Afternoon Discoveries: November 7, 2026

Speculative, Hybrid, Experimental, Short, & Flash Fiction

AMONG THE LETTERS
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Speculative, Hybrid, Experimental, Short, & Flash Fiction

A librarian folds rose petals into doorways, a woman finds lost pieces of herself in the dryer, and a tea estate waits on rain that will not fall. Today's short fiction comes from Translunar Travelers Lounge, Fractured Lit, Reckon Review, Clarkesworld, and X-R-A-Y, with small presses and independent magazines throughout. In the paid section, mirrored villages share a lake, a

ghost keeps house, and three boys walk the corn rows. The back shelf brings a Canadian magazine's thirty-five years, a translator's life between two homes, and Dunsany at his most mischievous.

All links in today's edition were checked against the linked publication, magazine, or publisher page on November 7, 2026.

Featured Discovery

One, Two, Inside, Outside, Twist - Beth Goder

Beatrice is a librarian with a degree in mathematics, a gift for strawberry tarts, and a habit of folding rose petals into openings onto other worlds. Every Sunday she peers through at other versions of herself, though none of them ever look back. Beth Goder builds the story like a folding pattern, layering a Queen of Stars, a bookish hedgehog, and a chorus of perfectly tuned frogs. The prose is playful, precise, and quietly tender about wanting to be seen. It is a small wonder from Translunar Travelers Lounge.

Read "One, Two, Inside, Outside, Twist" at Translunar Travelers Lounge

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The Discovery Desk

Going to Pieces - Chelsea Stickle

The narrator finds a piece of herself in the dryer, shrunken from the heat, and recognizes her old dream of becoming an Olympic gymnast. More pieces turn up at the coffee shop, at the doctor, and across a café table when a friend shares news of her own. Each fragment has a texture and a smell, and none of them will stick back on. Chelsea Stickle, whose micros have appeared in Best Microfiction, packs a whole season of midlife grief into a few hundred words. It is funny, sore, and exact.

Read “Going to Pieces” at Fractured Lit

A Concerning Lack of Rain in Ambawatte Estate - Moh Afdhaal

Kamal has taken over a Sri Lankan tea estate where rain now falls from engineered microclouds, and the rain has stopped working. His companion is Aamo, a beehive-shaped farm bot whose calm reports only deepen his frustration. While they wait on a maintenance ticket, Kamal remembers a bird’s nest his daughter once guarded through a cyclone. Moh Afdhaal, a civil engineer who writes when the world allows, gives the climate future a gentle and human scale. The ending arrives like weather you have been hoping for.

Read “A Concerning Lack of Rain in Ambawatte Estate” at Translunar Travelers Lounge

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Slot Machine Gods - Sarp Sozdinler

Nana says she has forgotten how to live, and soon she forgets how to cream her hands and wash her face. Her grandchild keeps the promise

made to Mother, caring for her patiently and gently. One day Nana announces she has forgotten how the world is supposed to end, and the pair head for a casino with turkey sandwiches in plastic triangles. Sarp Sozdinler, whose work appears in Wigleaf and the Pushcart Prize anthology, writes memory loss with dreamlike grace. The final hallway lingers long after reading.

Read “Slot Machine Gods” at Reckon Review

Fame Cycles of Pop-Gods - Cressida Roe

Debut day is hard for anyone, even a newly minted god waiting backstage for his first miracle. Hark can hear his worshippers murmuring about broken air conditioning and long weeks indoors, and he aches to fix it all at once. His priest wants a grand reveal instead, staged like a pop launch with wires threaded through his shirt. Cressida Roe turns celebrity, devotion, and burnout into a sly myth about what gods owe their fans. It is witty and surprisingly moving by its close.

Read “Fame Cycles of Pop-Gods” at Translunar Travelers Lounge

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Thank you for spending some time with this afternoon’s edition. Below this point are six more stories of mirrored villages, ghosts, stations, and summer fields, three pieces on speculative magazines and craft, and three special recommendations from the back shelf.

Special Recommendations can be found near the bottom of the article.

More From the Discovery Desk

Duet of Tears and Laughter - Jo Miles

Two villages stand in the same spot on the shore of a lake called Mirror, a world apart and close as fraternal twins. On still days, young Adya and her mothers play spot the differences with the reflection of Renna-ba across the water. One terrible night, they can only watch that other village burn. Jo Miles follows Adya into adulthood and a music that carries across worlds. This is hopeful fantasy that earns its joy, and its last scene glows.

Read “Duet of Tears and Laughter” at Translunar Travelers Lounge

All the Things He Loved Beyond Him - Scott Edelman

Ganz realizes he has died only when he finds himself hovering over his own body in the bedroom he shared with his husband, Kevin. The night before had been nearly perfect, with steak, red wine, Turandot on the turntable, and a row of Matisse lithographs. Now he can only watch as rooms empty, movers arrive, and new tenants fill the space. Scott Edelman, an eight-time Stoker finalist, writes a ghost story about love and taste rather than fright. The ending is quietly lovely.

Read “All the Things He Loved Beyond Him” at Translunar Travelers Lounge

The Exchange Service - R.T. Ester

Meka limps out of stasis into a steaming staging room with ninety-nine other bodies, feverish and hoping to find Kira again. He is a channel, one of the people a vast station uses to speak with the entity called starseer. Starseer has lost stars to a rival called moonbreaker and wants vengeance, while whole hospice worlds sit dark. R.T. Ester builds a strange, intimate novelette about diplomacy, grief, and being truly seen. It is ambitious science fiction with a warm centre.

Read “The Exchange Service” at Clarkesworld

Detasseling - Walker Minot

Three boys take summer jobs detasseling eight-foot corn the season after high school, riding a John Deere carrier into the sunrise. The farmer pays five dollars an hour plus lunch and almost never speaks. Walker Minot tells it all in the future past, through what Tyler, John, and Mark would each remember later. Their memories split over lunches, hunger, and evenings at home before their lives scatter. It is a short, luminous piece about friendship at the edge of change.

Read “Detasseling” at Reckon Review

Keepsake - Mark Williams

The narrator is nursing a beer in a Cooke City, Montana bar when a stranger from Indiana sits two stools down. The newcomer soon buys him a Coors and makes an offer involving buried gold, a graveyard, and a few Memphis pawn shops. All the narrator has to do is drive, dig, and fill the hole back in. Mark Williams, a poet and story writer from Evansville, plays the tall tale straight and lets the storyteller hedge his bets. The final turn is a wink.

Read “Keepsake” at X-R-A-Y

The Hush - Tracie Adams

A child sees something she was never meant to see, as Mama and the neighbours carry Daddy down to the creek under a swollen moon. Folks say that creek never gives back what it is fed. Long before that night, tins of brownies passed from hand to hand across town, and everyone understood what kind of night it had been. Tracie Adams, who writes from her farm in rural Virginia, gives Southern Gothic a flash-sized form. The town’s silence becomes a character of its own.

Read “The Hush” at Reckon Review

Beyond the First Shelf

Thirty-Five Years and Into the Future: Diane L. Walton, Edward Willett, and the Legacy of On Spec Magazine - Arley Sorg with Diane L. Walton and Edward Willett

On Spec has been publishing Canadian speculative fiction out of Edmonton for thirty-five years. In this Clarkesworld feature, Arley Sorg talks with longtime editor Diane L. Walton and author and publisher Edward Willett about the magazine’s past and what comes next. Walton recalls a life that ran from theatre school in Winnipeg to civil service

computers and the Writers' Guild of Alberta. The conversation is generous with practical detail about keeping a small magazine alive. It is essential reading for anyone who loves Canadian genre writing.

Read "Thirty-Five Years and Into the Future" at Clarkesworld

The Future Folding Into the Past: A Conversation with Xueting C. Ni - Arley Sorg with Xueting C. Ni

Xueting C. Ni grew up in Guangzhou among old alleyways and modern towers, then moved to the United Kingdom in 1993. She studied English in London and Chinese literature in Beijing, choosing literature over the sensible careers her family expected. For almost two decades she has worked across publishing, from contracts to production. In this conversation with Arley Sorg, she reflects on translation, editing, and carrying Chinese science fiction to new readers. Her sense of two homes gives the interview its quiet depth.

Read "The Future Folding Into the Past" at Clarkesworld

Seasons of Glass and Iron by Amal El-Mohtar - Kyle R. Garton

Kyle R. Garton reviews the Ottawa writer Amal El-Mohtar's collection for Strange Horizons, starting from the familiar praise of her prose. He argues that her sentences are not ornament but a love of language working at every level. The review moves through an epistolary romance written in magical marginalia, a dark fairy tale about a self-writing book, and a poem about relearning a lost language. Garton reads closely and quotes generously. It is a fine guide for readers new to El-Mohtar.

Read “Seasons of Glass and Iron by Amal El-Mohtar” at Strange Horizons

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Special Recommendations

The Star - H. G. Wells

A wandering body from deep space strikes Neptune, and the burning mass that results swings toward the inner planets. H. G. Wells follows the new star as it brightens night after night over cities, oceans, and frightened crowds. Tides rise, snow melts, and the whole world watches the sky together. The closing turn shifts to Martian astronomers who find the damage surprisingly slight. It remains one of the great short pieces of early science fiction, collected in Tales of Space and Time.

Read “The Star” at Project Gutenberg

The Hoard of the Gibbelins - Lord Dunsany

The Gibbelins eat nothing less good than man, and they bait their larder with a treasure beyond reason. Their tower stands across the river that surrounds the world, where burglars row easily to the steps. Alderic, Knight of the Order of the City and the Assault, studies every failed thief for years before attempting the hoard himself. Lord Dunsany tells it with dry wit and a perfect sting. Find it in The Book of Wonder, which Project Gutenberg offers free.

Read “The Hoard of the Gibbelins” at Project Gutenberg

How Nuth Would Have Practised His Art upon the Gnoles - Lord Dunsany

Mr. Nuth is the finest burglar in business, so discreet that the edges of stolen tapestry are scarcely noticed. His terms are moderate, with so much cash down and so much in blackmail afterwards. One day he takes an apprentice and sets out to rob the Gnoles, whose wood no sensible person enters. Lord Dunsany narrates with mock respectability, letting the dread gather in what he leaves unsaid. It is a perfect short tale for an autumn evening.

Read “How Nuth Would Have Practised His Art upon the Gnoles” at Project Gutenberg

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Thank you for spending part of your day among the letters with us.

Many of today’s stories ask what it means to be seen across a distance. A librarian peers into other worlds, a god waits for his fans, and two villages watch each other across still water. Others hold memory close, from a grandmother at a slot machine to three boys who would remember the corn. Short fiction lets those small doorways open wide. We hope a few of these pages keep you company this weekend.

I hope one of today’s pieces gives you somewhere worth staying for a while.

Take care!