

Submitting to Lit Mags

(without going crazy)

2021 — 72 submissions with 40 poems randomly slapped together in disjointed documents, roughly \$500 spent (way more if I count contests), and \$100 made.

Ouch.

2022 — The Year of Mass Submitting Like a Madwoman.

362 submissions with around 70 poems still mostly randomly slapped together, but the documents were formatted properly this time. I spent less, though, because, by this time, I'd figured out I needed to be selective about paid submissions. Still, I spent around \$150 on submissions (and I submitted to 3 contests, so that's around \$75). And guess what, 14 acceptances! And I made around \$400.

But...living deadline to deadline...

**no clear strategy...no target...what
do I do!!!**

Tick tick boom...

Let's get Submittable...

What are you submitting?

Get your ~~shit~~ **bundle** together

GENRE & STYLE

- 3 Popular Lit Mag Genres: Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry
- Subgenres: Endless! Examples include: literary, science fiction, fantasy, magic realism, mystery, children's lit, young adult, dark, historical, classical, etc. For Poetry, this can include things like formal poetry, prose poetry, free- or blank verse, spoken word, etc.
- What literary magazines publish: 83% poetry, 81% fiction, 69% nonfiction, 50% flash fiction, 32% flash nonfiction* (Stats Credit: Chill Subs)
- Most mags will ask for 1 piece of prose or a packet of 3-5 poems. Still, it's important to check individual submission guidelines

Why are you submitting?

Community

Lit mags created by a small passionate group focused on celebrating fellow writers.

SOME EXAMPLES:

Barrelhouse, HAD, Apex, december mag,
Stanchion, Points in Case, DIAGRAM,

Validation

Lit mags both new and established, somewhat competitive but far more accessible than “prestige” mags.

SOME EXAMPLES:

The Good Life Review, Maudlin, Little Engines, Northwest Review, Astrolabe, Hunger Mountain

Prestige

Lit mags that are prestigious, popular, and very competitive

SOME EXAMPLES:

The Sun, VQR, Joyland, Ploughshares, AGNI, Georgia Review,
McSweeney's, American Poetry Review

Readers

Lit mags that are popular not just for intellectual/rich readers, but “on the ground”
(e.g. social media, subscriptions, etc.)

SOME EXAMPLES:

**ONLY POEMS, Small Faces Collection, Taco Bell
Quarterly, The Yale Review, POETRY**

Career

Lit Mags that agents read

SOME EXAMPLES:

A Public Space, Ecotone, Baffler, n+1, Zoetrope, The
Commuter, Iowa Review, Barrow Street Journal,
Shenandoah, Conjunctions, Clarkesworld

Money

NO.

How to Find Lit Mags

Google

- Not the best option
- Will return you random or out of date results usually

Social Media

- Best for “Community” or “Readers” focused goal of submitting

Submittable

- The “Discover” tab is usually riddled with unvetted lit mags that have astronomical fees

Newsletters

- The Sub Club Newsletter
- Authors Publish
- “Publishing...and Other Forms of Insanity”
- Round-ups in newsletters of other lit mags

Databases

- most accurate way
- Chill Subs Database
- Duotrope

Acknowledgements Page

- Go to your favorite writers' short story, essay or poetry collections
- See the Acknowledgements page
- Take note of all the lit mags that published each piece

How to Submit

Guidelines

Ideally, these should be updated on a lit mag website's submit page and on their submission portal. This is not always the case. If you're unclear, then email them or just go with a standard submission format. Otherwise, always follow the given guidelines. This will increase your chances for being read and considered.

Reading Periods/ Submission Calls

Sign up for lit mag newsletters or follow the mags you want to publish in on Social Media. Track submission calls and have a day to submit. Do so with friends to make it more fun (and then, when you get rejections, you can cry-laugh together).

Watch Out For...!!

- Fees,
- Eligibility Requirements (eg. Location, Age, Gender, etc)
- Theme restrictions
- Payment details (currency, per piece vs flat rate)
- Simultaneous Submissions (or lack thereof)
- No masthead on their website (always always a personal red-flag)
- Website not updated in 6+ months
- Low-quality website
- No clear reading periods

The Perfect Cover Letter

Dear [Editor Name]...

**Thank you for reading
[WORK TITLE].**

A personal line (if you want) eg. I loved [WORK/WRITER NAME] you published last week because of...

**I hope you enjoy these
[X NUMBER OF POEMS].**

**Sincerely, [NAME]
[ADDRESS]
[CONTACT INFO]**

**BELOW IS A
BRIEF BIO:**

BIO

(for all stages of your writing career)

50-150 Words

Some (very few) will ask for an extended bio of up to 500 words.

Third Person

Established Writer

Highlight your biggest publication credentials. Generally limit 3-5 lit mags, 2-4 awards, books you've published or anthologies you've published in or edited.

Emerging Writer

Highlight the publications you're most proud of. Talk about what you do outside of writing. (E.g. When he's not writing, Karan teaches Composition, plays table tennis, and reads with his daughter).

Karan Kapoor is an MFA candidate at Virginia Tech. A finalist for the Felix Pollak and Charles B. Wheeler Book Prize; Diode, Tusculum Review and Iron Horse Literary Review chapbook prizes, their poems have appeared in *AGNI*, *Shenandoah*, *Colorado Review*, *Cincinnati Review*, *North American Review*, and elsewhere, fiction in *JOYLAND* and *the other side of hope*, and translations in *The Offing* and *The Los Angeles Review*. They're the Editor-in-Chief of *ONLY POEMS*.

New Writer

If you have no publications, talk about other cool things you do/have done even if they have nothing to do with writing.
(These are usually the most interesting to read anyway!)

Afterwards

Response Time

Can vary greatly but usually anywhere from 6 weeks to 6 months.
Some lit mags take well over a year to response. (For this reason, submit simultaneously and...

TRACK

Submission Tracker Sheet Share

Rejection

Keep calm and carry on...submitting

Repeat

Write a lot, read even more, research a bit & keep hitting submit

Self-Questionnaire

“I want to publish a lot.”

 YES

 NO

 NOT MY FOCUS

**“I want to make money
from my writing.”**

 YES

 NO

 NOT MY FOCUS

“I want to gain a bigger audience for my work.”

 YES

 NO

 NOT MY FOCUS

“I want to write and submit more.”

 YES

 NO

 NOT MY FOCUS

“I want to be present in more writing community spaces.”

 YES

 NO

 NOT MY FOCUS

**“I want to take more workshops
and editorial feedbacks to
improve my writing.”**

 YES

 NO

 NOT MY FOCUS

“I want to develop more writing connections.”

 YES

 NO

 NOT MY FOCUS

Count your hearts.

♥ represents a more “PROFESSIONAL” focused attitude (of wanting to submit, publish, make money, etc.)

♡ represents a more “EXPERIMENTAL” focused attitude. This is someone who is still searching for the direction they want their writing and publishing journey to take.

💙 represents a more “HOBBY” focused attitude. Someone who wants to write more and be a part of the literary community in some way.

Curate your lit mag list.

Once you get a better idea of what kind of a submitter you are, you can curate your personal lit mag “hit submit” list.

**Questions, Thoughts,
Concerns, Objections...**