

Seventh Edition ★ *July/August 2013*

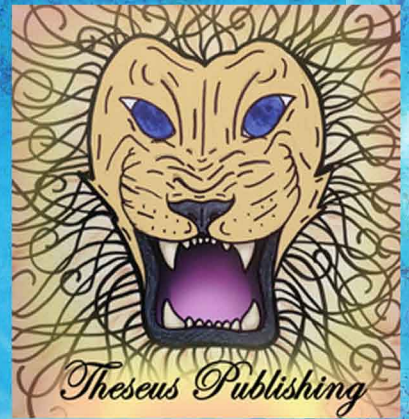
Welcome to *Theseus Publishing Online Magazine!*

Home to a variety of
Sci-Fi and Fantasy
Short Stories.

What's Unique in this Edition?

For this issue our Flash
Fiction theme is '*Travel*'

Issue 7 also includes a book review on
Eragon, a *Back to the Future* trilogy film
review and an in-depth article on TPOM
Editor Tasha's unique trip to Thailand.



Editors:

Becky Hayes
and
Tasha Williams

Contributing Writers:

Various
(See Inside)



Enjoy!



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This issue's Flash Fiction theme was:

TRAVEL

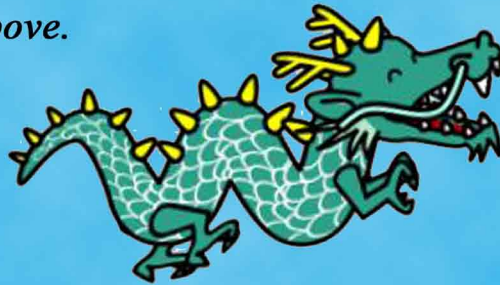


ENJOY ~

50 Word Stories

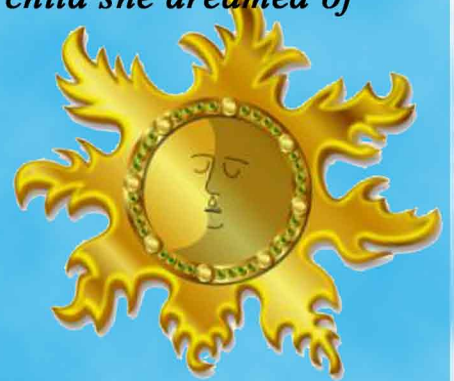
The Hillburn Giant by Alice Manning

With horns of gold and heart of stone the great dragon of Hillburn rose. He was never the most elegant when taking off into the skies, but once he'd climbed to above the clouds he was as dignified as the purest swan and as silent as the watchful moon high above.



Shine by Charlotte Finch

Ray never knew why she had been named after the sunlight. Whilst growing up everyone at the orphanage had told her that her mother had been a priestess and her father was the moon himself. As a child she dreamed of flying to the moon, and finding out for herself.



Whiskers of Steel by Jennifer Button

Once upon a time a daring mouse went on an adventure. He had never approved of the expression 'Are you a man or a mouse?' and he knew that he needed to prove his bravery to the world. After all, even man can't single-handedly scare a fully grown elephant.



Danskai's Survivor by Marie Morgan

It had been exactly 157 days, 6 hours, 12 minutes and 7 seconds since Evangeline died.

That meant it had been 157 days 6 hours and 7 seconds since Bralyn had left the burning remains of Danskai.

3 of those minutes had been spent cradling her in his arms.

2 of those minutes were spent pushing her body into one of the newly formed craters that scattered the land.

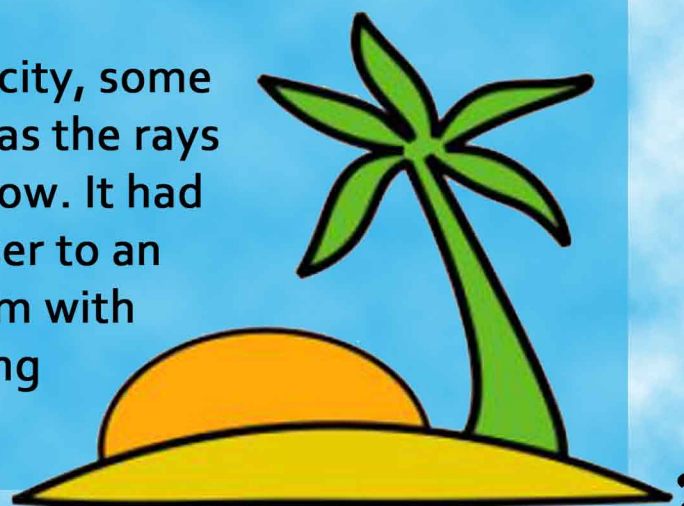
1 was spent wiping his tears away as flames burst from the ground and consumed her.

And the other 6 were spent running for his life.

*

The overbearing sunlight hit Bralyn's scabbed skin like a hot knife. He recoiled, trying to cover himself with the boulder that had been his place of rest the night before. A bird cawed above Him, alone and yet looking quite well. All the other birds he had seen had been dead, bones exposed as their carcasses littered the path from Danskai to the Unknown.

Does that mean there is another city, some place of refuge? thought Bralyn, as the rays reached his already burnt scalp now. It had been 157 days and he was no closer to an answer, but this bird provided Him with something he hadn't had for a long time.



Hope.

This new hope was the only thing getting him through.

Getting him through the heat, getting him through eating the rats with barely any flesh on. Hope kept him walking through the sands, trying to find neighbouring cities that he didn't even know existed or not. Had he been walking in circles for this long or was there simply no other world around?

Sometimes, he thought he saw a building, a settlement, a camping site. Anything that wasn't sand and desolate wasteland. Once he swore he saw a young child waving at him frantically. Bralyn had ran towards the child, getting so close as to see the tears on his cheeks, the blood on his lips. He had tried to grab the child, to both save Him and to confirm that humanity still existed. But the child disappeared from his very arms. He had felt no skin, just air. Was the child a ghost? Or was he going mad?

Bralyn thought it was the work of Him. Him was the reason that he woke up with scratches every morning. Him was the creature that followed him in his dreams, visible and yet not.

Him had been there since the day Danskai had fallen. Since the day Evangeline had died.

Him was never more than a shadow.

Him was never more than a whisper in his ear.

Him was the sound of Evangeline's dying screams.

Him was the final settlement in Danskai hitting the embers.

Him was his only companion and his worst enemy.

Bralyn began to run again, forward or so he thought. Him danced beside him, a slight darkness in the sun lightened sand. Bralyn continued to run, not caring for vengeance or any type of understanding. He understood perfectly. He was stuck with Him, and his bringing to a new city may cause further devastation. But Bralyn was Him now. And Him was Bralyn.



Step by Step by Dale Curran

All he had known was the metal bars and the rubber wheels. The numbing pain in his bottom and the stiffness and fatigue running up his arms, Andy sat in his bedroom staring out of the window down to the local football field. Kids dressed in red and blue kicking a football on a dark Sunday morning.

"Why don't we get ready and have a nice stroll through the park?"

Andy turned his head to the familiar voice, his mother stood in the doorway dressed in her winter clothes, her grey beanie revealing strands of auburn hair and her coat white as snow with red buttons enlaced down the front.

"I'd rather watch here," he sighed. His eyes fixed on the football pitch.

"I know it's hard love but fresh air will do you good." Her hand felt warm on his shoulder, like the Sun breathing on the damp grass on a winter morning. She went to his wardrobe and pulled out a red and white scarf and wrapped it around Andy's neck.

"Don't want you catching a cold do we now?" she smiled as his eyes moved to hers.

Andy's mother grabbed hold of the handles and reversed him spinning him in a 360 angle until the football pitch vanished and replaced by his bedroom door.

"Ready?" his Mother said.

Andy nodded instead of saying yes as if the all the words were lost to him. With a gentle push the wheelchair Andy was trapped in moved closer to the door until Andy pressed the brake.

"Wait, I want my boots. Dad's. They're in my wardrobe, could you get them for me?" he said hoping his mother wouldn't ask any questions. For a second he expected to

be bombarded with questions until he found his mother with her head in his wardrobe searching for the football boots. When she emerged, in her hands were two football boots, black boots with red patterns shaped like lightning bolts and the initials GM, Gary Morrison, Andy's father.

The lightning bolts to Andy shot out against the black, like whoever wore them could run as fast as lightning. Giving them to Andy, his mother pushed him out the door and out of the house.

The fresh snow was melting away by the rising sun the time Andy and his mother reached the park. Cyclists rode past, children ran past throwing what was left of the snow at other children and Andy was being pushed by his mother. All of his life consisted of running and fun and now all that seemed lost and replaced by a life sentence in a wheelchair ever since the crash. The naked trees stood tall in a line of columns as the concrete path stretched towards the football pitch. The air was fresh and cold on his face, forcing him to move the scarf an inch higher up to his mouth. As the path ended and the grass began Andy could see crowds of people watching the Sunday football league, local teams around the city playing against one another. A league where everyone knew Andy's name once, now the kids just call him the "The Boy in the Wheelchair".

The grass was bumpy compared to the smoothness of the concrete path but Andy didn't mind, his mother however had trouble pushing. Once they reached the side line of Andy's ex-team, his Mother secured the wheels.

"I'm just going to say hello to Hayley and Maria, I'll be

be back in a second." She said fixing his hat and scarf.
"Will you be okay?"

"I'll be fine" he reassured her.

When she was gone he watched the football match, the sound of cheers and the noise the football made when it came in contact with a boot made his past come rushing back to him. His father's football boots sat on his lap, he kicked his slippers off one by one until he only had red and white football socks on. With effort he placed each boot on and tied them up. The sound of the whistle, the ball smacking the post sent shivers over his body. The crowd cheering grew louder and louder until Andy found himself standing on the side line. The players stopped, still as stone. The cheers died down. And Andy's mother stood there watching her son take one step after the other.

"Can I have a kick?" he asked a young blonde boy.

Step after step, Andy approached the ball to the sound of cheers.

**REACH
YOUR
GOAL.**



The **BACK** **TO** **THE FUTURE**



Review!

By Becky Hayes

The Back to the Future films have always been a favourite of mine. Released in 1985 each film in the trilogy is a classic and they all still even appear on our TVs today; on the odd Saturday or Sunday afternoon when a yearly festival or bank holiday is close by. I obviously have a love for all things Sci-fi and Fantasy, and it is easy to argue that Back to the Future offers both of these things. In this sense I may be a bit biased, but it is quite hard for me not to be when I'm sure Back to the Future played some part in my love for Sci-fi when growing up.

Michael J Fox offers a wonderfully entertaining character, Marty McFly, who you immediately grow fond of and hope will succeed. Despite the fact that the film is quite dated you are still able to easily relate and understand Marty's character. You go with him on his journey through time. Having watched all the films I could never imagine anyone else playing his role. It surprised me to know that this could have actually been the case! Eric Stoltz was set to play the role originally as Michael J Fox was busy filming for the TV series Family Ties. Luckily the filming times were eventually altered and Mr Fox was able to take his place as one of his most iconic roles.

Christopher Lloyd plays an equally entertaining character in the franchise, Dr. Emmett "Doc" Brown. Famous for his crazy mad-professor attitude and iconic hair, he brought an equal amount of both humour and seriousness to all of the films. The running issue with all the different time lines could have been relatively confusing if we didn't have Doc there to explain to Marty what exactly needed fixing in order to rectify the time streams. I particularly liked seeing a different side to Doc in the last film when he

meets Clara. It's nice to see that he, like Marty, manages to find someone to be with and share his time-travelling secrets!

The only slight problem I had with the ending was the fact that throughout all three films Doc constantly talks of how he wishes he never created his time machine. In the last film he eventually asks Marty to actually destroy it, and we all think that's that. But it isn't. The DeLorean may now be dead but Doc has only gone and created a humongous time-travelling train for him and his family to travel in! I guess some people never learn.

*Overall, I love all three of the *Back to the Future* films, but having to analyse them I would say that the first film is the most iconic and unique in itself because it was the first and started off the successful franchise.*

However, on a more personal note I also really liked the last film, despite it having more mixed critic reviews than the other two. I actually found the old western settings to be quite a fresh addition to the franchise and I think the story really rounded off the end of the franchise quite nicely.

*If for some crazy reason you haven't seen the *Back to the Future* franchise, do! They're all classics that everyone has to watch at least once in their lives.*



Eragon - Book Review

by Tasha Williams

I recently read *Eragon* as part of my dissertation research as I am interested in young adult fantasy and had heard that the Inheritance series by Christopher Paolini was a prominent and recent case study that I could use.

Despite the bad reviews I read for this book on *Goodreads* and *Amazon* due to how similar the plot is to that of *Star Wars*, personally I enjoyed it and never realised this common comparison throughout the whole time of reading it despite being a *Star Wars* fan myself. Storylines will always overlap or be similar to something that has been written before so I try and treat every story as unique whenever I read it.

In terms of *Eragon*, I found the story to be a breath of fresh air in the fantasy genre, with the typical story of an orphan being left to fulfill a quest or his destiny as expected from the stereotypical fantasy genre. However, the character of Eragon was intriguing as was reading the mental connection shared between Eragon and his female dragon Saphira. I enjoyed being able to see Eragon's thought path as he decided what he wanted to do, and enjoyed that Paolini didn't make Eragon someone who instantly wanted to be a hero- throughout a fair bit of the book Eragon considered simply giving up, not helping others and going back to a normal life which is something not many characters consider despite being a very plausible option.

This story left me wanting more and despite its length, I had it finished within days. I was positively glued to it and I can't wait to read the next one - *Eldest*. *Eragon* has definitely inspired me to write and read more fantasy and has proven that fantasy for young adults can be written effectively and be as gripping as any cult fantasy novel.

9/10





Thailand Ventures 2013

with Tasha Williams!

So this year I applied to be a volunteer English teacher in Thailand for a charity named VESL. I had to raise £990 in order to go and thanks to a great many people I achieved my goal and left for Thailand on the 13th June, leaving the lovely Becky in charge of the magazine. I was terrified to say the least, as I'd never really been away from home before, and here I was, going away for 6 weeks to the other side of the world with people I barely knew and to stay in a country that had a completely different culture to England and a different language that I knew nothing other than hello in! (Sawadeeka/Sawadeekrap for those interested!)



After two very long flights (6-7 hours felt long to me, I'd never really travelled for more than a few hours before!) we arrived in Bangkok and my god was it insane! The heat hit me instantly as I got off the plane, it made no sense to me, it was LATE AT NIGHT and it was roasting!



We got our cases and then started the seemingly impossible task of finding a taxi to the nearest bus station, as we hadn't booked internal flights so we thought we'd just get a bus. 12 hour bus, nothing right? Oh how wrong we were! After finally

communicating with about 10 different taxi guys with failed hand signals, we got in a taxi and sped through Bangkok at a ridiculous speed, the drivers must have amazing spacial awareness, using the hard shoulder as a lane and everything. I remember thinking to myself 'Jesus Christ, I'm going to die before I even get to Chiang Rai!' As you may have guessed, I didn't die, and we started our 12 hour bus drive, shattered hungry and stinking (EW!) It definitely felt longer than



twelve hours, and I couldn't sleep so I ended up just looking at the scenery as we travelled up to the very north of Thailand, to Chiang Rai where our journey would truly start.



We were greeted at the bus station by some VESL representatives and were quickly whisked away to a nearby hotel for a much needed wash, sleep and meal! After a great day there relaxing, our host families came to pick us up the following morning. I remember seeing all these potential families stood

there looking at us and I was panicking about how I would communicate, what I'd say when I met them and more importantly if they'd like me! We watched everyone get paired off and eventually me and my partner Amy were matched with Napa, the main teacher at Lai Thung School, where we would be teaching and also the director of the school (we never DID find out his real name!) Napa and the



Director took us around Chiang Rai and Phayao where we saw the stunning White Temple and Phayao Lake and then we had 2 hour drive to Chiang Muan, the district where our school and home for 6 weeks was.

After getting settled at our school and having to make a quick dash to the hospital as Amy felt a bit sick (more on the hospital later!) we started teaching. I was so nervous at first, worried that I wouldn't be able to teach these kids properly and that my being there would be a waste of time. To make it easier and to settle my nerves, Amy taught my first few lessons with me. We split up the kids (about 30 of them, maybe less) into two groups. I took the younger kids named in year groups 1,2,3 and Amy had the older 4,5,6. After a few awkward minutes, the lesson began to flow and went quite well. However over time, me and Amy decided to teach on our own, and she took 1,2 and 3 as I realised I'm awful with little kids, much better at teaching the older ones. My class only had 7 kids in but they were all



amazing, so dedicated to their work and to being kind to the teacher. Whenever I came in the classroom, they put the fan on for me as they knew I wasn't good with heat and they even fought with each other to carry my stuff to and from lesson for me. I taught them a few games such as Hangman and What's the time Mr Wolf which proved to be a real hit as they demanded to play it every lesson. We went over topics such as clothing, time, numbers, weather and some of them even remembered phrases I'd said in the classroom such as 'english books out' or 'desks away' and even asked me these things upon entering the classroom. They were truly a delight to teach and appreciated the little they had and made me feel like part of a huge family.



My host mum, Napa was also fantastic. She made sure we saw the rest of the group regularly, as well as taking us for dinner every single day and including us in any trips that she went on, including meeting her son and his fiancé. Napa is a truly delightful woman and I see her as my second Mum now, she was so caring and whenever one of our group had to go to hospital, there she was by our sides, caring for us and

singing to make us smile. Once I had to go into hospital and she even paid my bills until I could get to an ATM, even though the amount was extremely large to the Thai people. She was astounding and I hope I get to see her again.



Another great thing about my visit was the travelling on the weekends. We did so many amazing things such as riding on the backs of elephants, visiting caves and areas with wild monkeys and seeing waterfalls and all the other fantastic beautiful things that Thailand has to offer. We even travelled to neighbouring country Laos on a speedboat. We didn't have time to see everything even in the 6 weeks we were there, the country and it's people are fantastic, every single Thai person I met treated you as if you were their best friend, always willing to help and make sure

you were happy. They were so grateful that we were teaching their children an important life skill and that was clearly shown in the way they acted towards us, always smiling and complimenting us.



Upon leaving, we were blessed by a Buddhist

monk and had rope tied to our wrists by every single adult that we had met in the Chiang Muan area which we had to leave on for a few days to promote good luck, wealth, beauty, happiness, romance and many other things. It was emotional to say the least, having over 20 people blessing you and saying how much they care for you. Thailand was more than a trip to me, it was a whole

new taste of life, when I arrived in England I didn't fully feel at home for a while. And I know why now, despite how I felt homesick and fed up sometimes in Thailand, I have now realised that I have a second home in Chiang Muan, a loving second Mum, a fantastic community and



some great friends that I have made, who all grouped together for this trip and were here for each other through hospital visits, money stress, travel confusion and many other things and though we may not speak again, I think we have all changed as people and that is through coming together through this great teaching experience in Thailand and making connections and memories with the beautiful people who live there. I will never forget everything I did there, and I will definitely go back one day and bring my loved ones, as they need to experience the generosity, beauty and wonder that is Thailand.



*And what about the **Next Issue?***



(CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

More info will
be available soon at:

www.theseuspublishing.weebly.com