

# CamdenNewJournal

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## REVIEWTHEATRE

# Review: A Time For Departure, at Pentameters Theatre

01 December, 2017 — By [Jack Courtney O'Connor](#)

### ***Bethany Blake and William Keetch in A Time For Departure at Pentameters***

THE US-born writer Tennessee Williams used the short form of playwriting as a laboratory for ideas to expand into longer pieces. His masterwork *The Glass Menagerie* (1945) was interpreted by critics as an expansion of an earlier piece, one of three presented here. *Summer at the Lake* (1937) is a snapshot of the characters and themes of *Menagerie* with its demanding mother and poetic son (who was loosely based on the author) who dreams of faraway places.

The subservient helper in this play became the disturbed sister, Laura.

Next up, *The Case of the Crushed Petunias* was described by Williams as a lyrical fantasy. In the playlet, a nameless young stranger (Alexander Hulme) who, as the Irish say, has “a touch of the poet”, liberates Dorothy Simple (Emily Slaughter) who has barricaded her Simple Notions shop with a double row of petunias. This play is based in a town called Primanproper, Massachusetts.

*In Our Profession* is set in a bachelor's flat in the late 1950s. Annabella (nicely played Bethany Blake) is an actress hacked-off by the neverending touring circuit so nails the first available bachelor and proposes marriage. It's a comedy with elements of farce.

The constant theme running through the three shorts is escape. In Williams' later work *Menagerie*, Tom, the main protagonist, escapes from the hungry 30s and his demanding mother and joins the Merchant Navy – Tom's father was a long-distance lorry driver who fell in love with long distance.

The three pieces here, expertly directed by Seamus Newham, work well together, with outstanding performances from Hulme as the poetic stranger and Sarah Dorsett as the mother figure.

**UNTIL DECEMBER 17**

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