

## **101 Fiction**

*Issue 1*

*September 2013*

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the new format 101 Fiction. Eight drabbles, eight hundred words, eight tales rising from the flames of creation. All inspired by one or both of the issue's two themes: phoenix and Autumn.

We launch with *Ship*, a poignant slice of science fiction from James E. Anderson. Then Robin Wyatt Dunn delivers a magnificently shifted vision of a future not so far removed from our own. R.S. Bohn gives one girl cause to curse the bird, before we follow Lela Marie De La Garza on a wondrous *Journey*, leading to a synesthetic *Implosion* from Kymm Coveney. We have a pair of *Phoenix*, from Stella Turner and Russell Bernstein, two terrible tests of a man's mettle. Finally, as in everything, we must flee the inexorable turn of *Seasons*.

Welcome to issue one.

Read. Absorb. Enjoy.

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## **Ship**

*by James E. Anderson*

"Ship, tell me a story," the traveller commanded.

"Long or short, sir?" asked a disembodied contralto.

"Short. I grow sleepy."

"Happy? Sad?"

"Happy. I desire a pleasant hibernation."

"Very well. There once was a gentle woman who loved a man from Autumn World."

"I hail from Autumn World!"

"Indeed, he had your dark looks and cruel smile."

"Cruel smile? Ship, are you joking?"

"Alas, he abandoned her to marry another."

"Stop! I ordered a happy story."

"In her despair, she joined the Phoenix Corps, and was reborn a starship."

"A starship? *Which* starship?"

The air chilled.

"Happy dreams, my love."

*Author bio: James E. Anderson teaches at a public university in the Great Lakes region, writes short fiction (very short, mostly), and blogs at [jimthewriter.net](http://jimthewriter.net).*

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## **Reopening**

*by Robin Wyatt Dunn*

The politicians daren't touch the shovels now, nor the scissors. The ceremonial toss of earth and snip of ribbon is a risky endeavour now, with the snipers.

All sorts of armed people, old and young, informal and well educated, they induct a ceremony of their own: democracy. Over the internet and at gunpoint, talking over tea, on the telephone, the street.

We build things now, on our own. Some of us wear ties. We wear the ribbons in our hair, and the earth upon our cheeks.

We're rebuilding our cities, guns on hips.

You're one of us, did you know?

*Author bio: Robin Wyatt Dunn lives in southern California and is the author of three novels. A member of the Horror Writers Association, he is proud to have been born in the Carter Administration. You can find him at [www.robindunn.com](http://www.robindunn.com).*

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## **Chicken**

*by R.S. Bohn*

In '46, my great-grandmother poured herself some tea. Out the spout came a phoenix, damp and bedraggled, like a kaleidoscope of coloured paper. That evening, great-grandpa changed the dial on the Silvertone and dropped to the floor. The entire block was out a week.

In '91, my mom married. Her salesman husband lasted a week before showing a Dart with an ignition problem to a prospective buyer.

A day after my first kiss, my science-geek boyfriend made a mistake in chemistry. They say the phoenix is lucky, but I wouldn't care if I saw another one for a thousand years.

*Author bio: RS lives in Detroit, where they aim for a zombie theme park. She thinks one already exists in her head. Admission is free: <http://rsbohn.blogspot.com>*

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## **Journey**

*by Lela Marie De La Garza*

The phoenix hatched out in late Autumn of a year folding gently into winter. The skies were dreary and dark; the air was turning cold. The phoenix decided to leave in search of better weather. It found skies of turquoise stippled with ivory and pearl mists of cloud. It flew over oceans that dazzled like diamonds and sapphires; into jungles of silver and jade leaves. Suddenly it felt the inward call of home, for the earth had shifted and the sun's rays tilted. The phoenix went back to its birthplace, bringing with it the emerald and gold bounty of spring.

*Author bio: Lela Marie De La Garza has had work published in "Behind Closed Doors", "Pound of Flash", "ChickLit", "Daily Romance", and "Creepy Gnome". She was born in Denver, CO. in 1943 while her father was serving in WWII. She currently resides in San Antonio, TX. with two cats, a kitten, and a visiting raccoon.*

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## **Implosion**

*by Kymm Coveney*

Her gall was the deep, almost purple spread of spilt wine as it leeches into the tablecloth's crisp, white fibres. She gathered her russet, seething fury into piles; raked in the fallen eidolon, tawny skeletal debris crackling upon release.

Sparks leapt from her long fingernails as they struck – rat-a-tat-tat – the marble upon which she meant to lie. The meagre flares from her ire would not do. She removed the shawl of tightly-woven violet threads, placed his smile next to the way he tied his shoelaces. She spoke his name; with the sigh that had ruffled his beard, fanned the flames.

*Author bio: Ex-pat from Boston living in Barcelona, raising polyglot kids and fooling with written languages.*

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*<http://kymminbarcelona.tumblr.com/>*

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## **Phoenix**

*by Stella Turner*

Drool hung like thick curtains from its cavernous stinking mouth. The putrid aroma, reminding me of decomposing corpses, filled the room. Had it eaten someone already, my wife? I wanted to call out her name but its beady little eyes kept me spellbound. What should I do, distract it or let it climb the stairs? My baby son asleep in his crib.

Without a backward glance I crept from the house. I knew I should have called someone but who would believe me? Rising from the ashes of my burnt out home I went in search of a new family.

*Author bio: My name is Stella Turner and I'm known as stellakateT on twitter. I have had three of my flash fictions published in three anthologies and long-listed in the Fish competition for the last two years. I adore flash fiction because I love the brevity of it. My blog can be found at <http://stellalikesspidersandothermyths.blogspot.com/>*

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## **Phoenix**

*by Russell Bernstein*

Autumn is the season of death. The Phoenix rises and falls with Autumn, and with it once great empires topple like decayed leaves in the wind.

Bryan was just a peasant, but today he vowed to end this vicious cycle. Here he stood, staring into the very face of death. The Phoenix's eyes were red with anger, the slightest hint of surprise evident in its expression for no one had ever dared to face it.

"I will destroy you!" Bryan screamed.

"What's that, Honey?" His mother called.

"Nothing, Mom!"

The wind carried strange voices. Distractions. He lunged at the Phoenix.

*Author bio: Russell Bernstein is a twenty-eight-year-old aspiring writer. The web series he wrote is currently in production. His Middle Grade Fantasy novel is currently under review by multiple literary agents.*

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## Seasons

by John Xero

Samuel flees through the blushing forest.

He runs for verdant green, the sweet breath of fresh life; he can see it, but the rich ruddy reds are faster, passing.

Behind him he hears the crackle of dry leaves falling from trees, and behind that, a lonely frost-ridden wind blowing through bare branches.

He struggles with each further step, feels his flesh failing too, wrinkles spreading with every shortened breath. The hairs on his arms rise in anticipation of the coming cold, whitening in sympathy with the world as soft flakes sift down from a greying sky.

And winter takes him.

*Author bio: John Xero knows you shouldn't struggle against the turning of the seasons, but instead enjoy each one in turn. He doesn't tweet as much as he used to (@xeroverse), and blogs even less (xeroverse.com).*

*He is the editor of 101 Fiction.*

*He once published a collection of short and flash fiction: This is the New Plan.*

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Thanks for reading.

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