

Scissors & Spackle

Current Issue

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David Breitkopf

Dear Winter Solstice Reader

Dear *Winter Solstice* Reader:

When our circulation director told me that you had not renewed your subscription, I must admit I was surprised, puzzled, and even a bit disappointed. I was sitting at my desk editing a fascinating article on vampires and pets, which unfortunately you will be unable to read unless you renew immediately, and I leaned back in my executive chair and said, "Maybe he lost the renewal slip?" I too have received countless renewal slips that have mysteriously slipped into the black hole that is my in-box. "Or maybe he forgot to renew." Vera, our circulation director, just cocked her head, and a subtle Mona Lisa smile played at the edge of her lips.

I am not faulting you for inaction or indecision. True, things get lost, jostle for our attention, get put on the backburner, sometimes even get burned. How much time do we really have to read a short story or novel

excerpt these days? I find my free time dwindling, caught up with domestic chores, keeping up with Facebook friends, editing, and raising money for this worthy journal. I haven't read a novel in months, haven't written one in years. I try, but then all sorts of issues intrude: my daughter needs to be driven to the doctor, my son to tennis, and then to the doctor, then my daughter to tennis. My wife, Deidre, is hardly around these days it seems. When we met in a poetry workshop in college, we were inseparable. She preferred Elizabeth Bishop and Randall Jarrell, and I preferred H.D. and William Carlos Williams: *no ideas but in things*.

I romanticize those languid afternoons when we sat on the floor in the university library between stacks and read each other "unique" and "important" passages, but then you become a published writer yourself, and fly off to this conference, that symposium. (I'm not sure what the differences between the two are, except there's better booze at symposiums). You have to scramble for money, writing hack articles about vampires and pets. To top it off, the journal you founded starts losing circulation.

Deidre said that life is not permanent. She's been studying Buddhism lately. This morning she sat at the breakfast table sipping green tea, reading Pema Chodron's *When Things Fall Apart*, and said, without looking up from the page, maybe my little journal has "seen it's final *Winter Solstice*," but I can't help thinking she's subtly saying she wants a divorce.

I don't think *Winter Solstice* has seen its final solstice, its final sun standing still. People make choices. Not everything is so clear. I'm capable of changing with the times. In the 1990s, we interviewed the likes of E.L. Doctorow and Joyce Carol Oates. In our last two issues we've interviewed such luminous young writers as the slam poet Taylor Mali, and Junot Diaz, who said in passing that my first novel, *Writing My Name*, a story of a young man with an absent father, a mother who subtly undermines him, and a twin brother who is hospitalized with schizophrenia, inspired him. Did I mention that the young man in my novel finds solace in literary journals, and one day starts his own called *Summer Solstice*?

I know you have sent *Winter Solstice* some of your poems and short stories. While we have yet to publish any of them, I personally have found a brutal and distant clarity in two of them. There is a grittiness to your writing, like actual grit under one's fingernails. I believe that if you renew your subscription to *Winter Solstice*—for just \$22 a year or \$39 for two years—we will potentially publish something of yours in our journal someday.

Sincerely,

Kit Rick Shaw

Publisher and Editor of *Winter Solstice*

David Breitkopf has toggled between journalism and tennis his entire adult life, though there was that five-year foray into standup comedy. Presently, he teaches tennis in New Jersey and lives in New York. He is just completing a novel after nine years. In the next month, two other stories of his will be published in literary magazines: "Elderquake" in *Hobo Pancakes*, and "No Problem" in *Two Hawks*



Quarterly. Links to additional stories by David Breitkopf

<http://www.wildviolet.net/2010/04/13/laundry/#.UMoTj679V44>

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