

101 Fiction

Issue 6

December 2014

Welcome to Issue 6.

Welcome to the world in black and white.

But it's not that simple. It never is.

We have a fantastic issue for you. A little more subdued, perhaps, than previous ones, but no less remarkable for that. Never one to bow to boundaries, we drift outside our own a little, with an array of stories that are not so easy to classify in terms of genre, not so easy to stick into one of the four boxes 101 Fiction has ascribed itself.

And that's no bad thing.

There's a strangeness that runs through the whole issue. One step outside of reality. Just close enough to almost pass as our world, to almost *be* our world...

In this issue you'll find angels, nuns, and gods. Criminals, detectives, vagrants and victims. Wedding and divorce. Even the odd splash of colour amongst the black and white.

Read. Absorb. Enjoy.

'Aumakua

by R.S. Bohn

Bare feet clinging to black rock, Fritzi wonders if any god will come to her rescue after she leaves the island.

Watching the girl on the basalt shelf saying goodbye amidst salt spray, one of them smiles.

"Not goodbye, little troublemaker." Reaching into the sea, it seizes a wriggling white fish. With a kiss, it is set free again – and goes streaking across the ocean.

A hundred island gods will breathe a sigh of relief when Fritzi steps onto that plane, but this one will close its eyes, and open them again as a white fish speeding towards new land.

Author bio: R.S. Bohn has no family gods to keep her out of trouble, so if any wish to volunteer, she promises lots of tea and windmill cookies.

Exile

by Sylvia Heike

Eliel looked over his shoulder into a dirty mirror. A single white feather nestled half-buried in the black plumage of his wing. He pinned the feather between his fingertips and pulled.

It hurt, but the pain was nothing compared to the memories it brought. Was this how it felt to be mortal? To ache for things he couldn't have, yet to be mocked by them so he could never forget?

There was no way to age gracefully. Not for him. Eliel swore he would pluck out every damned white feather as they appeared. Where was he going to fly, anyway?

Author bio: Sylvia Heike lives and writes in Finland. Her favourite colour is white, and she loves snow. These two things may be related.

Website: <http://www.sylviaheike.com>

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/sylviaheike>

Redundancy

by Kymm Coveney

“No one else was working,” said the Virgin. She recrossed her legs, bobbling the row of day-glo-orange plastic chairs.

“No,” said the cleaning lady, slapping her mop under the Virgin’s seat, nearly wetting the holy heel. Crossing herself.

“And the nun,” she continued, but was interrupted by the mechanical voice calling Number Fifty-Two. Blinking red dots. The nun, who was cross-stitching two seats down from the Virgin, held her needle up to the light, trying to thread it. The Virgin wished she could ignore the message, *I shall fear no evil*, falling in canvas folds on Sister Mary Xavier’s lap.

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

www.betterlies.blogspot.com

[@KymmInBarcelona](https://www.instagram.com/KymmInBarcelona)

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

Colours

by Alan Dennis Harris

Melanie put down the colouring book and wandered out of her room, leaving crayons scattered across the floor. As soon as she left, the crayons started arguing. They didn't like each other. The black hated the white and the white sought to distance themselves from the black, the beige, the brown and the blue. Green showed distrust for orange; the feeling was mutual. Red and yellow preferred to stay to themselves.

The family Labrador walked into the room, hungry and undiscerning.

And it came to pass that the crayons finally reconciled in the backyard, in soft piles like melted rainbows.

Author bio: Alan D. Harris writes short stories, plays, and poetry based primarily upon the life-stories of friends, family and total strangers. Harris is the 2011 recipient of the Stephen H. Tudor Scholarship in Creative Writing and the 2014 John Clare Poetry Prize winner from Wayne State University. In addition he is the father of seven, grandfather of six, and 2013 Pushcart Prize nominee.

Wedding

by Deidre Dykes

He polished the gold cufflinks on the pockets of his rich black tux coat for the eighth time, his hands shaking. He had never thought he would be so lucky as to end up here. Ah, but what a wedding it would be! Dinner and dancing and kisses by candlelight. An intimate reception with his closest friends. Perhaps his family would never understand but that didn't really matter to him any longer. She walked down the aisle, the roses she held a striking crimson against her alabaster skin. He all but beamed, so happy he'd raised her from her grave.

Author bio: Deidre Delpino Dykes is a writer by trade and probably has a bird on her head. She lives in the Washington DC area with her husband and several parrots. She tweets regularly with the handle @gowordbird.

Divorce

by *W. M. Lewis*

My head hurts. I stand, wobbling, in the too white kitchen. The lights are bright. Glare off the pots is dazzling; they hang from the ceiling like bats and catch sunbeams as if they were insects. Divorce papers printed on fine parchment lie on the bench, next to a jubilant soup recipe. I pretend to ignore the papers, which like slobbering dogs desperately seek attention. The recipe screams "Ginger in its kibbled form!" like a huckster. I place the recipe, ingredients and divorce papers in a blender. I hit Start. My black heart whirls, suddenly as light as the room.

Author bio: I'm an Australian poet and writer. My poetry has appeared in Alliterati Magazine, Best Australian Poems 2011, Cordite Poetry Review, Eclecticism, Multiverses, PoV Magazine, Railroad Poetry Project, street cake magazine, The Night Light and Tincture Journal. You can find me and my writing on Twitter at @mindintoword and at my blog, whatevertheysing. (whatevertheysing.wordpress.com)

Beginning

by Sylvia Heike

In the beginning, there was a man with dark rich soil in his pockets. The soil carried within itself the seed of everything that he wished to grow. Every person, every organism, and every planet was buried in that waking darkness.

But things didn't grow well in the dark. He reached into his pockets and spread the soil around him, and then he lit up the sun and the stars and let there be light.

Some things bloomed and others withered, yet he still tends to every fold of the universe, never leaving anything for too long without some light.

Author bio: Sylvia Heike lives and writes in Finland. Her favourite colour is white, and she loves snow. These two things may be related.

Website: <http://www.sylviaheike.com>

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/sylviaheike>

Pulse

by John Xero

Brian sank into black.

Pain thrummed in white bursts: throbbing flashes of light writ bright across his consciousness.

And between, black claimed him. Swallowed and suffocated him.

While white cracks splintered outwards, sharp shining knives of searing pain.

And black devoured him. Consumed him utterly, until he thought he could not rise again.

Until he was dragged upwards, torn out into white agony.

And down again, deeper into endless black.

Surfacing in hurt and white and light and a face he ought to know. And words.

"Dad. Please. Wake up. Please."

Black drew him down.

White blossomed.

Black loomed.

White

Author bio: John Xero wonders where all the time has gone. He used to have so much. Almost his entire working life has been spent amongst books, and one day he will finish writing his own. He has a twitter (@xeroverse) and a blog (xeroverse.com), and he really should use them.

Celebrity

by W. M. Lewis

With pet paparazzi in tow he joins the long queue at the Godalming Club, they're both high on something white and newly minted, him hidden by a thin disguise of shaven head and wee moustache, the photographer draped in her usual camera sleaze — an experiment this, really — feet shuffling, waiting in an everyday way, him craving what he doesn't usually endure — time and people passing — and when they reach the front the 'entry consultant' says nothing but shakes a massive and sublime black head in precise samurai movements and raises an explicit meaty hand which utters No Entry, surprising everyone.

Author bio: I'm an Australian poet and writer. My poetry has appeared in Alliterati Magazine, Best Australian Poems 2011, Cordite Poetry Review, Eclecticism, Multiverses, PoV Magazine, Railroad Poetry Project, street cake magazine, The Night Light and Tincture Journal. You can find me and my writing on Twitter at @mindintoword and at my blog, whatevertheysing. (whatevertheysing.wordpress.com)

Confession

by Robin Jennings

The light is blinding. Blinding white. But it warms my face and relaxes me. I hear his voice like an echo and it snaps me back to reality. I can see the outline of his face – the black lines of his frown mostly. Handsome, but not as soothing as the light.

We've been at this for hours, me and him. He keeps asking the same question, but we're getting nowhere. I'm getting bored.

"You're really going to do this?" he asks.

I nod. There's nothing left to offer him. He knows it, but he asks again.

"Where is her body?"

Author Bio: Robin Jennings is horror enthusiast based in the open fields of Northern New Jersey. Having previously optioned a full length screenplay called "Shudder", she's now focusing her creative efforts on short fiction.

Noir

by Matthew Konkel

With black eyes, the man called The Psychologist stared over wire frames. He wanted to hire me.

"I'm no private detective," I said. I was a struggling writer barely keeping his margins straight, fearful of the blank white stare of the empty page.

"Yes you are," he said with calm assurance. "We're all detectives wading through life's mysteries, discovering the "ohs" and "ahs" to the hows and whys."

He had a point. But I wouldn't play his game.

"You're already playing," he said.

I balked. Then he told me the job.

"I want you to uncover who writes your story."

Author bio: Matthew is a teaching-artist, playwright and independent filmmaker. His latest film is titled Neptune (www.lasthouseproductions.com). His fiction and poetry can be found or is upcoming at the Newer York, Paragraph Planet, Postcard Shorts, Linguistic Erosion, The Eunoia Review, Danse Macabre, Sein and Werden, Theme of Absence, Primal Urge and Streetcake Magazine. His plays have been produced nationally and internationally by theatre companies including Edmonds Driftwood Players, Pink Banana Theatre, Cupcake Lady Productions and Screaming Media Gi60. His short play Walk, Don't Walk is published by Pennster Media. www.matthewkonkel.com

Winter

by John Xero

Hugh felt the rumble of the subway train thundering below him. Light cascaded up through the grills, illuminating the slow clouds of steam drifting from the warm tunnels.

Snow fell softly, white flakes bringing the cold of the black night sky down with them. It settled across the city, shying only from the gratings, retreating from the heat.

Hugh lay on his back, watching the gentle winter descend. Another train rattled below and for a moment he could pretend his shivers were just the quaking of the ground.

He wondered if he would sleep. He wondered if he would wake.

Author bio: John Xero wonders where all the time has gone. He used to have so much. Almost his entire working life has been spent amongst books, and one day he will finish writing his own. He has a twitter (@xeroverse) and a blog (xeroverse.com), and he really should use them.

Thanks for reading.

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