

Fiction Editor Joey Cruse with Angela Joynes

Hi Ms. Joynes,

Tom and Charles asked me to select the author of my choice for the Fiction Interview to be published in Issue 10 and you were the one.

If you'd be interested in participating I've some questions for you about your story 'Trout Addicted to Meth' and your writing in general. I try to set up my questions as interview-y as possible, but do your own thing. I love the piece.

Since we're doing this by email, I'm probably gonna be pretty loose with tone because, you know, interviews. First off, nice work, nice story. 'Trout Addicted to Meth' reminded me of a bygone time in literature when metaphor held the key.

JC: I can't help but ask if your piece plays off of 'Trout Fishing in America' by Brautigan? He's one of my favorites and, I think, resonates beautifully in your piece.

"Rip currents of anxiety throb in my throat, but I remind myself that Elliot is kind, caring, funny, and fresh; he makes me feel happy and safe,"

has a blend of poetry and prose that works.

*AJ: I'm honored to be interviewed for such a fresh, creative literary journal. Who can resist *Fleas On The Dog*? Joey, when you say that "*Trout Addicted To Meth*" reminded you of a bygone time in literature when metaphor held the key, might you be suggesting that I'm old? Well, no offense taken, because I am kinda, and old fashioned too, and an old soul. Thanks for asking if my piece played off Brautigan's '*Trout Fishing in America*'. It doesn't, but also thanks for adding more to my bill at my local independent bookstore! I'm thrilled by your comment that "*Trout Addicted to Meth*" blends poetry and prose. I realize that's not everyone's cup of tea and a biscuit in fiction, but I love to inject a pleasing rhythm here or there, or a beautiful phrase into an otherwise painful discussion.*

JC: This story has a deep connection between two trouts that make me want to be a better person. There is depth (accidental, shit, pun) and dimension. How do you like writing about love? Your story cares, it wants. You've taken a lovingly brutal relationship and given us this great vehicle of trout.

AJ: Great phrase BTW — "a lovingly brutal relationship." What could be more heartrending and discouraging than deeply loving someone with addiction? No matter how hard she tries, the

narrator in my story cannot ‘fix’ Eliot with love alone. I needed the trout metaphor, I think, to create some distance from the visceral pain. Writing a purely human love story seemed too exquisitely cruel to tackle (couldn’t resist the fishing term) without the trout image as a buffer to represent the narrator’s lover.

JC: *How do you feel about the combination of poetry and prose? “Even as a troutling he wasn’t cute —*

scanty cadaverous lips on a splayed mouth, and that angular forehead receding into his scrawny, freckled frame — not that looks matter.”

Your style punctuates and has great rhythm. I was curious of how you edit.

AJ: Poetry and prose? They belong to each other, conjoined, don’t you think? Editing is the best part of writing for me, a chance to rap my writerly knuckles for sounding too fancy — too lyrical for the subject matter, or using a complicated word when my character would choose something simple. It’s also a joyous opportunity to remove unnecessary words, something I learned (of all places) from my professor of Cell Biology, not English or Classics. Many people think of editing as removal, but it’s also a time for addition — to insert vivid word choices, the perfect adjective, or the detail that matters.

JC: *What is your line between metaphor and personal life? I find that line hard to navigate when creating meaning for an audience.*

AJ: My line between metaphor and personal life? Much thinner than one might think. I was destined to write a trout love story, I guess. For years my brother has made fun of me for fishing across the pond for a mate, dangling my bait in front of a Welshman in a London pub, and reeling in a great catch. But seriously, whether we realize it or not, I believe all human beings construct images, story, and metaphor to understand self and their place in the world. I try to write in multiple layers so the superficial story will be understood by anyone on a quick first read, and then through the use of language and symbolism to weave a deeper narrative that peels back upon further digestion.

JC: *I think about relationships and how they make rife fodder for writing and how we’re tied to expressing ourselves as effectively as we can to convey our feelings. Who is your favorite classical artist (no judgment, I do not know many), if you had to be in any movie who would you replace, and, if your home library burned down right now, which books (your laptop is conveniently broken) (how about 5?) would you save?*

AJ: Joey, your questions are hilarious! Favorite classical artist? No one in particular, but I’ve found the same principle applies to fine paintings, sculpture, and architecture as to Shakespeare. They’re all much better in person. A postcard is no substitute. Neither is Google. And movie role, are you kidding? Unless you can find a cameo for a plumpish woman on oxygen who loves to laugh?

My five MUST HAVE books:

No Great Mischief by Alistair MacLeod, the finest (not just finest Canadian) novel ever written!

Anne of Green Gables by L.M. Montgomery, Anne and Diana evoke such happy memories.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo by Stieg Larsson, because occasionally I crave suspense.

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Sorry, cheating, I know, but if worse comes to worst, it makes a great weapon)

The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde, because humor keeps us sane, or helps us enjoy the insanity. I'm not certain which.

Lovely work, Thanks for your time and candour.

Joey Cruise

Fiction Editor/FOTD