



The Canadian Science  
Fiction Review

presents

# AE micro 3 SPACE

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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 third 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 2012 is *space*. 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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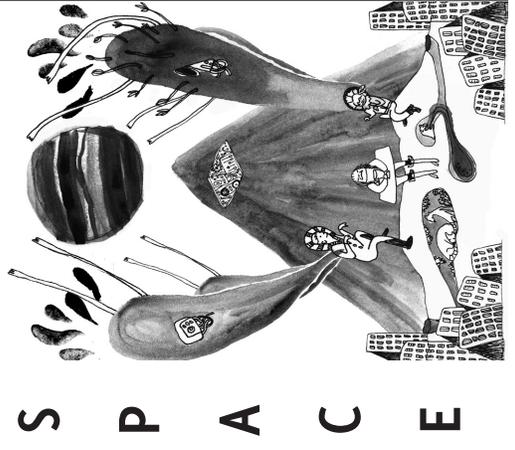
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8. Starting from the fold, cut carefully along the heavy solid line until you reach the creases you made earlier.
  9. Unfold the paper flat and then fold it in half again lengthwise with the printed side out.
  10. Pick up the paper and hold it at 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.





2012

AE

**S**PACE. How DO YOU tell a story that evokes the wide, wonderful weirdness of space when you have so little room to do it in? Look at this tiny rectangle with such narrow margins, the edges looming so close, so claustrophobic.

Nearly ninety stories came in for the third *AE Micro*. How do you select a scant five tales out of so many worthy submissions? We are always impressed by the distilled nuggets of narrative that we receive for our annual microzine, but perhaps this year more than ever.

Each of the following stories contains a small universe unto itself, one that expands to fill much more — ahem, space — than one might reasonably expect given the tight quarters we've crammed them in. You can devour them all in one gulp if you want, but if I were you, I'd pause after each one, and give them some room to breathe before you turn the page. They deserve it.

—Helen Michaud  
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

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Illustration by Laura Leif

PUBLISHER'S READER  
Erika Kiessner

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR  
Paul Jarvey

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR  
Helen Michaud

EDITOR  
D.F. McCourt

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## The Canadian Science Fiction Review



Space by Robert Dawson

"There's no such place as space."  
"There is, too. It's up there," the little girl insisted.

"Nah, that's the sky." He waved upwards toward the blue bowl. "And above that's heaven. That's real. Space isn't real, it's just in the movies. Like Narnia and Shriassie Park."

"I see." She resumed skipping.

My hand curled protectively around my cellphone, with uploaded photos of my three missions and one spacewalk. I wanted to call them over and show them. *Look, space is real. I've been there.*

But there was a police car nearby, watching. Maybe talking to kids in playgrounds isn't illegal, but my clothes smelled like they used to after touchdown. I hadn't shaved for days, and my breath made it clear that I'd breakfasted with my friend Jack. They've wanted me before.

Anyhow, perhaps the kid's right. Back when I was still playing spaceman in the playground, I had this picture book that said things become real when someone loves them enough. It's been thirty years since the last eagle landed. Maybe there aren't enough dreamers and stranded astronauts left anymore to keep space real. I turned and walked away. After a few minutes the police car left too.

live. I'm the one who can stare at the stars and call me what they like, but I'm already limitless. I'm glad I'm an android. Plastic and wires don't swell up the same way. Kerner's ilk can't catch him. He gasps, like he's never seen it before. His eyes bug out. I start counting.

One, two, three... Pop!  
And then I'm floating there alone.

"Why would you paint..."  
But he glances out at the blackness and it catches him. He gasps, like he's never seen it before. His eyes bug out. I start counting.

I smile, showing white plastic teeth. "Oh, I borrowed them for the day. I'm making a painting of the galaxy."

They survive, if they close their minds to the beauty around them. But it makes them grumpy.

"What did you do with the telescopes?"

his red face distorted through the space helmet. "You soulless, wire-headed bitch," he snarls, but he glances out at the blackness and it catches him. He gasps, like he's never seen it before. His eyes bug out. I start counting.

That's handy on days like today, when Captain Kerner shoves me against the ship's hull.

It's not true what they say. Humans don't explode in the vacuum of space. It's the sense of wonder that does it. Once they notice real limitlessness, all they can do is grow to match it. Sooner or later—pop!

Space Pops by Ada Hoffmann

Distress Call by Gabriel Schlesinger

Infinity times infinity times infinity. Versus two.

Our air: recycled. Our water: recycled. Our food: energy bars. Limited supply.

We are drifting at a speed of 7,743 miles per second. Hardly drifting at that speed. But we have no thrusters. No control. We've given up trying to fix it.

Instead, we play cards in the galley.

We connect out in the cockpit. We connect the stars, making our own constellations: Goateded barista. Cocktail umbrella. Girl with headphones.

We tell each other secrets. We've run out of real secrets, so we invent new ones. She was born with a pig's tail. I sang in a boy band.

We calculate the chances of hitting atmosphere. Of becoming shooting stars. We forget to carry the one, every time. But we know the chances are small.

We both agree it would be a good way to go. This is not a cry for help. This is everything we ever wanted.

for passengers. had also cut the comm link. There was no room of the line. She screamed at him but Freeman

Tanni was not afraid until he released his end of the line. She screamed at him but Freeman

"But, Freeman, I'm head over heels in love!"

She couldn't resist taunting his earnestness. "But, Freeman, I'm head over heels in love!"

She couldn't resist taunting his earnestness.

back. He shouted down the comm at her slowly receding form. "There's your space! And that's all you'll ever have unless we start making babies!"

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about it. Gave me some space..."

His push was hard enough to disengage her from the surface of the ship and she began to drift into the black, somersaulting gently. Tanni was not afraid; she knew Freeman would soon grab the linkline connecting them and haul her back.

Freemom kept on at her when they were out repairing the outer skin of the hull. Through the suit comm, she said, "Freem, let me think about it. Gave me some space..."

Two generations out, on the seed ship, *Hypocotyl*, Tanni had never known Earth and would never see G.Hese 581.d. She rejected her role as an intermediate.

Link by Alan Garth

Shaft by Rain Prior

It was another distant rock hurtling around another distant star, and soon enough another shell littering the cosmos. The corp mined the things like a chain smoker, this old girl just the latest in a long line.

Dag worked the sixteen, a lonely shift, riding the lift down deep and whistling in the dark. Nothing to do as he descended but study the shaft walls, map their colours and undulations in his head.

His was a slow realisation. She'd always been a strange rock, a trembling and uneasy rock, so maybe he should have seen it coming: changes so gradual it was weeks before he was conscious of them, shaft walls swelling and growing and infinitesimally closing in.

She was growing. *She was heeling.*

The corp had tunnelled out her esophagus, her intestines, emptied a line through her bowels and cut deep into her shiny core, a ruthless and ongoing vivisection. Dag slept on her skin and invaded her guts to carve out pieces of her.

And if he wanted to survive, he would do it till the job was through. Dag whispered an apology as he closed his eyes and let the shaft swallow him whole.