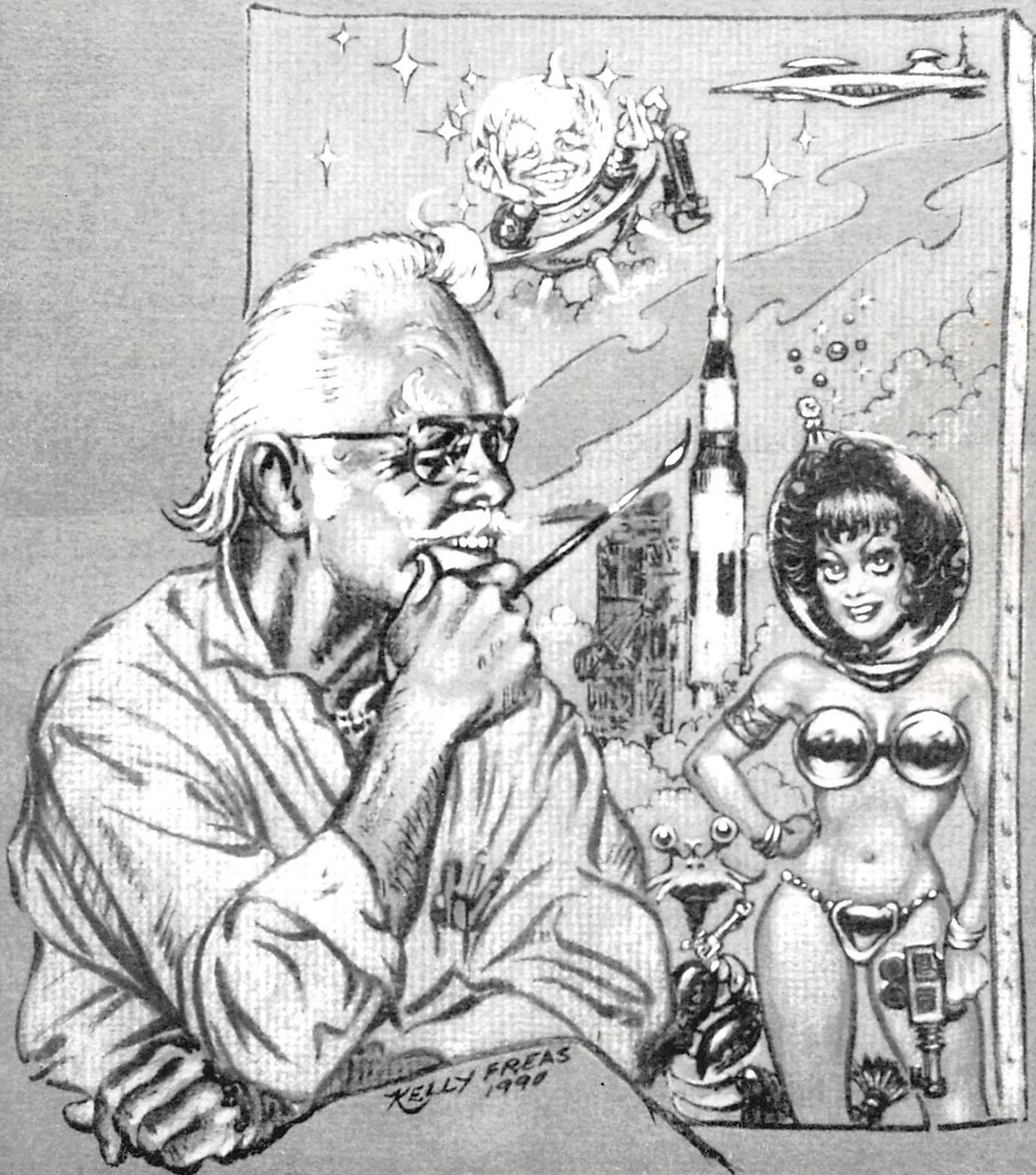
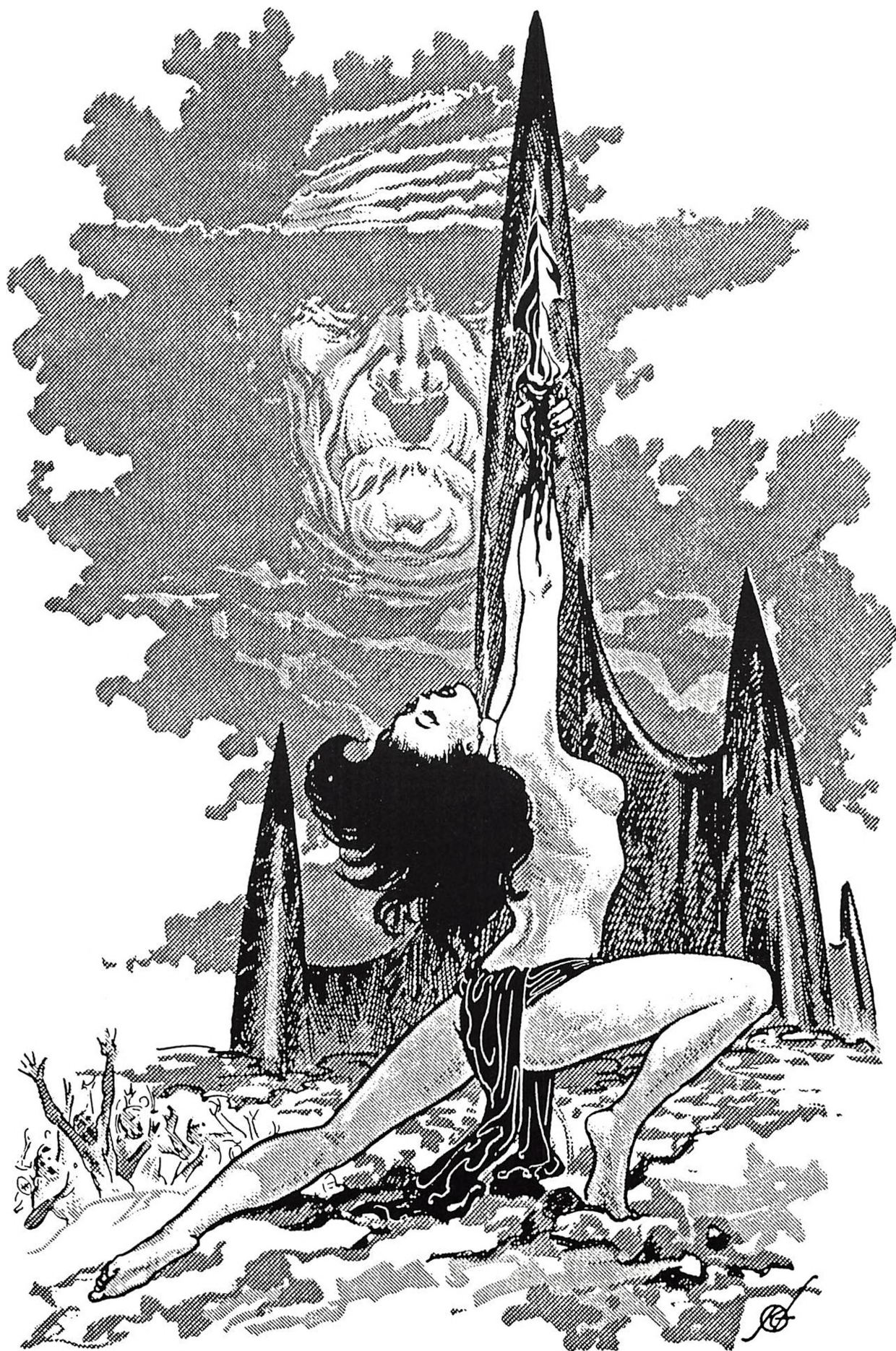
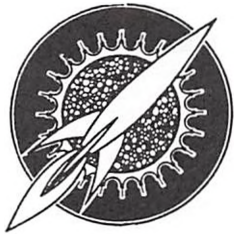


PHILCON[®] 90

The 54th Annual Philadelphia Science Fiction Conference







PHILCON[®] 90

The 54th Annual Philadelphia Science Fiction Conference

November 16th, 17th, & 18th 1990



Principal Speaker

**Fritz
Leiber**

Guest Artist

**Frank
Kelly
Freas**

Special Guest

**Ellen
Kushner**

Special Guest

**Michael
Bishop**

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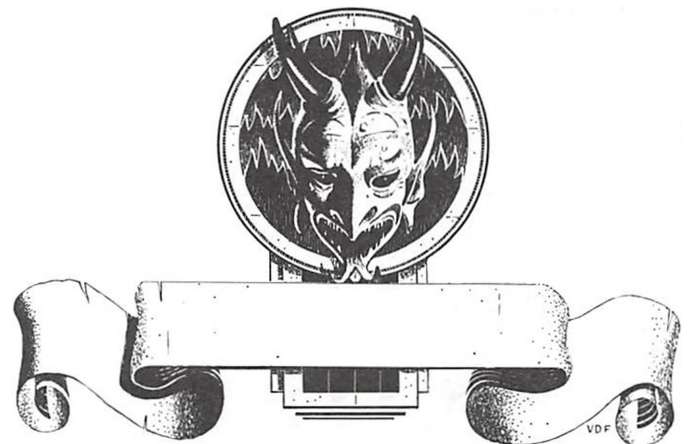
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Bob Walters 13, 30, 31

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A Message From Our Chairman

On behalf of all the members of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, I welcome you to Philcon 1990, the 54th Annual Conference of the Society. Whether you are a grizzled veteran of many Philcons past or joining us for the first time this year, we believe you will find enough activities and events at Philcon to make your stay a memorable one.

We continue to take pride in the quality of our guest speakers. Fritz Leiber, our Principal Speaker, is a writer whose work runs the gamut of science fiction, horror and fantasy. While there is no "typical" Leiber story, his work combines light humor and satire, a strong descriptive sense and remarkable power. Fritz Leiber is one of those rare authors whose work remains equally popular with professional in the field as with his many fans.

Although justly famous for his Fahrd and Grey Mouser heroic fantasy tales, Leiber has also contributed major works at the novel length. These include "The Big Time", "The Wanderer", "Our Lady of Darkness", and "A Specter's Haunting Texas"

Perhaps alone among his peers Leiber has won major awards for work in all three genre categories - science fiction, horror and fantasy. The degree of his sway over the field can be judged from his array of awards - six (6) Hugos, three (3) World Fantasy Awards, and a Grand Master of Fantasy Award.

Some writers are fortunate enough to crown a long career of achievement by being named as a Guest of Honor at a World Science Fiction Convention. Fritz Leiber has earned this distinction twice - thus far. We are pleased that he chose to add Principal Speaker - Philcon 1990 to his long and growing list of accomplishments.

Our Guest Artist, Frank Kelly Freas, has been a major influence in the field since he broke into it in 1950. His work makes its lasting impression by combining a realistic rendering of fantastic elements with his trademark humor. Freas has been widely studied among those hoping to make a name for themselves in the field of science fiction illustration. The degree of the acceptance of his work from fans can be judged from his twenty (20) Hugo nominations and ten (10) Hugo Awards for Best Artist. We are pleased to present his work once again to Philcon attendees.

Michael Bishop, one of our Special Guests, is an ambitious author whose complex and engaging work is in the forefront of "literary" science fiction. Among his works are: "No Enemy but Time", "Ancient of Days" and "A Little Knowledge." We are pleased to welcome him back to Philcon after too long an absence.

Our other Special Guest, Ellen Kushner, is one of the brightest lights and most popular of the newer authors. She made her dramatic debut in the field with her first novel, "Swordspoint" and followed that success with her recent "Thomas the Rhymer." We look forward to following her fantasy work for years to come.

The Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, which sponsors Philcon, is an organization with a year round array of activities. Our regular membership meetings are held on the second Friday of each month at 8:00 p.m. at International House, 7701 Chestnut Street in Philadelphia. A program featuring a talk by a prominent author or artist in the field follows the business meeting and begins at 9:00 p.m. Upcoming guests include the artist David Mattingly on December 19, 1990, author Craig Shaw Gardner on February 9, 1991, and author Michael Resnick on March 15, 1991.

In addition, our Book Discussion Group holds monthly meetings to Critique a classic or currently popular work in the field. The Special Events Groups attends movies, exhibitions, and events of interest to the science fiction world throughout the year.

For more information about the society, please write to us (include your name and address) at the following address:

Philadelphia Science Fiction Society
P.O. Box 8303
30th St. Station
Philadelphia, PA 19101

In the meantime, enjoy yourself at Philcon 1990!

Oz Fontecchio
Chairman, Philcon 1990

Guests of Philcon 1990

Martin Silver Arcturus	Steven Gould	Mark Painter
Ellen Asher	Sharon Green	Susan Palwick
Isaac Asimov	Kurt Griffith	Paul Park
Janet Asimov	David Harris	Charles Parker
John Baltadonis	David Hartwell	Sandy Petersen
Jill Bauman	Mike Hinge	Nick Pollata
N. Taylor Blanchard	Jeannett Holiman	Andrew Porter
Bryn Bernard	Alexandra Elizabeth Honigsberg	Ron Robinson
John Gregory Betancourt	Janet Kagan	Alen Rodgers
Michael Betancourt	Donald G. Keller	Mark Rogers
Dainis Bisenieks	John Kessel	Milton Rothman
Erick Blackburn	Tom Kidd	Charles E. Rupprecht
N. Taylor Blanchard	Ruta Kidolis	Charles Ryan
W. Alexander Brejcha	Rosemary Kirstein	Larry Schick
Will Brown	Tess Kissinger	Stuart Schiff
Ginjer Buchanan	Karl Kofoed	Julius Schwartz
Linda Bushyager	Eric Kotani	Darrell Schweitzer
Bryan Cholfin	Theodore Krulik	Tony Sciarra
Thomas Claeson	Ellen Kushner	George Scithers
Hal Clement	Lissanne Lake	Harold Serenbetz
Greg Costikyan	Geoffrey Landis	eluki bes shahar
Greg Cox	Jody Lee	Findley Shaperio
Charles Devine	Fritz Leiber	Hannah Shapero
Charles Dougherty	Shariann Lewitt	Charles Sheffield
Gardner Dozois	Kathy Logue	Josepha Sherman
Scott Edelman	Richard Lyon	Susan Schwartz
Janice Eisen	F. Gwynplaine MacIntyre	Margo Skinner
Michael Flynn	Mike Manley	Paul Sorton
D. Douglas Frantz	Joe Mayhew	Nancy Springer
Frank Kelly Freas	Roger McBride-Allen	Tim Standish
Laura Brodian Kelly Freas	Arron McCellon	Steve Stiles
Guy Frechette	Keith Minnion	Michael Swanwick
Sharon Frechette	Laura Mixon	Mercy Van Vlack
Esther Friesner	Judith Moffet	Kenneth Von Gunden
Gregory Frost	Pat Morrissey	Bob Walters
Alexis Gilliland	James Morrow	Lawrence Watt-Evans
Dolly Gilliland	Sam Moskowitz	Claire Wolf
Ken Gale	Mike Moyer	Ron Wolotsky
Teel James Glenn	Shelley Ott	Jack Womak

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Vice-Chairman Sylvia Vega de Lombardi
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John Prenis (Aug-Dec)
Treasurer Jim Wills
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Assistant Deborah Snyder, Donna M. Smith
ASFA Liaison Bob Walters

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Flyers Mark Trebing
Assistant Margaret Trebing
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Assistant Sydney Weinstein

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Assistant Carol Adams
Artists' Workshop Bob Walters
Exhibitions Becky Kaplowitz
Filking Crystal Hagel
Filksong Contest Carol Kabakjian
Films Tony Finan
Assistant Sharon Carroll
Gaming Room John Desmond
Assistant Brian Kleger
Green Room Barbara Higgins
Assistants Joyce Carroll, Rosemarie Freeman
Postal Cancellation ... Timothy Binder, Becky Kaplowitz
Programming Operations Todd Dashoff
Science Programming Lew Wolkoff
Video Mark Kerns
Assistant John DeWeese

Masquerade

Masquerade Beth Paczolt Weiner,
George Paczolt, Rob Himmelsbach
Green Room Sue de Guardiola
Photo Ken Warren

Masquerade (continued)

Registration .. Vicky Warren, Helene Deeley, John Syms
Sound D. Jeannette Holloman, Sara Paul,
Ron Robinson, Don Weiner
Technical Alex Latzko, Boots, Sue,
Michael Tartaglio & team
Video Jim Rollbauser
Workshop Marty Gear, Bobby Gear,
Chuck Whitney, Sharon Whitney,
Kathy Sanders, Drew Sanders

Art Show

Art Show Yoel Attiya, Joni Brill Dashoff
Assistants Chip Hitchcock, Sharon Sbarsky
Auctioneer Joe Mayhew
Sales Sharon Sbarsky
Security Wayne Houseknecht, Kirsten Houseknecht
Staff .. Bonnie M. Atwood, Ted Atwood, Kristina Blanco,
Rik Boutin, Todd Dashoff, Pam Fremon,
Karen Harris, Rick Katze, Stacey Kimmel,
Erica Lilly, North Lilly, Winton Matthews,
Heather Preston, Pat Ritter, Jennie Roller,
Dale Sharrick, Victoria A. Smith, V.M. Wyman

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Baby Sitting Winona Whyte
Con Suite Carol Kabakjian
Assistants Ann McKnight, Rich Kabakjian
Dealers' Room Janis Fontecchio, Ira Kaplowitz
Den Christine Nealon
Staff Rachel Boone, Bill Ladson, Bill Reichart
Information Lee Weinstein
Assistant Diane Weinstein
Logistics Bob Schwier
Operations Laura Syms
Assistant Larry Gelfand
Staff Pat Betz, Leslie Danneberger
Personnel Anne Norton, Mike Nelson
Quartermaster Hank Smith
Registration Rich Kabakjian
Assistant Marie Schwarzl, Carol Kabakjian
Sales Pete Radatti
Transportation Anne Norton, Jim Wills

What's Happening at Philcon

Special Guests

Fritz Leiber

The genre's most decorated author - six Hugos, three Nebulas, three World Fantasy Awards and Grand Master of Fantasy - in a featured (and rare) East Coast appearance.

Frank Kelly-Freas Slideshow

Ten time Hugo winner shows his best Art.

PSFS November Meeting

Featured speaker - Michael Bishop - former Philcon Principal Speaker's triumphant return.

The Ellen Kushner Hour

One of SF's brightest rising stars. Be there.

General Interest Track

My New Ending for The Odyssey: Rewriting The Classics

An exercise in hindsight, with a (hopefully) humorous perspective. If you could, are there any classics you'd like to rewrite or improve? Does, for instance, the ending of Childhood's End make emotional sense? I have my new ending worked out . . .

The Necessity of Skepticism

This should be more than just New Age-bashing. Shirley McLaine is such an easy target. The premise is that the SF/fantasy writer must maintain some degree of skepticism because fantastic literature is the art of deliberately making things up.

Words and Pictures: Written SF vs. Film SF

Is there really a 30-year gap between what's going on in written SF and what Hollywood thinks is new and exciting? Are the movies just now moving into the '60s, or haven't they gotten that far?

Tom Clareson Slide Show on SF Art

A leading scholar illuminates the history of SF art.

Neglected Authors

Panel participants aside, which writers deserve far more attention and acclaim than they're getting?

Has Splatterpunk Run Its Course?

Steven King said that if you can't horrify 'em, terrify 'em, and if you can't do that, go for the grossout. But after too many slasher films and Fangoria Photos, is the grossout still possible?

Seeing Pink Unicorns, or the Five Most Ridiculous Stories I've ever Written (or Read)

The untraditional Midnight Humor Panel.

Beyond the Pointy Ears: What Will REAL Aliens Be Like?

They will be the product of an entirely different evolutionary system, and will not be members of the Actors' Guild. Alien's physiology, psychology, sociology. Can we really communicate with/befriend/trade with another species?

Magic Realism

Is this a new and significant kind of fantastic literature, or just an academic buzzword for respectable authors who don't want to be associated with that Sci Fi and Trilogy stuff. This panel certified elf-free.

Is the One-Book Trilogy a Thing of the Past?

The proliferation of multi-book novels/series etc., Threat or Menace?

Form vs. Content: Too much Style

Do these terms actually mean anything, or, as Samuel Delany has suggested, are style and content actually the same thing? Yet James Blish set down as a Rule, SF must have content. It must be ABOUT something.

Fritz Leiber Appreciation

A survey of the principal speaker's many accomplishments.

The Future is Really the Present: The Influence of Political Events on Science Fiction

Some of the New Worlds clique once suggested that SF "futures" are, at best, about the present. Thus The Space Merchants is really about the 1950s, and 1984 distinctly addresses 1948. Beyond the obvious level of topical news stories translated into SF, how do current events influence the SF we read (and write)?

Is Nuclear Doom Doomed?

Or, are we too optimistic when we suggest that, in light of recent world events, the Nuclear Holocaust tale is no longer convincing?

SF for Morons: Great Bad Books (Why bad books sell)

So, if they're so bad, why do people keep reading them? Reading is an ultimately democratic activity. Does this make it, and publishing, inherently a matter of lowest common denominator?

The Image of the Witch in Fantastic Literature

Or, the evolution of the Halloween Hag into something more interesting and sympathetic. The witch as archetype vs. the witch as stereotype.

Neglected Sciences

What sciences or areas of technological advance have been overlooked by science-fiction writers in the endless quest for fresh story material?

The Last, Very Last (We Promise), Midnight Horror Panel

A Travesty.

Scaring the Reader 3/4 to Death

Half just isn't good enough.

SF in the Schools

How it is taught, and how it should be taught.

Meet the Pros

Step carefully while in the presence of the Demi-Gods of Science Fiction.

Fans and Fanzines Aren't What They Used to Be.

It isn't just that the mimeo may be a thing of the past, but that traditional fandom itself is changing . . . or becoming an endangered species?

Fantasy Worlds I'd Like to Live In

Of course many of the most interesting stories take place in worlds you wouldn't want to live in. Mervyn Peake may have been a genius, but most of us are not about to move to Gormenghast.

Classics Come of Age, or THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS is 21 today

Why do some books survive and speak to readers year later, when other, enormously popular and even influential ones do not? How well do the classics of the past hold up today?

Art Show

Do you know why you're enticed to buy that SF or fantasy book? Because it's written by your favorite author; the title is intriguing; and sometimes because the cover art catches your eye! Come see the original paintings for some of those book covers; interior illustrations for Asimov's, Analog or your favorite comic book; glasswork, sculptures and jewelry; and even humorous sketches about fandom.

Most of the artwork displayed is for sale by written bidding. Limited edition photoprints are available for direct sale in the Print Shop located inside the Art Show. There's something for everyone's interest, taste and budget to take home and hang on their own wall.

Artist's Track

The Art of the Costume

Dressing up and down - past and future costuming.

Illustrators of the Future

Frank and Laura Kelly-Freas talk about the contest, which encourages aspiring illustrators by offering three \$400 quarterly prizes and a \$4,000 annual grand prize, plus an opportunity to illustrate an upcoming volume of "Writers of the Future"

Computer Art

What the mind and the chip have wrought.

F&SF Sculpture

3-D materials and techniques in this expanding field.

The Continuing Saga of the Pulps

A checkered history unfolds - the proud and the profane.

The Comics - Not Stand-up!

Comic book artists talk about art, SF and the critical doghouse.

The Art Director

Two of the species explain all.

Cover Art: The Insiders Tell All

This will just about cover it.

SF Photography

More than your average SLR.

Samurai Cat Madness

Mark gets crazy. Some fine block work - fun for all.

Real and Unreal in Space Art

The colours out of JPL's space telescope are brighter than you think.

Costumer's Track

Masquerade

A conclave of the most uniquely dressed people in the city of Philadelphia (and the surrounding vicinity stretching for some distance up and down the Atlantic seaboard).

This year the competition will include a Craftsmanship category, in addition to Whole Costume award and the other usual categories.

This year we are privileged to have among our judges Barbara Higgins, a member of the Lunatic Phringe (The Philadelphia Costumer's Guild).

KnightFighters

Presenting "The Actionmaster Combat Show". How to stage a fight without killing each other, and make it look spectacular.

Beginner's Costuming

Creating your first works of art out of existing material.

Historical Costuming

The evolution of the art throughout the ages (of fandom).

Fighting in Your Costume

Some suggestions by the experienced people from KnightFighters.

Costuming Past and Present

A slide show by the multi-award winning Kathy and Drew Sanders.

The Art of the Costume

Dressing up and down - past and future costuming.

Filking

Filking is the music of and for Science Fiction Fans. It includes songs about movies, books, fandom, characters, authors, and just about any other subject you can name in styles ranging from parody to folk to rock 'n' roll.

The Filksong Contest

Philcon would like to thank the following people for volunteering to be judges of the filksong contest:

Barbara Higgins
Carol Kabakjian
John Syms

The winners of the contest will be announced on Saturday, during intermission at the Costume Call.

Gaming

Friendly games, games for making friends, intensely competitive games.

Simple games and complex games.

Games of the future, of history, of worlds fantastic.

Games of intelligence and foolishness, of signfica and trivia.

Games for fifty hours straight.

And people who like to get together over gameboards.

Really nice people, they are. Drop in. Say hello.

Postal Cancellation

A Place in History: Philcon's Mark at the Adam's Mark

Calling all Philatelists! On Saturday only, a postmark commemorating Philcon 1990 and PSFS: 55 Years of Science Fiction designed by Tim Binder and Rebecca Kaplowitz will be offered for sale 9am to 4pm. If you've seen how the "Star Trek" Postmark has appreciated in value in just over one year, you're sure to agree this is a prime collector's item!

Science Track

Hal Clement - A new look at the Dark Planet

The noted hard SF writer re-examines the planet Pluto based on the latest astronomical research.

Dr. Charles E. Rupprecht - Real World Genetic Engineering

Dr. Rupprecht will discuss the work with a genetically engineered rabies vaccine that's now going on at the Wistar Institute in West Philadelphia's University City.

Larry Schick and Sandy Petersen - Computer Game Design

Two designer of computer games for Microprose Software tell how they do what they do.

Harold Serenbetz - Organlegging in the Real World

Mr. Serenbetz will discuss the work of the Delaware Valley Transplantation Program. (He'll be bringing organ donor cards. The guy wants your body. Please sign up.)

Dr. Findley Shaperio and Associate - The Solar-Powered Auto

A discussion of Drexel University's solar-powered auto research program by Dr. Shapiro and one of the student members of the research team. Note: Drexel's car finished thirteenth in this year's national solar powered cross-country race. (And ahead of the Penn and Villanova teams.)

Writer's Track

SF for the future: What is worth preserving?

Joe Mayhew, director of SF acquisitions for the Library of Congress, wants to know.

Writers' Workshop: Dealing with Rejection

Why the writer has to come back for more.

Writers' Workshop: Critique

Professional writers critique the works of beginners. It's not too late to enter your story, if you show up with ten copies.

Writers' Workshop: Editors

Leading book and magazine editors tell what their looking for - and what they aren't.

The State of the Short Story

For those of you not busy working on your trilogy.

Arcturus

Fantasy Jewelry

Custom Work

Crystal Design

**Using gold, silver, amethyst,
fossils, quartz, sugilite, crystal
ball, and ammonite.**

Your design or ours.

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Philadelphia, PA. 19127**



Art Show Rules

The Art Show is an exhibit of original SF, Fantasy and Fannish art in two-dimensional (e.g. sketches and paintings) and three-dimensional (e.g. sculpture) forms, executed by both professional and amateur artists. All artwork other than that marked "NFS" (i.e. "Not for Sale") is for sale by competitive (written and voice) bidding. There is also a Print Shop for direct sales of photoprints and lithographs, which is located along the common wall with the Dealer's exhibit area.

To bid on artwork you must:

- 1) Be a registered member of Philcon as evidenced by your Philcon badge.
- 2) Register at the Art Show Control Desk to receive your bidder number.

Each piece of artwork is tagged with an ID/bid sheet which lists the title of the piece, the medium and the name of the artist. The color of the bid sheet indicates the sale status of the artwork:

Blue: Artwork for display only, not for sale.

Yellow: Limited edition photoprint or lithograph for sale at a preset price only. A print with a yellow bid sheet will have a single line for a written bid. The first written bid, equal to the preset sale price, buys the print. Usually the artist will have submitted additional copies of the print for direct sale in the Print Shop at the same preset price.

White: Original art for sale to highest bidder, beginning at a minimum bid price. Original art with a white bid sheet will have several lines at the bottom of the sheet where the bidder can write down the amount he/she wants to bid for that item. The amount of the bid must be at least as much as the minimum bid specified by the artist and more than any preceding bid. Write your name, bidder number, and the amount of your bid legibly on the bid sheet. Do not cross out any written bids.

Written bidding will close at noon on Sunday. The Art Show will be cleared of all art at that time. Any artwork with less than three bids will be sold to the highest bidder. Artwork with three or more written bids will be entered in the voice auction. The voice auction will be held on Sunday afternoon from 1pm to 3pm in Ballroom E/F.

At the auction, the art is open to further bids by other people. Therefore the bidder should attend the voice auction to make further bids on pieces he/she is still interested in buying. The bidder making the highest bid by voice will buy the art at that price. If there are no voice bids, the art will be sold to the person who made the highest written bid.

Several words of warning: Keep track of all the bids you make; when placing a written bid on an item, assume you will be the winning bidder on ALL of them. This way you can avoid buying more than you can afford. If you have reached your limit of Art Show purchases, wait till you have lost an item to a higher bidder before bidding on another item. Also, return to the Art Show before it closes (Sunday, noon) to check the bid sheet and see which items, if any, you have won by written bid and which items will be going to voice auction.

Art Show Sales will be on Sunday afternoon from 1pm to 4pm in the Delaware Rooms 3/4. At this time you must pick up and pay for all items of art you have won by written bid or voice auction. Cash, Visa, Mastercard, travellers cheques, and personal check with ID will be accepted for payment as per rules set by the Philcon Treasurer. Proof of ID (at least one photo and proof of address) will be required of all buyers at the time of payment. You must pick up and pay for your own purchases. We **WILL** track down anyone who fails to collect and pay for artwork they have bought at Philcon.

Remember: you bid, you buy. Be Serious. Do not make a bid unless you mean it. A bid is a legal obligation to buy the art you bid on at the price you bid.

Weapons Policy

No weapons - guns, gun replicas, swords, Knives, lasers, model lasers, or anything that could be perceived as a weapon by the public - will be permitted at Philcon. The Philcon Committee has the final say as to what constitutes a weapon. Unfortunately, we must reserve the right to revoke the membership of anyone who refuses to comply with this policy.

The only exceptions to this policy are as follows: Registered participants in the Masquerade may wear a weapon, excepting guns and operational lasers, from one-half hour before to one-half hour after the Masquerade. Participants in the Costumers' Workshop may also wear weapons, with the same restrictions, while in the Workshop.

EXTRA

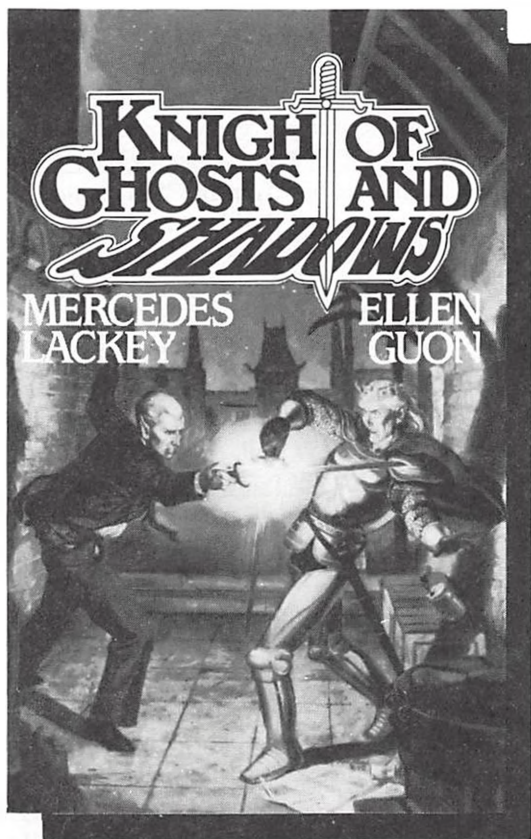
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SECRET RULERS OF AMERICA
REVEALED BY BAEN IN JULY

69885-0 * \$3.95

ELVES IN L.A.

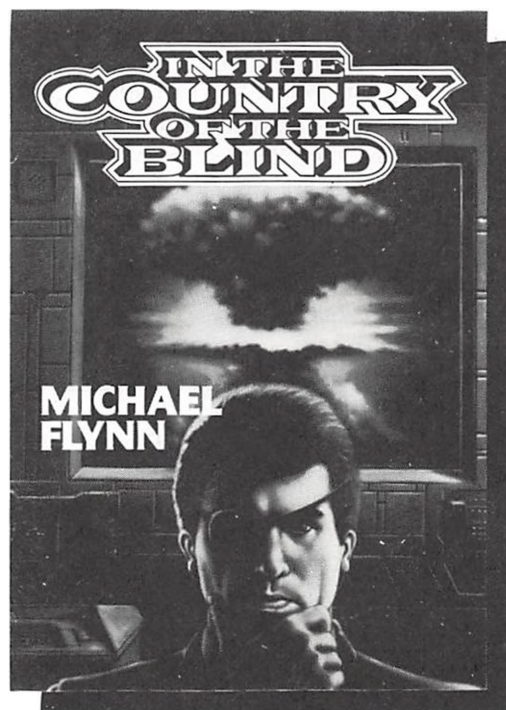
It would explain alot, wouldn't it? Half a millennia ago, when the elves were driven from Europe they came to--where else? Southern California. Happy at first, they fell on hard times after one of their number tried to force

the rest to be his vassals. Now it's up to one poor human to save them if he can. A knight in shining armor he's not, but he's their last hope, their *KNIGHT OF GHOSTS AND SHADOWS*...

SECRET SOCIETY RULES
HISTORY--PSYCHOHISTORY
WORKS !!!

What if there really were a secret conspiracy running things behind the scenes... and they were incompetent? History would have it that the 18th-century invention of a mechanical computer, the Babbage machine, was a failure. The history books lie.

Hugo-nominee Michael Flynn tells the story of the secret society that manipulates history through predictions made with their working model of the Babbage machine. Initially benign, now they are applying their knowledge to install themselves as the secret rulers of the world. Can they do it? Even though their methods are imperfect, unless they are stopped their success is assured. *IN THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND*, the one-eyed man is King...



69886-9 * \$3.95

Fritz Leiber, Wizard of Lankhmar

Fritz Leiber Jr. is a modest man, too modest in fact to praise himself in public, for all that his accomplishments are so numerous and manifold that for you or I to overlook them would have to amount to total blindness. He doesn't toot his own horn. So I shall have to toot it for him. If you will indulge, let me be immodest in his stead.

###

Fritz Leiber Jr. is the son of famous a Shakespearean actor. He grew up among theater folk and has occasionally trod the boards himself. Leiber Sr. starred in numerous films, and Fritz Leiber Jr has been in a few also, although acting has never been his primary profession. But no experience a writer has ever goes to waste, so you can be certain that the backgrounds in such stories as "The Four Ghosts in Hamlet" are completely authentic.

Fritz Jr. began in the fantasy field as a reader of Weird Tales and a correspondent of H.P. Lovecraft. It was Lovecraft who first recognized his early promise and urged him on. Some of Lovecraft's letters to Leiber may be found in Lovecraft's Select Letters V (Arkham House). As a result of this friendship, an early version of Leiber's "Adept's Gambit," which he was working on at the time, acquired Cthulhu Mythos elements, complete with invocations to Shub-Niggurath. (Which, however, came out again before publication.)

###

His first professional appearance was "Two Sought Adventure" in Unknown in 1939, although numerous early Leiber stories did appear in Weird Tales, including the influential "The Hound," which together with "Smoke Ghost" and a couple of others virtually invented what we call "contemporary urban horror." Indeed, the twice-filmed Conjure Wife (Unknown, 1943) is arguably the first distinctly modern horror novel, setting a pattern that wasn't to really catch on until the days of Ira Levin and Stephen King.

Leiber was hardly inactive in science fiction either. His actual first science fiction story, "The Never Come Back" (Future, August 1941) hardly make any impact, but he was soon a major star of John W. Campbell's Astounding, where the celebrated "Golden Age" was the in progress. His first two novels, Gather, Darkness! (1943) and Destiny Times Three (1945) were highlights of that era, and, more importantly, remain as vivid and exciting now as when they were first published.

Only with some perspective does the scope of Leiber's accomplishment become clear. There are many writers who,

to use a certain editor's cruel phrase, "are dead before their time." They are unable to change and adapt to new conditions, and may spend decades of their lives in the frustrating position of no longer being able to sell current their work, while past glories molder away in old magazines.

Not so with Leiber. It is a major theme of any Leiber appreciation that his work does not date into "period pieces." His earliest stories are now more that fifty years old and they still live.

In the 1940s, he was a major figure, contribution to the best magazines. In the 1950s he was a major figure, a stalwart of the then noisily-revolutionary Galaxy (his 1958 Galaxy serial, The Big Time, won the first of his many Hugos and is now an acknowledged classic) and the more quietly revolutionary Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction. Some other classics Leiber stories from the '50s include "A Deskful of Girls," "A Pail of Air," "A Bad Day for Sales," and "Coming Attraction."

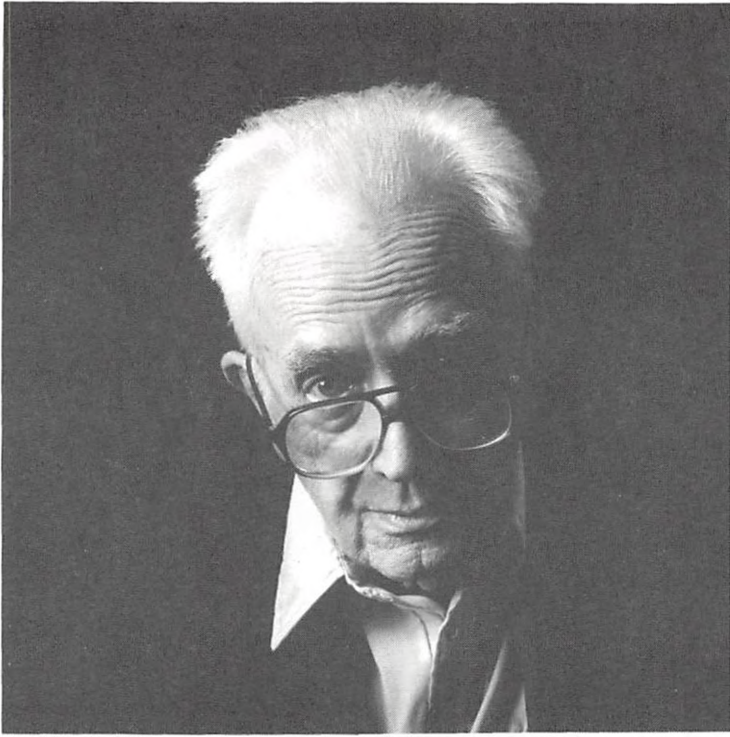
In the 1960s, he was a major figure: one thinks of his 1964 Hugo-winner, The Wander (1964) and of the splendid satire A Specter is Haunting Texas (1968), plus a more classic short fiction: "The Man Who Made Friends with Electricity," "The Secret Songs," "The Oldest Soldier," and many more.

In the 1970s . . . well, you get the idea. Another seminal horror novel, Our Lady of Darkness (1977), more awards. In the '80s, The Ghost Light, the splendid Fahfrd and Gray Mouser novel, Knight and Knave of Swords, plus more awards, including a World Fantasy Grandmaster for Live Achievement. I'm only skimming the surface. Leiber has also written a large body of essays which show him to be one of the most articulate and patiently intelligent critics the field has ever seen.

And I've only managed to mention the Fahfrd and Gray Mouser series once so far. It would be an astonishing oversight, had not Leiber so many other notable works of art (yes, the 'A' word, in the sense of the 'L' word, Literature, about which more anon) to his name.

The Mouser series. Yes. If one single thing identifies Fritz Leiber to the largest possible public, it is probably this particular sword-and-sorcery series, which set the pattern for so many other rogue-characters, loveable or otherwise, to follow. Fritz is certainly the best S&S writer since Robert E. Howard, which may not seem to be saying much -- he has Howard's strengths without his weaknesses, and more strengths too. What in the hands of another might have become an adolescent exercise in swordplay and brain-bashing, is in Leiber's colorful, mordantly witty, and genuinely sophisticated.

###



Leiber's secret, I think, is that he has never sold out. He has something unique to say. His work has a special texture which is to be found nowhere else. His imagination is like no other, and he gives it full play every time he sits down at a typewriter. Like all great writers -- (yes, the 'G' work too) -- he knows that his very individuality is the one thing he has to offer to the world. It is inexpressibly precious, not to be flattened out, streamlined, and shaped by conventional commercial forces. No formulas, no sharecropping for Leiber. He doesn't write the standard product. He doesn't meet standard expectations. He retains the ability to surprise and delight us. It's what we mean -- in the best sense -- by Literature: writing which lasts because it is genuine. It touches genuine human reality -- the terrors and wonders of a Leiber story are in the deepest sense true rather than mere rehearsed tropes -- and so the story remains valid as long as readers remain human.

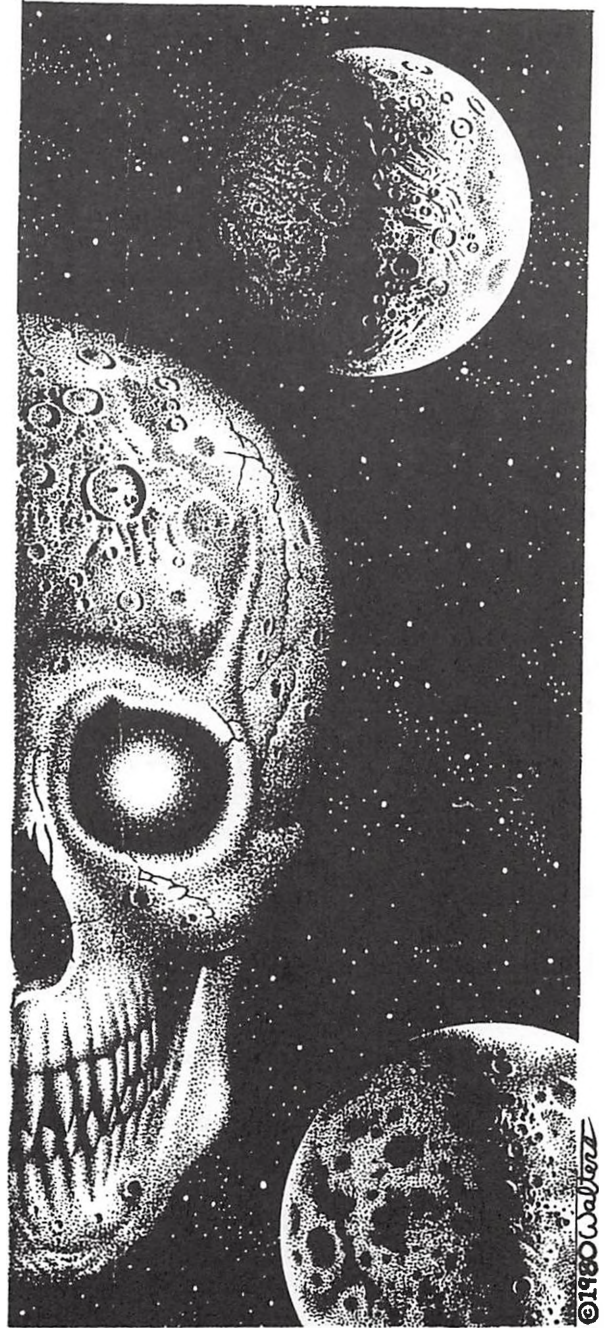
That is what really matters in the end. Assembly-line writers are ultimately interchangeable, to be replaced by more such assembly-line writers in the next generation. But there is only one Fritz Leiber, and only he can produce genuine, patented Fritz Leiber stories.

That is why we praise him now, when many of his contemporaries from the early and even middle parts of his career (or their works at least) are dust.

###

We are honored to have such a talent among us. The presence of Fritz Leiber in our field make us all a little bit more respectable.

-- Darrel Schweitzer



Highlights Fritz Leiber's Career

"Two Sought Adventure." (first published story), *Unknown*, August 1939.

Conjure Wife. *Unknown*, April 1943. First book publication: Witches Three (1952). Twayne, 1953 and numerous later editions. Filmed as Weird Woman (1944) and as Burn Witch Burn (1962).

Gather, Darkness! *Astounding*, May-July 1943. Pellegrini and Cudahy, 1950. Numerous later editions.

Night's Black Agents. Arkham House, 1947.

Destiny Times Three. *Astounding*, March-April 1945. *Galaxy* Novel 28 (1957).

The Green Millenium. Abelard Press, 1953.

The Big Time. *Galaxy*, March-April 1958. HUGO WINNER. Ace, 1961 (as half of a Double, the other half being a Leiber collection, The Mind Spider).

The Wanderer. Ballantine, 1964. HUGO WINNER.

"Gonna Roll The Bones" in Dangerous Visions, ed. Harlan Ellison. Doubleday, 1967. HUGO WINNER.

A Specter is Haunting Texas. *Galaxy* July-Sept 1968. Walker 1969.

"Ship of Shadows." *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, July 1969. HUGO WINNER.

"Ill Meet in Lankhmar." *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, April 1970. HUGO and NEBULA WINNER.

"Catch That Zeppelin!" *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, March 1975. HUGO and NEBULA WINNER.

Our Lady of Darkness. Berkley, 1977. WORLD FANTASY AWARD WINNER.

The Fahrd and Grey Mouser Series:

Swords Against Wizardry. Ace, 1968.

Swords of Lankhmar. Ace, 1968.

Swords in the Mist. Ace, 1968.

Swords Against Deviltry. Ace, 1970.

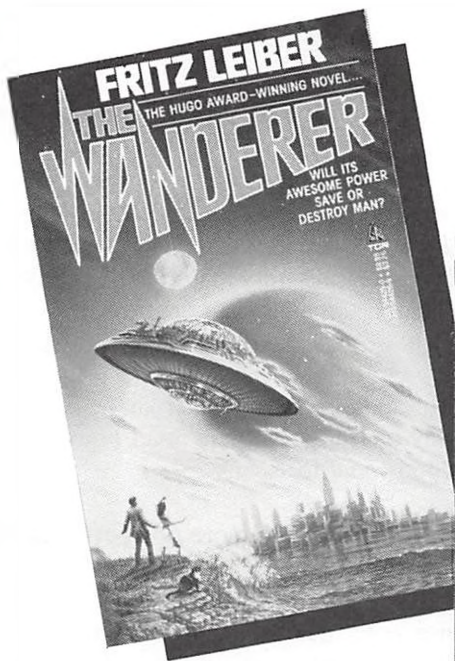
Swords Against Death. Ace, 1970.

Swords Against Ice Magic. Ace, 1977.

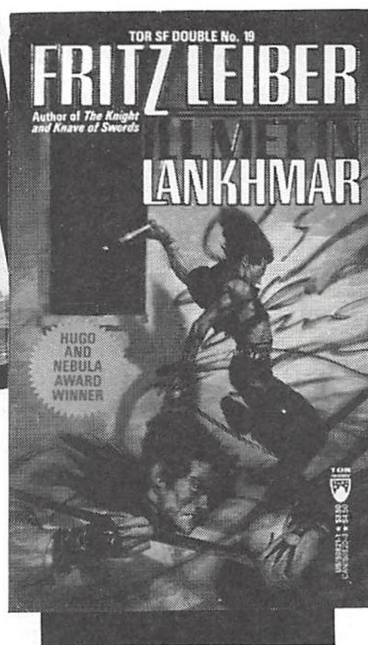
The Knight and Knave of Swords. Morrow, 1989.

-- Compiled by Darrell Schweitzer

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An Interview with Fritz Leiber

DS: You have something of a theater background, don't you? How has this effected your fantasy writing?

FL: Well it's effected my writing in many ways, and from very early on. You see my father was a Shakespearean actor primarily on the stage, and so when I was just a little kid I was exposed to the plays of Shakespeare. I mean, my father was learning Hamlet when I was four years old. I learned the part pretty well at the time myself. But the main thing is that I was exposed to Shakespeare and to drama. I know that's had a profound effect on my writing. In the first place, I do at times tend to fall into a kind of Shakespearean poetry in my writing. And also I tend to cast stories as if they were on the stage. Not too many of my stories have been dramatized but I've had a couple on Rod Serling's *Night Gallery*, and of course there's been *Conjure Wife*. I have not written for the stage, or television, or the movies, but I sometimes cast short stories in the form of one-act plays, with the stories consisting of stage directions and spoken dialogue. That's true of, say, "The Secret Songs" and "The Winter Flies" and "237 Talking Statues Etc."

DS: Do you think there's any potential in fantasy theater?

FL: Yes, I think it's a possibility, and I'd like to see some of it done to my stories. A. J. Budrys pointed out that *The Big Time* just cries out for dramatization because it's done very much as a play, because it holds to the classical unities. It all happens in one place; it takes about two hours of actual story time; and there's a unity of motivation running through it. And as it happens right here at Brown University and out in Berkeley, California there are projects on at the present to dramatize *The Big Time* as a stage play.

DS: It seems to me that fantasy has a unique advantage on the stage, because the audience can be induced to imagine so much. Something done on stage, in the round, for example, with virtually no props, would be very difficult to do on screen because there you need elaborate effects. Henrik Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* is a good example.

FL: Yes, whether things are done in that simple fashion, or whether there are attempts to use special effects on stage, I think it can be very impressive in both cases. If you do have special effects on stage, why, they have a kind of excitement that the movies and TV never had, because you're pulling out something right in front of the audience, like watching a magician work live. And so I think whether it's done by just letting the audience imagine the special effects, as in the case in theater in the round, or whether you actually attempt it on stage, the results are always good.

DS: Do you think there would be an advantage here, because today the theater audience is more discriminating than the movie audience, and you could actually get intelligent material produced?

FL: Yes, that's true. After all, even the movie audience is becoming more discriminating. The trend is towards small theaters and small audiences, and there isn't so much need for seeking the lowest common denominator audience nowadays on the stage or even in the movies. That's really the function of television.

DS: Have you had any experience writing for the movies?

FL: No, not really. And I've stayed away from it not because I don't want to do it but because I know it's a difficult sort of writing. Of course there are the technical problems and learning those in the medium, but also there is the problem of pleasing the people who are involved, the prospective producers, the ones who will pay for it, and the actors, and in the case of television the network and the sponsor. I've stuck to magazine and book fiction because that is still a one-man job.

DS: Why do you write? Is it as a job, or for self-expression?

FL: It's for both. Self-expression is perhaps too weak a phrase. I write in order to stay sane. It's part of my whole adjustment to life, to be a writer, and look at experience from the point of view of hunting story material. If I couldn't write, I couldn't stay healthy, mentally and emotionally healthy. So, it's something I have to do and I have to do it for a living. I'm just at the age to be entering Social Security, but instead of having the retirement problem which can be so dreadful for some people, why I have no problem at all. I just gotta go on working, for support and for sanity.

DS: Then you find your writing more of a personal thing, not to be tampered with by others?

FL: I've gotten a great deal of help, really from editors. I think John W. Campbell, Jr. certainly helped me a great deal with my first stories, and especially my first two novels, *Conjure Wife* and *Gather, Darkness!* I submitted outlines and first chapters to him for those books, and he gave me a great deal of help. In the case of *Gather, Darkness!* it was taking the characters more seriously and treating them as if they were real people rather than satirical figures, which they tended to be when I first started to write the book. And in *Conjure Wife* he helped me keep the plot from getting out of hand. Later on, almost ten years later, I found myself owing a great deal to Anthony Boucher. When I was selling to

Fantasy & Science Fiction while he was editor he helped me give my stories more literary polish, more of a modern, contemporary treatment. There are several stories like "Rum Titty Titty Tum Ta Te," "A Deskful of Girls" and "The Big Holiday" which wouldn't have their present form if it hadn't been for the intelligent corporation of Tony Boucher. When he got my first versions of those stories he made suggestions of a most general sort for rewriting the stories. I'm happy to cooperate with the intelligent editor at any time. My stories have been improved by it. Some of my best titles, for instance, have been given me by editors. I owe a lot to Frederick Pohl there. For instance I had titled my story about chess as "Grand Master." I was thinking in terms of titles that would have appealed to John Campbell. He liked one word titles. And Fred Pohl picked out of the story the phrase, "The Sixty-Four Square Madhouse," and it made a fine title. That was true of "The Creature From The Cleveland Depths," which I had originally called "The Tickler," and Fred Pohl found this title in my story, and of course it's quite charming.

DS: What were your dealings with August Derleth like?

FL: They were always happy dealings, not successful. Derleth rejected a number of my stories, oddly enough, that later sold successfully. I remember he turned down "The Man Who Made Friends With Electricity." Although it's quite a popular story and it was later selected by Judith Merrill for best of the year and so on, Derleth didn't care for it. He didn't like fantasies with contemporary or topical materials in them, and political and social references. So we at times had difficulties there. He also rejected my Edgar Allan Poe story that was afterwards immediately bought by *Fantastic*. But although we had difficulties, I always enjoyed working with him, and I certainly wouldn't have gotten my Lovecraft articles into polished form, my articles like "Through Hyperspace With Brown Jenkin" and "A Literary Copernicus," except for the opportunity that Derleth's books provided. So we got along very well together. To tell the truth, when Derleth began his posthumous collaborations with Lovecraft, I was rather contemptuous of this idea of him. I thought that we oughtn't try to imitate and carry on Lovecraft in that particular fashion. But over the years I began to see that this enthusiasm was there, and my heavens, now we have a whole flood of Cthulhu Mythos stories, so that Bob Bloch denominated it as a sort of modern school which have grown from Lovecraft; and I also realize that without that sort of dogged enthusiasm Derleth would never have persisted in his efforts to make the critics and the general public aware of Lovecraft, which have in the long run proved so successful.

DS: Do you think this constant re-use of the Cthulhu Mythos is beneficial, or is there a danger of stagnation?

FL: [Laughs] That's a funny question. You know, for many years after Lovecraft's death I never would write a Cthulhu Mythos story. I had a feeling that this is just a sort of dead

end, blind alley of writing, and I wanted to have no part in it. I finally went so far as to write "The Black Gondolier" in which I used, I think, Lovecraft's method of story construction, but of course I made no reference to the Cthulhu Mythos or any of the names and place names and entity names in Lovecraft's writing. And then about a year or so ago I wrote a pretty harsh review of Brian Lumley's *The Burrowers Beneath*, certainly a Cthulhu Mythos story *par excellence*. I took it apart and criticized it, and admitted my critical feelings about such stories. You know what the result of this was? I began to think, well, I'm a pretty weak character if I criticize something I haven't done myself. So I got tempted, and when Paul Berglund approached me, asking me to write a story for a book he was getting together for Donald Wollheim called *The Disciples of Cthulhu*, I finally decided I would try and write a Cthulhu Mythos story. And heaven help me, I've done it. So that pretty well answers your question.

DS: What has struck me as a problem in that the assorted Lovecraftian entities are no longer frightening when they become overly familiar. You know, a shelf full of *Necronomicon*s is no more effective than one, and probably less so.

FL: Well, I've got an angle on that. My story is set back in 1936 and 1937, 1937 being the year that Lovecraft died. And by making it a period piece to that degree, I think I'm in a position at least to make the period come alive a little more. I'm putting it back in Lovecraft's time and it's a story that you might say Lovecraft might have written if he'd lived a few months longer.

DS: Did you have any contact with him while he was alive?

FL: Yes, I corresponded with him for the last eight months of his life, it turned out. That began exactly in the same way as Robert Bloch's contact with him. Robert Bloch first got in touch with Lovecraft by writing to inquire where he could obtain copies of Lovecraft's earlier stories. In my case my wife did it for me without my knowledge. She knew I was crazy about Lovecraft so she wrote to him, care of *Weird Tales* or *Astounding Stories*, and asked him where one could get hold of his earlier stories. And so he started to write letters to us and offered to lend them to us. There wasn't any need for that, it turned out. Then he asked me, when I had sort of hinted that I'd written some stories in the weird vein, although I'd never sold anything, to let him see them immediately. Then he not only read them but criticized them in a very friendly and considerate way, and also circulated my manuscripts among people like Henry Kuttner, Robert Bloch, August Derleth. In fact I wouldn't have met Bloch and Kuttner and Derleth if it hadn't been for Lovecraft circulating my stories, and so as I say this correspondence was voluminous. It had a big effect on my writing and continues to do so. So that was my main contact with Lovecraft.

DS: Are any of your early stories rewritten at Lovecraft's suggestion the way Bloch's "Satan's Servants" was?

FL: No, the only prose of mine that Lovecraft saw was "Adept's Gambit," the first Fafhrd and Mouser story I wrote, and Lovecraft made no suggestions for rewriting there. He merely corrected my spelling and made suggestions for better word choice in a few places. For instance I had talked about a door that was activated by hidden hinges, or by a hidden mechanism. He objected to the word "activate" and said "worked" or "moved" would be simpler and better. There you have Lovecraft coming out for the small word against the big word. In another case he objected to the use of "intriguing" to mean "fascinating." He said this was again almost a modernism. He sort of frowned on modernism of this sort. But outside of that, no, he didn't make any suggestions for rewriting "Adept's Gambit." What did happen was this: I got so enthusiastic for a few months about Lovecraft that I did change "Adept's Gambit" slightly in one version and introduced references to Nyarlathotep and have something chanting "Iä Shug-Niggurath." Later on I realized that this was rather silly to try to stick the Cthulhu Mythos into the Fafhrd/Mouser stories, so I suppressed that version, which never was anything more than a manuscript. I had about four different versions of "Adept's Gambit" before it was finally published by Arkham House in my book *Night's Black Agents*.

DS: Was the Mouser series the first thing you ever wrote? How did you get started doing it?

FL: It grew up in my correspondence with Harry Otto Fischer. I was at the University of Chicago at the time, and I met another chap from Louisville, which was where Harry lived, named Franklin McKnight and McKnight introduced me to Harry. Harry and I hit it off and Harry began to write me long letters. I had never written at great length in my letters or anywhere else before then, but to keep up with the challenge presented by getting letters twenty and thirty pages long, why I began to write longer letters, and in our letters Harry and I began to create imaginary worlds, solely for the purpose of writing about them in our letters. We had really no idea at that time of making stories of them. So we invented several imaginary worlds together, and one of the imaginary worlds originally invented by Harry was the world of Fafhrd and The Grey Mouser, and the city of Lankmar. Those things, Lankmar, Fafhrd and Mouser were invented in a couple of hand-written pages of Harry Fischer's letter. As we did with that sort of thing, I latched onto it and wrote him a reply, in which I told a little more about Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, and we kept that up for a couple of years in our letters. But we never took it any further. We both began long stories, novels even, about these characters, and then abandoned them after a few dozen pages apiece. Then several years later Harry was working in the corrugated box business. He was a designer and engineer, and he had given up completely his earlier writing ambitions. But the magazine *Unknown* came

along and with Harry's consent I tried a story for them about Fafhrd and the Mouser deliberately sort of fitting it into the pulp story vein, and fortunately that was successful and I carried on from there. But as it happened Harry has not collaborated with me except in one instance. I mentioned that Harry began a long novel which was called *The Lords of Quarmall*, and he wrote that one about 1935 and completed about 10,000 words of it. Then it became apparent to him that this was going to be two books long at least if he ever finished it, so he never did anything more with it. And twenty-five years later I finally decided that I was up to the job of taking these ten thousand words and writing a story around them that would also contain Harry's actual writing. And so I did that with my thirty-five thousand word version of it by the same title. Harry and I, at my suggestion, have simply split the income of that story on the basis of the wordage we contributed. He gets two sevenths and I get five sevenths of the profits, and that actually is just about the only collaboration that I've done.

DS: How do you feel about the sword and sorcery field in general? Do you think there's a danger of stagnation there too? You may remember that a couple of years ago Alexei Panshin called it a "literary fossil." How could it evolve?

FL: I don't know -- I don't think it's a literary fossil any more than the detective story is a literary fossil. It's true it's generally set in what you might call a particular sort of past culture, but it seems to me that it's just subject to the dangers of all such fields. If there's too much slavish imitation of past stories, well then people probably will begin to find it sort of dull and the field won't prosper. But right now it seems to be going strong. I think as long as the writers remain inventive and don't try to write sword and sorcery stories according to some elaborate set of rules that have to be used in every story they'll do all right. I'm not in favor of limitations of that sort myself. All these genres of stories are just convenient pigeonholes for cataloging stories for libraries, and for the purposes of discussing them, of talking about them, but every story is a new creation, whether it's mainstream or some so-called genre, and so I think the field for all I know may get stronger instead of fading out.

DS: In writing a Mouser story, which is more important to you, the character or the world of Nehwon?

FL: Incidentally, Nehwon was invented by me in 1957 when Marty Greenberg brought out *Two Sought Adventure*, the first hardcover collection of the Fafhrd and Mouser stories, mostly ones that were published in *Unknown*, and it was then that I decided that the whole series needed a name, and so I invented Nehwon. As far as importance goes, the characters are a little more vivid, because I have tried to put them in other backgrounds. In fact earlier in "Adept's Gambit" I had the Alexandrian-Hellenic age as my background, but they're both pretty vivid.

DS: What is your basic method for creating an imaginary world?

FL: I can't rightly say that I have a basic method, because here my friend Harry Fischer performed the first act of creation. I have not followed the method of inventing the world carefully in the science fictional sense, I mean in deciding how big the planet is, what kind of gravity it has, what sort of atmosphere, how long are the years, how long are the days, and then working down to the actual forms of life, and the history of the culture of the dominant race. To tell the truth I have invented the world of Nehwon as I have gone along with the stories, and I have just now hinted in my last couple of stories, that there's a southern hemisphere to the world of Nehwon, but I've left it open as to whether it's a planet or a hollow world of some sort. I find on the whole that I like this method. It leaves me free. I haven't mapped out the entire world of Nehwon, so there may well be completely undiscovered continents. I haven't pinned things down, I don't have a history of Lankhmar that I refer to when I write a story about Fafhrd and the Mouser. I know as much as you'll find in the stories, and beyond that there's a grey mist.

DS: You mentioned the possibility of Nehwon being another planet. It seems to me that most fantasy settings, including yours, are just alternate versions of the Earth's past, without the history. Do you think it permissible to set a fantasy on another planet, and then have horses and oak trees, and that sort of thing?

FL: No, not if you're starting out with the idea that this is a story about another planet. I don't see how it's possible to use horses except when you're using one of the basic science fiction gimmicks, such as an interstellar empire, and the idea is that Earth was colonized in the past, or sent out colonies in the past, and if you have colonies made up of not only human beings but horses, or if horses originated on some other planet and came here, well then maybe. If you start out from the science fiction premise I don't really see having horses on other planets. You could have animals that serve the same function as horses, but it would be more stylistic to have them derive form, oh, a reptilian stock, or some other stock that have no exact analogue on Earth.

DS: What fantasy writers do you think had the most influence on your own work?

FL: E.R. Eddison, *The Worm Ouroboros*, has had a great influence on me. I think Robert Howard has, and certainly James Branch Cabell and the world of *Jurgen* and *The Cream of the Jest* were influential here. You were talking about *Peer Gynt* a while back, and I think that Ibsen and especially his fantasy, *Peer Gynt*, have had quite an influence on me. Those are some of the books. Dunsany, of course.

DS: Do you prefer to write fantasy as straight escapist fiction,

or to use it as satire the way Cabell did?

FL: Oh I use it at times as satire and I like to link it with our modern world. For instance there's that story "The Bazaar of The Bizarre," and in it Lankhmar is menaced by some super-salesmen called The Devourers who are such dedicated salesmen that they hate to sell anything that's worth anything. They figure that the test of a salesman is that he can sell things that are utterly worthless, and this is pretty obvious satire of Madison Avenue and the cheaper and more commercial side of Hollywood. I've gotten sort of a kick out of having smog in Lankhmar and calling it smog. Well they probably had smog in Rome and Babylon.

DS: Do you think that this ever destroys the effect of the fantasy, by popping the bubble?

FL: Yes, it can. It can. You have to be very careful with it. I get the impression from Ursula LeGuin's fine essay, "From Elfland to Poughkeepsie," that she feels strongly that some writers like Zelazny and myself are apt to do this sort of thing and pop the bubble. I don't feel we do, but that's really up to the readers and the critics to decide. If I have a character in Lankhmar say "Wow," if I do it the right way, that doesn't spoil the fantasy. All I'm saying is, yes, in Lankhmar that's the equivalent of "Wow!" and just as I have them talking English in my story I have them using equivalent words to some of our modern slang, and I don't feel that pops the bubble. But I think here it's a difficult problem and all you can decide is, "Does it work?"

DS: Do you find that your heavily satirical stories, such as *A Specter is Haunting Texas*, date after a while?

FL: Yes, certainly. You do run up against the danger of such things dating. They reflect my own changing attitudes. I mean that only president for whose election I ever really worked was Johnson. I was in that Stop Goldwater business. A couple years after he got into office, though, Johnson was close to the top of my hate list and I wrote *The Specter is Haunting Texas* to exorcise these strong feelings I had about Johnson and the Texas oil men, and so on. Then by the time the story came out Johnson wasn't running for president next time. He'd bowed out.

DS: It seems to me that the thing is good enough as a story to live on, and it might, if only people don't try too hard to dig out the topical references in it.

FL: Yes, I think that's true. There are topical references in all sorts of stories that were written five hundred or a thousand years ago, and we generally ignore them. But when the topical reference is to the recent past, then we're especially aware of how jarring it is. But in a hundred years who is going to worry about Johnson and Goldwater and the Democrats and Republicans of our particular era? It would probably just

seem an oddity, and not a topical reference at all.

DS: Do you think your stories will be around a hundred years from now?

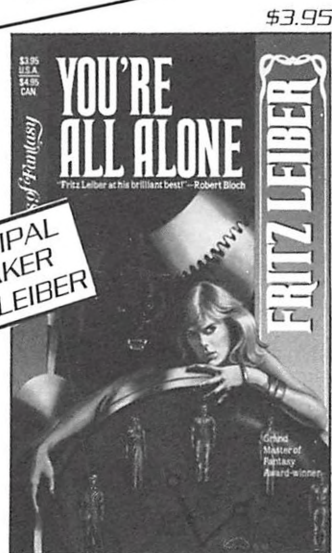
FL: I don't know. That's what we're all working for, of course.

DS: Thank you Mr. Leiber.

-- Conducted at the First World Fantasy Convention, Providence, R.I., 1975

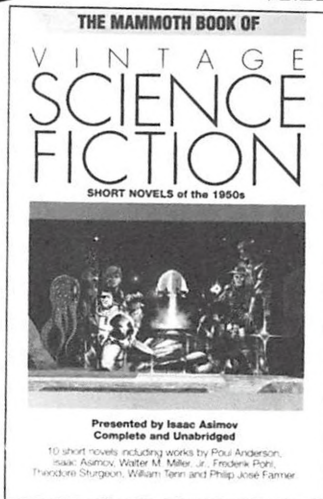


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Replacement for Wilmer by Fritz Leiber

A Ghost Story

This is subtitled "a ghost story" and it almost is one, in the traditional sense, for all the element of the supernatural is decidedly fleeting. But it is about a haunting -- of sorts -- and certainly about what revenants of the Departed linger, and it is in any case a perfectly good Fritz Leiber story we're certain you have not read. Its only prior publication was in a fanzine published by Terry Carr some years ago.

-- Darrell Schweitzer

As the holes on the tape stopped jumping up and down and took long, solemn, longitudinally rectilinear paces, and as the carillon over the bank three blocks away consequently finished its melodious jangling and tolled four o'clock, a cab stopped in front of the Amity Liquor Store and three men, conspicuous in this neighborhood by their coats and neckties, silently crossed the sidewalk. The fourth, who also wore a hat, paused to pay the driver with a handful of half dollars and quarters he had collected from his comrades a block back. He tipped a big four quarters, which made the cabbie shake his head at his sanity.

Once inside the store the four men, after a look at each other, simultaneously removed their neckties and carried them to a hatrack in the carton-crammed rear of the store next to the toilet. One of the men exchanged his coat for a bulky sweater that buttoned up the front, while the man with the hat replaced it with a faded blue cap that covered all of his thinning, mouse-colored hair but made his butterfly ears even more prominent.

Still not saying anything, they trooped back to the front of the store, collecting on the way from the short length of dented counter denominated as bar the four drinks the store owner, acting as barman and clerk, had uncapped or poured for them.

The man in the sweater, a grizzled-topped hulk with misanthropic, watchful pale eyes, raised his brown beer bottle for a toast.

"Wilmer," he said.

They drank.

As he lowered his gin and lemon soda, the second man quirked his full lips in a satyrlike smile.

"You know, Cappy," he said reflectively to the man in the sweater, "I believe that was the cleanest I ever saw Wilmer's face."

There was a tentative general snort of laughter, followed by a somewhat uncomfortable pause.

Then the third man slowly nodded his big head. "That's only the truth, George," he assured the second man. "It was also the best shave Wilmer ever had in his life. Those guys at the mortuary sure put a gloss on him."

"Bet they had quite a job, though," George shot back, "Probably had to sand-blast."

At the same time the man with the butterfly ears

reminded the third man, "Hey Driscoll, Wilmer's dead. We ought to show more respect, at least the first day, or don't you think?" The objection was even more tentative that the snort of laughter had been. Then Butterfly Ears continued, getting onto firmer ground, at least for a butterfly, "You made me wear a hat to the funeral. You said this cap wouldn't look right."

"Now, you're being stupid, Skeeter," Cappy informed him, pointing a grey-sweatered arm. "I hate a stupid man." Then Cappy proceeded to lay down the law. "Look here, we paid our respects to the dead when we went to the funeral. A hat's part of being respectful. But that's over. Now we pay our respects to truth. Even Wilmer had some respect for truth, you know. He'd have never let himself be argued into wearing a hat. Well, I say Wilmer was just about the dirtiest man who ever lived. I don't believe he ever took a genuine bath in his whole life. Anyone care to dispute me?"

There was a chorus of relieved "No's." A happy recollective light came into George's eyes and he said, "Remember the time Wilmer tried to come in here after cleaning catchbasins without even changing to his drinking coat? Ed told him to stay out." (The owner of the Amity Liquor Store, who was leaning forward with spread elbows on the bar, nodded confirmation.) "Wilmer offered to stay in the back room and do his drinking there, but Ed wouldn't agree even to that. Said it would stink up the can. It ended with Wilmer in the alley and Otto taking his shots and beers back to him."

"I remember!" Skeeter put in eagerly. His wide smile seemed almost to link his ears. "I took turns with Otto rushing them. We'd just open the door a crack and stretch out two long arms. Wilmer got stinking too."

"Stinking both ways," Ed said, walking forward behind the counter to wait on a package customer.

George said, "If we had an absolutely clean world -- I mean if science had conquered crapping and there were just one turd to be found once a year in one place, Wilmer would buy a ticket a sufficient time ahead and go get it."

"My wife would never let Wilmer set foot in our apartment," Driscoll put in with another of his deliberate nods. "Not even when he'd bring me home drunk. I think she could smell Wilmer in her sleep, and it would wake her up when I couldn't even when I'd fall down."

The happy light was really sparkling now in George's eyes and his satyr grin was at its wickedest as he launched out in the dreamy chant suitable for a big-city pastoral. "Wilmer would come to me and he'd say, 'How do I get a woman, George?' and I'd inhale and make a disgusted face -- no, the face of a connoisseur -- and say to him, 'First off, take a bath, Wilmer. Take a long, long bath with lots of hot water and soap,' and he'd listen to me and then he'd give me the hurtest look...."

"Maybe Wilmer finally did take a bath," Skeeter burst in excitedly. "Maybe that's what gave him the pneumonia." And he laughed alone in thin high peals.

"Wilmer once did shack up with a woman," Driscoll stated soberly. "It happened a long while ago. She was as dirty as he was. I know it's hard to believe, but it's true."

George was frowning thoughtfully now. "I get a funny feeling," he said, "thinking of Wilmer standing back there in the alley, covered with sewage, having his drinks, refusing to make even the smallest concession to popular opinion. It's as if he'd created his own little world and were being true to it. I think the key to his character's there, if I could just put it into words."

"You have," Driscoll said heavily.

"Enough of that now," Cappy said with the air of an orchestra leader dropping his baton to bring a movement to a close. "We're agreed Wilmer was the dirtiest man going. I often told him so myself. Now I want to say -- "

"I've got it!" George interrupted. "The key to Wilmer's character was ambition. He knew he could never reach the top in any other line, so he decided to become the dirtiest man in the world."

"We've closed that topic," Cappy said impatiently, collecting his brown bottle of beer from the new round of drinks Ed was preparing. "Now I want to make the statement that Wilmer was also the most disgusting drunk I ever knew. We all get a little glassy-eyed from time to time, but Wilmer would get as polluted as a pig day after day. He really craved his liquor."

"That's right, Cappy, that's right," George agreed, easily taking fire again. "Remember how every day at four-thirty, regular as clockwork, we'd watch him come through that back door in his green drinking coat with that oh-so-eager look in his eyes?"

The bank carillon jangled out the quarter hour and for a bit no one said anything. The floor creaked as Driscoll reached for his second bourbon and water.

"Otto would generally be with him," George went on, "because he quit work at the same time. But we'd hardly notice Otto. All we could see would be Wilmer's face as he stuck it ahead of him through the door -- Wilmer's face and that longing in it."

"Otto wasn't at the funeral," Driscoll remarked.

"He's having to janitor Wilmer's buildings along with his own until they get a replacement," Ed explained. The owner of the Amity had drawn himself a small glass of beer along with Skeeter's large one and was temporarily part of the

group.

"I noticed Otto's drinking coat back on the hatrack," Skeeter put in. "Not Wilmer's green one, though. I wonder what became of it?"

"Stop all that useless chatter," Cappy commanded. "George was describing something I want to hear."

With a quick smile and nod to Cappy, George continued, "That look of longing on Wilmer's face would be so powerful and so touching that time and again we'd all offer to buy him a drink."

"Yes, and he'd take them, too," Cappy said curtly. "Wilmer cadged more drinks than most men. He'd accept them and he'd drink them, sometimes two or three at a time, and pretty soon he'd be so polluted I'd get disgusted with him."

"I bet Wilmer left a pretty big tab behind," George said with an inquiring look at Ed. The latter shook his head. "Just eighty-five," he said. "His mother came in and paid it this morning."

"It's strange to think of a big dirty souse like Wilmer still having a mother," George said, puckering his forehead. "I know he roomed with Otto and the old lady would hardly let him in her house, but he depended on her a lot just the same. You could tell."

"You're out of order," Cappy reproved him. "We haven't got to Wilmer's psychology yet. We're still on his drinking."

"Wilmer cadged drinks, all right," Skeeter said. "I bought him a glass of muscatel not two weeks ago. Maybe it was the last drink he ever had. No, I guess not."

"Wilmer was getting to be a wino the last two years," Driscoll said. "He was shifting over. I suppose it was the easiest thing to drink on the job."

"Oh, but there was nothing in the world like Wilmer polluted," George launched out again, the faraway twinkle back in his eyes. "He'd grow a bigger moon face, he'd get stupid-sillier, and he'd even fall on his face with more finality than another man. Remember how he'd always want to pass out and sleep in the back room here and you wouldn't let him, Ed? You'd say 'No' and chase him out front and ten minutes later he'd be back there and we'd hear empty cartons crunch as he flopped on them."

"I couldn't let him sleep in here by himself," Ed said with a grin. "Imagine what would have happened if he'd waked up alone at four a.m."

Skeeter chortled. "Many's the time," he said, "I helped drag Wilmer out in the alley on a summer night when you'd closed up and we'd leave him snoozing there. Or help Otto get him home, though that didn't happen so often."

"Wilmer's drinking always heaved up in the summer," Driscoll observed, "which isn't the way of a normal man who shifts from whiskey to beer then. I suppose he knew he didn't have to worry about freezing to death."

George said, "Right now I can hear Wilmer's snores. I can visualize the dirty green glow of his drinking coat when he was sleeping in the alley with the moon coming over the water tower."

"That's enough about Wilmer's drinking," Cappy said decisively. "I've got one more thing to say about him and then we'll quit. Wilmer was undoubtedly the stupidest man I ever knew in my life."

"Oh, but that's right," George said swiftly. "'How do I get a woman, George?' 'George, how do I get a white-collar job?' 'Why do they hold elections, George, on the days when the bars are closed?' 'George, how do people know if their kids are left-handed?'"

Skeeter boasted, "Once I actually got Wilmer to ask for a left-handed monkey-wrench at Tanner's hardware."

"Wilmer couldn't even do simple arithmetic," Driscoll asserted. "I don't believe he could count on his fingers."

Ed nodded at that. "Sometimes he'd question his tab," he said, "and I'd add it over for him very slowly. It was pitiful how he'd pretend to follow me."

George said, "Remember how for two whole months he thought I was a Communist, because I came in here carrying a book? He even got Otto believing it."

"Yes," Skeeter pressed, "and remember the day you brought a girl in here who was a model -- a dress model -- and Wilmer asked her how much she'd charge to undress in the back room?"

"That wasn't stupidity," George contradicted, "that was tactlessness. Wilmer never knew how to go about anything."

"All right, all right, we've talked enough about Wilmer now," Cappy commanded loudly, getting his next bottle of beer.

"I guess you're right, Cappy," Skeeter said in a hushed voice. "I forgot we'd just been to his funeral."

"That's not the point," Cappy told him disgustedly. "you're being stupid again, Skeeter. We haven't said anything but the truth and Wilmer can't hear us anyhow. It's just that we've heard enough about him for today. I'm sick of the subject. Somebody talk about something else. Go ahead."

There was a long silence.

George was the first to look around at the others. An odd smile began to switch at his lips.

"You know," he said, "we're going to have a hard time finding something to talk about, now that Wilmer's gone. Something real juicy we can all get together on, I mean."

Driscoll nodded slowly and said, "I guess we talked about him more than we realized."

"Oh, we can keep coming back to Wilmer for a while," George went on, "but there'll be nothing new to add and after a bit the whole topic will be so dead we won't want to touch it at all. You know what? We're going to have to find a replacement for Wilmer."

"How do you mean, a replacement?" Driscoll asked.

"You know," George said, "somebody to talk about somebody to be the stupidest and dirtiest and drunkenest. If we don't find a replacement, Wilmer will....well, haunt us, you might say."

"Now you're talking like a superstitious lunkhead, George," Cappy said sharply. "Wilmer's dead and a dead man can't affect anybody."

George looked at him quizzically.

Cappy continued, "But you may have something in that replacement idea." The gray-sweatered man began to look thoughtfully at Skeeter.

"Hey, quit that, Cappy," Skeeter said uneasily, almost knocking his glass off the shelf as he reached for it. "I'm not going to be any replacement for Wilmer."

Cappy frowned. "I wouldn't be too sure of that, Skeeter," he said. "You're stupid enough sometimes -- I've told you twice today -- and I've seen you rubber-legged drunk pretty often and I know you don't wash behind those ears more than once a month."

"Better watch out, Skeeter," Ed warned with a chuckle.

"Hey, quit it, you guys," Skeeter protested. "Quit looking at me, Cappy."

Skeeter was watching Cappy apprehensively. All the others were grinning at Skeeter delightedly except George, who was smiling at the ceiling abstractedly and saying, "You know, it's a very funny thing how we really need Wilmer. Here we've been talking for half an hour as if we were glad to be rid of him, when actually nothing would please us than if he'd push through the door right now."

A sudden gust of wind in the street outside raised thin swirls of dust, momentarily plastered a sheet of newspaper against the water-marked display window, and since it blew from the direction of the bank, it swelled the volume of the computerized carillon jangling out four-thirty.

A man with his head ducked low against the dust and wearing a dirty green coat with stains down the front pushed in through the door.

The five men in the Amity saw him and turned pale. Skeeter's beer glass crashed on the floor. Then the newcomer looked up.

George was the first to recover.

"Otto, you old son-of-a-gun!" he cried. "What are you doing wearing Wilmer's drinking coat?"

"Mein Gott, I didn't know it," the newcomer protested, looking down again and then raising his eyes guiltily. "The two coats always hung each other beside. I thought I was putting on mine. Here, I take it off."

"That's all right, Otto, forget it," George said heartily, stopping him with an arm around the shoulders. "Here, have a shot of gin."

"Have a drink on me, too, you crazy Dutchman," Cappy bellowed, getting two of his brown bottles and uncapping them.

"And on me," Skeeter squeaked, darting behind the counter to get a washed glass and draw the beer himself.

"A drink on each one of us," Driscoll put in, reaching for the whiskey bottle. "Finish that gin I'll pour you a snort of real liquor."

"And when you're ready for it, a peppermint brandy on the house," Ed finished, smiling broadly.

"Shee, fellows, thanks," Otto said a little wonderingly, "but first I better -- "

Cappy thrust a hairy finger at him. "you forget that coat for now," he commanded, "and drink your drinks."

"Okay, Cappity, you win," Otto surrendered. "Shee, fellows, I'm sorry not to be at the funeral, but it went against my heart. That Wilmer, I liked him. Nobody's ever going to take his place."

"Forget funerals," George directed. "How's life been treating you, Otto?"

"Shee, Gay-org, I wouldn't know. Say, not too many drinks, fellows."

About ten minutes later they let Otto go back to exchange the green coat for his own. The loud boil of conversation simmered down.

Cappy said in a gruff undertone, wrinkling his big nose, "You know, that Otto stinks. I never noticed it before because he was always with Wilmer."

"He sure snatched at those drinks when he got going," Skeeter put in, a little ruefully.

"And he's stupid," Cappy said decisively. "Only a very stupid man would accidently put on a dead man's coat."

"What do you think is happening, Driscoll?" George asked lightly.

"How do you mean?" Driscoll asked, frowning. Then his brow cleared and he nodded. "I get you."

At that moment Otto came from in the back wearing his own coat and they all fell silent. The off-duty janitor was staggering a little, but as he surveyed them a momentary flicker of distrust crossed his eyes.

"Say, fellows, what were you all talking about?" he asked.

Cappy answered for them.

"Why, Otto," he said innocently, "we were just all wondering who would ever take the place of poor old Wilmer."



Frank Kelly Freas

I first met Kelly Freas more than twenty years ago (yes, the mind boggles), back in those halcyon days when one could know every writer and artist in the field of science fiction and could read all the books published in the genre in a year's time. We met, by chance, in the office of the illustrious and legendary editor of Analog Magazine, John W. Campbell. Although John was of great stature in the field, so too was Kelly, for he had already won four consecutive Hugos for his art from 1955 through '59 and was only a year or two away from repeating and exceeding that feat. In all, Kelly Freas is the proud and deserving recipient of ten Hugos, A Frank R. Paul Award, a Skylark, a Lensman and countless other prestigious honors. He is easily the most beloved of science fiction artists and, unquestionably, one of the most talented. His fluid sense of design, his inventive and often outrageous use of color, the sensual and sentimental flavor of his work, all add up to a look which is definitive science fiction and uniquely Kelly Freas'.

I didn't say very much to Kelly during that first encounter for I was awestruck being, as I was, in the presence of the gods. Somehow, in spite of my shyness, Kelly and I became friends over the years. We were never the "I'd-give-the-shirt-off-my-back" type of friends, but there was a comradeship between us, built on mutual respect and common experience. We both dearly loved science fiction and we'd both reveled in and suffered for that love.

I remembered the time we met at Iguacon, the '78 WorldCon in Phoenix, Arizona. We were both scheduled to speak at a roast for Harlan Ellison and I was somewhat apprehensive about having to be funny and insulting, without wanting to inadvertently offend anyone. Kelly invited me to his room for a drink of tequila to help calm my nerves. Although I was no stranger to alcohol, this was my first encounter with tequila and I was completely unprepared for the insidious way in which this drink sneaks up on you and slams you between the eyes. By the time we got to the roast my eyes couldn't focus. When I was called upon to speak, I was certain that my kneecaps had dissolved. Barely able to stand, incapable of seeing my notes, I was compelled to rely entirely on my own inherent sense of nastiness to get me through the evening. I understand (although I don't actually remember) that I was suitably ruthless on that occasion and laid waste to virtually everyone in the room, including the audience. I have Kelly Freas to thank for this--and he has never since failed to bring out the worst in me whenever we meet.

In the late '70, when Kelly's beloved wife Polly was stricken with lymphatic cancer, I'd called him on the telephone and tried to offer him some comfort. Ten years earlier my own wife had been afflicted with Hodgkin's Disease, also a form of lymphatic cancer, and I wanted Kelly to know that there was every reason for him to have hope that Polly would prevail. To my astonishment, Kelly needed no reassurances from me, he knew that she would do well and he was determined to persevere. Through his diligence and his prayers, Polly went into a complete remission which lasted more than five years. I can't believe that these were anything but the most dire times for him, yet through it all he was still able to produce some of the finest work of his long and fruitful career-- and he and Polly traveled everywhere. They were frequent guests at conventions all across the country and no one, not already aware of their ordeal, would ever have guessed that there was a problem with Polly's health. When Polly finally left us it was a great loss, not only to Kelly, but to thousands of friends and fans whose lives she'd touched. Now with a new life and a new bride, Kelly has shown himself to be a true survivor. I don't believe I've ever know anyone with his tenacity and determination to carry on.

As a science fiction artist, Kelly Freas really knows no peers. Having worked in the field for forty years, he has influenced the aesthetic sensibilities of several generations of SF readers. A wonderful cartoonist, a consummate draftsman and inherent storyteller, Kelly's art (if I might use that over worked expression) literally defines the field of science fiction illustration. Widely imitated, never duplicated, he is one-of-a-kind talent and one of the very best artists ever to have worked in our admittedly small, but highly challenging artistic specialty.

I'm thrilled and deeply pleased to see that Kelly has been asked to serve as a Philcon Artist Guest of Honor. I'm happy to see that so many other convention committees have, of late, also decided to honor him and I wonder what pleasures the new Kelly Freas renaissance will bring. He has truly enriched our field, given substance and shape to our dreams, and brought respectability and acceptance to this brand of literature which we so dearly love. I can think of no one currently working in the field of science fiction illustration who is more deserving of your recognition. To this I would like to add my on congratulations to him for a lifetime of dazzling and remarkable achievements and my dearest thanks for twenty-odd years of sage and valued friendship.

-- Vincent Di Fate

Highlights of Frank Kelly-Freas' Career

Books

Astounding Fifties, 1971.

Six-to-Go, 1971.

Science Fiction Art Print Portfolios, 1972-79.

Frank Kelly Freas: The Art of Science Fiction, 1977.

Frank Kelly Freas: A Separate Star, 1984.

Awards

Hugo Achievement Award, 1955, 56, 58-59, 70, 72-76.

Frank R. Paul Award, 1977.

Ink Pot Award, 1979.

Daedalos Award, 1987.

One Man Shows

NASA, Langley, VA. 1979.

Chrysler Museum at Norfolk, 1977.

American Museum of Natural History, New York City, 1974.



The Staff of Kelly Freas Studios

Frank Kelly-Freas, the "Dean of Science Fiction Illustrators," is one of the most famous SF and fantasy illustrators in the world. He has been active in the SF field since 1950, and his endeavors have covered many areas including: *Astounding* from the 1950's through the 1970's; *Mad Magazine* covers from 1955 to 1962; religious art (over 500 portraits of saints) for the Franciscans; space poster of NASA; beautiful women on the noses of bombers while in the Army Air Corps; Skylab I insignia design; many covers for Ace doubles; cover art for Daw, Signet, Ballantine, Avon, all 67 Laser Books, and many other publishers. He was also editor and artist for the Donning/Starblaze Editions.

Kelly was the first to receive 10 Hugo Awards (he has been nominated twenty times). He also won the Phoenix Award for DeepSouthCon (1982), Boston's Skylark Award, Moscon's Lensman Award, the Inkpot Award, the Rova, the Frank R. Paul Award, and many others in and out of science fiction.

Frank Kelly Freas is presently directing the illustration of the L. Ron Hubbard *Writers of the Future* anthologies. He also is Coordinating Judge of the L. Ron Hubbard Illustrators of the Future contest which offers three \$400 quarterly prizes and a \$4000 annual grand prize to aspiring illustrators, plus an opportunity to illustrate an upcoming volume of *Writers of the Future*. He is, of course, always on the lookout for potential illustrators displaying in science fiction convention art shows.

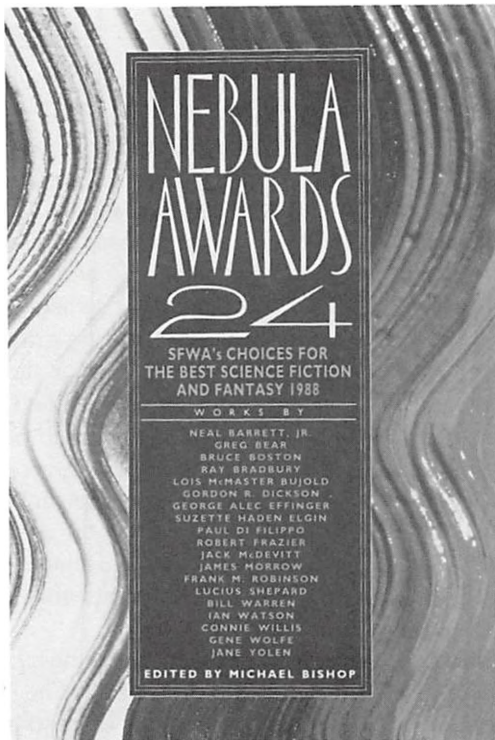
Author and illustrator of the books *The Astounding Fifties*, *Frank Kelly Freas: The Art of Science Fiction*, and *A Separate Star*, as well as a number of magazine articles, Kelly now resides in Los Angeles.

For forty years Kelly always created his artwork as a solo endeavor. His late wife, Polly, handled his prints and book as a separate business, but never participated in the actual production of the illustrations. Since his remarriage in 1988, Kelly has drafted his new wife as assistant illustrator. His collaboration with her resulted in their receiving ASFA's 1989 Chesley Award for Best Magazine Cover.

Laura Brodian Kelly-Freas, Ph.D. came to California from New Jersey. After teaching courses at various schools in that state, she served for two years as Associate Instructor at Indiana University where she earned a doctorate in music education. It was there she got her experience as engineer, host, and producer of classical music radio programs at WGIU, Bloomington, Indiana. Since then she has worked at KQED-FM in San Francisco and KUSC-FM in Los Angeles. Laura was the host of the nationally syndicated classical music radio program "Music Through The Night" for the American Public Radio Network. Currently she hosts the in-flight classical music programs for Delta Airlines, and is part-time host of live concert broadcasts on KUSC.

As Executive Director of Kelly Freas Studios, Laura runs the actual business in the family. She is in charge of books and print sales, marketing, promotion, contracts, public relations and finance. Laura is also involved in nearly all of the aspects of illustration with her husband. She reads the manuscripts to be illustrated, does the background research, provides the sketches and layout. When she works on sections of the finished art, their combined signatures indicate the collaboration.

For several years, Laura Brodian Kelly Freas has been active in science fiction fandom in the western United States. She hosted the Greenroom at the first BayCon in San Jose, California. She's Director at Large of the Costumer's Guild, West. Laura has won prizes at convention masquerades, including WesterCon. In her spare time she enjoys reading, historical re-enactment, dancing (historical, ballroom, and modern), costuming, and music. She founded the (San Francisco) Bay Area English Regency Society, and for two years served as President of the Southern California Early Music Society. (She also happens to be a gourmet cook, thank heaven - Kelly.)



"IF YOU SEEK THE BEST
IN QUALITY AND
DIVERSITY,
LOOK NO FURTHER."

— *Los Angeles Times*



Michael Bishop

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The Bishop File

I know Mike Bishop rather well. Though, on the other hand, I don't know him at all...

I'm looking at a file of letters from Mike to me. It's two inches high and stretches back to early 1975 -- goodness, that's over fifteen years ago. (This sounds rather like Wordsworth struggling to express his amazed sentiments at encountering a pond. "I measured it from side to side. 'Twas six feet long and three feet wide." Or whatever the exact dimensions.) The file doesn't contain any carbons of letters from me to Mike because I don't keep carbons. In fact I don't keep very much at all. My work room somewhat resembles the cockpit of an F111 -- small and crowded and held together with rubber bands as it were. But I've kept every letter that Mike ever sent me -- recognizing from the outset that there was something special about those letters, and something special about Mike too.

Those letters -- all scrupulous in their syntax (unlike my own letters), all crafted with that blend of conscious diction and quirky colloquialism which characterizes Mike's stories and novels -- are a record -- ahem -- of writerly striving for the sublime, of *human* striving, of activity for his community (I'm a sucker for that sort of unpaid carry-on too), of helpfulness, courtesy, humor, wit, persistence, and courage.

Browsing through the Bishop file, I realize that I'm in danger of being caught like Br'er Rabbit by the Tarbaby, and will never complete this present little piece about Mike at all unless I wrench myself free. The browsing's just too interesting.

I mention Mike's courage because, to the outsider, it might look as though he has progressively marched upward -- book upon book, via the occasional Nebula award -- towards eminence as a major established author who can feel (justifiably) secure in his position and his future. However, it hasn't actually been that way. Frequently it has been for Mike (as for me) quite a struggle for survival. But all the while he has continued to envision, to kindle in the imagination, and then to craft work of the highest possible excellence.

Yes, he's been true -- and remains true -- to his own vision.

Cares take their toll on a person -- those grinding mundane economic cares -- but they have never taken their toll of the artistic care that Mike lavishes on any project.

I've been lucky enough to join in on two projects with Mike -- the anthology Changes, and a transatlantic novel collaboration, Under Heaven's Bridge. I remain amazed and delighted at how smoothly, fertile, and semi-telepathically Mike could synch with a writer living in another country entirely. All done by letter, without us even speaking to each other once on the phone, let alone squirting stuff at each other in computerized modem intercourse. A bit of a miracle, really.

A writerly miracle, and a miracle of human relations.

Mike can work such miracles.

And we've still never met, and only spoken once on the phone (about some urgent Nebula anthology business). What he wrote me back in 1975 remains true. "...photographs can't be trusted, and I'd probably walk right by you if you showed up in the Pine Mountain post office."

How peculiar in our interconnected, travel-shrunk world. So really I don't know Mike at all. Though at the same time, through his letters, I seem to know him intimately as one of my best friends and closest colleagues.

Maybe it's a *dumb* idea for us to ever meet now...

Yet I envy your chance to meet Mike here in Philadelphia.

And the books? And the stories? You already know those, don't you? What wonderful, compelling titles Mike's stories have! From "Death and Designation Among the Asadi" to "The Gospel According to Gamaliel Crucis (or The Astrogator's Testimony)" to "Apartheid, Superstrings, and Moredecai Thubana." I *envy* Mike his titles, so redolent of strangeness, poetry, and, yes, wisdom. And I envy him the contents of those stories, and the stylish yet colloquial narrative art they display, and the quirky, believable, passionate, characters.

His novels -- likewise unique, beautiful, strange, and compelling human -- have addressed alien societies, human societies of the near and further future which suffer from peculiar belief structures (yet strive for joy and fulfillment), our own prehuman past, prehumans in the present day, and the scourge of AIDS, the last intercut with ailing unicorns from a parallel Earth which might equally be a metaphysical dimension, though perceptible on a miraculous television set, a uniquely Bishopesque, a uniquely episcopal, conjunction. Who else, in another story, would have sent gypsy caravans through a doorway of the imagination to cross the dust seas of the Moon?

And of course, as a Bishop, Mike has many times set off with his metaphysical, his science-fictional, his fantastic harpoon in quest of the Great White Whale of God, whatever a God might be -- and in one story the Godhead is an alien preying mantis.

Which are my favorite books of his? This morning I think the answer is Transfigurations --- that splendid extension of an already splendid story about enigmatic aliens who communicate by color-coded eye-flashes; an extension which resolves the enigma without in the least diminishing the sense of mystery, an achievement which is real art. Oh yes, and also Who Made Stevie Crye, a contemporary horror novel unlike any other, a trickster kaleidoscope that is at once parody,

meta-horror, and a deeply compassionate, witty tale full of serious playfulness and love. But those are only my favorites this morning

Mike's alien Cygnostikoi in *A Little Knowledge* also have fascinating eyes: hourglass eyes that perceive at once the mundane world, and the supernatural, the numinous domain. While the eyes of other aliens are jewels, organic crystals. But of course. For Mike is a writer of vision.

As well as being a writer whose *love* for the characters he has created shines out brightly.

But you already know all wonderful characters -- who invariably have wonderful names to match. You already know all those books and stories.

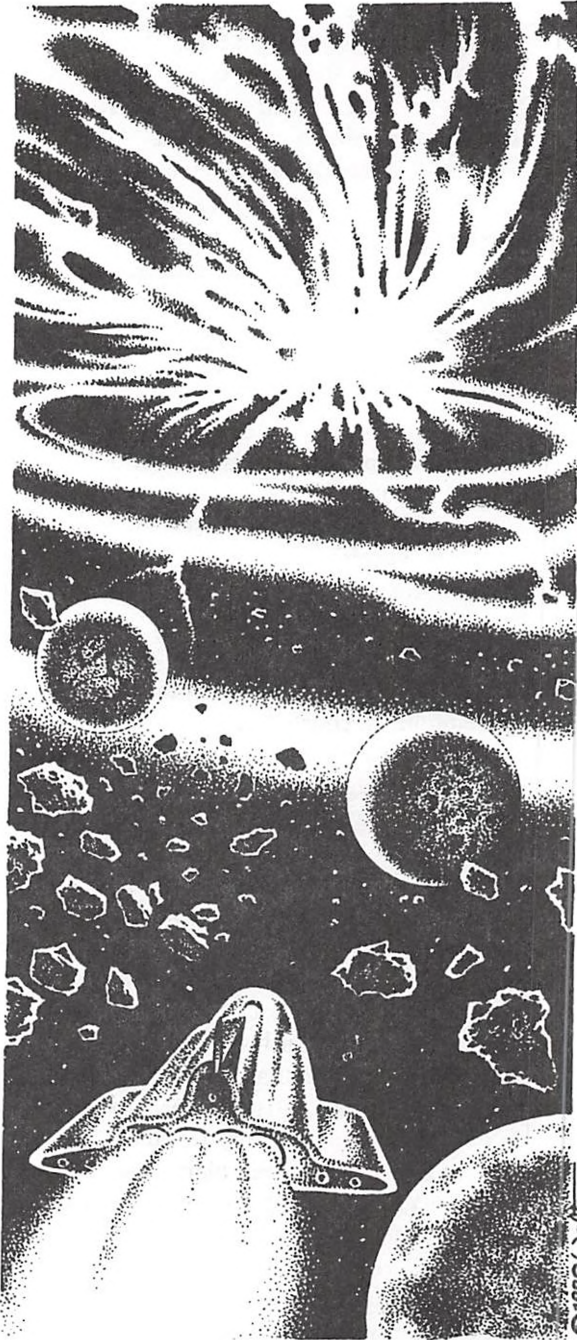
If not, or if you have missed out on one or two... what convention is with a bookroom?

Put down this program book and *buy now*.

Unlike a lot of authors, Mike writes a neat signature.

I know. It figures hundreds of times in my own unique epistolary text by Mike: the Bishop File.

-- Ian Watson



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Highlights Michael Bishop's Career

"Piñon Fall." *Galaxy*, Oct-Nov 1970. (First published story.)

A Funeral for the Eyes of Fire. Ballantine, 1975. Revised, 1980 as Eyes of Fire. First hardcover edition, Kerosina Books, 1989.

And Strange At Ecbatan the Trees. Harper & Row, 1976. (as Beneath the Shattered Moons, DAW, 1977).

A Little Knowledge. Berkley/Putnam, 1977.

Stolen Faces. Harper & Row, 1977.

Transfigurations. Berkley/Putnam, 1979.

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"The Quickening" in Universe 11, ed. Terry Carr. Doubleday, 1981. NEBULA AWARD WINNER.

Blooded on Arachne. Arkham House, 1982.

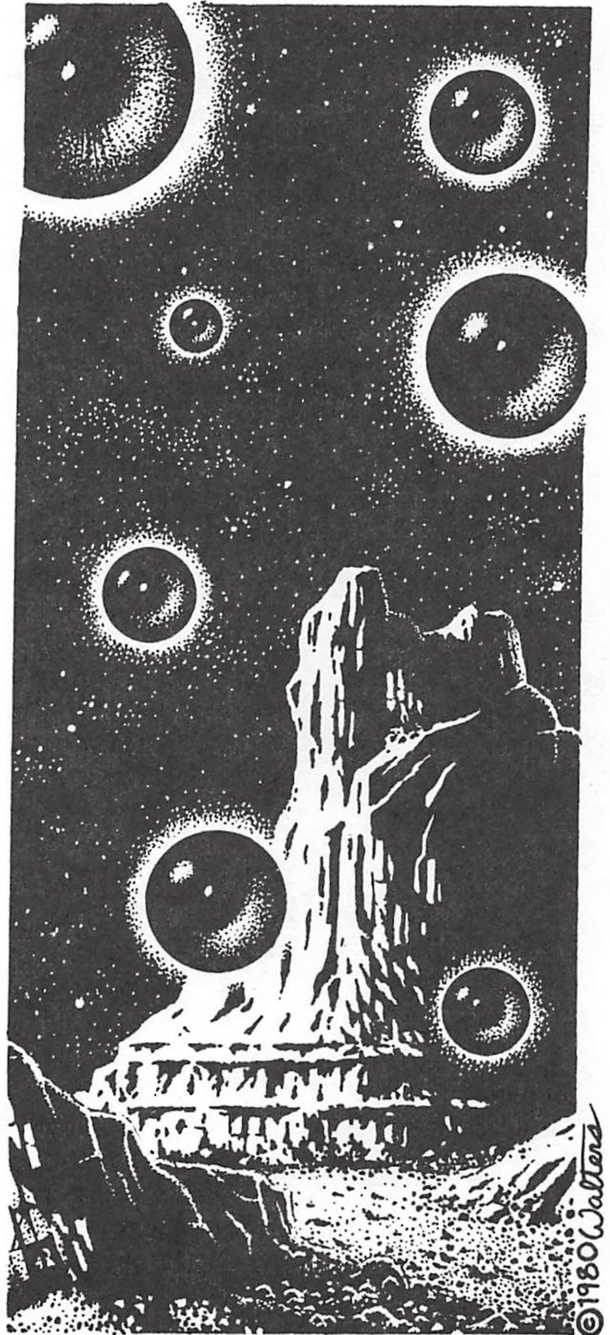
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Who Made Stevie Crye? Arkham House, 1984.

Ancient of Days. Arbor House, 1985.

Unicorn Mountain. Arbor House/Morrow, 1988.



-- Compiled by Darrell Schweitzer

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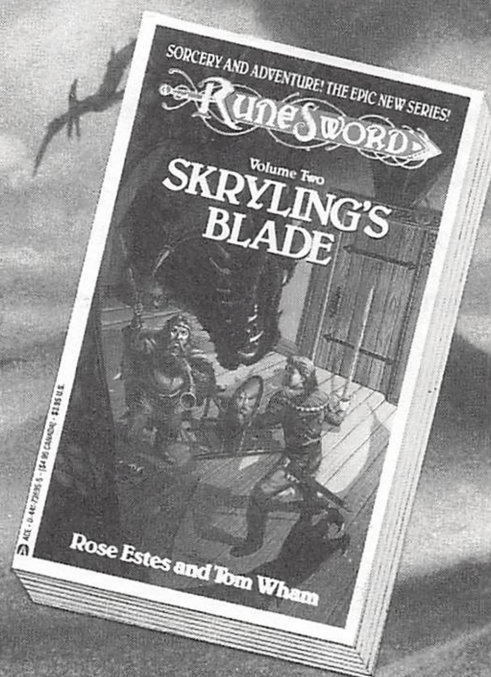
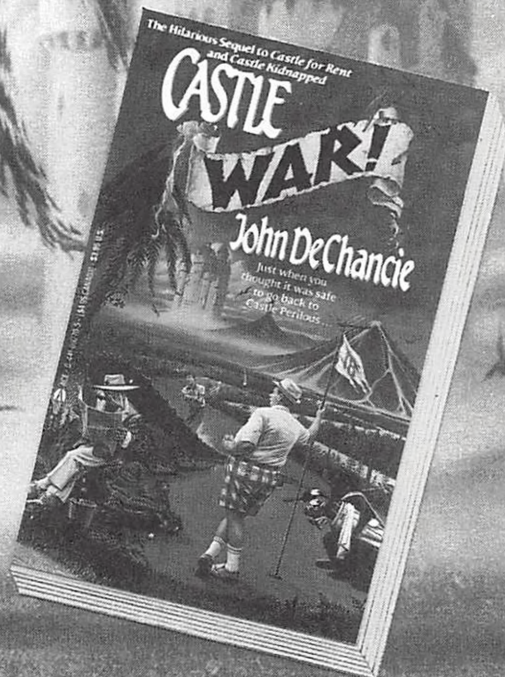
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Tears by Michael Bishop

Anything you do more than once in fandom rapidly becomes a tradition. Therefore it is now a tradition for the Philcon program book to present a story by one of the guests which, er, isn't exactly science fiction or fantasy, but which does show the writer at the height of his or her powers.

Science fiction usually operates on a vast scale -- planets, galaxies, whole universes -- and this can make us forget the smaller region of home planet Earth. But Michael Bishop has not forgotten. He is from the South, Georgia to be precise, and in the following story he shows himself to be a southern regionalist in the venerable tradition.

-- Darrell Schweitzer

When True Stanford -- Mister True to nearly everyone who knew him -- came out his front door and crossed Orchard Street into my yard on his way uptown, I almost went inside to keep from having to talk to him. I was picking up pecans and dropping them into a paper sack, and his route through the yard would bring him right past me. For some reason, though, I called out, "Hey, Mister True, Howya doing?" Maybe I felt guilty about wanting to avoid him.

A couple of years ago they made him retire from the bank. To keep busy he pattered around his and Miss Carolyn's yard. In the fall he raked up oak and pecan leaves. In the spring he put out tomato plants in topsoil surrounded by old tractor tires. Year round he drove the beat-up Impala to and from town with his felt hat jammed down on his head and a bewildered at-loose-ends look on his face. Miss Carolyn said that he was like a ghost in the house, haunting one room after another and fading off into the yard when he didn't know what else to do.

Hearing me, Mister True turned on a smile that would've been brilliant except for his crooked teeth. He was a couple inches over six feet but looked even taller because he was so thin and wore his trousers right up under his rib cage. He had his famous felt hat on and his famous button-up sweater hanging off his shoulders like a ratty cape. His walk was what got me, though. His legs only seemed to move below the knees, and he had his hands on his hips with his thumbs pointing toward his belt buckle in a way that reminded me of a girl modeling a bathing suit.

Dressed like that, walking like that, he arrived about an arm length's off. A crust of dried egg yolk clung to the corner of his mouth, and a night's growth of beard stubbled his long jaw. He looked down as if he had something important in his shirt pocket, but it was just to keep from having to meet my eye.

Smiling, he mumbled, "It's not on. It's off. They have 'em up there. It'll do if I get one again."

He held his thumb and forefinger apart to show me the size of whatever he was talking about. He nodded toward town.

"It's this problem. We need one, and they have 'em. I've got to go there and get it. It's off, that's why."

Mister True talked that way nowadays. Fuzzy pronouns and verbs that didn't go anywhere. To stay up with

him, you had to make funny mental jumps. It was one of the reasons that the bank didn't even call him for part-time teller work anymore. In a grown man, it was irksome. You wanted to grab him by the shoulders and demand that he put real names and places to all his formless mutter.

"Look," I said. "Is there something I can do?"

Hands on hips, he swung his skinny chest around toward his own house and back again. ". . . out and won't stay on." I couldn't hear the rest of what he said.

"Is it your car?"

Mister True's head came up. His smile got sunshine bright.

Thinking I'd hit the jackpot, I told him that even though I wasn't a mechanic, I could check under the hood and maybe give him an idea what was wrong. Then he could tell Erroll Seaver or one of the other fellows at the Amoco station. This idea was hunky-dory with Mister True. He waved jerkily at the blue Impala sitting in his driveway, inviting me to go back over there with him. I put my sack of pecans on the straps of a lawn chair, and we crossed the street together.

I went to the Impala's hood, but Mister True climbed the steps to the porch and walked straight into the house. Maybe for a flashlight or a screwdriver, I thought. But when he didn't come back out, I stepped over a flowerbed and onto the porch and knocked on the screen door.

Miss Carolyn let me in. Saying she was glad to see me and grateful that I'd come, she led me into to a dark parlor with painted wainscoting halfway up the walls. In this parlor, Mister True was standing in front of the space heater and staring down at it as if it had hurt his feelings.

"The handle for turning on the gas came undone," Miss Carolyn told me. "True's been worried about it all morning."

I used a screwdriver on a lampstand next to the heater to tighten the handle. It took maybe thirty seconds. Mister True and Miss Carolyn beamed at me as if I'd just run a pack of rabid dogs out of their front yard. In the chilly gloom of the parlor, Mister True's eyelashes had a gluey look. He put one long hand on top of the heater and rolled his knuckles over the ugly amber metal.

In the hall I said, "I thought it was the car he was worried about. That's what he made me think."

"True gets confused these days," Miss Carolyn said.

She was pretty close to crying.

"Don't we all," I said.

[] [] []

The next time I saw him, he was sitting on a folding chair in the voting-machine room in our new City Hall. Miss Carolyn was an election official, and she was checking the name of each person who came in against a list of registered voters. Mister True was at the end of the table, not far from her, because she didn't like to leave him alone. He'd turn on the TV or maybe the tap water and then go out for a walk. His driving had also gotten worse. Miss Carolyn had begun to hide the car keys to protect him and everybody else in town.

A small line snaked around Miss Carolyn's table. My wife and I made it longer, but folks kept throwing the levers in their booths, opening the curtains for the next voter, and so the line kept right on moving. The people going past Mister True asked him how he was doing, and told him how well he was looking, and patted him on the shoulder of his musty-smelling cardigan.

"True just went to the post office," Miss Carolyn explained to everyone. "Says we've won a lottery or something."

I looked at Mister True. When my sister and I were kids in the pew across from his and Miss Carolyn's, she'd noticed that although Mister True would cross his legs at the knee, the foot of the upper leg would still rest on the floor -- right next to the foot of the uncrossed leg. He was sitting that way now, and the smile on his face seemed to have as much to do with this peculiar posture as it did with any lottery victory.

"This is what we get," Mister True was telling everyone. "This right here. Hundreds of thousands of dollars. Millions maybe."

He had a brochure from an aluminum-siding company. With one spidery finger, he was tapping a toll-free telephone number given on the brochure. To him, the telephone number was the amount of the prize money he and Miss Carolyn had won. At each person shuffling by, Miss Carolyn looked up in a pitiful, begging way: Don't make him think anything else, her look meant.

"Congratulations, Mister True."

"That's wonderful."

"Gonna take a trip to Hawaii now?"

Pam and I were coming up next. Pam leaned her forehead into my back and whispered: "It makes me want to cry, Dick. I swear to God, it makes me want to cry."

[] [] []

A few days later, I came home to find the house empty. At the kitchen window I looked out over our dead lawn at Orchard Street and the tall tarpapered roof of the Stanfords' house. Just then Pam pushed open Miss Carolyn's screen door, said something to somebody inside, and came

down the steps. Pretty soon, she was with me in the kitchen. I made us each a cup of instant coffee, and we sat down together at the breakfast bar.

"What's going on?"

"Miss Carolyn and I put Mister True to bed. Took some doing."

"It's only six twenty. Is he sick?"

"Worn out. Miss Carolyn, too. Really wrung out, Dick, the both of them."

"Yeah, it's tough puttering around the house all day."

Pam gave me a look. "They've been to a funeral in Sylvester. A double funeral for the teen-age grandchildren of an old friend of Miss Carolyn's. They were killed this weekend in a car crash. The Stanfords have been gone two days, Dick. They only got home a couple of hours ago. Didn't you even realize they were gone?"

"I was at work. I was at work yesterday, too."

Pam tapped her coffee spoon on the Formica. She got to tapping harder and harder -- until, finally, I grabbed her wrist. Like Mister True, she refused to look at me.

"Miss Carolyn's about the bravest woman I've ever met," she said bitterly. "The absolute bravest."

"Is that something to get angry about?"

"Listen to this, will you? The funeral confused Mister True. He saw two coffins there. Two coffins for two young people. He thought his and Miss Carolyn's grown-up sons had died. The whole two days they were in Sylvester he thought that. He cried like a baby in the church and at graveside when they lowered the caskets -- the caskets were closed because it was such a messy wreck -- and Mister True thought his own kids were being buried."

"Nobody set him straight?"

"Dick, Miss Carolyn didn't know. It never occurred to her that he didn't realize whose funeral they were attending. It was a bit out of proportion, how he was carrying on, but Mister True's always been soft-hearted and everyone understands that he's been declining these past couple of years. It touched the folks there. It really did, Dick."

In a modest sort of way, this was a fantastic story. I sipped my coffee and waited for Pam to get on track again.

"Driving home from Sylvester, Miss Carolyn finally figured out what'd happened. Mister True started mumbling the boy's names -- 'Cliff, Cliff,' 'Martin, Martin' -- and all about how it wasn't fair, him and Miss Carolyn going on to live longer than the boys when Cliff and Martin still had families of their own to raise. So it hit Miss Carolyn like walking through a big pane of glass -- invisible to you one minute but the next you're all cut up and hurt places're too many to count. She stopped the car to try to explain to him that it wasn't the way he thought."

"Didn't that do it?"

"Stopping confused him. He knocked his door open and wet the grass at roadside. Then he told Miss Carolyn they had to get home and check their insurance policies. You see, he figured out there was money owing Cliff's and Martin's families -- which was pretty sharp thinking for a mixed-up old

man. She tried to tell him again that those closed caskets hadn't held their sons, but he'd seen what he'd seen, and all she could do, then, was pull him back into the car and drive him on home.

"Your mean he still believes their sons are dead?"

"Listen. Miss Carolyn called me as soon as the got home. I went over there to help her straighten Mister True out. We showed him school pictures of the kids who'd died. We explained about the car crash. We told him Cliff and Martin were okay. What finally did it, though, was calling Cliff long-distance in Birmingham and letting Mister True talk to him. Cliff talked to his daddy just as sweet and reassuring as you could ask. He wasn't a bit annoyed, just truly and sweetly concerned."

"And Martin?"

"He's up in Atlanta, but we couldn't reach him. Which was fine because talking to Cliff did it for Mister True, anyway."

Pam carried her cup to the sink and poured out what was left of her coffee.

After a while, looking out the window, she said, "You should've seen him, Dick. He clapped his hands like a kid. He yanked his hat off and flipped it at the ceiling. He grabbed Miss Carolyn and began blubbing into her shoulder. Sobbing, Dick, just sobbing to beat the band. Miss Carolyn got started, too, and this time it was tears of joy because their boys were still alive. Pretty soon, I was right in there with them, just laughing and crying at the same time."

"You're doing half of it again."

Pam turned on the cold water and rinsed her hands. "I don't know how Miss Carolyn stands it," she said. Then she leaned down and rinsed her face. Taking a dish towel with her, she went by me and straight upstairs to bed.

I made my own supper.

[] [] []

Mister True got worse and worse. He found the hidden car keys and wrecked the Impala without killing anybody or damaging anything besides the car but a zinc garbage can. He wandered off at odd hours, and the night patrolman brought him home a couple of times. By spring Miss Carolyn was spoon-feeding him his meals. She had to do other things for him, too, the kinds of chores that people with babies get used to doing.

In June, Mister True fell off a stool trying to unscrew a light bulb that hadn't even burned out. He broke his hip. His stay in the medical center seventeen miles up the road stretched on and on, and Miss Carolyn was hardly ever in her house. Evenings, her porch light burned until midnight or later. Pam kept up with things and gave me reports almost every time we sat down to eat.

One evening a TV program we like was on, right at this place where the detective is stalking a heavyset bad guy in a fatigue jacket. The telephone rang. Pam got up to catch it. Folks always call when you're five minutes away from a big shootout.

The program ended, another one began, and Pam came back from the kitchen and sat down on the sofa. Her eyes were red.

"That was Miss Carolyn. Mister True's dying."

I turned the TV off. "He's been dying for five or six weeks now, Pam."

"He's dying tonight. He's not going to make it to morning."

Miss Carolyn just thought we should know."

"I'm sorry."

"I asked her if she wanted me to drive up there. She said no, she just wanted to be with him by herself tonight -- to hold his hand and rub his forehead and kiss him goodbye until he can't feel it anymore. She'd be embarrassed to do those things if anyone else was around. She'd feel like she had to talk to them because they'd come all that way to sit with her and keep her company."

I looked at my feet. This was it. Never again was Mister True going to saunter out his front door with his hands on his hips like a contestant in the Miss America pageant. His famous felt hat and his famous ratty sweater would go into a box somewhere. So would Mister True, for that matter.

"It's probably a blessing," I said. "He hasn't been anything like himself for a couple of years."

Pam didn't seem to register this. "I started crying. That got Miss Carolyn going. I apologized, but she told me not to worry. Over the phone, it's something better than talking that two people can do together."

Pam took a deep breath. She wasn't crying now, but her eyes were red.

"Damn," she said. "So many stupid, goddamn tears."

I had no idea what to say to that. Pam didn't know what else to say, either. TV was impossible. I got up and went through the house and stood for a long time on the front porch with my hands in my back pockets. I looked at the clouds dirtying the night sky and listened to the semis going through town on the way to Columbus and other points south.

[End]

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Ellen Kushner – An Appreciation



When Ellen Kushner's Swordspoint was published by Arbor House in 1987, it heralded the appearance of an important new voice in the fantasy field. True, like most first novels, it spoke with borrowed accents--the witty repartee of Georgette Heyer's Regency romances, the literate intensity of Dorothy Dunnett's Lymond chronicles, the on-the-edge grittiness of M. John Harrison's Viriconium stories--but unlike most first novels, it transcended these influences and melded them into a consistent, individual idiom. Along with the incisive power of this prose ("I have not in some time read a better writer," opined Algis Budrys in F&SF), what impressed readers and critics alike was its adult sensibility, aware of questions of gender and class, applied to adolescent swashbuckling material a' la The Prisoner of Zenda. Though its lack of a supernatural element (like Zenda, it merely takes place in no known country) nonplussed some observers, the story of master swordsman Richard St. Vier, his lover Alec, and the various criminals and nobles they encounter in a complex plot organized around two set-pieces--a pseudo-Jacobean play much of the cast attends and a breathtaking final trial scene--was universally hailed as a landmark.

For some few, however, Swordspoint merely fulfilled the promise of Kushner's first story, "The Unicorn Masque",

from Terri Windling and Mark Alan Arnold's World-Fantasy-Award-winning 1981 anthology from Ace, Elsewhere. It is a stunning Elizabethan fantasy, with echoes of Moorcock's Gloriana; its two protagonists, the virgin queen and her all-too-perfect suitor, are remarkable creations.

Ellen Kushner was born in Cleveland, attended Bryn Mawr, and graduated from Barnard College at Columbia University. She was an assistant at Ace Books in the late '70s, moving to Pocket Books as her 1980 anthology Basilisk (a model for the aforementioned Elsewhere series with its mix of originals and reprints, poetry and prose, all with appropriate black & white illustrations) was published. A year later she quit publishing entirely to concentrate on writing; for the next five years she labored painstakingly over Swordspoint. In the interim there appeared a number of short stories: "Red-Cloak," a Richard & Alec story that was her actual first sale, published in Whispers in 1982; "Lazarus," a bizarre, experimental prequel to "The Unicorn Masque," in Jessica Salmonson's 1983 anthology Heroic Visions II, from Ace; and "Night Laughter," in a 1986 Tor book. She also produced five entries in the Choose Your Own Adventure™ series from Bantam.

Each of the two 1986 Signet shared-world anthologies about punk elves, Borderland and Bordertown (also edited by Windling and Arnold) has a Kushner contribution: "Charis," a poignant evocation of the feelings of a teenaged girl embroiled in a Faerie plot; and "Mockery," co-written with Bellamy Bach, which juxtaposes a male painter and a female poet for a fascinating exploration of the nature of art and gender.

Swordspoint having, to the author's great relief, finally appeared, Kushner left her gargoyle-festooned Upper West Side apartment and moved to Boston, where she joined the staff of WGBH-FM as a classical announcer. She is currently heard on the nationally-distributed American Public Radio Nakamichi International Music Series, where her wit and impish humor enliven the proceedings considerably.

In early 1990, her long-awaited second novel, Thomas the Rhymer appeared from William Morrow. Based on the famous ballad and its earlier recension [rendition] as a 13th-century romance, Thomas is a warm and romantic evocation of medieval rural living; the lengthy excursion of Thomas in Elfland (which incorporates another well-known ballad, "The Famous Flower of Serving Men") is a tour de force.

Simply put, Ellen Kushner is one of the most important writers in the fantasy field today. She is known for her eloquence on convention panels and for her superlative readings of her own works, and she should make a worthy Honored Guest indeed.

-- Donald G. Keller

Four NAKA Scripts by Ellen Kushner

I'm afraid a lot of my writing time is now going to writing scripts for a radio show. Not to say I don't work on fiction—if anything, a day spent pounding out the equivalent of a weekly column get my gears turning and my engine purring for more words when I get home! But in terms of sheer time-at-the-computer, I've got to say that the Nakamichi International Music Series has me pinned to the mat.

Since the summer of 1987, I've been a music host for WGBH-fm, one of two Public radio stations in Boston. In February, 1989, I was chosen, like Cinderella, to be the host of a nationally-distributed classical music series. It's produced here at WGBH, with a generous grant from the E. Nakamichi Foundation (they make high-end sound equipment in Japan, and distribute money for good musical causes from a foundation in Los Angeles - - No, I don't have a free Nakamichi player; does the Ford Foundation give you a free car?). We're distributed by American Public Radio, that brave little outfit in St. Paul, Minnesota, who first brought you "A Prairie Home Companion."

All of the concerts you hear on the series are recorded before a live audience, and come from somewhere outside the continental United States -- we get lot of good stuff Canada, as well as from Sydney, Hong Kong, Berlin, Budapest....The radio stations there send us their spectacular recording of concerts; our team of crack Classical Music Nerds sifts through hours of performances to come up with exciting 2-hour programs. Our motto: "Cut the Crap!" No endless applause; no conductors coming onstage and shaking hands with themselves; and absolutely positively no pieces we don't like!!! We pick and choose the best of each concert, and put together 2 hours each week of Good Stuff. And I never pretend I'm actually sitting in the concert hall.

What I do do is educate. Ruminates. Tell jokes; reminisce. I don't pretend to know much more than I do about classical music; I draw on my experience as an artist and a writer and a reader and a history fiend and a woman of the 90's to bring people closer to the music.

It drives the Bach-worshippers crazy. I understand they're burning me in effigy in front of their \$5,000 stereo systems in suburban D.C.

So, since my writing time is taken up with Naka scripts, not little pieces for SF cons, I thought I'd at least give you the benefit of some of them:

ONCE, IN THE MIDDLE OF WINTER, the phone rang. It was Caroline. We'd been through a lot together: The college gym requirement, Freshman Comp., mystery meat in the cafeteria....Now here she was waiting out a snowbound winter in Minneapolis, while I waded through the slush of NYC, reading manuscripts and waiting to get famous writing novels.

"Hi," she said, "I've been watching TV. There's a train across Canada, that takes you all the way to Vancouver. Wanna go?"

Novelists are supposed to jump at the chance for adventure. Besides, I love trains, and I love my friends. "Sure," I said.

So I had three springs that year: the one I left behind in New York, the one just beginning in the middle of the Canadian Rockies, where I nearly missed the train at a little station, jumping off to pick some lilacs, and one in full bloom on the West Coast of Canada, by the sea. Our itinerary even *sounded* like a train: *from Winnipeg to Vancouver...Winnipeg to Vancouver....*

I'm Ellen Kushner. This week on the Naka IMS, we are making the return journey, beginning at the Pacific Ballroom in the Hotel Vancouver, for a Gala Concert by the CBC Vancouver Orchestra, and winding up all the way in the east, in Toronto, where the Esprit Orchestra plays pieces with the intriguing names, "Cortege," "The Infernal Machine," and "Three Hallucinations for Orchestra".

[NB: "Caroline" is of course Caroline Stevermer, author of The Serpent's Egg (Ace, o.p.) and co-author, with Pat Wrede, of Sorcery & Cecilia.]

IN THE DAYS BEFORE photography, the only way to know what another place looked like, short of going there, was through pictures that someone had drawn or painted.

A pretty obvious statement, you may say, and you'd be right. But I think the reason great photographers aren't a dime a dozen is that it is very difficult to get a camera to see the way the human eye does, to notice what it notices. These days, we tend to think that the camera is utterly accurate, and that *artists* are the lunatic visionaries, creating a world only they can see.

Which is why I was so surprised to discover that there really are Rembrandt trees in Holland.

I was on the train from Schipol airport, on my way to Utrecht for the big annual music festival there. You know how those sleepless all-night flights to Europe can leave you with that weird detached feeling of seeing everything both from a distance and very, very clearly at the same time. I sat on the train, my body barely staying upright on the swaying seat, my mind jumping with excitement, watching cows grazing in the flat green fields with windbreak lines of trees in the distance....there was something familiar about it. The summer wind blew the branches, their green leaves showed silver undersides--and there it was! That crinkling edge, almost golden, sharp and defined, each leaf against the other, even hundreds of feet away.

I was looking at a Rembrandt etching.

I thought he'd made it up.

The whole trip was like that for me: constantly encountering the familiar on unknown ground.

I'm Ellen Kushner, and this is the Naka IMS. Thanks to an invitation from Radio Nederland, there I was on that train, on my way to the Early Music Festival in the Dutch city of Utrecht.

At the end of my first hectic day at the festival, I went to a midnight concert of music by 15th Century Flemish composer, Adrian Willaert, in the Jacobikerk. Excited and exhausted from a day of racing around a new city, meeting new people, taking in concerts, I felt I was back on the train again: too tired and too alert. There I sat, quite late at night,

in the nave of that huge five-hundred-year-old church. Suddenly I was off the train and into the forest itself. The pillars rose like tree trunks, the vaulting of the rafters spread up and up above our heads.

Ten singers from England, The Tallis Scholars, lifted their voices, and world was full of shifting leaves, each one fine-edged and exquisite, all moving against each other to form a shimmering pattern, manifold yet decreet, the Rembrandt tree, a perfect work of art.

LETS SAY ... all my childhood games began that way. Let's say the bed is a boat and the floor is the water and there's sharks down there. ...let's say I'm this princess and you a gypsy, and you kidnap me and I try to get away....

Remember?

Well, let's say it's Vienna, around 1826. You're an artist, and I'm a...poet. You're new in town, so I say, "Look, let's go over to my friend Spaun's house, and listen to some music. He's got a nice piano, and some good friends who like to get together and play."

"Oh, no," you say, "I don't have any good clothes. And I wouldn't know what to do, how to behave, with all those fancy people."

I laugh. "Fancy people? You're thinking of aristocrats and bankers? No, I assure you, my dear friend, it's just a lot of artists, thinkers and writers like us. Most of us are just starting out, or trying to. Can you sing?"

"Well," you admit, "I sight-read a little."

"Oh, that's good. Our best composer writes the most wonderful music! He's done some truly exquisite songs -- he sets a lot of our poems to music. He's published quite a bit of music, actually -- You'll like them. Very simple, but so moving. A real departure from all that stuffy classicism -- old-fashioned powdered wigs and aristocratic patrons -- he writes music with genuine feeling!"

Now, you're interested. "Oh, really? What's his name?"

"Schubert, Frans Schubert. In fact, he contributes so much, we call our little evenings, Schubertiads."

"Coming?"

I'm Ellen Kushner, and this time on the Naka IMS, we're going to attend a Schubertiad with our friends pianist Zoltan Kocsis, and the Alban Berg String quartet with Elizabeth Leonskaja.

(Well, let's say it's a real drawingroom Schubertiad. Actually, the performances are, as always on this program made possible by a grant from the E Nakamichi Foundation, from the international concert stages -- this time, we go to Vienna -- Schubert's hometown -- as close to the original Schubertiads as 250 year can get us.)

So: "I'm very worried about Frans, I have to tell you. He contracted some sort of illness, what 5 years ago back in

1822. He hasn't been doing too well -- but he keeps on composing. He's written a charming set of little piano pieces that are about to be *published*, I understand! But he's not looking well these days. And I hear he doesn't even have the money to go on holiday to mountains, where the air would do him good!" I'm sure that Hungarian pianist, Zoltan Kocsis, is going to give a very feeling performance of Schubert's Impromptu in C minor now.

[MUSIC ; MORE BIO ; MORE MUSIC ; WRAP-UP:]

I'm Ellen Kushner, and I've certainly had fun taking the role of one of Schubert's many friends in the 19th Century Viennese arts community. I suppose I'd better wrap it up with the bitter ending:

"They're going to bury Franz next to Beethoven -- his brother said that was what he wanted. I thought he was getting better -- he went for a walking-tour to Eisenstadt in October! But at the end of the month it all went to hell -- he couldn't eat, couldn't drink, couldn't keep anything down...Spaun said he was still correcting proofs to *Winterreise*.... Oh, it makes me so angry! He could have been a success. I know it. We all loved his music so much. But most of his manuscripts have just gone into trunks... songs, symphonies...who knows what-all? Trunks at his relatives. That's the last anyone will hear of poor Franz Schubert."

IN MY NEXT LIFE, I plan to be a conductor.

I am going to look a score, a page of some twenty separate orchestra parts, and they will be transparent as glass to me, and the music will shine through. I will commune with the spirits of dead great composers. They will express their will through me, and I will show them things they never knew they knew. I will raise my arms, and dozens of great musicians will give note. They will trust me to bring them in at the right moment; strident string will mute when I frown, and timid flutes will come forth when I beckon. Like a team of matched horses, the will slow to a walk at the tightening of my hand on the manifold reigns. I will hear visions.

In my next life, I plan to be a conductor.

You get the idea.

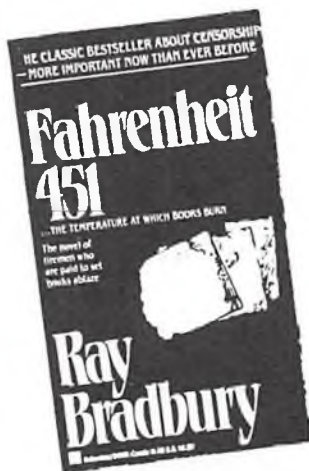
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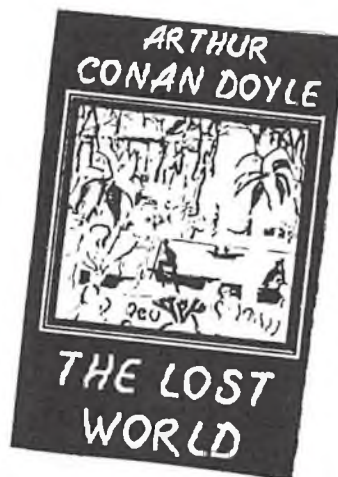
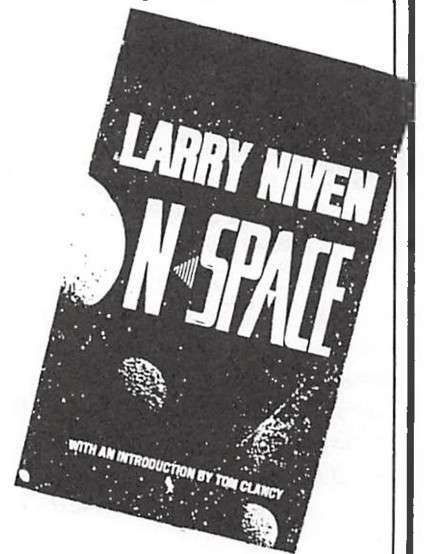
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