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Printer's Devil Review

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Editor's Note

There is a curious story about Aldus Manutius, the sixteenth century Venetian printer who invented the italic typeface style. Some say that he employed a black boy as an assistant, and that the people of Venice believed the child to be an insubstantial spirit, an imp of Satan. To dispel these rumors, Manutius made a public display of his apprentice and announced that “any one who doubted him to be flesh and blood might once come forward and pinch him.” The tale of Manutius’s apprentice is one of many origin stories for the term “printer’s devil.”

Another explanation concerns Johann Fust, a business partner of Johannes Gutenberg. Fust loaned Gutenberg the money he needed to complete his revolutionary printing press, but their partnership ended in 1455 when the inventor couldn’t repay the debt. Fust took Gutenberg to court, won the case, and was awarded the original press. Fust then went into business for himself, printing Bibles in Muntz and peddling them in Paris, where his mass-produced editions could be sold at a much cheaper price than those crafted by scribes. Familiar only with hand-copied manuscripts, some buyers saw something unnatural, even devilish, in the uniformity of these bargain-priced Bibles. Superstitious Parisians publicly accused Fust of employing black magic in the creation of his holy books.

Whatever its origin, by the seventeenth century, the term “printer’s devil” had come to refer to an errand boy or apprentice in a print shop. Joseph Moxon, in his encyclopedic account of English trades and handicrafts, explains the term this way: “The Press-man sometimes has a Week-Boy to Take Sheets, as they are Printed off the Tympan: These Boys do in a Printing-House, commonly black and Dawb themselves: Whence the Workmen do jocosely call them Devils; and sometimes Spirits, and sometimes Flies.”

The term was still in use in nineteenth century America to describe ink-stained apprentices. In fact, two of the founding fathers of our national literature started out as devils. At twelve years old, Walt Whitman stood over a type case in the office of the Long Island newspaper, the *Patriot* and, under the direction of a master printer, pressed words in line with a composing stick. Long before Samuel Clemens piloted a riverboat or took up the pen name Mark Twain, he worked as a printer’s devil for the *Hannibal Courier*.

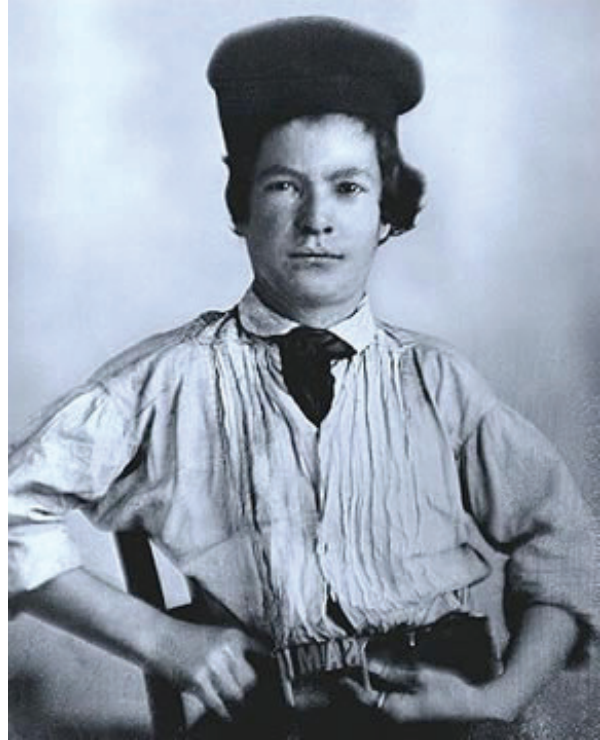
The editors took the name *Printer's Devil Review* for this journal as a way to acknowledge our status as apprentice printers. We are not publishing industry professionals, but rather practicing writers and artists who volunteer our time to bring work we admire to a wider audience. Because we've never published a journal before, we accept that we're bound to botch pages, spill ink everywhere, and occasionally step on some toes.

At the same time, we want to indicate our desire to encourage writers and artists who are, like us, in the journeyman stage of their creative careers. The magazine exists specifically to provide new and emerging writers and artists with access to publication.

We are also inspired by the examples of the young Whitman and the future Mark Twain—both by their literary potential and their entrepreneurial vitality—to imagine a future of creative achievement for ourselves and our contributors as well as a literary and artistic community capable of sustaining us as we work to master our respective crafts.

Obviously, a project like this depends on the labor and goodwill of many different people. I would like to thank my editors for devoting their time, effort, and aesthetic judgement to this endeavour. I am also very grateful to the contributors to this issue, our first, for entrusting us with their work.

I would also like to thank Timothy Gager for his help recruiting content and for his frank advice, Sue Kriegsman for providing us with a place to meet, and Alana Kumbier for her early contributions to the project. Thanks also to Zachary Evans and Annabel Gill of the *Inman Review*; Sue Miller, editor of *Greatest Uncommon Denominator*; and Caroline Zimmerman of Kneerim & Williams for sharing their experience with us.



Portrait of Samuel Clemens as a youth holding a printer's composing stick with letters SAM. Courtesy of the Mark Twain Project, The Bancroft Library, University of Calif., Berkeley.

Thomas Dodson



Contributors

LAURA CHERRY is the author of the full-length collection of poetry, *Haunts*, published by Cooper Dillon Books in September 2010. Her chapbook, *What We Planted*, was awarded the 2002 Philbrick Poetry Award by the Providence Athenaeum. She is the co-editor of the anthology *Poem, Revised* (Marion Street Press). Her work has been published in numerous journals, including *Forklift: Ohio*, *H_NGM_N*, *The Vocabula Review*, *Newport Review*, *LA Review*, and *Naugatuck River Review*; it has also appeared in the anthologies *Present Tense* (Calyx Press) and *Vocabula Bound* (Vocabula Books). She received her M.F.A. from Warren Wilson College.

KENDRA DECOLO is an M.F.A. candidate at Vanderbilt University where she is head poetry editor of *Nashville Review* and teaches creative writing at the Tennessee Prison for Women. Kendra was recently awarded third prize in Split the Rock's Fourth Annual Poetry Contest, selected by Jan Beatty.

SEAN FLOOD is a Boston-based painter. His work focuses heavily on architecture and urban subject. He tries to capture the energy and essence of street scenes through his markmaking and brushwork. You can see more examples of Sean's work on his website, WWW.SEANFLOODART.COM.

SUZANNE FRISCHKORN is the author of *Girl on a Bridge* (2010) and *Lit Windowpane* (2008), both from Main Street Rag Publishing. In addition she is the author of five chapbooks, most recently *American Flamingo* (2008). Her poems have recently appeared or are forthcoming in *Barn Owl Review*, *Copper Nickel*, *MiPo*, *North American Review* and *PALABRA*. She serves as an Assistant Poetry Editor for *Anti-*.

CHRISTINE GENTRY joins BBQ on the short list of good things to come out of Texas. She lives in Harlem with her Greek Tortoise daughter, Delphi. In what little spare time she has, Christine likes to write very short stories, two of which have been published in *Word Riot* and *Flashquake* magazines.

CHRIS HALL received a B.A. in English from The University of Massachusetts, Amherst. There, he studied poetry with Martín Espada. He currently lives outside of Boston.

Photographer JARROD MCCABE hails from Massachusetts and is most widely known for his portraiture and landscape photographs. In addition to his photographic work he is currently sending fake postcards. To receive a fake postcard, email your name and address to Mr. McCabe (JR@JARRODMCCABE.COM) with the following subject heading: "I Love Fake Postcards."

MARY BETH O'CONNOR is a poet and fiction writer who lives in central New York and teaches at Ithaca College. Her award-winning chapbook *Smackdown: Poems about the Professor Business* was released in a new edition last year by *The Teacher's Voice*. Her work has been published in *Cafe Irreal*, *Prick of the Spindle*, *Mad Hatters' Review*, *the Comstock Review* and other publications.

NORAH PIEHL is a freelance writer, editor, and book reviewer. Her essays and reviews have been published in *Skirt!* and *Brain, Child* magazines, on National Public Radio, and in print anthologies. Norah's short fiction has appeared in *Shaking Like a Mountain*, *Literary Mama*, *The Linnet's Wings*, *The Legendary*, and in the anthology *Battle Runes: Writings on War*.

KATE RACCULIA is a writer and researcher, living the sweet life in Somerville, Mass. and working on her second novel. Her first, *This Must Be the Place*, was published by Henry Holt & Company in summer 2010.

CAT ENNIS SEARS recently graduated from Emerson College with an M.F.A in fiction writing, where she taught freshman composition and research writing. Her work has appeared in *The Chicago Quarterly Review*, *Bateau*, and is forthcoming in *Corium Magazine*. She received honorable mention in a *Glimmer Train* short fiction contest and was nominated for the 2011 AWP Intro Journal Awards. She is at work on a collection of historical short stories.

FRANZ WRIGHT is the author of several books of poetry. His recent works include *God's Silence*, *Walking to Martha's Vineyard* (winner of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for poetry), *The Beforelife* (also a finalist for the Prize), and *Ill Lit: Selected & New Poems*. His latest full-length collection, *Wheeling Motel*, will soon be released as a Knopf paperback. Mr. Wright recently published two chapbooks: *Entries of the Cell*, a single long poem soon to be collected in *F* (forthcoming 2013 from Knopf), and *7Prose*, a set of prose poems in homage to his wife, the translator and writer Elizabeth Oehlkers Wright. Other poems in that series, in prose and verse, will be collected this fall in *Kindertotenwald*.