

SOUR GRAPES
--A Critical Review of Past and Present Literary Offerings

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Week of December 26, 2010
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Magazine Review of:
Hayden's Ferry Review, Issue # 47 – Fall/Winter 2010
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[HFR #47](#)

(2010)

Written by Various Authors.

Review by Paul Lambrecht.

Grade: A-

The two interviews are pretty good and interesting—with Adam Johnson and Benjamin Percy. Both of the profiled authors talk about the dance between writing literary and genre fiction.

The fiction selections are okay for the most part:

1. ***With Consideration and Care*** by M.X.Wang

A Chinese girl raised in America is orphaned and sent back to China where she is brought up by a ward who used to be close to her family. He decides he wants to marry his adopted daughter but she wants to return to America as another man's wife. Her life may be in the hands of the local party bureaucrat, though—the family-planning commissioner.

2. **[Losing One's Head](#)** by Natalia Cortes Chaffin

Entertaining story about a family in Cuba living under newly-minted dictator, Fidel Castro. Under top-down imposed poverty and Castro's rationing scheme, the headstrong protagonist wants a feast for the sake of her family's pride—but they are against butchering the family pet.

3. ***Auto-Pilot*** by Adam Johnson

Excerpt from an upcoming novel, this story follows an interrogator for the North Korean government who has a backlog of cases to work through--a series of "rogue citizens" he must put the screws to. Good thing he has a big bag of interesting and persuasive implements at his disposal.

4. [***Leap***](#) by Alan Stewart Carl

First in the list on a non-communist theme. Interesting story about a shy college freshman whose roommate ends up murdered and stuffed in a drainage pipe. He and another mourner are subsequently thrown together by default—and they work through their grief (and hormones) in a generally unhealthy way.

5. ***Snow*** by Tamar Jacobs

Somewhat interesting story of a citizen crusader surveying her gritty hood after a snow.

6. ***No One At All*** by Anthony Varallo

Kind of boring story about two young friends on a vacation to the beach with one of their families. The older boy is the alpha male, and the younger boy forges a deep temporary bond with a hermit crab.

7. ***East of West, West of Weir*** by Nick White

This story is terribly filthy. Even Jerry Springer couldn't scare up a homily about the white-trash dynamic on display in this story. The events described are far worse than what happened at Abu Ghraib. It's passably written, though, so it delivers a shock, and might fool a few people.