

## 101 Fiction

Issue 2

December 2013

Welcome to issue two. First, a big thank you for all of the interest and support. We had a great round of submissions and more than enough quality drabbles to fill the fifteen slots I decided on for a nice full issue. It was hard to say no to some, but the end result is fifteen fantastic tiny tales. Fifteen hundred well-chosen words inspired by one or both of our two themes: *winter* and *undead*.

Cynthia Fucci brings 101 Fiction back to life with *Reanimation*, and then we're off for a blissful ride on Kymm Coveney's *Triumph*. We'll dim the lights for R.S. Bohn's *Stages* before we hear from KM Zafari's reminiscing *Vampir*. SJI Holliday thaws us out a little, but you may wish she hadn't, because Caroline von Schmalensee's *Jack* comes a-knocking next.

Adam Bunnell chills us with *Frigid*. We have some *Family* values and a little black humour from Alex Valente, while a daughter shares a *Frozen* memory with Wednesday Silverwood, and a mother misses her *Hijo* in R.S. Bohn's poignant story.

Something terrifying is *Rising* in Carol Stone's tale, but Scott Dingley's *Scapegoat* has risen already and stalks the land. Rhonda Eikamp's king flees to the *Frozen* north, and angels descend in John Xero's *Mercy*. Finally, Roisin o'Hare brings us full circle, with *Cycle*.

Read. Absorb. Enjoy.

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## **Reanimation**

*by Cynthi Fucci*

This is a weary state of being. To my husband's great joy, I have been revived four times since dying last spring. I cannot express the torment of my soul being wrenched from peace to give rise to this rotted mass of flesh. I've considered tearing his great machine to pieces while he sleeps but there is no longer need.

With the winter came his dismay, and his cough. His invention will fail without that divine spark he'd harness from the summer storms.

Death beckons us both now. Together, we shall slumber, sorrow buried beneath a stark shroud of snow.

*Author bio: Cynthia Fucci is a used-book peddler living in Montana. When she's not reading the books she should be selling, she's writing anything that strikes her fancy.*

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## **Triumph**

*by Kymm Coveney*

Silence so deep each nuance of sound from the downshifted engine is muffled, snowbound. The boy straddles white sky under a dream of clouds and eternity, suspended in the chill air. The headlamp casts a pale yellow shadow on the road made pristine trail. Alone in the universe, the boy, the girl and the motorcycle travel in a slow, gentle glissade down the mountain, through a tunnel of dark evergreens. When they emerge, the world is light. As if a shroud has been drawn across the winter, they leave the drifts behind them. The boy accelerates into the opening land.

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

*[www.betterlies.blogspot.com](http://www.betterlies.blogspot.com)*

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

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## **Stages**

*by R.S. Bohn*

He dribbles a Moravian red on the boards, an old gesture for luck, he tells her.

Tonight they open, she and her benefactor, a man whose name she can never remember. He has yellow teeth and dyed black hair. Her play is about young lovers, tragedy, and rivers that flow the wrong way. She wrote it, and now she stands on stage, imagining the house in a few hours, if the seats are filled.

"Don't worry, they will be," he whispers.

His kiss on her neck is dry, unexpected, and he's gone.

And so is the wine on the boards.

*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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## **Vampir**

by KM Zafari

There hadn't been a winter this cold since 1889.

He could almost see her now, playing with him in the snow, the first time he'd felt human in 400 years. She'd known what he was but had loved him completely, trusted him completely.

She shouldn't have.

The urge had been too strong, the winter, too long. And a dream, so sweet, transformed into a nightmare when he awoke to what he'd done.

Her memory was fading now, his immortality, a curse.

He'll shiver by her grave tonight until the morning sun, to see a dawn they never could have shared.

*Author bio: KM Zafari writes a lot of Twitter Fiction, many short stories, and is currently working on a couple of novels. Why The Bat in the Hat? "Sometimes dark, sometimes silly. If Poe and Seuss had a love child, it would probably be... unattractive - but might think just like me." Winner of the "Writer's Digest" Shortest Short Story Contest.*

*@thebatinthehat*

*thebatinthehat.com*

*<http://www.amazon.com/KM-Zafari/e/B00ATUKCFY/>*

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## **Thaw**

*by SJI Holliday*

We found him in a ditch. Frozen hands curled like claws, broken fingernails from where he'd tried to pull himself out. We scraped and dug, revealing him bit by bit, until his face emerged, etched in fear. Three months he'd lain in that icy grave, while we cried and searched, accepted that he was never coming back. We hauled him into the truck, rubbed our hands as the heating blasted through. A scraping sound, a glance in the frosted mirror, and there he was, sitting up in the back, his blue lips curled back in a rictus grin, slowly thawing.

*Author bio: SJI Holliday has short stories and flash fictions published in various places online and in print. She has a novel out on submission and another telling her that it's ready to be written. You can find her on twitter @SJIHolliday and at her blog [www.sjiholliday.com](http://www.sjiholliday.com).*

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## **Jack**

*by Caroline von Schmalensee*

Last night I listened to farmer Jack scratching at the front door and watched the snow fall over the garden. Jack's movements became slower and slower. When they stopped, there were three inches of powder on the ground.

This morning, I fed the cattle and chickens in the barn, enjoying the warm comfort of their company, before dealing with Jack.

The first year, I stored the frozen bodies in an outhouse to bury in spring. But they thawed back to life. Now I use a chainsaw: head, limbs, torso. Chopped up, Jack is easy to handle.

I'll burn him later.

*Author bio: Caroline reads and writes in Edinburgh, UK. She writes short stories to distract herself from the bigger job of editing a novel.*

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## **Frigid**

*by Adam Bunnell*

They told him not to go into the drifts, but he saw a girl there. She beckoned with a pale finger, eyes like chips of glittering ice. She was slender, naked, and a heat within him stirred. He plunged into the powder. The village lights faded away, and the sky grew dark. He found her at last, standing gently atop a waist-deep drift, arms outstretched. He pulled her to him, wrapped his arms around. Where their skin touched, wisps of steam hissed into the air. He kissed her cold, lilac lips. They found him the next morning frozen solid, alone.

*Author bio: Adam Bunnell is a prototypical English teacher/writer with a love for fantasy and horror.*

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## **Family**

*by Alex Valente*

I shake the snow off my arm, groaning. I haven't been gone that long, surely? You'd think they'd be happy to see me, a familiar face, especially in this type of cold. It's been a weird beginning to the new year: I've been feeling under the weather lately, and was really looking forward to seeing Liz and little Matt again. I look down at my arm. I try putting it back into its socket, but decide it could turn out handy in other ways. I start moving forward again, slowly, dragging it behind me. My wife and kid flee, screaming.

*Author bio: Alex Valente is a PhD student in comics translation, freelance translator, part-time poet and short storyteller (in Italian and English) and occasional scare actor. He tweets about all that as @drfumetts.*

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## **Frozen**

*by Wednesday Silverwood*

My mother rarely told the story, and then only under duress. Every time she did she looked at me a little uncertainly, a little askance.

It happened when I was a child. In the winter when the world was dead and cold, the stars brilliant points of frozen light.

I remember only that I was running, breath steaming, hearing their voices calling to me through the mist. They were shouting, calling my name.

Later, when my mother asked me why I had jumped into the freezing lake, I told her that I “had wanted to play with the other children”.

*Author bio: Wednesday Silverwood is a horror writer from North London, England. She has had recent work published in 100 Doors to Madness from Forgotten Tomb Press and in SNM Horror Magazine. She is a member of the Horror Writers Association. Please see her website at [www.wednesdaysilverwood.co.uk](http://www.wednesdaysilverwood.co.uk) for more information.*

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## Hijo

by R.S. Bohn

This year, the *Día de los Angelitos* fell on a Friday, and *Día de los Muertos* on Saturday. Which would he come? He had been fourteen, but could drive, had worked at the bridge with his uncle, unloading crates. Had made a *bebé* with Keisha, still in her belly.

Estrella set a sugar skull on the altar on Friday, beside the marigolds and white candles.

Tommy came home late, beer staining his jacket.

"This ain't Mexico," he said, swatting at the altar.

The sugar skull rolled onto the floor.

A pale hand reached for it.

"Miguel," she breathed. "*Mi hijo*."

*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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## **Rising**

*by Carol Stone*

By the lake's edge the boy stands, his flesh creeping along trembling bones at the horror before him.

Bodies drifting slowly to the frost-covered surface, grey waxy faces bearing blood-encrusted teeth. Ugly bulbous eyes pressed against the thinning ice, staring, flickering, watching him. They are human but less than human, dead yet not happy to lie peacefully in their watery grave.

And the winter sun casts its warming light, cracking, snapping, splintering the brittle glassy sheet. They fed on his father and soon they will rise to eat flesh once more, the flesh that creeps, his flesh.

He cannot run.

*Author bio: I am a specialist nurse by day, aspiring writer by night (and at any other given opportunity especially when working a night shift or whilst enduring long pointless meetings). I love dogs, laughter, Turkish Delight, chocolate, laughter, books, films, red wine, laughter, cake & comedy. I hate pointless meetings, know-it-all's, pointless meetings, to-do lists, long pointless meetings, greed & boredom. I am renowned for being laid-back & for not taking life too seriously. I have previously been published in AlienSkin magazine & Colored Chalk. My dream is to be the next Stephen King or Judi Dench, whichever comes first.*

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## **Scapegoat**

*by Scott Dingley*

In the muddy light cast from that vast shining disc of alien moon above,

With luminous fog hiding an abyss, perhaps a thousand fathoms deep... or high,

It stoops, head bowed, at the very edge of its rock cornice perch,

While scurrying, grey-scalped minions – parasites and pets – brush beneath its thick knuckles and turn the ground to a shimmering puddle.

It watches the far off citadel, along the forbidden snaking road...

The candle flames and spire rooftops of mankind,

And the scapegoat's broad, monstrous shoulders roll forward with laboured breaths – or pining sobs – almost as if it can feel sadness.

*Author bio: Where to point the finger of blame? Scott Dingley is a writer of dark fiction, increasingly devoted to the drabble...*

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## **Frozen**

*by Rhonda Eikamp*

Dethroned, he fled north and the nights grew cold. He had seen ice before, but only in blocks imported for his palaces, not these fragile floors on creek and puddle. At dusk white buttons fell, and riding in upon the village he asked, "What is this?"

"Ghosts of our dead," the girl replied, "murdered by the southern king."

Gaze tilted, he saw it was true. Each flake was a face. Faces with razor teeth, floating onto his eyelids. Falling with night's vengeful quickness, a million, more. They bit his skin and grinned.

"Shelter!" he begged.

"Not here," jeered the villagers.

*Author bio: I'm originally from Texas and live in Germany (so winter's a natural horror story for me). Stories of mine have appeared in Daily Science Fiction and The Colored Lens. When not writing fiction, I translate German legalese (another kind of horror).*

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## **Mercy**

*by John Xero*

I remember when the Niphim first appeared, descending with the late snows, eight-winged winter angels, each beautiful and unique. I was there. It was the second decade of the twenty-first century, when the age of science ended and the new age of myth began.

They say the Niphim attend to the forgotten, the weak, the helpless, leaving frost-furred corpses, transporting broken souls to some safer place beyond the cruel humiliating ice of human existence.

I say otherwise. I have seen the screams frozen in each serrated feather, seen the Niphim's wings spread further each year, layered with agony and despair.

*Author bio: John Xero is looking forward to the new age of myth; he's halfway there already, mentally. His head is full of stories, old and new, and sometimes they fall out, onto the internet.*

*This is the New Plan - <http://www.xeroverse.com/p/ebooks.html>*

*Tweets: @xeroverse*

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## **Cycle**

*by Roisin o'Hare*

Winter is harsh here. Deny the claws that rend your hollow stomach, eat sparingly of hoarded food. The days are brief and grey, the nights unending. Ice lurks treacherous, snow temptingly soft, wind pierces clothing to steal warmth from any unguarded flesh.

And the winter walkers rise.

Truly the corpses of loved ones lost or simply snow-puppets, cruel caricatures. It makes no difference. Their cries need no breath, their broken fingers scrape at door and window. When the last leaf falls, the siege begins again. Despair kills more than the cold.

It will be too long before we see crocuses.

*Author bio: Roisin o'Hare, an Irish girl living in Oxford who spends too much time saying 'I should write' and not enough time writing.*

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Thanks for reading.

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