



The Canadian Science
Fiction Review

presents

AE micro the second

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THANK YOU FOR READING!

You are currently holding (or reading on a screen with your head cocked sideways) the PDF edition of the second issue of *AE Micro*. *AE Micro* is an annual special edition of *AE – The Canadian Science Fiction Review* featuring stories no more than 200 words long. The theme for 2011 is *second*. This two-page PDF is meant to be printed out and folded into an eight-page papercraft booklet. Follow the instructions in the next panel to fashion your own handmade issue of *AE Micro*. You can use this page for practice. When you finish, the pages should be in the order in which they are numbered here.

AE Micro Folding Instructions

1. Print out this PDF on a sheet of regular letter-size paper.
2. Crease the paper in half widthwise with the printed side facing out, by folding along the dotted line in the middle of the paper.
3. Fold along the other two dotted lines, with the printed side facing in.
4. Unfold the paper and lay it out flat.
5. Fold the paper in half lengthwise along the solid line with the printed side out, creasing it well.
6. Trim off each end of the paper by cutting along the solid lines, then unfold.
7. Fold the paper in half again widthwise with the printed side out.

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8. Starting from the fold, cut carefully along the heavy solid line until you reach the creases you made earlier.
 9. Unfold the paper flat and then fold it in half again lengthwise with the printed side out.
 10. Pick up the paper and hold it at either end with the folded edge at the top.
 11. Move your hands toward each other, allowing the middle section to come out to either side.
 12. Push the pages together until they meet to form a spine and arrange them so the cover is on the outside.
- To make the pages lie flat, go over each fold to crease it sharply.



2011

AE

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The Canadian Science Fiction Review

AE

AE and AE Micro are brought to you by:

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IN MANY WAYS, this microzine is the one-year anniversary of *AE*. There are any number of yardsticks we might use that would date our origin either earlier or later, but the first tangible thing to come out of *AE* was *AE Micro*. The theme for last year's microzine was, simply, "Micro." It was appropriate not only for the format but as a reflection of *AE* as a whole, at the time little more than a germ in the minds of the founders and of the great many of you who saw its potential. For this, our second edition of *AE Micro*, the theme is "Second."

For some of the authors appearing within, this is the first time they have graced our pages; for others, the second. All of the stories however, from the macabre poetry of "Birdcage" to the light-hearted whimsy of "The Miracle of Der Betrug," are top-tier examples of the strength and versatility of the microfiction form.

So please, take a few seconds to enjoy these bite-sized gems. We think they make for a great beginning to the second of many years to come.

—D.F. McCourt
EDITOR

Infection by Rob J.

Jack, at this heartbeat in time, is in awe of the infection. A previous test subject had likened it to living in a slow-motion world. Jack feels more like he's in fast-forward.

Living high on the drug is phenomenal; you react faster, see more, hear everything; sex is heightened; good food lasts longer on your taste buds, but then, so does bad food.

Jack is also able to watch, comprehend, fully experience the hull of his ship being blown apart by a Rebel missile. Metal sheets crumple and peel off the nose from the impact. The four-inch-thick glass, only a foot from Jack's face, erupts, launching shards at him. But before they tear into his flesh and pierce his eyes, he watches the incoming explosion ignite the escaping oxygen, creating billowing waves of fire, which crawl up the crippled hull, sweeping in behind the glass shrapnel.

Without that infection this would already be over, but with his senses pumping at ten thousand percent, Jack's last second seems to never end. Time enough for regret.

The dagger-like fragments bite into his cheeks, lips, eyelids, while the fire scorches his pupils, and he—

her scream. "It only hurts if you fight it."

"We were wrong," he said. "They came to our planet to save us. Let them in. Then you'll understand." Frowning, he reached out to stifle her scream. "It only hurts if you fight it."

The Changers by L.S. Taylor

Maddie plunged into the forest, sliding down switchbacks and clutching at ferns to keep from tumbling outright. At the bottom, chainlink fences guarded the public from falling into the canyon; she crashed against them, regained her footing and kept running.

At the bridge, she skidded to a halt. He was waiting for her on the deck. "Addison!" Anguish warred with relief. She hurried into his arms. "I thought the Changers got you."

"Shh," he murmured. "It's okay." Maddie stared at him, horror rising. She backed up, but he caught her wrists and trapped her with his gaze.

"Relax." Addison grinned, his eyes shining in the moonlight. Maddie shivered. He never grinned like that. "This won't take long." She couldn't take her eyes from him. A Changer was crawling up her back, sinking its spiked tendrils into her skull and its tail into the base of her spine, and she couldn't look away. "But everything we've fought for—"

"We were wrong," he said. "They came to our planet to save us. Let them in. Then you'll understand." Frowning, he reached out to stifle her scream. "It only hurts if you fight it."

The Miracle of Der Betrug by John Leavitt

One night, a traveler came to Der Betrug. He was put in a room with sheep. The traveler's boots were cracked and his cloak torn. He smelled odd. Even the sheep thought so. He was a pilgrim, he said. He had come to visit the Wunderkammer.

The abbot refused. Be thankful for a cot. But the traveler had brought a gift. A new wonder. Oval lenses bound in wire. The abbot wore them and suddenly he could see ten inches in front of him. For this gift, the pilgrim could visit the Wunderkammer. They went in.

The room held many treasures: silk vestments, golden books, silver crosses beside a studded unicorn. This was not what the pilgrim had come to see.

For his gift the abbot would show the traveler the Miracle. No outsider had seen it before. The traveler trembled. With reverence, the abbot presented a large-mouth bass on a wooden frame. The bass jerked to life. It sang. And as the fish's tiny speakers belted out "Take Me to the River," the traveler closed his eyes, rubbed his forehead, and thought: "I am going to fucking kill Bernstein when I get back."

"Sir." I opened the airlock.

"One. Initiate."

Poor, lost man. Coming second, I could avoid his mistakes.

"Two."

My brother married young, had two kids, a silence thicker than vacuum between them all.

"Contact in three. Stand by, James."

"Sir." I rehearsed the glyphs for cautious welcome from equal, no obligation implied. I'd had plenty of time to practice the aliens' language. I'd wanted to be on the first contact team.

Second Contact by Damon Shaw

I used to resent my older brother. Everywhere I went, he'd been first. The only things he couldn't do were swim and maths, so I ended up a fit astrophysicist. Sitting in a tin can near Saturn, approaching another tin can with the slow inevitability of plate tectonics. I wasn't the first one here, either.

"Ten seconds to contact." Lasers swung to beat on our shuttle. I swallowed. "Formalities, James. Relax."

"Yes, sir." I unclenched my jaw. The Captain would have displayed our own missiles, I knew. It was a grand dance in the ballroom of space, Saturn our chandelier. Humanity stumbled the first time. Both partners paid in an escalating rush of retaliation until bodies tumbled like dandelion seeds. I'd seen the recordings. Everyone had.

Her heart is a small pigeon. The first died. It was hungry and she didn't want to feed it. It gnawed on entrails and made a lot of noise. When it died she felt sad for weeks. The new one is much better behaved. It makes few noises, though she rarely feeds it either. She has no time to be bothered by things like birds.

She wants to learn love, but pigeons are scavengers. She wants to eat but needs not to. She is filled with self-knowledge, confusion and cotton-balling. Her eyes are made of glass but they reflect nothing.

The second pigeon falls from its perch and dies. She curses it for being so obstinate. The sadness returns.

Birdcage by Christine Wvler

Her body lacks a ribcage. Instead, she carries her head and shoulders on the frame of a birdcage. It is painful to dance. She so desires to dance.

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