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Editorial

Tina Cooper

Christine Lowentrout

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Mythcon 51: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

Albuquerque, New Mexico • Postponed to: July 30 – August 2, 2021



Abstract

Welcome to *The Mythic Circle* #11. This issue offers some variations on a theme of Winter-into-Spring, particularly Doug Rossman's notable "The Theft of the Sun"; let us know if you enjoy the seasonal parallelism. You'll also notice that we continue to run a lot of poetry, including a series of poems by Dirk Verhulst which delicately probe the terror in everyday life, and a wryly lyrical series by Clelie Rich.

Additional Keywords

Mythic Circle; Editorial

EDITORIAL

Welcome to *The Mythic Circle* #11. This issue offers some variations on a theme of Winter-into-Spring, particularly Doug Rossman's notable "The Theft of the Sun"; let us know if you enjoy the seasonal parallelism. You'll also notice that we continue to run a lot of poetry, including a series of poems by Dirk Verhulst which delicately probe the terror in everyday life, and a wryly lyrical series by Clelie Rich.

Lynn Maudlin noted in our last editorial that poetry submissions would be closed until April, but we are not working through our backlog as quickly as we had hoped; so we are extending the closure through August. Poetry will reopen on September 1.

We welcome new author-subscribers! If you have a friend who would be interested in joining our dialogue, consider telling the friend about us. The heart of *The Mythic Circle* lies in the letters of comment, and we are actively searching for authors who will subscribe and participate.

We thank you, our subscribers, for your support.

--Tina Cooper and Christine Lowentrout

LETTERS OF COMMENT

Dear Lynn, Christine and Tina--

I've not gotten back to *The Mythic Circle* #9 for a couple of months now, so maybe I'd best say something about what I did get read. I don't have much to say about some of the stories that I read--Hood's rewriting of Poe in "Sweet as Muscatel," for instance, or Kennedy's "An Unearthly Pun."

But I do have a comment about Kay Fortunato's "We Call It North Carolina." It seems to be that this is a typical amateur story in one respect--that of lack of conflict, and hence lack of plot. I hope I won't hurt Fortunato's feelings by jumping on her story, but it's always easier to discuss flaws than to point to good parts. So I'm deliberately ignoring her descriptive abilities, characterization, etc., to emphasize one important flaw.

I assume (not all others agree) that plot is based on conflict. A story normally opens with an actual or incipient conflict (any of the standard ones--Man vs. Man, Man vs. Society, Man vs. Himself, Man vs. Nature, Man vs. the Supernatural [Man is generic in this list; you can say Person if you wish]). The story gives several examples of this conflict in action, and the story is resolved by the protagonist winning, losing, running away-- something tied to the conflict.

Unfortunately, none of these things happen in any meaningful way in Fortunato's story. The reader is told about Stacy's panic a week before (Woman vs. Herself, caused by Woman vs. Nature or Magic), but this is just summary, not full dramatization. The meeting with Vern Banyman is peaceful; they discuss the odd way life is; and Stacy gets back into her world without a problem. This is an idyll; it's not a significant short story, for it's plotless.

Oh, yes, that's another assumption of mine--fiction without a plot can be an idyll, a character sketch, or a descriptive sketch, but it's not a true short story. It's ok to write idylls if that what one wants to do, but I'll make a prediction: none are going to sell to professional magazines. To create reader interest, a story has to have a conflict.

That's enough for this letter. I think my critique of "We Call It North Carolina" is valid within its limits, and I hope I've been assertive enough to cause some of the other readers to send you *their* understandings of plot.

Best wishes,

Joe Christopher
Stephenville, Texas

The Mythic Circle:

Let me begin by expressing my husband's and my appreciation for Lynn Maudlin's four years of effort on *The Mythic Circle*; we will deeply miss the unique blend of caring and humour she brought to her task of co-editing. And to the newly enlisted Tina Cooper, welcome.

Both the quantity of poetry in Issue 10 (just the right balance) and the quality were extraordinary. Charles Rampp's "17809 Vineyard Lane" had his usual quiet but satisfying charm. My favorite by Jill Solnicki was "Flutist," though perhaps my favorite line of hers is the one wherein she describes a meteor as "this seed the universe spat." Colleen Anderson's "The Vernal Queen" was very fine indeed.

I initially found Rhea Rose's "Dragon Sol" and "Eye of Miranda" a little too verbose, as though she were trying to squeeze a few too many magnificent words into a short space (a failing I recognize because I, alas, share it). This impression dimmed somewhat on a second reading, though I still think these poems are a little hard to get one's mouth around if read aloud; and I do believe one should write for the ear as well as the eye and the mind. Rhea's "Untitled," simple as it was, I found to be a perfectly enchanting, rhythmic little lullaby.

Owen Neill comes as close as any of MC's poets to writing structured verse; I would like to see him tighten up his structures even more, as he clearly has