

## **101 Fiction**

*Issue 14*

March 2016

Welcome to issue 14, and twelve tiny tales of gods. Mighty gods and mortal gods; bright gods and awful gods; creators, destroyers and tricksters; wanderers and wonderers.

Gods have always been a part of human life, treading a balance of fear, awe and wonder. Of the beyond and the familiar. They have been saddled with responsibility and blame, granted power, worship and gifts. For every humble worshipper there are two more spitting curses at the uncaring forces above. Gods are powerful dichotomies, paradoxes even, and therein do stories thrive.

Our stories begin in creation and end with, well, an ending. We set foot in ancient ages and modern times (and venture a little further forward, to the future). There are gods grounded in the very world around us; gods walking among us; myths that a hundred words can barely contain; gods both re-imagined and metaphorical.

This is the first issue in our fourth year as a more compact quarterly zine. Each year contains a cycle of themes... so gods are only the beginning.

Read.

Absorb.

Enjoy.

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## **Creator**

*by John Xero*

The stars were grit between his fingers, grainy, slipping through like sand in a cosmic hourglass. He pressed his hands together, creation and destruction flaring hot and heavy in his palms, and sent another galaxy spinning into the vastness.

If he concentrated, really concentrated, he could focus on details. The nuclear fury of suns; the icy hearts of comets; planets, moons, and sometimes, *sometimes*, a flickering glimpse of something more.

Some miraculous alchemy of chance and matter.

Something like him, in miniature, but nothing like him at all. Chaotic creations of an ordered system.

Life.

Strange company, out of reach.

*Author bio: John Xero knows that creation is the most powerful force in the universe, whether that be physical, imaginary, or biological. He knows that he needs to do more creating too, there's stories inside him that want out.*

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## **Loihi**

*by Voima Oy*

Once there were gods on the mountains, living above the tree line in the cold air where nothing else survives. I have seen their palaces in the ice. The light so bright it blinded me.

In the sky is set a frozen palace, the moon, where they say a goddess lives. Each night, we watch her changing face.

I know a goddess who lives in volcanoes. Her heart beats beneath the waves. She is Loihi!

I will find her in the new land, where the lava meets the sea. Hear my prayer! Loihi, my love, I sing only to you.

*Author bio: Voima Oy lives on the western rim of Chicago, near the expressway and the Blue Line trains. Her writing can be found online at Paragraph Planet, Visual Verse, 101 Fiction, Sick Lit and Unbroken Journal. Follow her on Twitter, too— @voimaoy*

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## **Vacation**

*by Suzanne Verrall*

A seaside vacation: dreaming, drifting, bronzing. Late mornings, later nights.

Day one: blue water.

Day two: bluer skies.

On day three you tell me about the diving pontoon you have seen in the bay. *Sounds fun, I say, come on then.*

The sandbar stretches on forever, makes swimming impossible, makes the water thigh-deep and difficult. I tire quickly. You forge ahead.

When you are far enough I step up and walk upon the waves, following you. So much easier than wading. And as you glance back, I drop down into the water before you see me as I truly am.

*Author bio: Suzanne Verrall lives in Adelaide, South Australia. Her flash fiction, essays and poetry appear in Flash Frontier, Flash Fiction Magazine, Archer Magazine, Lip Magazine, Poetry NZ Yearbook and The Journal of Compressed Creative Arts.*

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## **Visitation**

*by Neil James*

He'd traversed vast nebulae to reach the planet of blue and green – the final outpost of his faith. His flock needed him; they were destroying themselves through hate and fear. He landed in a flashing cloud of gold, naked as a lamb but for his flowing white beard.

Walking from the desert into the city, he touched every person he met, till two Adams in blue bundled him into a wheeled chariot, his wrists tightly clamped. He repeatedly told them his name, but it only made things worse. Now an Eve in white stood before him, quoting Mental Health legislation.

*Author bio: Neil James is a football writer who occasionally pens short stories. He keeps starting novels but lacks the attention span to ever finish one. Twitter: @neil\_james1*

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## **Muse**

*by Kent V. Anderson*

I'm a robot.

I often wonder if there might be a robot god, as well as a robot heaven.

And if so, what does robot god do during his off hours?

Does he attend movies in robot heaven?

And when he's at the movies, if a tall robot sits in front of him,  
will robot god tell him to move?

And what about, if robot god has to leave his seat to do something during the movie?

When he comes back to his seat,  
will they play back the part of the movie that he missed when he was out?

*Author bio: Kent V. Anderson writes a variety of short stories, many of them rather whimsical. Kent lives west of Chicago with no cats or dogs, although several have expressed interest.*

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## **Crossover**

*by Jack Holt*

The doctor is shifting in his seat. "Continue."

"I'm something else when I'm there," Claire is saying. "I'm becoming more powerful every day."

"How often do you visit this... shadow realm?"

Claire is studying him. "Whenever I close my eyes."

The doctor is making notes. "Of course."

Clare closes her eyes. Darkness swells in the corners of the room.

"I should close them more often."

The floor is shaking.

The doctor looks up. He cannot see Claire. He drops his notes. He is standing now. The black is closing in.

A voice is booming. "Soon everyone will close their eyes."

*Author bio: Sometimes Jack writes things. You can read some of them at <https://jackkholt.wordpress.com/>*

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## **Potion**

*by Tom O'Brien*

'I would have your finest potion, m'lady. Black as Stygian depths, hot as Hades flame, strong as the Minotaur. Mark ye well though; let not the flame lick to the burn. Rather caress the liquid to ripe aroma, such to convince this God his divinity has returned, however fleetingly, on the first sip. Only you, sorceresses, safe in your enchantments, know I will be drawn back to your siren call. To throw myself, Sisyphean, on your merciless allure.'

'Tall, Grande or Venti?'

'Oh, umm; I'll have a Grande, please.'

'Two Ninety Nine, sir. Sugar behind you. Have a nice day.'

*Author bio: Tom O'Brien is an Irishman living in London. He's been longlisted, shortlisted and placed in numerous competitions and publications around the web. He has a short story appearing in a forthcoming anthology published by Blood & Bourbon.*

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## **Misled**

*by Kecia Sparlin*

Sensual bottles filled with liquid gold stood in rows against a mirrored wall. Alone at the bar, Oscar watched himself sipping Scotch on the rocks. Blues crackled from a tin speaker. Conversation murmured at the tables. Illicit smoke stung his eyes, excusing the tear.

Goddess of Love, she had claimed. Oscar snorted. "Got that part right," he muttered into his drink, then sucked dregs of whiskey from the ice. With a tremor, he tilted the glass toward the bartender. "Hit me again."

The elixir she sold him had done the trick, made Wanda fall in love. Just not with him.

*Author bio: Kecia Sparlin writes and writes. Many of her stories can be found free at her website, Muninn's Memories, <https://muninnmemory.com/>*

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## **Seeds**

*by Vidisha Phalke*

Be careful of the quiet, the demure, the seemingly naïve; the girl with pretty smiles and empty laughter, with rebellion reflecting in her hidden frowns, with true intentions locked away in gentle angles. The immortals may be thought dead, but she hides behind the ribcage.

Pomegranate perfume steals the air from the room. Cloying. A hungry queen squeezes the heart, nurtures the greed. The girl dips ink like eating forbidden fruit, signs her name like a curse, hides behind the façade of innocence and lets the others label her new husband a blackmailer.

The Queen of the Dead still lives.

*Author bio: Vidisha Phalke is a full-time writer and part-time high school student. She hopes to help create a more magical world.*

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## **Anvil**

by *LindaAnn Lo Schiavo*

The first time he saw Venus, Vulcan loved. Without her as his wife, the god of fire knew his smithy's flames could never be this intense. Even so, her busy womb is the tomb of marital harmony. Each time he catches Venus nude, another lover riding anvil'd hips, lame Vulcan feels fenced in by fate.

The goddess who is love, loved him perhaps no better than all else.

Their partnership seems doomed until she comes bearing news, bearing their son – winged Cupid.

He'll create lead-tipped arrows, equipping hands too young to have a conscience. Undetected, forger Vulcan tools his revenge.

*Author bio: Native New Yorker LindaAnn Lo Schiavo is completing her 2nd documentary film on Texas Guinan [1884-1933] and dodging gun-molls in Shubert Alley and in decommissioned speakeasies. To revive her spirits, she puts pen to paper.*

*Recent credits are Peacock Journal, Measure, Nous, and Metamorphose Magazine, who published her short story on the Greek deity of wisdom – "Adventures with the Goddess Pallas Athena."*

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## **Retribution**

*by Lausdeus Otito Chiegboka*

The spirits held a trial, the spirits of our fathers which the priest invokes in consecration, which Anakwudo, chief priest, invokes during incantation. They cursed you to die an ominous death. I do not know why those gods spared me. These things never happen without the knowledge of *Chukwu Ukpabi*, God of our ancestors, that gave life to our deities, and gave life to Adam to bring forth all of us, descendants.

I mourn that night we explored our fantasies under the *Ukwa* – Breadfruit – tree, hidden from the moonlight. That night a ripe *Ukwa* fruit fell, and split your head.

*Author bio: Lausdeus Otito Chiegboka is a medical doctor from Nigeria with keen interest in literature. He was born in Nsukka, Nigeria and practises in Warri, Nigeria. He writes poems and prose, and also enjoys dancing and singing. He made the 2016 shortlist of the Commonwealth Short Story Prize for the short story, "Exorcism".*

*My twitter handle is @chieslaus.*

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## **Deicide**

*by John Xero*

“What’s it called when you kill a god?”

“Deicide.” Carter frowned. “Unless you mean, like, tearing the god and associated belief structure slash doctrine apart in the minds of his followers, in which case you want iconoclasm. I think.”

“First one.”

“Why?” Carter looked over at his partner, looking down at the man they had just killed. Nothing unusual in that. It was kind of their thing.

Blood pooled across the cracked paving. Blood that was dark and deep. Deeper than it ought to be. Blood with bright specks glittering in the deep dark, like stars.

“Deicide, you say?”

“Yeah.”

*Author bio: Killing gods is a dangerous undertaking. This is not the first god John Xero has killed and he worries who may take notice if he starts making a habit of it...*

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Thanks for reading.

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