



The Canadian Science  
Fiction Review

presents

# AE micro 6 degrees

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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 sixth 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 2015 is *degrees*. 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.





## The Canadian Science Fiction Review

**I**F FICTION WRITING were an Olympic event (and there are many excellent reasons why it is not), there's no doubt that telling a story in fewer than two hundred words would have one of the highest degrees of difficulty.

Having academic credentials like an M.F.A. is no guarantee of success; formal education doesn't always focus on the extreme economy of prose required to pull off the feat that the authors in this collection have achieved. These stories elicit laughter, sympathy or discomfort; they may even increase your heart rate or raise your temperature a degree or two.

Constructing such compact tales as these and bringing them full circle can be murder, but fortunately reading them is a much more pleasant experience.

We hope you enjoy this year's installment of *AE Micro*.

—Helen Michaud

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

degrees  
micro



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## The Canadian Science Fiction Review

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by Degrees by Robert Dawson

"Whaddya wanna be when you graduate?" I asked.

"Galactic Emperor, brah. Galactic Emperor."

Harold drained his beer.

I threw a peanut at him. "You gotta be born emperor, dickhead."

"Sure, moron, on Earth. But in an advanced culture you'd need qualifications. Lots of qualifications. Right?" He signalled for another round.

We got our B.Engs. Two years later, Harold went back for an M.D., then, a few years later, a Ph.D. in epigenetics. His thesis led to the Methuselah treatment and personal riches. He took down his shingle and began an M.A. in economics.

For his D.Sc. thesis in physics, he discovered faster-than-light communication—and detected signals from extraterrestrials. He got his fourth doctorate in linguistics, for deciphering them. Then he signed up for a correspondence course, the first of many, at a university fifty-three light years away.

Two hundred and seventeen years later, on Rigeld XXVIII, my pocket ansible pinged. It was Harold.

"Whatcha been doing?" I asked.

"Studying, brah. Studying. And waiting for this."

Glowing orange characters hovered above my ansible. "It's a job ad. Supreme Coordinator of the Galactic Union."

"Going to apply?"

"I did," he said, and sighed. "I did. They said I'm overqualified."

## What Goes Around ... by Holly Schofield

43, 44, 45 ... Wilkey counted off as she hopped over the asteroid's surface. She chuckled. Wining the pistol duel would be as easy as stealing Brock's scientific formulae had been. Cheating beat brains, every time.

Brock had reluctantly agreed to settle out-of-court via a three-shot duel at fifty paces, stipulating they meet at this dense asteroid's equator.

At the fortieth-eighth pace, Wilkey whirled and blasted the two drones that were acting as seconds. Smoke puffed; the drones fell slowly. She fired next at Brock's back, squinting into the sun's glare. Damn! The shot missed.

"I am not a murderer," Brock's voice through the radio was matter-of-fact. She hopped her last pace and turned to face Wilkey, cradling her gun.

Why agree to a duel then not fight? Blind anger overtook Wilkey. She invented new curse words, while Brock watched, curiously relaxed. Wilkey would have gone on indefinitely if not for the thump against her back. She staggered forward, then fell. Suit alarms rang. As her life leaked away, Brock explained in patient detail how Wilkey's own bullet had orbited 360 degrees around the asteroid to hit her squarely in the back. And how brains beat cheating, every time.

## The First Degree of Separation by Stephen S. Power

My lawyers are dealing with yours, but I have to write you myself.

I don't know you. The 47 times you say you saw me in concert, I never saw you. I certainly can't recall holding your hand during a show last year.

I hold lots of hands. 40 a night. 1600 a tour. It's my trademark, it's me, and now I can't do it anymore.

That's not just advice of counsel. Thanks to you I'm terrified of being touched in case someone else steals my skin cells.

Don't call mine a gift. I didn't discard them, either, whatever your lawyer says, and how many hands I've held is irrelevant. My holding yours wasn't consent for you to scrape them off, then use them so horribly.

Planting them in stem cells. Turning those cells into sperm. Impregnating yourself. Do you really think I'll acknowledge your daughter, as if she excuses everything? I cringe in my husband's arms. I cry in elevators. I can't even touch myself.

My lawyers will make you pay, but all I can do to pay you back is tell you this:

Every song I never sing, I dedicate to you.

## Ph.D.s of Separation by Josh Vogt

Lab Audio Log #147

I can't comprehend the device you left behind, Annisa. None of your colleagues can, either.

What chance does a geneticist like me have in bringing you back if your own team doesn't know how you engineered this?

I'm sorry for doubting you. For making you feel like you had to prove anything.

Honestly, your theoretical physics work always intimidated me. You intimidated me. I never imagined I'd find such a captivating genius who'd think I was worth her time.

Wow loving. You were so proud when you brought everyone in to reveal your prototype—and so furious when I laughed along with the rest at your temporal transporter." Good joke, Annisa. You had us going there ...

Then you pushed that button. And vanished. It's been a year now. Your team wants to disassemble the machine, but they let me in here one more time. To say goodbye.

So here I am, talking to the empty space where you stood before leaving so many questions.

Did it really work? Are you still alive somewhere? Somewhen?

But the most important question is ... If I push that same button, will I find you again?

End Audio

## Hotter than Hell by William Squirrel

Michael had flown to Bangkok to see where his son died: an abandoned factory in the impoverished sprawl. Lieutenant Phao's shirt was soaked with perspiration. They were looking at a stainless steel vat.

"They put the tourists in a lye solution," Phao said. "Then they heat it to 180 degrees, under pressure to keep it from boiling. Everything turns to soup in three hours, four if the body's modifications are good. They say: 'The longer the stew, the better the profit.'"

"The liquid is strained," he gestured toward the back. "Then it is shipped to nano-extraction labs in Laos."

A large mesh screen lay in a jumble of white shards by the cargo door. Phao picked up a skull.

"Single gunshot, massive trauma, but look," he struck a finger in the hole. "The edge is smooth. It was healing. Even after death the nanobots work. Very expensive technology. Very desirable."

The teeth of the skull were beautifully symmetrical. Phao dripped in the heat.

"You never sweat," Phao asked.

"No," said Michael. "My temperature remains perfectly regulated except in the most extreme conditions."

"Very expensive technology," Phao smiled, and rested a hand on his sidearm. "Very desirable."