

## One Story Is Eight Years a Debutante

By

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Admirers of *One Story* magazine came out in bespectacled droves for the *One Story* Literary Debutante Ball: A Celebration of Emerging Writers, held this past Friday at the Old American Factory in Gowanus, Brooklyn. The event celebrated emerging and established literary voices alike—the centerpiece was the presentation of writers whose fiction was first published in *One Story*—but also eight years of publication of the tiny (it measures in at five inches wide by seven inches tall) but influential magazine.

*One Story*, delivered once every three weeks to nearly 10,000 subscribers, has a one story per issue format that enables its authors, first-time and well-known alike, to enjoy a position of equal prominence. Unlike most publications, *One Story* (really!) allows literary hopefuls to “go from the slush pile to having an agent,” says contributing editor Elliot Holt. “My life changed after my story was published in *One Story*,” mused Mohan Sikka, the author whose “Uncle Musto Takes a Mistress” went on to win a PEN/O. Henry Prize in 2009.

While Friday’s cotillion bears the same name as the coming-out parties that welcome Manhattan’s elite young women into society, similarities end there: the venue was not the Waldorf Astoria but a low-lit, sweltering-hot warehouse space. Revelers donned their finest 80s-prom attire, and wine and Brooklyn-brewed beers were swilled from plastic cups as the night’s honorees entered through a giant garage door. In addition to the introduction of the debutantes into the high-literary world by such heavy-hitting escorts as Pulitzer Prize-winning Michael Cunningham, screenwriter Tamara Jenkins, and author Jonathan Lethem, the ceremonies, hosted by comedian John Hodgman (pictured above), included a dramatic interpretation of the story “Bar Joke, Arizona” by Sam Allingham, as well as a showcase of artwork inspired by *One Story*’s fiction. According to a thank-you speech by publisher Maribeth Batcha, its featured prose persistently “makes us think, cry, laugh, or wonder” and leaves its readers “knowing a little bit more about the world than we went in.” If that doesn’t convince you to pick up a copy, then pay heed to this endorsement by Reif Larsen, author of *The Selected Works of T.S. Spivet*: “These little things, they’re perfect for the bathroom.”

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