

Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine Issue #58 - April 2014

Reviewed by Charlie Harmon

Editor: Edwina Harvey

Web Address: andromedaspaceways.com

What they publish: short stories up to 10,000 words, poetry, creative non-fiction "articles," and artwork, as long as they relate to speculative fiction.

Submission Guidelines: E-mail submissions (in standard manuscript format) to asimsubmissions@gmail.com as an attached .rtf. They have a page listing common formatting errors and another listing tropes/stories/elements they tend not to publish including, for instance: "9. Second Person Point of View: You know you shouldn't. You want to do it but you know you will go blind," and, "17. Are You Sure You Know How to Use a Semicolon? Most writers who use them wouldn't use them if they knew how to use them." They will e-mail you a confirmation number and a link to their submission tracker. They're open to anything sci-fi, fantasy, or horror, but they don't particularly like "dark." No multiple/simultaneous submissions, please. 1.25 cents/word Australian for fiction, and \$10 Australian for each piece of flash, poetry, or non-fiction.

Description of Publication: This is a quarterly, Australian, semi-pro genre magazine that publishes both in print and online. There are a variety of digital formats for \$4.95 (I got mine through Amazon) and the print version is \$12.95 plus shipping. Issue58 has 14 stories by contributors from around the world as well as 3 poems, 4 book reviews, and an obituary for noted Scottish author Iain Banks. The Kindle version looks nice, with a professional cover and some nice illustrations, though I did notice a couple of typos/malapropisms. They have a really active community around the publication of the magazine and seem to genuinely encourage new authors.

Prose per issue: 4 issues per year with between 10 and 15 short stories per issues (between 40 and 60 short stories per year, plus the poetry and non-fic).

Prose Reviews:

"The Bedroom Ceiling" by Steven Pirie is a plain spoken, humorous science fiction story set in a nameless young man's bedroom. The subjective first person narrator opens with his intention to discover cold fusion and solve the world's energy problems, as suggested by his governess, who thinks that a boy his age shouldn't be staring at the ceiling all day. This is at 9:52. At 9:56: "I have created a small rupture in time and space in the corner of my bedroom ceiling. Possibly, when I know more of physics and chemistry, I'll know how I've done this." He uses the hole to confer with Aristotle, who tells him about fire, earth, water, air, and aether. By 9:57 he's realized Aristotle's elements aren't really elements and is transmuting "baser elements" into gold. By 9:58 he's mapped the atom. At 10:04, Mrs. Griffith has suggested that he goes back to staring at the ceiling, but now he's had an epiphany involving the sun. "Look, let me show you," he says. The last section is at 2:32 and mirrors the first paragraph exactly, except for its final sentences: "And this time, when I discover cold fusion, Mrs. Griffiths has said I'm not to burn down half the city. I wonder what she means by that?"

The narrator's voice is deceptively simple, and a lot of the humor comes from the seeming ease, almost boredom, with which he solves the mysteries of the universe. "I have summoned Paul Dirac into my bedroom ceiling rupture, and we have talked long nanoseconds about quantum electrodynamics and relativistic equations for the electron. I think he is pulling my pisser." As the story progresses, the physics terms become more and more obscure and I don't know if it's authentic but it feels like it is, which is the important thing. The story also uses the passage of time to accentuate the humor, with timestamps at the beginning of each short section and most of the action taking place between 9:52 and 10:04. It's also fairly short (less than 2,000 words), which is important for a story with this much physics jargon--getting out before the opaque science talk can alienate the reader. All in all, a really funny, well done story. My principle question is whether knowing more about physics would cause me to like it more or less, but I can deal with the uncertainty (please forgive me the terrible physics joke).

"Non Smoker. Good Sense of Humour. Must Like Chickens" by Marie Alafaci is a plain spoken humor piece in a slightly surreal modern setting. Anna, the subjective third person protagonist, is reading in her apartment when a chicken walks in and says, "Not bad." After some back and forth, the chicken reveals that it's Anna's prospective new roommate. Jump forward (and the entire story is a series of vignettes, ending with Anna an old woman) to Chicken coming home drunk, *again*, and Anna throwing her in the bathtub because she smells like vomit, then feeling bad and putting a blanket on her. Chicken introduces Anna to her future husband, makes a touching speech at their wedding, and is the only one who can stop their newborn daughter from crying. Then, a sudden call in the middle of the night: Chicken has met a man and is moving to Germany. The story cycles through a few more jumps, as Anna's daughter grows up and her husband passes on, and in the final section: a knock at the door. Chicken has returned and Anna is overjoyed.

The opening line, "A chicken walked into the room," combined with the title, which is, at the very least, interesting, was enough to hook me. Once I'd figured out where the story was going, primarily a single joke played

out over nine sections and 4,000 words: Anna and Chicken are going to have a fairly standard fictional relationship, but one of them is going to be a chicken, my interest started to wane. It's a pretty good joke, and Alafaci gives the reader a good sight of Chicken doing a variety of things chickens don't normally do--taking a shower, painting her toenails, dancing at a club--but they aren't quite enough. I couldn't help but compare it unfavorably to "The Bedroom Ceiling," at least in terms of knowing to get out while you're ahead. That said, it's a mostly fun story, and I appreciated the way it jumped through time, often giving us representative, rather than key moments in their relationship.

Rating: 9. Most of their stories are by relative unknowns, but they've also published some professionals, and most of them are pretty good. Their acceptance rate isn't much higher than your average professional market, but their site is full of tips for prospective submitters and they seem eager to encourage new writers. They also pay, even if it is a token amount in Australian dollars. All in all, a good intermediate goal, especially for quirkier stories (not all were silly/absurd by any means, but several were, and it's my experience that humor can be difficult to find a home for).