knows, I tend to spend a lot of time on the interwebs, reading, about writing. There's a great line in the *It Works How & Why* saying, "The way to write an inventory is to write it!" Makes sense. And the next line? "Thinking about an inventory, talking about it, theorizing about the inventory will not get it written." But before I get to that point I spend copious hours dicking around online. I was really looking for an online community of people who weren't too lofty or flaky, but snarky and biting, yet wouldn't get upset if I used the word "cunt" or "face fucked." I know. I have difficult demands. A place to put works in progress online and get fresh eyes to look over them and to be able to workshop a piece.

Not only am I still searching for such a place (although there are some marginal contenders right now...) there seems to be this bizarre (to me) and disturbing trend. To take pride in being published. Online.

Look, being published isn't the main goal of anything I write. I might try, will likely fail, and be ok with it, and keep it moving. But to most people, being published seems to be the elusive holy grail. But what I find so, so, so... sickening(?) is that so many people count having their writing on some webpage being published.

Giving a sermon about the rise of the interwebs and the decline of print at this point is preaching to the choir. Online has replaced newspapers and magazines (Books, I see you. You are next in line...) in how or where information is conveyed, but it has NOT replaced the stature that a print publication offers. Why? Because websites are cheap/free, and a dime a dozen. Make that a dime a bajillion. I know this. As the former owner and editor in-chief of a nationally distributed magazine, I know there is infinitely more interest when I reached out and offered someone the cover or coverage in a print publication versus those offering space on a website. Print carries clout.

Yet after spending time online, in profile after profile, interview after interview, many writers have this sense of pride that their work was "published" on SpaceMonkeyAss.com. Or that they won Best Fiction Writer of the Year Award 2008 on IsThereAnEchoInHereIsThereAnEchoInHereIsThereAnEchoInHere.com. Don't get it wrong, take pride in your work, but c'mon people, really?

Look, if the Paris Review or VQR or The Iowa Review publishes your work, or even if it appears on their website, I get it. They have a long, storied history. But for some failed writer who couldn't get published who starts their own online literary magazine so that they can be "published" and "publish" other writers who have failed...?

Get the fuck out of here.

I hope I never stoop so low to make claim to being published these places.

I would take more pride in being rejected by them than by being published by them.

PS: Don't get me started on flash fiction... Yes I know it's history. Yes I know famous practitioners. Yes I know Hemingway's six word story. But again...  
Weaksauce.