READERCON 22

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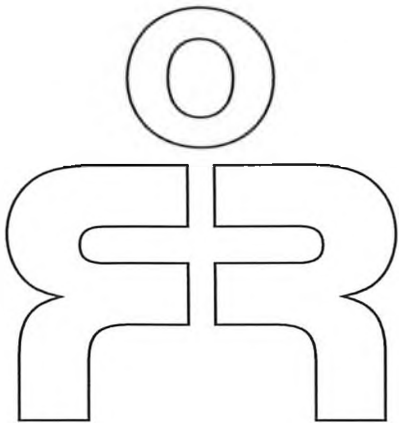
22

SOUVENIR BOOK



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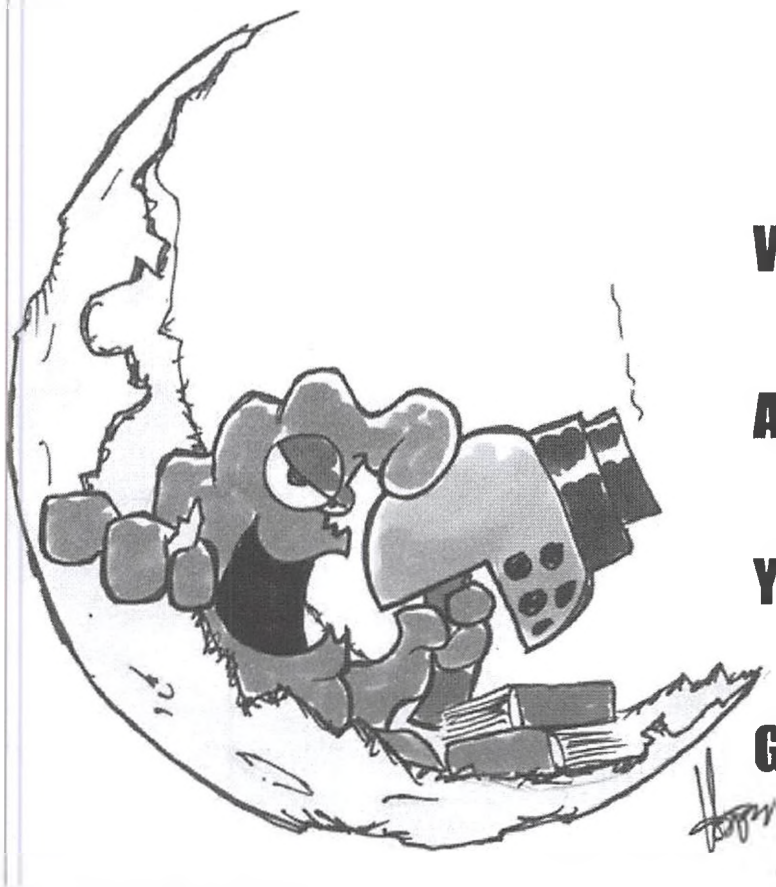

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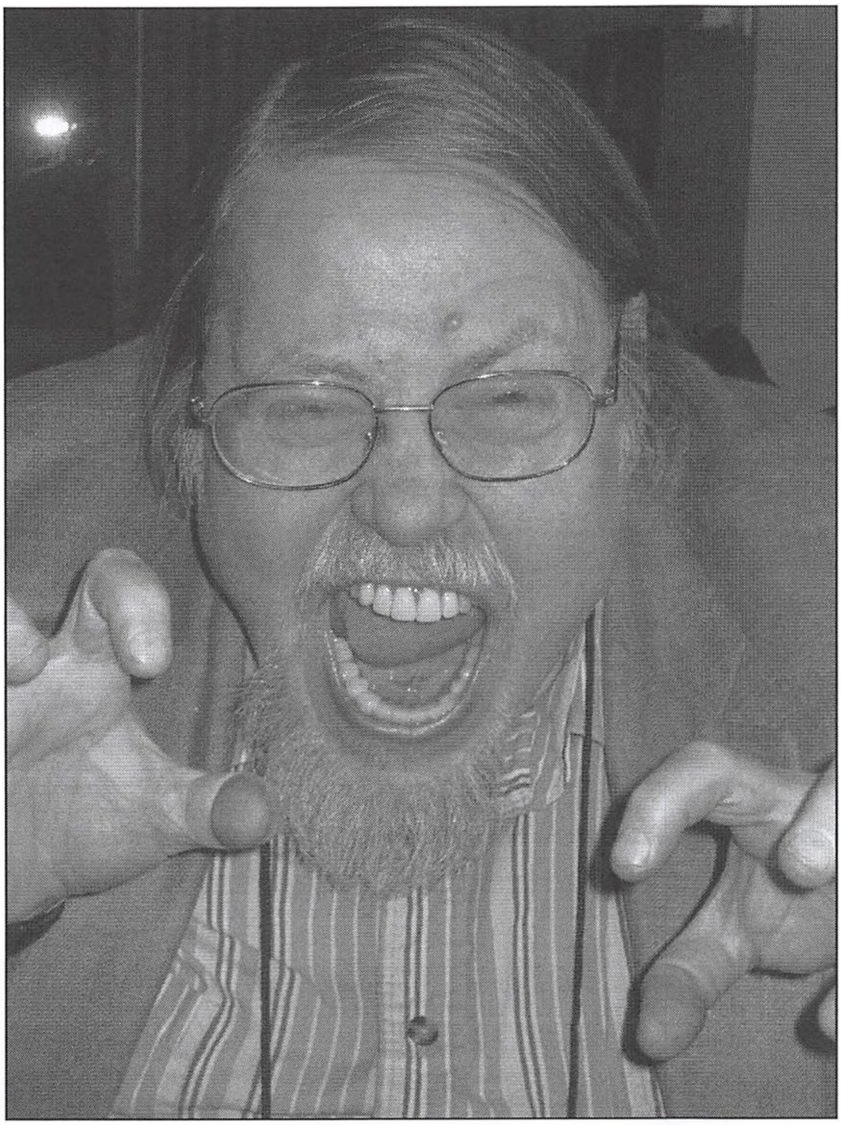

{Photo by Ellen Datlow}

GARDNER DOZOIS

SITTING IN THE SUN IN THE WAIST-HIGH GRASS: "THE LAST DAY OF JULY" BY GARDNER DOZOIS

{Michael Bishop}

[First published in the *New York Review of Science Fiction* #159 (November 2001); collected in *A Reverie for Mister Ray: Reflections on Life, Death, and Speculative Fiction* (Pulphouse Publishing, 2005). Part ii originally published in *Strange Days: Fabulous Journeys with Gardner Dozois* (NESFA Press, 2001).]

i. a memory

As an aspiring SF writer, I first read the hair-raising speculative fiction of "hot young Turk" Gardner Dozois in the early 1970s while serving at the United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School in Colorado Springs, Colorado, as an English instructor. I encountered Gardner's dense, evocative, intensely felt stories primarily in the most exciting original anthologies of that time, Damon Knight's *Orbit* and Robert Silverberg's *New Dimensions*.

Of all Gardner's early work, the disquieting Vietnam War story "A Dream at Noonday" from *Orbit 7* and the beautiful off-planet adventure-meditation "A Special Kind of Morning" from *New Dimensions 1* probably had the most impact on me, but "The Last Day of July"—an enigmatic novelette set in 1939!—from the third number of Silverberg's series sent chills spiraling down my spine and envy rushing through my bloodstream.

The entire story takes place in a dilapidated country house in Pennsylvania, and most of the "action" occurs between the ears of its writer protagonist, a troubled young man named John. Early on, too weary to accomplish repairs on the house, John goes into the yard to read his "notes." Dozois describes this mundane safari and its follow-up in acute off-hand detail:

> John wades to the center of the lawn with his notebook, and sits down determinedly, in the sun. Sitting, the grass comes up above his waist, and he has the illusion that he has just lowered himself into a tub of sun-warmed green water. For the first time, he notices how overgrown the grounds actually are. Weeds and wildflowers have sprung up and proliferated everywhere, and John is submerged in an ocean of growth…
>
> To distract himself, John opens his notebook… The shadows of the tall grass can be seen on the lined paper—one scheme of order imposed over another—and he watches them… in bemused fascination. The calligraphy of the shadows is exquisite; they look like actual brush strokes on the page, clean-bordered black lines. The sun also casts the silhouette of an insect onto the page—a shadow spider crawling along a blade of shadow grass, a reflection of some negative and polar universe. He lifts his gaze slightly to locate the real spider, and then manages to watch both it and its doppelganger at once… He tries to touch the silhouettes of grass and spider. He cannot—there is nothing

but feel of paper under his fingers, and the shadow spider now clambers distortedly over his knuckles. Neither can he feel the ink that forms the words on the page, though he knows that it, too, is there.

As he watches, a word pulls itself up out of the paper and scurries away.

I shivered. Other young writers shivered, too. Although little happens here in the story's outer narrative, John's self-involved perplexity grows architecturally in Dozois's prose. Meanwhile, the lineaments of a potentially remarkable career had also begun to take shape. As Robert Silverberg noted in his Introduction to *The Visible Man* (Berkley Medallion, 1975), Dozois's first collection, "The thrust of the [writing] is psychological, but the changes of spirit take place beneath an accretion of concrete detail, of vivid and immediate simile and metaphor and physical description."

"The Last Day of July" occupied the honored final slot in *New Dimensions 3*. Ursula K. Le Guin's classic short story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" had nailed down the equally important lead-off position in that powerful volume, which also included "Down There" by Damon Knight, "The Girl Who Was Plugged In" by James Tiptree, Jr., and notable work by Terry Carr, R. A. Lafferty, and Barry Malzberg.

At that time, I had an exhilarating sense that editors and writers were working in tandem to transform—in fact, to *transfuse*—the entire field. They wanted, or *seemed* to want, to release new blood not only into the anemic body of traditional sf and fantasy but also into the sediment-clouded waters of mainstream literature. Just as Gardner's story "The Last Day of July" dramatically intimated in its final pages, a major change—a change for the better—loomed in the world of English-language letters.

Unfortunately, at least from one perspective, the crowd-pleasing films of George Lucas and Steven Spielberg soon came along to make visual sf hugely popular, even as they (perhaps inadvertently) undercut the struggle to drag literary sf out of the pulpwood commercial bogs of its origins in the United States. Science-fiction titles bounced to the top of best-seller lists, but usually as novelizations of film or TV properties or as units in written series like the *Dune* books of Frank Herbert and the *Foundation* novels of Isaac Asimov.

Even at that oddly hopeful time, though, "The Last Day of July" struck long-term readers of the stuff as a kind of anti-sf, a slap in the face of science-oriented stalwarts like Asimov, Clarke, and Heinlein. This Dozois kid could write, sure, but he liked present-tense narration almost as much as past-tense storytelling, and his stories often subjugated action to interior monologue and upsetting psychological effects. "The Last Day of July" fit into this box so snugly that it certainly fed the myth of its author—and some of his fellow contributors to *Orbit*, in particular—as elitist pessimists. Some critics held, or strongly implied, that Dozois's work was defeatist, that he preferred fine writing to narrative substance, and that reading his work, especially if you cared more for story than for style, would inevitably plunge you into ulcerous depression.

Complete balderdash, these charges. Dozois always put his style at the service of content. Early stories like "A Special Kind of Morning," "Chains of the Sea," "The Visible Man," and, yes, even "The Last Day of July"—as well as such fine subsequent efforts as "Dinner Party," "The Peacemaker," "Morning Child" (these last two Nebula Award winners), and "Solace"—disclose a writer with an insightful sense of what our humanity often demands or extracts from us.

Besides, Dozois had, and still has, a compassion large enough to redeem his put-upon characters from the snares that they have fallen into or laid for themselves—even when that redemption is philosophical or metaphorical rather than physical: maybe, in fact, especially then. Even in those ancient days, incidentally, Dozois understood the charges that some leveled against him, and in "A Special Kind of Morning" appears to respond to his critics in the voice of his garrulous narrator:

Sit down, sit down: butt against the pavement, yes; it's been done before. Everything has, near about. Now that's not an expression of your black pessimism, or your futility, or what have you. Pessimism's just the common-sense knowledge that there's more ways for something to go wrong than for it go right, from our point of view anyway—which is not necessarily that of the management, or of the mechanism, if you prefer your cosmos depersonalized. As for futility, everybody dies the true death eventually; even though executives may dodge it for a few hundred years, the hole gets them all in the end, and I imagine that's futility enough for a start. The philosophical man accepts both as constants and then doesn't let them bother him any.

Recently, I had occasion to read "The Last Day of July" again. Since *The Visible Man*, Gardner has published two other collections, *Slow Dancing Through Time* (Ursus Imprints, Mark V. Ziesing, 1990), a series of collabora-

tions with Jack Dann, Michael Swanwick, Susan Casper, and Jack C. Haldeman II, and *Geodesic Dreams: The Best Short Fiction of Gardner Dozois* (St. Martin's, 1992). In the fall of 2001, NESFA, the New England Science Fiction Association, will publish a new volume of his work, *Strange Days: Fabulous Journeys with Gardner Dozois*, and Gardner asked some colleagues to write brief introductions for individual stories. I chose "The Last Day of July." Here is what I said, after enthusiastically rereading the story:

ii. an introduction

Up front, let me admit that I don't know what "The Last Day of July" *means*. I have a good idea what *happens* in the story because it unfolds, episode by disquieting episode, in linear sequence. Granted, subtle references to John the protagonist's past or to the historical provenance of the tale bubble up briefly, but these strike me as time-tested rather than avant-garde storytelling devices, and Dozois never purposely muddles either the description or the tenor of an event to throw the reader off stride. Mystery inheres in "The Last Day of July," I feel, not because the author dazzles or obfuscates, but because the significance of John's metamorphosis—from a wounded human being into a living seed of a brand-new continuum—defies rational explanation; it slips through the gears of one's cogitating mind like an undiscovered isotope of quicksilver.

This metaphor for the story's slipperiness may seem to imply a criticism. I don't intend it to. Among other things, "The Last Day of July" has to do with boundaries, and with fruitfully trespassing them—with emerging from the woods of futility and disaster onto the shore of a dolphin-engendering sea. It frames an entire pageant of life-affirming allegories, from the breaking up of writer's block to the triumph of peace over world war to the cyclical coming of spring to the penultimate mystery of resurrection. It opens out to all these readings, but limits itself to none of them.

I like "The Last Day of July," in fact, precisely because you *cannot* read it as you would an amusing anecdote or a fact-based news article. Even more surprising, you cannot even read it as you would a parable by Jorge Luis Borges, for Borges generally explains himself—even if his explanations stun us with their erudition and complexity. Here, on the other hand, Dozois's storytelling leaves us gasping after meaning, catching a gulp or two of oxygen, and breathing an entire otherworldly atmosphere, checking to see if our lungs have withered and our very skin transmogrified into an organ of aeration. I like "The Last Day of July," in short, because you have to pay attention to it line by line; you must *think* about the implications of its events.

The first time I read "The Last Day of July" I paid too little attention. I registered the impressive writing, the accuracy of the author's eye ("A rubber duck next to the wagon, dead, eaten away by weather, the side of its face distorted as if by acid"), and the magisterial progress of the story. I felt the menace in its paragraphs, the dread in John's self-image and outlook, and the disorienting weirdness of the change about to befall him. (When, near story's end, John walks downstairs, Dozois compares his walk to "wading through hardening glue, and with every step the glue gets deeper and stiffer. He holds very tightly to one proper thought, because he knows now what happens to people-seeds who are caught too tightly by the world...") But, initially, I failed to grasp the historical setting, the nature of John's ending change, and even the story's legitimacy as science fiction.

Pay attention. Note that John thinks once of "swing" music, that the grocery man whom he finds so annoying refers to Edvard Beneš, who resigned as president of Czechoslovakia in 1938, and that John has firsthand experience of the London Blitz, as well as scary premonitions of both Boston and New York City "fused into molten glass by some new atrocity of man." Think about "The Last Day of July" as a psychological case study, yes, but remain open to its mind-blowing operation as a tale of both personal and societal transformation. Think Poe, Kafka, and maybe even Lovecraft ("a lactescent, nacrid light"; "the labored, ugly beating of a monstrous heart"), but understand, too, that in this still early story, Gardner Dozois continued forging his own inimitable voice and identity, and that the heat of his forge fired the imaginations of dozens of his immediate contemporaries, mine among them.

iii. an interview

In preparing this piece for *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, I wanted to add some material not available in my brief Introduction. To that end, I conducted an interview with Gardner via e-mail. He graciously responded to all my questions, despite his work editing *Asimov's Science Fiction* and many pressing personal matters, including a death in the family. Allow me to thank him again for his cooperation.

Q. What thematic intentions did you have when you wrote "The Last Day in July"?

A. It's been so long since I wrote this story [at least thirty years] that I have only vague memories of just what I was intending to do in it, sort of like overhearing an author talking about the inner meaning of a story at a bar, and then being asked to repeat what he'd said thirty years later. Keep that in mind.

Q. Can you recall what triggered the story and your own personal circumstances when you began it?

A. I started [it] while living in Milford, Pennsylvania, in the summer of 1970, or at least started keeping notes that would eventually go toward its creation. I was sharing a rented house with Jim Sallis in Milford, after that year's Milford Writers Conference, and then left to act as an unofficial assistant for Damon and Kate's two-week closing stint at Clarion, which, in those long-ago days, actually took place *at* Clarion University in Clarion, Pennsylvania. When I got back, Jim had moved out and two people I'd never met had moved *in*, and I shared the house with them for a couple of months thereafter. The sense of psychic dislocation that this engendered may have contributed to the atmosphere of the story. I don't remember whether I started writing the story in the house at Milford. I may have done the opening few pages as well as bits and pieces that appear throughout [it].

Q. What about the eerie scene of John in the long grass of the front yard?

A. I was sitting in the sun in the waist-high grass, writing in longhand in my notebook, when I had the dislocating experience that John does in the story—of thinking that he sees a word pull itself out of the text and scurry away—and then I wrote *that* down in the notebook while sitting there. That one image, by the way, usually affects writers strongly, although readers who are not writers may not get any particular frisson from it. Mostly, though, I took careful notes of the house and surrounding grounds, which are described from life as accurately as I could get them

Q. Did you have any special marketing strategy in mind after finishing "The Last Day in July"?

A. I wanted to submit a story to Robert Silverberg's *New Dimensions 3*. I doubt that I bothered to submit it to any other market. Indeed, I doubt that there was any other market that would have accepted it. Certainly, it was much too weird and far out for the sf magazine markets of the day.

Q. But you did have Knight's and Silverberg's original anthology series, along with recurring volumes of Terry Carr's *Universe* and Samuel Delany and Marilyn Hacker's *Quark*, as potential outlets.

A. Knight and Silverberg did have a big impact on my early career, not so much because they guided or shaped what I wrote (although they did do a bit of that, on the craft level), but because both *Orbit* and *New Dimensions* provided markets receptive to the kind of work that I wanted to produce then. Without those two anthology series, many of my early stories might never have seen print. (Some of them had already bounced, often with form rejection slips, from the regular magazine markets.) Writing a new story for each new issue of *Orbit* became a priority of mine early on. A bit later, when stuff like "A Special Kind of Morning" and "Chains of the Sea" became too science-fictiony for Damon, producing a new story for *New Dimensions* also became a priority.

Q. Did you consciously write as a New Waver? As a rebel against the plain style and straight-ahead storytelling of writers like Asimov, Heinlein, and Clarke?

A. The magazine market of the time was particularly staid and stuffy—definitely on the wrong side of the Straight World/Counterculture gap developing then in American society—as far as we Hot Young Turks were concerned, but I never considered myself "at war with old-style sf." I'd always enjoyed it, and I cheerfully continued to read Jack Vance and Poul Anderson all the way through the New Wave days. But I could only *write* what I could write, and what I could write wasn't old-style sf.

Q. What about the so-called "Milford Mafia"? Did any sort of battle lines exist?

A. I guess I was a minor member. But with few exceptions we were not consciously organized into a Movement, or even largely in sympathy with the work of other "New Wavers." However, we were all under relentless attack from the Old Wave front, which *did* seem to us, at least, an organized, monolithic, seamless wall of disapproval. Many "New Wavers" disliked being lumped together, and others did not even care for the work of the writer with whom they were lumped—but we all faced the same pressures, the same disapproval. We were on the far side of an evolutionary shift, though, and telling us that we should recross the gap to the nearer side was pointless. Most of us could no more have done that than we could have flapped our arms and taken to the sky.

Q. "The Last Day of July" strikes me not only as an sf story but also as an oddly upbeat variety of horror story, at least if one pays attention. Any comments?

A. The experience of hearing footsteps clomping overhead, distinct and unmistakable footsteps, and going up the only staircase, finding nobody there, and then hearing footsteps clomping around *down*stairs, actually happened to me in that house in Milford. It's one of my most clear-cut "supernatural" experiences. A rational explanation may exist, but its nature has always eluded me. Perhaps this is the experience that started me thinking of using the house as a setting for a "ghost story" or a "haunted house story," although being there in isolation—as I was most of the day—spooked me a bit, anyway. Just writing a traditional haunted house story didn't seem especially interesting, though, and my thoughts drifted slowly toward the storyline that I ultimately used.

Q. And the sense of disorientation that the story imparts?

A. This was a particularly disjointed and dislocated period of my life. I had no regular place to live. I drifted from place to place, sometimes renting an apartment, sometimes crashing with somebody, no regular job, almost no money, no steady girlfriend, no contact with my family (from whom I was somewhat estranged), few friends except the people I'd met at conventions or writing workshops. I had no real career direction except to write what stories I could manage to get down on paper and to sell them wherever I could. No doubt the rootless, dislocated, cut-off-from-most-social-systems feel of all that went into coloring the tone of "The Last Day of July."

Q. Where does the title come from?

A. From an old traditional folk song. It goes something like "The cuckoo is a pretty bird. / She sings as she flies. / But she never cuckoos / Until the last day of July." Even as a ferociously pretentious twenty-something, I doubt that I meant anything more profound by this than a vague sense that the end of the story when the bird "cuckoos," when [John] goes "cuckoo." In other words, when reality breaks down completely for him... I was a big fan of [Ken Kesey's] *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and, typically, it pleased me to work in a hidden or second-level reference to the book. Or I may have just thought that it sounded neat.

Q. And the references to President Beneš of Czechoslovakia and swing music?

A. They were just meant to imply that the story was taking place in the days immediately prior to World War II. John himself sees the visions of the London Blitz he's been having as a premonition of the coming of the war, but he doesn't understand—although I intended for the *reader* to understand—that his further premonitions in New York and Washington are premonitions of other, future wars, nuclear holocausts, and then of the literal end of the world itself, or perhaps even of this universe, as the old universe begins to close down and a new universe to start up. For all of the connections intended, though, all the hidden meanings, you'd have to go back in a time machine and ask the young author himself. If you do, say "Hi" to him for me.

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APPRECIATION

{Eliot Fintushel}

Gardner Dozois has been my angel. He championed my work, even at its most eccentric, even when it was getting hate mail. (One *Asimov's* reader, as a result of "Izzy and the Father of Terror," wrote that he wished the Hale-Bopp comet would come back round and take Fintushel. I made him a gift of the little pin that I won for that story, a Nebula nominee, and he softened somewhat.) What was Gardner's response? He wrote me: "But hey, as we used to say in the army, *fuck* them if they can't take a joke." The Sycamore Hill gang visited Gardner and Susan at their apartment once, and I was surprised that it wasn't, as would befit the perennial pope of science fiction, a palace. It was, instead, a claustrophobic redoubt made of bookshelves and stacks of manuscripts and correspondence, plus a kitchenette and bath, also filled with books. They must have slept between the endpapers. Avuncular, humble, kind, attentive, and dedicated to the bone and to the marrow, how can you not love the guy? ~

EVERYBODY IN SCIENCE FICTION KNOWS GARDNER DOZOIS. OR THINKS THEY DO.

{Eileen Gunn}

Whether you are a writer or a reader, you know Gardner as an influential editor, especially for his two decades at *Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* and for his twenty-eight best-of-the-year anthologies, which set a standard of scope and critical acumen for the rest of the field. Before Gardner, a year's-best anthology was just a collection of stories—good stories, often with a short introduction and intelligent but brief comments, but just that, a bunch of stories. Gardner started the practice of taking a broad and detailed view of the field of SF. His introductions account for pretty much every significant editorial event in English-language SF, covering fiction and criticism, movies and television, gaming, important conventions and awards, and more. He gives a lengthy listing of significant stories that didn't make it into the book, and uses it as a way of encouraging new writers and acknowledging old ones, letting them know that he noticed their work, even if he didn't buy it. He frequently reminds readers and writers that a best-of-the-year anthology is not a definitive proclamation of excellence: it is a collection of some of the stories published that year that the editor especially likes, that are diverse enough to please readers of different tastes, and that weren't all published in one magazine.

Gardner has a reputation as a great story-doctor, but to me that description is unfair, not just to Gardner but

to doctors as well, since it implies a quick fix, a bandage slapped on the wound, rather than a thoughtful inquiry into the cause of the problem and a solution that heals and strengthens. As an editor at *Asimov's*, Gardner often worked with a writer to shape a story that would satisfy the aesthetic sensibilities of both the readership and the writer. I'm grateful to Gardner and to his wife Susan Casper for an hour-long phone conversation, maybe twenty years ago, in which they painstakingly helped me iron out glitches in my story "Lichen and Rock." The tale was much improved by its therapy session, and Gardner is fortunate indeed to have Susan as a partner: a wit to match his own, and a smart, talented writer herself.

I received a number of acceptances and a few rejections from Gardner while he was at *Asimov's*. My favorite—and it's hard to tell which category to file it under—is the note I got for my story "Fellow Americans," an alternate history in which Richard Nixon has become a game-show host. It was typed on a little pink rectangle of paper, one of those tear-off multiple-carbon forms that we never see anymore: unprepossessing, to say the least, for so important an editor. It said, in its entirety, "Well, they may hang me for this, or they may fire me, but what the hell: I'm feeling dangerous tonight." Only Gardner, I thought, could write an acceptance that read like a rejection.

Because Gardner is a genuinely modest man, people are too often unaware of his own very serious fiction, which he has had far too little time to write. When I first met him, in 1976, he already had a reputation as one of the most thought-provoking of the young, literary short-story writers in the field. Not all his work is collected—for one thing, he keeps on writing more—but check out his new collection, *When the Great Days Come* (Prime Books, 2011), which contains work from throughout his career. His novel *Strangers* came out in 1978, a dark, metaphoric examination of the isolation of one individual from another. He also collaborated on two novels, one with George Alec Effinger and one with George R. R. Martin and Daniel Abraham, both of which are eminently readable.

If you have met Gardner at a party or seen him on a panel at a convention, you will remember him for his impressive wit, which is both generous and dry, an unusual combination. Because his wit is quick and raucous and sometimes raunchy, and because he is so good at deflecting personal inquiries when being interviewed, people who know him only as a public figure are often unaware of his generosity and personal kindness.

The Gardner that his friends know is different from the Gardner the public knows: like many other apparent extroverts, he's a master at deflecting attention. Hearing him interviewed at convention after convention, I was struck by how successfully Gardner evaded any serious questions. He subverted entire interviews, dancing deftly around interviewers like Muhammad Ali in the ring, turning their questions back on them, tricking them into chattering away about themselves instead of asking him questions. I vowed that, should I be given the chance to interview Gardner, I would not be so easily distracted. I got my chance when Gardner was a GoH at Orycon in 1995.

I concocted a plan and implemented a strategy. I enlisted Ellen Klages to be timekeeper: she would distract Gardner with snappy verbal sallies. I would purport to have questions from the audience, which would lull him into a state of sleepy self-confidence. I wanted first to address the one question that every aspiring writer in the audience wanted to ask Gardner, and then I wanted to get Gardner to talk to three hundred people about the pleasures and frustrations of writing serious, literate science fiction, the way he would talk with me or Howard Waldrop or Gene Wolfe or George R.R. Martin, sitting around at two a.m. in a hotel coffee shop.

Here is a quick recounting of what happened, from the estimable Patty Wells, writing in the fanzine *Plokta*:

> I've always admired Gardner Dozois as an editor and writer. At Orycon a few years back, he had asked for an interview as his GoH presentation. In front of a packed room, interviewer Eileen Gunn revealed her plan to play Stump the Editor. Friends of Gardner had been solicited for questions and a stopwatch was used to gauge which question slowed him down the most. After a few almost legit questions, Eileen turned to Gardner and casually drawled, "So Gardner, who *do* you have to fuck to sell a story to *Asimov's*?" To which he replied, almost without pause, "Why, Isaac—of course, these days you have to be more determined..." Then Eileen turned the interview on a dime, making it serious. She put Gardner on the spot on the future and place of short fiction in the genre. It was a brilliant hour where I was entranced by Gardner's grace, intelligence, and love for the field.

Why am I telling you all this? Because your assignment for this weekend, should you choose to accept it, is to put Gardner Dozois on the spot, and be, like Patty and me, entranced by his grace, intelligence, and love for the field of science fiction. ~

THE GARDNER-BEATERS OF MILFORD
(AND OTHER TRUE DOZOIS STORIES)

{Joe Haldeman}

I think I first met Gardner at a Washington or Philadelphia convention in 1969 or 1970... he invited me to crash at his place after the con. I remember a couple of gallons of really cheap Chianti and much hilarity into the night—but I can't remember which of those cities it was! Such is the power that Dozois wields over mere mortal minds.

We were both Army veterans, in a time when that was extremely rare in fandom. It gave us an extra universe of things to bitch and moan about.

We really got to know each other at the Milford Writers' Conference in 1970—I was a real beginner, with only two published stories, but Gardner had convinced Damon Knight and Kate Wilhelm to invite me.

The conference was at the Anchorage, Damon and Kate's huge crumbling manse in Milford, Pennsylvania. It was the grand-daddy of all the roundtable workshops that are now a pretty common stepping-stone to professional writing. The policy at Milford was to invite a couple of beginners along with about twenty established professional writers. Gardner and I were the chosen newbies, along with another unknown, Gene Wolfe.

Some of the people knew Gardner before he got there—but *everybody* knew him after a couple of days. He's one of the funniest people alive, and he also has a keen insight into what works and doesn't work in a story, and knows how to deliver criticism without too much sting.

But he was irrepressible! The protocol for the workshop was for one person at a time to speak, no exceptions; the writer whose work was being discussed not to talk at all until everyone was finished. There was absolutely no way Gardner could keep his mouth shut for a whole hour.

After a day of shushing him, to little effect, Kate Wilhelm took direct action. She armed the people on his left and right with huge plastic mallets, and whenever he opened his mouth out of turn, they would pummel him without mercy. I think Joanna Russ and Harlan Ellison were the first Gardner-beaters, but there was no shortage of other volunteers.

After a day of this, I think Gardner did train himself not to speak, though he might have made strangling sounds every now and then.

I can think of any number of people who would have made a room full of enemies with this kind of flagrant misbehavior. Gardner made a room full of smiling friends—first impressions that he soon parlayed into the million-dollar edifice that became his editing and writing career!

Maybe not millions. Or maybe kopeks.

We went to a few more Milfords in the years that followed, but that wasn't enough for Gardner. My brother Jay (Jack C. Haldeman II) was starting to write sf, and he had a big house in the Guilford section of Baltimore, so Gardner suggested that he invite us all over for a miniaturized version of Milford. The meetings of course became known as "Guilfords."

(This led to a truly strange fannish/pro-ish coincidence. Writers who regularly went to Milford became known as the Milford Mafia, so those of us who did Guilford, of course, called ourselves the Guilford Gafia. If you don't know what "gafia" means, go ask the nearest fan.)

Besides Gardner and Jay and me, the other regulars were Jack Dann, George Alec Effinger, Phyllis Eisenstein, and Ted White. Other people dropped by for a week or a day, or at least for the 24-hour beer blast that wound up the Guilford. Roger Zelazny sometimes showed up for that part, the only really famous writer who touched our pocket universe.

Other people will tell you what a great writer and editor Gardner is. For me, he's also been a good friend and confidant for all of my writing career, which, at 43 years is, I think, two years shorter than his. And yet he still has all that hair! Maybe he doesn't work so hard, after all....

THE MULTIPLE DOZOIS

{Nancy Kress}

Gardner Dozois is really many people.

I don't say that this is the result of genetically modified cloning (although some of us have our suspicions...) but surely there are more than one of Gardner. The various aspects of G.D. are otherwise just too disparate.

There is the writer. This Gardner creates beautifully crafted, understated, somber stories like his 1983 "Morning Child," my favorite Dozois story and deservedly a Nebula winner. This is one of the very few SF stories that have ever made me cry. It is bleak, moving, deeply emotional.

Then there is the con-going Gardner, who is decidedly *not* understated nor bleak, and rarely overtly emotional. This is Dozois the *bon vivant*, ready with laughter and quips and off-color jokes. A great Gardner to have dinner with, to sit around in the bar with, to enjoy.

Gardner the Editor is yet a third person. Sharp-eyed, he brings considered judgment, high standards, and a wealth of experience to choosing stories for his anthologies, to helping young writers shape those stories, to creating volumes in which readers can find a variety of stories spanning many sub-genres. This is Dozois as literary gatekeeper, and nobody does it better. When Gardner the Editor sits on panels, everybody from aspiring writer to well established pros should listen to what he has to say.

Probably all of these Gardners will turn up at this con. Lucky you—you get to experience them all. But if, out of the corner of your eye, you catch a glimpse—even a glimpse!—of more than one corporeal Dozois, perhaps disappearing around a corner or climbing a back stairwell, let me know. I want my cloning theory confirmed. ≈

SOME WORDS ABOUT GARDNER

{Sonia Lyris}

Ahhh, Gardner Dozois. Gardner I-remember-his-last-name-by-pronouncing-it doze-eee-owes, which is just plain wrong, but I do it anyway. Gardner who taught week five of my Clarion West class and was the first and only person to ever try to convince me to change my name for the sake of my publishing career.

"I know what it's like to struggle with a confusing last name" he tells me sagely in our one-on-one session. I tell myself, "this guy can make or break your writing career, girl. Just smile and nod."

He notices my silence, and adds, "Just think about it."

I do. I think "Lyris" is a heck of a lot easier to say than dose-wah. But I don't say that. I will keep my mouth shut, damnit.

I fail, of course, but he ends up publishing my story anyway, after many painful revisions. Somehow it's the cover story in a fall issue of *Asimov's*. My mother is so proud.

At week five the class is hanging onto sanity by thumbs. Our little writing selves have been nourished by Nancy Kress, brought up right by Pat Cadigan, beat up real good by John Shirley, and stunned into awe by Howard Waldrop. At week five we're just getting over the none-too-easy-go-

ing Mr. Shirley and frankly proud to be standing upright at all. To be walking and talking as if we still have it a little together.

We wanna be writers so very, very bad. We want to rite so very, very gud. We'll do anything. We're dizzy with how much anything we'll do.

To say we are tired is such an understatement that if could you catch us, glassy-eyed and stumbling down the halls of the dorm like brain-damaged lemurs, and asked us if we were, indeed, tired, our hysterical laughter might have been heard on every floor of this tall building and been hard to stop.

Gardner is the editor-critter at Clarion West this year. He is the guy who can actually take us to print if we are both good and lucky and maybe behave ourselves. So there is a bit of tension in the air.

It doesn't last. Gardner works his magic on us and by Tuesday the class is settling down, mellowing out. Sleeping through the night. Okay, no, that's absurd. But you get the idea.

Gardner has this effect on people. They start out being intimidated, impressed, and end up talking about the proper use of vibrators in alien contact stories. It's the Gardner Does-he-wah maj-ick.

He makes us laugh, he makes us write, he makes us think, and we—of course—adore him. It's his birthday this week, so we spring a surprise party on him in the lounge. It's all pretty simple: he walks in and I yell "Gardner! Look surprised!" and he does and I take a photo.

{Photos by Sonia Lyris}

We have a big gooey cake for him and of course we give him a cupcake with breasts on it. And a grow-a-pecker toy. And an oversized condom. And a large stack of paper that has as page one the worst fiction the twenty of us can construct which is pretty damned impressive. It's a shared-world anthology we call "Strange Twistings Below" and it's just awful and we are so very, very proud. (Yes, I still have a copy. Contact me if you're offering pro rates.)

Later I present Gardner with a token of my esteem: a glow-in-the-dark slug:

What, you ask, is that thing he's wearing on his head? Why, it's my garter belt, of course. Really, you had to ask?

In my notes for that week I find scribbled: "Gardner—there's no describing Gardner. We had a great time." And so we did.

Here are some clever things Gardner probably said:

"I'm glad you didn't just slap me with a wet fish and say 'this is the end.' I hate it when writers do that."

"You have a novel on your hands, God help you."

"You've mastered this form; my only question is, why?"

"There's a *fish* on a *dish* and I said, 'uh oh!'"

"You've camouflaged this story beautifully."

Indeed, Gardner gives us the best advice some of us will ever get; says this sage of industry: "Cut to the jets of semen!"

Ah, the jets of semen.

As the years have gone by since that Clarion West, as they've trickled, slithered, and slammed on down the road of life, I recall wistfully Gardner's humor and kindness.

And across those same years as I've walked the halls of various conventions people I know (and people I don't) will come up to me and say "Hey, Gardner has a message for you. He wants you to get back to your writing."

"Uhm," I say nervously. "Thanks."

What Gardner wants, Gardner gets. So here, Gardner, these words are for you! See? I'm writing again!

And now, ladies and gentlemen—the jets of semen!

A PHILADELPHIA REMINISCENCE

{Mike Resnick}

Every now and then the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society used to fly me in to speak at their meeting, and because Gardner and Susan are old friends, Carol and I always used to have dinner with them.

One night Gardner took us to one of his favorite restaurants. The four of us sat down, looked at the menu, and ordered appetizers—and so help me, the whole place burned down before they arrived. Three huge fire trucks pulled up, we made a hasty exist and got out unscathed, and then went to another restaurant.

After they dropped us off at our hotel, it was all I could do not to hunt up the nearest Greyhound station and write on the wall: *"For a hot time, call Gardner at..."* ≈

GARDNER DOZOIS IN A NUTSHELL

{Michael Swanwick}

[Originally published in the Arisia 2010 Souvenir Book.]

When Gardner Dozois was five years old, a hurricane hit the coast of Massachusetts. His mother, who was an imaginative though not educated woman and prone to getting things wildly wrong, misheard something on the radio to mean that the moon was going to crash into the Earth. So she bundled him up and drove him to the seaside in the middle of the storm to watch the world come to an end. When he was serving in the Army in Germany, he was sent by *Stars and Stripes* to take a photograph of a downed helicopter. At the airport, the helicopter dispatched to carry him to the site of the accident came in badly and crashed before his eyes. He took a snap of the wreck and returned to base, figuring that one helicopter crash looked much like another. Working as a slush-pile reader, he slit open an envelope containing a story from a frustrated aspirant writer and discovered it had been rigged so that when he slid out the manuscript, a cardboard hand popped up and gave him the finger.

You couldn't blame him if he'd turned out dour and miserable.

But of course he didn't. As witness the New Year's Eve party Gardner threw some twenty-five years ago. To set the scene, imagine forty or fifty people crammed into a space that will comfortably hold a third that many, all holding those shallow plastic glasses that launch a flat sheet of champagne into the air whenever somebody jostles your elbow. Beforehand, Gardner had craftily placed a cardboard box of rejected manuscripts—ones their authors had stipulated could be discarded—beside the fireplace.

Gardner waited until the party was in full swing and then, standing by the fireplace, shouted to Susan Casper, his wife, "*Susan! The fire is dying down!*"

Susan, meanwhile, had carefully positioned herself at the far corner of the room, as distant from Gardner as it was possible to be. She shouted back across the throng, "*Well, what do you expect* me *to do about it?*"

By this time everybody in the room was listening. We couldn't help it. "*Don't you think somebody should put something on the fire?*" Their timing was perfect. It was like two vaudevillians swapping banter. All conversation stopped. Nobody looked away. "*So put something on the fire!*" Susan tells him.

"*Okay!*"

And, with a roomful of writers watching, Gardner scooped up a handful of manuscripts from the box and tossed them on the fire!

At that time, Gardner Dozois had just a few months previously become editor of *Asimov's Science Fiction*. Over the years, the Hugo Awards for Best Editor mounted up until the table where he kept them looked like a display in a sex shop. Yet, shining with virginal innocence among this vulgar thicket of rockets were two Nebula Awards for short fiction. I was present at a much later party when a young publishing neophyte discovered them and said, "I didn't know that Gardner was also a writer."

"Oh, yes," I said. "He's a much better writer than he is an editor."

She gawked at me in disbelief.

But it's true. Gardner is not only a writer but possibly the most important writer of his generation. As his compeers—people like Joe Haldeman and Jack Dann and George R. R. Martin—will gladly tell you.

The great public mystery of Gardner Dozois is how a man as outgoing and filled with wild whimsy and Rabelaisian mirth as he is can write the grim stories he does. For, make no mistake about it, they can be *grim*. "Machines of Loving Grace" features a tormented young woman in a relentlessly ugly, environmentally-degraded future who commits suicide time after time—only to be brought repeatedly and painfully back to a life she doesn't want by an uncaring medical bureaucracy. Gardner will tell you with a straight face that this is an optimistic story—that because the girl doesn't give up, but keeps on trying to kill herself, it's actually an affirmation of the human spirit. Perhaps. But it's not anything I'd advise you to read late at night when you're not feeling good about yourself.

Contrast this with his performances at science fiction conventions. I recall the "Sex and Science Fiction" panel where the raunchily humorous stories (the one about the misplaced yam in particular) got so raucously out of control that two women, editors both, fled blushing from the room. Seeing this, Gardner beamed down from his Olympian seat up on the stage and flung out an arm to draw everybody's attention to them. "Look!" he bellowed. "They liked the panel so much that they're leaving to have SEX RIGHT NOW!!!"

How can such two polar opposites exist in one man?

But if the contrast between the man and the writer is puzzling, the contrast between the writer and the editor is downright baffling. I'm not talking about the fact that as a writer Gardner Dozois's primary allegiance is to serious, gorgeously-written "high art" literature, and that as an editor his tastes are catholic and inclusive—that he likes adventure and hard science and humor and even fantasy fiction, provided only that it's done well. One's taste in reading is always more generous than one's muse, and all the truly great editors have this same wide capacity for appreciation. No, I'm talking about the fact that a writer as bleak as Gardner is capable of being still retains his zest for editing. By Gardner's own estimate, he has read more bad fiction than anybody else on this planet. But right up to the last day of his editorship of *Asimov's*, he attacked his job with gusto. I've watched him dive into the slush pile, avid for that moment when he picks up something written by a total unknown, begins reading, and, forgetting where he is and what he's doing, falls into the story completely. Even today, when he's the magazine's editor *emeritus*, he still reads every science fiction story published for his Best of the Year collections with an enthusiasm that from the outside is hard to comprehend.

But maybe the contradictions are only apparent.

When Gardner was in the Army, the rotation levy came through the newspaper office and by random chance sent a buddy to Viet Nam and left him behind. The friend wrote him one long letter, and then fell silent. All subsequent attempts to get in touch failed. Back in his hard-scrabble days when Gardner's main source of income came from freelance theme anthologies, a contributor wrote him a blistering letter excoriating him as a money-bloated plutocrat for not paying on acceptance. Gardner hadn't been paid himself yet, and was selling books personally inscribed to him by friends in order to buy food. He borrowed money so he could send out the check. Because he couldn't afford health insurance, Gardner came within an ace of dying from undiagnosed diabetes. I vividly remember walking down Twelfth Street in Center City Philadelphia with him at a time when he was barely able to shuffle along, while he spoke with a sad fatalism about his growing blindness and of the darkness closing in around him.

Experiences like those temper and burnish a man. They bring out his essential qualities and make them shine. And if a man sees all too clearly the harsh absurdity of a life that

leaves no one unmarred and from which there is only one exit... well, in some cases this will only make him happier with what he gets. I first met Gardner in 1974, and know for a fact he never expected he'd live to see the new century. Nor have the passing decades made him one whit more optimistic about the future. In his heart, he knows that there's an asteroid out there somewhere coming to wipe out all life on Earth, and that it's got his name on it. I doubt he ever thought for an instant that he'd be as successful as he is now. But he doesn't for an instant believe it's going to last. Ask him about his retirement plans, and the words "steam vent" will inevitably pop out of his mouth.

But joy? He's always had that. The end of the world is coming, it's barreling down on us like a locomotive, faster than you can imagine and it's unstoppable. But as long as it hasn't hit us yet, we might as well have some fun. Sit down, have a few laughs, tell a story or two. Here's something you haven't read yet but should. Here's the word on a hot new writer who's just on the brink of writing something spectacular. Have you checked out the latest *Asimov's*? The new *Best-of-the-Year* has a few surprises in it.

THE HAGIOGRAPHY OF SAINT DOZOIS

{Michael Swanwick}

[Originally published in Philcon 1997 and Minicon 1998 convention publications; collected in hardcover in *Moon Dogs* (NESFA Press, 2000).]

Did you know that Paul McCartney used to be in a different rock band before Wings? Okay, maybe that was too easy. Here's another. Did you know that Gardner Dozois is a better writer than he is an editor? No, really, listen:

Did y'ever hear the one about the old man and the sea?

Halt a minute, lordling; stop and listen. It's a fine story, full of balance and point and social pith; short and direct. It's not mine. Mine are long and rambling and parenthetical and they corrode the moral fiber right out of a man. Come to think, I won't tell you that one after all. A man of my age has a right to prefer his own material, and let the critics be damned. I've a prejudice now for webs of my own weaving.

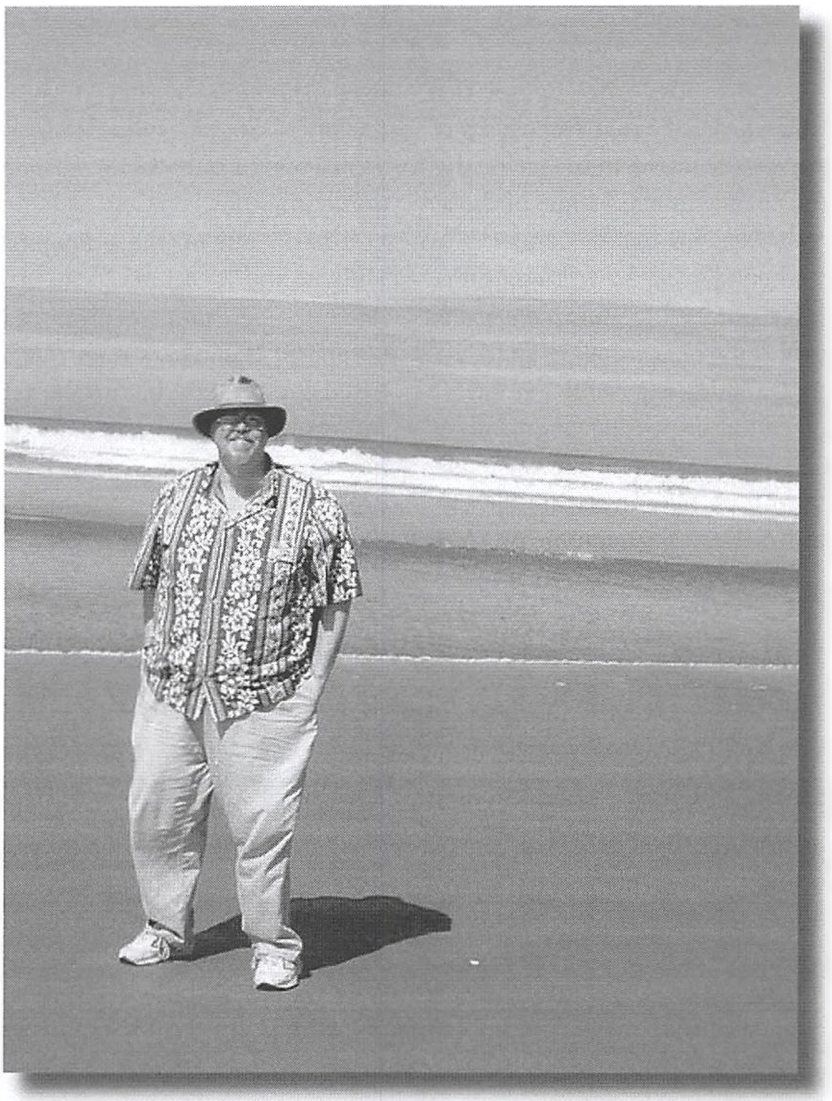
Those two paragraphs immediately above, with their sudden irruption into wit and color, "social pith" and vinegar, are the opening lines to "A Special Kind of Morning," in which Gardner squanders enough ideas to fuel a standard trilogy of SF novels on one fast story-within-a-story that's ostensibly about a rebellion against a tyranny so absolute that no price is too great for liberty and a war so terrible that by its end those fighting it no longer care for victory. But really it's about life and love, valor and compassion and freedom and all those things that really matter. The two central events of the story, in fact—the lordling's first experience of physical love, and the death of the ancient storyteller—take place just before and after the story itself. And it's explicit that these events are forever recurrent, always happening, that it's always (somewhere, for somebody) a special kind of morning. Even on the day that you die.

So can you picture it now? Not a tenth of it.

Nor can you appreciate the high regard in which Gardner is held by his fellow writers unless you've actually read "Machines of Loving Grace" and "Chains of the Sea" and "Morning Child" and the scant few dozen other stories he's produced over the decades, most of which can be found in his two solo collections, *The Visible Man* and *Geodesic Dreams*, and his collaborative collection, *Slow Dancing Through Time*. He's picked up two Nebulas for his stories (they gleam demurely from amid the thicket of vulgar "best editor" Hugos on his trophy table), but so what? Awards are only important when you don't have

any. What truly matters is the work itself, and to appreciate that you'll simply have to dig through used-book stores to find his collections and his sad, beautiful novel, *Strangers*. It won't be easy. It'll be worth the effort.

So if this guy's so good, then what (I rhetorically posit that you might reasonably ask) is he doing working as an editor? I might claim simple economics. Everybody knows that nobody can make a living writing short fiction in this field, but even if you could make a living writing short fiction, you couldn't make a living writing it at the pace Gardner does. He's a craftsman and an artist. The craftsman will write no story before its time. The artist takes his orders from the hindbrain. If his hindbrain doesn't care to give him any material to work with this month, then tough. The unconscious knows nothing about the price of groceries.



{Photo by Susan Casper}

When you write like that, you'd better have a day job.

But the connections are not so simple as that. Because Gardner's day job happens to be editing *Asimov's*, a position which he inherited from Shawna McCarthy who in turn inherited it from George Scithers. Quite frankly Shawna and George were tough acts to follow. Both are capable and popular editors who published a lot of top-flight stories in *Asimov's* and established it as the single most important magazine in the field. Yet I believe that it is Gardner Dozois who will be forever associated with the magazine, much as Campbell is with *Analog* and Ross with the *New Yorker*, regardless of how able those who follow him may be.

Again, why?

Bear with me, while I engage in a touch of circumlocution. I first met Gardner twenty-umpty-some years ago at a Philcon. He was sitting in a hallway, surrounded by fans, giving a dramatic reading of Robert Heinlein's *Time Enough for Love*, in order to demonstrate that sections of it had the same cadence as Longfellow's "Hiawatha." (Go ahead, try it for yourself. Chapter XI: "Stand with me on man's old planet, / gazing north when sky has darkened... Here is life or here is dying; / only sin is lack of trying. / Grab your picks and grab your shovels; / dig latrines and build your hovels—" And so on.) He was a one-man carnival. Later that night, as one by one the parties closed down around our merry band, he led the survivors up and down the halls for hours looking for the mythical Last Party that must be surely out there somewhere.

Since then, I've hung out with Gardner a lot. I've seen him in extreme poverty and relative affluence. I was around when, almost totally blind, he checked into the hospital, expecting never to leave. I've co-written stories with him, one of which, a three-way with Jack Dann called "The Gods of Mars," made it onto the Nebula ballot, and another, "The City of God," which contains some of the finest prose (his) I've ever had the pleasure to muck about with. For the past several years I've been working on an interview in which I ask him detailed questions about every story he's ever had published. (It's currently up to 45,000 words and counting.) So I know a lot about the man. I even know, as not many can claim to, about the time when he was five years old and his mother took him to the seashore at the height of a hurricane to watch the moon crash into the Earth.

But that's not what you want to hear about. You want a simple, lucid explanation of Gardner Dozois. For which, let's go back to the early 1970s.

Back then he used to visit Manhattan regularly to make the round of editors. While he was pitching and selling the occasional anthology to help keep body and soul together, he dropped praise in unreceptive editorial ears for new and talented writers like Gene Wolfe and Howard Waldrop, people whose work was considered too weird, too literary, just plain too good for science fiction. He was a one-man unpaid publicity service for stories now considered classics but back then so far out on the edge that they were in serious danger of going unpublished.

I saw Gardner only a day or two after he got the *Asimov's* gig, and I am here to testify that what he was ecstatic about was not the money or the influence or the status of the thing, but the chance to place some of those stories in print.

Sometimes I drop by when Gardner's working on his annual juggernaut of contemporary literature, *The Year's Best Science Fiction* (can we really be coming up on its fifteenth year?), agonizingly searching for a sufficient number of top-grade stories from other people's publications to make it clear that the volume is more than just this year's Best of *Asimov's*. And I am here to testify that every such story he finds in *F&SF* or Omni Online or *Mike Resnick's Alternate Dental Hygienists* is a spiritual pain to him. It grinches Gardner that somebody else got to publish them first.

It is this desire to find and publish "the good stuff" that drives and defines Gardner Dozois. He loves science fiction with an intensity that that very few can match.

Odin gave an eye for wisdom. Gardner paid for his editorship with his own fiction. Serious editing takes the same kind of creative energy as does serious writing. John W. Campbell was a highly-regarded writer before he took over *Astounding*. He lived to see that contribution almost forgotten. So too with Gardner Dozois. These days he writes maybe one story a year. Sometimes it's a light one. Sometimes not.

I had a dream the other night. I fell asleep reading Dumas, and it seemed to me that I was a Musketeer. In defense of the Queen's honor, I had quite handily killed several of Richelieu's men. At last, however, I was captured and brought before the vengeful Cardinal himself. Things were not looking good for me. But fortunately I had upon my person a most valuable parchment, which I presented to Richelieu with a flourish.

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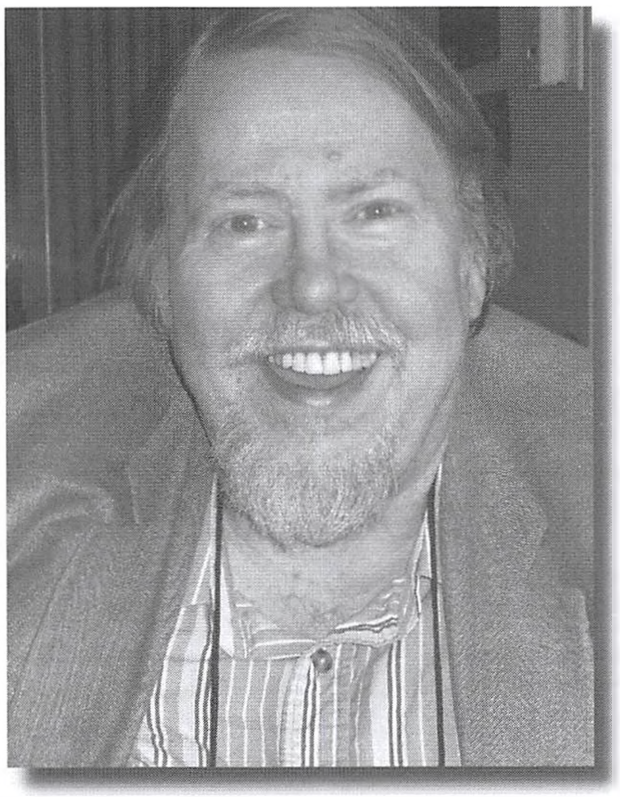
APPRECIATION

{Jeff VanderMeer}



{Photo by Ellen Datlow}

Very early in my career, I sent almost every story I wrote to Gardner Dozois at *Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*. Slowly, I began to get a better class of form rejection. Then I began to get rejections from Dozois himself. Eventually, I sold two stories to him: "Mahout" and "The Bone-Carver's Tale." "Mahout" was my first professional short story sale. He was also very kind about a novella of mine, "Dradin, In Love," which was too long for him to take, but about which he was encouraging. It would later become the first story in my *City of Saints and Madmen* collection, and I still remember what he told me: that writing was a long game and that I should not get discouraged and that stuff like mine might take a little longer to catch on. He was always unfailingly nice—and the two stories he took from me weren't easy ones for *Asimov's*. They were very weird. Dozois is one of the editors whose advice and comments meant a lot to me. I'm glad you're honoring him at Readercon.

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DAH ZEUS

{Howard Waldrop}

I first met Gardner at the 1976 Kansas City Worldcon.

A guy who looked like a walking mountain range was standing in front of the A-G table, after the opening-morning crowd had thinned out some.

The guy said to the Visitor's Bureau and Convention Center lady at the table:

"The name's DŌ ZWAH. Gardner DŌ ZWAH."

A fifteen-year-old, walking by, stopped dead still, and said:

"So that's how you pronounce it!"

I'd heard about every variation on it tried through the years, starting with Do Zoys, Dah Zeus, Doo Zioys, and lesser phonemes and variables of English sounds.

Well, it's not English, it's French-Canadian (Canuck to you).

Gardner, it goes on to appear, was born in Salem MA to French-Canadian (Canuck)-derived parents.

People had been trying to get us together for years. Once we were introduced, it was like we'd known each other all our lives.

We were both from working-class backgrounds and had been working stiffs ourselves before being drafted during the (he early, me a little after) Late Unpleasantness in SE Asia. (I'd been stateside; when you can type a blazing 19 words a minute, you go where the Army needs you: Gardner had been sent to Germany, where he wrote the 3rd Army Safety Column: "Do not pitch your tent over the exhaust manifold of a Patton tank on maneuvers on a cold night Or You Will Die" was the tenor of most of them.)

Gardner had chosen to stay in Germany when he was discharged, figuring it was cheaper to live there on No Money than back in the States. He'd sold his first story *before* he was drafted; he sold his second about a year *after* he was discharged.

My life was similar: I got news of my first sale the 4th day of Basic Training and got to enjoy it about 15 seconds before I had to crawl through some more barbed wire while an NCO helpfully tear-gassed me.

There were enough parallels we could talk about almost anything. Gardner: "We didn't have much growing up, but we did have manners. It's all that separated us from the gorillas."

Besides writing his ass off, Gardner had already begun editing; some reprint anthologies and he'd taken over Dutton's *Best Science Fiction of the Year* from Lester Del Rey, with, I think, #5 or so. (The joke was it was like *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in reverse: Gardner got older, but the cover of the book stayed the same...)

I was, I guarantee you, in awe of his writing. Here's this funny, funny man (in person) and here are his stories, which make you want to open important veins, like "A Kingdom by the Sea," and his and Jack Dann's "Down Among the Dead Men" which is about a vampire in a concentration camp, for god's sake.

I once heard Gardner, at a banquet, give the most salacious and unprintable account of what the severed heads of cryogenically frozen people will be used for (aside from the obvious) in the future. He had a whole tablefull of people, unable to eat, rolling around on the floor laughing.

The man's a phenom: he was reading 200-300 mss a week editing *Asimov's* and *The Year's Finest SF* for St. Martin's. (I can't imagine.) What does he do to take a break? He goes to Clarion West as an instructor and reads *another* 50 mss that week...

I had to look at my notes to keep things at Clarion West straight: I heard Gardner fill in the writer following him on everyone, where they were in class, what they could already do or couldn't do, off the top of his head on the way to the airport. *Geez, louise...*

The second-best thing that happened to Gardner was that he fell down and broke his knee on an icy street some years ago. Getting treatment, he found he was diabetic, did some stuff about that AND HIS EYES GOT BETTER, so he could read *even more* mss...

I figured when he stopped editing *Asimov's* we'd get tons more Dozois fiction: it hasn't worked out that way, because he's in even more demand as an anthologist, alone and with George R. R. Martin. The stories do come, but not fast enough to satisfy me and all the other readers waiting for more.

He's done okay for a guy with a name most people can't pronounce until they *hear* it.

Readercon couldn't have gotten a better guest. Follow the sounds of laughter, and the poems of Emily Dickinson being sung to the tune of "The Yellow Rose of Texas":

Because I could not Stop for Death / He kindly stopped for *meeeee*...

You'll find Gardner somewhere in the center of it.

CHAPTER ONE OF AN UNFINISHED SEQUEL TO *STRANGERS*

{Gardner Dozois}

There were always kites in the sky above Kite Hill.

From the top floor of his father's house, in the Old City of Aei, that cold stone place in the middle of the air, atop its three-hundred-foot sheer cliff of black rock, on the North Shore of Shasine, on the world of Weinunnach, Genawen could look straight out to where the kites rose from Kite Hill, and swooped and darted almost at a level with his eyes: fanged silver and black nightmare shapes, big-eyed *kwians*, pale striped ghosts who whistled and moaned as they slid past. More of them flew in the High Summer, but even in deep Winter they flew, glinting with ice.

The kites could be seen from almost anywhere, a useful guide in finding your way home again, when you were out wandering the stone labyrinth of Old City, layer upon layer of winding cobblestone streets, tiny steep-walled alleys, the occasional ceramic square fringed with silverwoods and pale green ghostfinger trees and surrounded by sheer walls of buildings, buildings rising up on top of buildings like a cresting wave, all black rock and iron and old wood, with the wind always breathing through it, cold even in summer. Genawen spent a lot of time exploring the endless maze of streets and plazas, sometimes with his brother and his sisters, more frequently alone. He was often alone.

Terran scholars have called Genawen Jé Farber an oldest son, *zrhan*, but it's more complicated than that, and many nuances are lost from the translation from the Cian, just as they are in the translation of the name of the planet Weinunnach as "Fertile Home," which is essentially true but loses many layers of complicated and sometimes contradictory implications. For one thing, the *zrhan* doesn't necessarily have to be born first—something difficult to determine anyway, as Cian children are "born" by what Terrans would call Caesarian section, in rapid succession. More important than order of birth in determining who the *zrhan* will be is a complex that Terrans might call something like "charisma" or "personality" or "presence," subtle distinctions that even the Cian are not really sure how they're measuring. Nevertheless, there is rarely any question as to who the *zrhan* is, and in this family, Genawen was it. The *zrhan* often manifests a certain loneliness of spirit, an isolate nature, holding themselves apart from the world, which is why they sometimes become *twizans* or Singers, mediators between this world and the People of Power, or even become Shadow Men, the enigmatic and somewhat sinister bureaucrats who managed such government of Shasine as existed. This was certainly true of Genawen. Even when surrounded by his squabbling siblings in the small stone house, he was somehow alone. And really, he rather liked to be alone—something also often true of *zrhan*.

His father was a big, quiet man, somber rather than sullen, who rarely lost his temper or even raised his voice, but who seldom smiled and never laughed. Everyday, Genawen's father, who bore the strange name of Joseph Farber, would take the cablecar down to the New City, to the busy docks along the River Aome, to work unloading cargo from riverboats in Summer, from ice-skimmers in Winter, when the silver Aome would freeze solid to the bottom. One of Genawen's earliest memories was of watching his father get dressed for work, peeking out from under a thick throw rug decorated with demon faces and stalking, long-legged predatory creatures that he and his siblings huddled under, watching as his father wrapped himself in furs and heavy padded clothing

preparatory to striking out into the freezing winter day. The last thing his father would do, before leaving the house, was to pull a woolen mask over his face, covering it completely except for glass-covered eyeholes, and Genawen always felt a pang of sadness and even fear at seeing his father's face disappear beneath the mask. He loved to watch his father's face. Unlike anybody else he'd ever met, his father had no natural fur on his face or body. To Genawen, his father's white skin moving through the semi-darkness of the room, gleaming in the lamplight like a fish swimming through the ink-black sea, was beautiful and strange.

Then he would be gone, down to the docks below.

In spite of living in what was in many ways an intensely regulated and regimented society, the Cian did not closely monitor their children, and so Genawen and his siblings were largely left on their own in their father's absence, unsupervised, to a far greater extent than would be common in most Terran societies. By the time Genawen was half-grown, one of his sisters had paid the price for this, accidentally crushed to death beneath the wheels of an immense ceremonial cart bearing a huge silver-and-obsidian fish through the narrow streets of the Old City. After this, the somber Farber became even more somber, sometimes sitting for hours after dinner, staring into the shadows that gathered in the corners of the room, ignoring the wrestling and shouting of his other children.

Genawen and his siblings had had a wet nurse in their earliest years, since for some reason that was never discussed their father had been unable to nurse them himself, but Genawen barely remembered him, except for the bitter, pungent reek of the beetleroot that he constantly chewed. Now, in the wake of his daughter's death, Farber was moved to go out and hire a *soúbrae* to keep a vague eye on them, some of the time, at least. This struck Farber's Cian neighbors as eccentric. Fatalists all, they thought that whatever was going to happen would happen, if a child were going to die it would die, and that to take precautions to try to prevent it was vaguely insulting to the People of Power, the People Under the Sea.

Nevertheless, Farber hired the *soúbrae*, an Old Woman or Sterile One. Some *soúbrae* became the female equivalent of Singers and gained immense power and influence, being deeply embroiled in the running of the numerous ritual ceremonies or Modes, while some eked out a living on the fringes of society. Again, which was which depended on some mysterious quality of "personality" or "presence" rather than any more easily quantifiable quality.

This *soúbrae* was one of the unsuccessful kind, a tall stick-thin woman with a mouth that twisted down on one side, the disfigurement perhaps the reason for her lack of achievement, who had a heavy, sour, unpleasant smell and who wrapped herself to the neck even in the hottest part of the summer. She was quite the oldest person any of them had ever seen, and to Genawen, it seemed certain that she was the oldest person in the world.

The first couple of days, her employer's admonishments still ringing in her ears, the *soúbrae* kept the children inside, until their restlessness and boredom nearly drove them all mad, which meant that they were driving *her* mad as well, and nothing she could do would keep them still.

When the *soúbrae* discovered that the children could not read, as their father also could not, although he spoke fluent Cian, she decided to keep them out of her hair for some of the day by taking them to a crèche for training. Some Cian children did attend crèches for academic training, especially up here in Old City where only members of the aristocratic Thousand Families who ruled Shasine were allowed to live, although they were trained in what would have seemed a rather casual and laissez-faire way to a Terran educator—teachers wandering in for a while, seemingly by random chance, and then drifting away, some never to be seen again, while the lessons were taken up by some other passing adult, until they too put the burden down and moved on. Somehow, the children learned.

So the *soúbrae* gathered the children into a haplessly protesting flock and walked them through the streets of Old City until she found a crèche close by (attendance at a crèche was never formalized, and sometimes children would go to one, sometimes to another, seemingly at random, whichever one they happened across first in their wanderings), near where the vertiginous steps of the Winterwalk, almost more a ladder than a staircase, spilled out like a stone waterfall onto the Esplanade. It was a long, low, slate-roofed, slit-windowed, gray and black building, with rows of white and weathered skulls planted neatly around the door in among beds of cheerful yellow and red wildflowers, and continuing up around the doorway as a decorative motif.

When the *soúbrae* tried to take the children into the crèche, though, her way was blocked by a stern old man with orange eyes.

"You cannot bring them here," he said.

"Why?"

"You know why," the old man said. "And you know who *they* are." The old man was fat and sweating in the summer heat, with red cheeks, and Genawen could smell him from where he stood, a smell like old food and stale clothes.

"They have nowhere else to go," the *soúbrae* protested. "They run loose like wild coursers. This is not a proper way for children to live."

"I don't care," the old man said, still blocking the way, his face set and hard. "They cannot enter here."

Sighing, the *soúbrae* led them back home. They sat around the house for awhile in silence, the *soúbrae* looking even more sour than she usually did, until, timidly, Genawen dared to break the heavy silence by asking, "Why wouldn't they let us go into the crèche?"

The *soúbrae* turned to look at him, and studied him for a long moment before blurting out, "Because your father is a monster! Haven't you ever *looked* at him? Haven't you ever noticed that he doesn't look like anyone else? He's a monster, and you're a monster's children. Monster children! No wonder they won't let you inside to contaminate proper children!"

When Genawen started to protest against this characterization of his father, and some of the other children began to cry, the *soúbrae* stared at him for another long moment, and then shook her head. "Poor little one! It's not really your fault. It's not even really your *father's* fault, monster though he is." She looked furtively around her, and her voice sank to a whisper. "An *opein* possessed your father. During the Alàntene, when the Summer World dies and the Warm People go under the sea to be replaced by the Winter World and the Cold People, the Gates of Dûn open at the bottom of Elder Sea, and then the ghosts of those who've died rise up on the wind like kites and go into the otherworld, and demons and *opein* come *out*. One of them came out then, an *opein*, during that Alàntene, the Mode of the Winter Solstice, the Opening-of-the-Gates-of-Dûn, and possessed your father. Your father was already a monster, of course, but with the *opein*'s power added to his own, he became very powerful indeed, powerful enough to daze and fascinate your mother and force her to marry him. Something that never should have happened! He was a monster, and she was a member of the Thousand Families, and a Shadow Man's daughter to boot! It was monstrous! And, of course, marrying a monster, especially one being ridden by an *opein*, she was doomed, doomed to death and agony and horror!"

The rest of his siblings were sobbing openly now, and tears ran down along Genawen's own cheeks, although he refused to make a sound.

"He killed her!" the *soúbrae* said with gloating satisfaction, almost with glee. "Right here in this room! He *killed* her, he killed your mother. He ripped her to pieces, without the consolations of ritual or the proper words being spoken or the proper sacrifices being made to ensure her reception in the otherworld. He just tore her apart, right here in this room! The walls were splattered with her blood, it took months to clean it off!" The *soúbrae* fell silent for a moment, some of the passion seeming to leak out of her. "I'll never forget her cries," she said quietly. "She seemed to scream for hours, hideous, awful screams. Everyone in the Row woke up, and we shuddered with horror in our beds."

She stood up. "So that's why you can't go to the crèche. Your father's a monster, an *opein*. And you're monster children. You have your father's blood in you. Never forget that, no matter where you go. Nobody else will."

When their father came home that night, Genawen told him about the incident at the crèche, although he was afraid to mention the story the *soúbrae* had told them, about his father killing his mother. His father listened silently, his face slowly turning as black as iron with anger, the muscles in his big arms bunching, his big hands clenching. Then, without a word, he got up and went out into the night again.

When he came back, hours later, he brought with him a strange little machine, small enough to fit into the hand, flat black, with a tiny malevolent red eye that blinked constantly.

From then on, the children slept with the machine strapped to their heads, one at a time (Genawen first, of course), and the machine whispered to them as they slept, teaching them how to read and write.

The smoldering red eye of the machine followed Genawen through his dreams, blinking and relentless.

After a couple of weeks of this, Genawen answered the door one evening to find a stranger standing there. The stranger was a small man, neat and self-possessed and phlegmatic, with hair as black and glossy as obsidian, and hard agate eyes. He ignored

Genawen, staring into the room over Genawen's head at Genawen's father. Genawen's father stared back, the blood draining out of his face until it was as pale as winter ice. Neither man spoke. At last, in a hoarse voice unlike his own, Genawen's father said, "Children, go upstairs."

The children started to protest, and their father blazed at them, "Damnit! Go upstairs!"

Quickly they went, scurrying out of the room and up the stairs to the upper floors. Their father had almost never yelled at them before, and it left them shocked and subdued.

As the others rushed to the top floor, Genawen hung back, as close to the top of the stairs on the next floor as he thought he could get away with without being caught, and tried to listen, being able to catch only the occasional word. The voices in the room below were hard and cold, like rocks speaking.

"...not our way...taught by machines...not Cian..."

"...had no choice...they wouldn't..."

"...Liraun would have wanted...for her children..."

"...Don't talk to me about what Liraun would have wanted...the children..."

"...unacceptable...arrangements will have to be made..."

The voices blatted at each other for a long time, like trumpets fighting, circling and snarling. At last, silence fell. The children were too scared to go downstairs, even Genawen. So they huddled under a fur until they fell asleep. Their father never came up.

In the morning, the blinking machine was gone, and they went to the crèche.

The fat man who had refused them entrance was still there, but he refused to speak to them; in fact, he wouldn't even look at them, but moved through the crèche with his jaws clenched and his face stiff and tight, as though he were being forced to smell an unpleasant odor.

In a Terran school, the children might have been pushed around and bullied, perhaps beaten up, but that was not the Cian way. Taking their cue from their teacher, the other students ignored them, and the children passed through the crèche like ghosts, only occasionally hearing a word spoken to them.

When released from the crèche for the day, Fire Woman, the sun, still high in the sky, they would scatter out across Old City, seeking their own divertissements, and, more often than not, Genawen would end up wandering alone. Sometimes he would see the man who had visited his father, the stranger, standing alone on the Row or at the foot of Kite Hill and staring at him, but he never made an attempt to speak to Genawen, and Genawen was afraid to speak to him.

He took to going to the Terrace along the Esplanade, where you could look over the edge of the three-hundred-foot cliff upon which Old City was built, and he would stare out over the sea of low pastel roofs below that made up the New City that surrounded Old City's obsidian mesa on all sides, and then look off to the East, where the real sea waited, Elder Sea, glittering and immense, lapping its waves quietly against the parade of shoreline dunes that stretched away endlessly up the North Shore until they faded from vision.

One day, there was a fat silver teardrop hanging in the sky above Old City, winking intolerably bright in Fire Woman's rays. As he watched, the teardrop drifted across the sky, growing larger and larger, and then began to settle slowly down through the air like silverwood fluff, like a gleaming silver feather, disappearing at last behind the highest stone towers of the city, where the Shadow Men watched and ruled.

Later that day, Genawen was still wandering aimlessly along the Esplanade when a small Mode came by, about thirty or forty marchers, preceded by musicians strumming *tikans* and blowing noseflutes and banging gongs and drums, followed by Impersonators holding up fierce-faced Talismans with staring obsidian eyes or dancing and capering in jeweled costumes and demon masks.

Behind them all came a low cart being pulled by what would have looked to a Terran child like huge sad-faced centipedes with rows of rippling legs. The Terran child might have found them frightening, but Genawen knew they were merely *rowans*, ordinary beasts of burden, although they weren't seen up here in Old City as often as they were in other parts of Aei. They were nervous too, shaking their reptilian heads as they walked and mooing long and mournfully.

Standing in the cart was a creature unlike any that Genawen had ever seen: a creature like a huge green-black living boulder with big glistening wet eyes, with fringes of squirming chartreuse cilia and incongruously tiny and delicate hands sprouting from its middle. It had no arms to wave, but it rippled its cilia and flapped its tiny absurd hands as the cart went by, as if waving to the crowd along the Esplanade who had gathered to watch the procession pass. Its stink washed over Genawen as it passed in front of him, a

powerful alien stink like a heavy animal musk and freshly turned earth, mixed with acid; perhaps it was the smell that was making the usually docile *rowans* toss their heads and fret.

Standing on the cart next to the creature, looking small next to the big boulder-shaped thing but slim and erect as a lance, was the stranger who had come to visit them. He turned his head and stared down at Genawen as they passed, and his hard golden eyes lingered on him for a long moment after the cart had gone by, and then he turned his head forward again and the procession tinkled and tootled away down the Esplanade.

"What *was* that thing?" Genawen said to the man standing next to him.

"Another outworlder," the man said glumly. "These are called Enye. Too many damn outworlders here already! Not like when I was a boy! Turu, Earthmen, Jejun, now these damn rock things." He turned away in disgust, and if he were Terran might have spit on the ground, but the Cian were too fastidious for that.

That night, after the dinner things had been cleared away, and his siblings had gone yawning upstairs to bed one by one, Genawen lingered, peering as intently at his father as his father was peering into the empty shadows under the eaves. Since he'd heard the *soúbrae*'s horrific tale, against his will and against his best efforts to fight it, his relationship with his father had changed. He had never been even the slightest bit afraid of his father, but now he found himself unable to stop flinching when his father walked near him, and when he slept, his father would visit him in his dreams, drenched from head to foot in his mother's blood, and Genawen would wake with his mother's screams ringing in his ears.

After a while, Genawen's father felt his eyes on him and looked up. "Something troubling you, boy?" his father said in his deep, rumbling voice.

Genawen opened his mouth, then closed it again, unable to speak. After a few heartbeats, he gathered all his courage and said, "Why do you look different? How come you don't look like us? Is it true that you're a monster, like the *soúbrae* says?"

His father was silent for a long moment, and then stood up abruptly, and Genawen flinched away, expecting to be hit or perhaps even torn to pieces. But his father just held out his hand and quietly said, "Come on, boy."

Genawen took his father's hand and they left the house without any word of explanation being spoken. He'd rarely been out this late, and Old City looked different in the dark, the phosphorescent glowlights along the streets throwing strange black shadows, everything hushed and silent, the constellation of Summer Man swimming up over the horizon and a handful of small pale moons tumbling overhead. Here and there, light leaking silver or orange or yellow from a window or from around the edge of a door, from far away the brief crystalline tinkle of a *tikan* playing. The air smelled of wetness and the distant sour smell of the tideflats, now and then a fleeting whiff of sausages cooking. Their footsteps clacked hollowly in the empty streets, and his hand felt very small in his father's hand. Neither of them spoke.

They walked down through the deserted streets to the Esplanade and then out on the Terrace and up to the edge of the cliff, and Genawen had a brief stab of fear that his father was going to pick him up and throw him over the edge, still without speaking a word. But instead his father put his hand on Genawen's shoulder and pointed out across the gulfs of air to the pastel lights of New City below. "You see that place?" he said, indicating a strange jumble of odd-looking buildings that Genawen had noticed before, all glass and sharp angles and bright lights harsher than daylight, towering up many stories higher than any of the low rounded ceramic buildings that made up the rest of the city. "That's the Earth Enclave. I came from there, and from Earth itself before that. That's why I don't look like any of you. I'm not a monster, I'm an Earthman." And then his father's face twisted, and he added, "If there's any difference."

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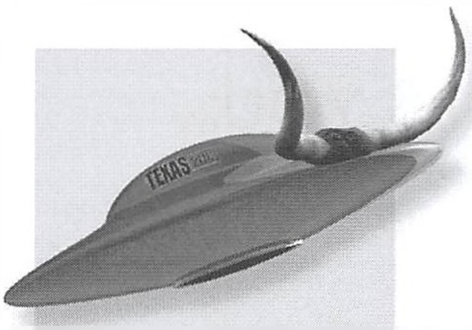

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GEOFF RYMAN

REVIEW OF *THE CHILD GARDEN: A LOW COMEDY*

{M. J. Engh}

In 1991 *The New York Review of Science Fiction* invited me to review Geoff Ryman's *The Child Garden*. I'm still working on it.

As a reader, I was blown away. As a reviewer, I couldn't find a handle. It was like trying to play cards in a tornado. What's the theme? What's the book about? Clearly, it's about the complex interdependencies of creative artist, performer, producer/director, and audience. It's also about love, labor, and loss—and about climate change, genetic engineering, sexual orientation, Marxism, fingertips, and eternal life. It's a book that made me happy and that slipped through my mental fingers every time I tried to grasp it. Here goes for another try.

Let's start with replication. There is a scene early in *The Child Garden* when Milena, the heroine, meets Lucy, a Tumour:

> Milena turned to see a terrible head, framed in unnaturally orange curls. The lips were covered with crumbled red cosmetic, there were only a few teeth in the mouth, and the face had gone soft, like overripe fruit. it was covered in lines and cracks.
>
> 'My name's Lucy, but my friends call me Loose. Ha-ha-ha!' the voice barked.

For the first time in her life, Milena is looking at an old person. Tumours are immortal because they have incurable cancer. Their cells have been replaced and perfectly mimicked by cancer cells.

Meanwhile all other forms of cancer have been wiped out, with the unanticipated consequence that human life expectancy has dropped by 50 years. No one knew until too late that cancer cells secreted proteins that increased longevity. People now drop dead in their thirties, and education has been speeded up by dosing infants and young children with information-carrying viruses. No one has to learn anything; by the age of ten they know everything considered worth knowing, from mathematics to Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

"*It's a Dog of a Song,*" Lucy sings, climbing onto a tavern table to perform for her cronies,

> 'Ambling gently along...
> But it doesn't know how to end...
> Just a Dog of a Song
> But...'

Her head jerks as she imitates a broken phonograph record.

> 'We all sing along. But...'

There's no stopping a Tumour in full song. She can keep up the repetitions and the jerks indefinitely.

Like the Tumours, education by virus is a way of freezing time—the continual replication of the past, buffered against mutation and with no energy left over for anything new. Civilization is a broken record, always repeating the same phrase. Three-year-olds sneer if a performance of Shakespeare deviates from the original production.

But Milena has resistance, in more ways than one. Most of the viruses that are supposed to make her knowledgeable simply make her sick. She has had to learn things for herself, an astonishing handicap in this society. And it's not only knowledge she has missed out on:

> Viruses made people cheerful and helpful and honest. Their manners were impeccable, their conversation well-informed, their work

> speedy and accurate. They believed the same things.

Resistant Milena has Bad Grammar; she may be well-mannered and honest, but she is homosexual.

It is a lush world, full of swift and exuberant growth, but one that constantly repeats itself. Everyone—with rare exceptions, like Milena—is Read at the age of ten, and a replica of each personality is added to the Consensus, an organic Super-consciousness that substitutes for a government. After Reading, children are assigned occupations appropriate to their talents or lack thereof. Dialectical immaterialism has replaced Marx's dialectical materialism.

Yet things do change—frequently and sometimes dramatically, though always step by step. Innovation is made palatable by labeling it restoration. Even conformists vary, and replication with variation is the raw material of Darwinian evolution. Thanks to the omnipresent, ever-evolving viruses that infect them, humans change more and faster than ever before. During Milena's short lifetime, she sees more and more people infected with an empathy virus that makes them sensitive to the feelings of all forms of life (viruses included). "The coffee screams," they cry sorrowfully. Of course, they can't bear to eat anything. Luckily, humans don't need to eat now; they can photosynthesize.

Despite Consensus-dictated conformity, many of the novel's characters are misfits. Milena's great love Rolfa, a musical genius, is one of the humans genetically engineered for mining in Antarctica, with the size, strength, fur, and appetite of bears. Rolfa, who is setting *The Divine Comedy* to music ("for an audience of viruses"—she has no desire to have it performed), is a double misfit, not a normal human and not a normal member of her family. One way of describing the plot of the novel is that it's the story of Milena's heroic struggle to have Rolfa's *Divine Comedy* produced for a worldwide audience.

But wait—it's not so simple. This is a book about music and silence, light and blindness, disease and health, love and selfishness, art and reality—ultimately, about the struggle between self and Consensus; and the point made over and over, with increasing richness and conviction, is that none of these pairs are contraries. They are integral parts of the same thing, whether the parts like it or not. Nobody likes it. *It's a dog of a song*, as that early epiphany has it, *But...* But it's the only one there is to sing.

So this isn't, as such contrasts often are in the hands of lesser novelists, a political parable about Freedom vs. Totalitarianism, or Democracy vs. Communism. It goes much deeper, to the tension (inevitable in social organisms like humans) between individual and community.

And, importantly, this is not one of those facile Panglossian cop-outs ("you can't have good without evil, you can't have prosperity without poverty, oh my isn't the universe beautiful"). There's nothing about good and evil here—only correctable and uncorrectable conditions with unforeseeable consequences either way. There's a great deal about winning and losing, but the moral (at least one moral) seems to be that winning *is* losing, and vice versa. When you're part of the architecture, moving up or down changes the whole structure, and *up* and *down* take on different meanings. And what in certain passages could be read as a depressingly naïve vitalism is closer to an impressionistic sketch of organic evolution.

Milena, when we meet her, is a bad actress (she is always herself) in a troupe that repetitiously presents *Love's Labour's Lost*, one of Shakespeare's least memorable plays.

> Why, universal plodding prisons up
> The nimble spirits in the arteries.

Ryman does not quote those lines, but at one point Milena's troupe discovers their validity, when a new director inspires them to replace their plodding with nimbler spirits of thought and emotion. In time, the ever-resisting Milena surmounts all obstacles to become perhaps her world's greatest celebrity, something she definitely does not want. Much of Milena's labor is lost, in the sense that it turns out to be superfluous to what she thought was her goal. Meanwhile, rather by accident, she has radically changed the world, died for love and freedom, and achieved immortal life. Milena resists to the end, and even beyond the end, as she teaches the Consensus the value of death.

The Child Garden has sometimes been criticized for chaotic flashbacks, jerking readers backward and forward in time so that they forget where the "Now" of the story is. But these are not flashbacks in an ordinary sense. Another way of describing the plot is that it's the story of when and how and why Milena loses her early memories, and when and how and why she gets them back. We simply follow her along that thread of remembrance. And "Where is my Now?" is one of the principal philosophical questions of the book.

But just one of them. And if you're not into philosophy, don't worry. This book is fun. (It's subtitled *A Low Comedy*, not without reason.) And it is beautiful.

TIME, MEMORY, LOVE, TRANSCENDENCE

{Joan Gordon}

I won't write here of Geoff Ryman's awards (well deserved), or of his theory of mundane science fiction (well considered), or of his beautiful prose (well savored), but of one trait I have found in all his work (and in him). He is great of heart.

Certain great writers, although not all of them, deserve that epithet: Walt Whitman and Samuel Beckett, for instance. Not all works by an author may be great of heart, I suppose, and not all works that are great of heart may be great works of art as well. And it is certainly true that what is great of heart for me may not be great of heart for you. But here are some questions to ask in testing an individual work's greatness of heart. Does your heart lift after reading? Do you feel included in the writer's concern and vision? Have you learned something deep and compassionate about the world? Does the work haunt you in a good way? Do you have passages marked that could make you weep if you simply peeked at them again? I have answered yes for almost everything I have read by Geoff Ryman.

I am going to support my claim for Geoff using just three works, but I could easily have picked others instead—these are just my favorites: *The Child Garden*, *Air (or Have Not Have)*, and "Everywhere."

Like Whitman, Ryman includes and accepts everyone—he is large, he contains multitudes; like Whitman, opera enters and infuses his writing; and, like Whitman, he leaves us feeling embraced. Whitman ends his "Song of Myself" like this:

> Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,
> Missing me one place search another,
> I stop some where waiting for you. (86)

Geoff ends *The Child Garden* with: "The gates would be left hanging open in each moment, here, now, in Czechoslovakia or in England. Always" (388). He ends *Air*: "Mae and Kwan, Sunni, Siao, Kuei and his new son, Old Mrs. Tung, all of them, turned and walked together into the future" (390). Always. Together. Embraced.

Like Beckett, Geoff's stories inspire us, even offer transcendence, without requiring belief or faith in the goodness of the universe, just a willingness to persevere and make ourselves into what we can. Beckett says, somewhere in *Endgame*, "The End is in the beginning and yet you go on." Bleak and yet encouraging. In "Everywhere," the grandfather says, "You know, all the evil in the world, all the sadness comes from not having a good answer to that question: what do I do next?" (725). In *Air*, Mae says:

> [E]verything dies. It is not good enough just to live. You have to know that death is certain. Not... Not just of the person, but of whole worlds. Ours is going to die. It is dead now. The only thing I can do is help it be reborn, so we can survive. (158)

I don't have a copy of "Pol Pot's Beautiful Daughter," but in my commonplace book I have a quote from it: "There is no forgiveness in Cambodia. But there are continual miracles of compassion and acceptance." Bleak and yet encouraging.

But, of course, Geoff's vision is really his own, and I want to conclude with his take on memory and story as our way toward transcendence. In "Everywhere," the Angel of the North (a real thing—I've seen it!) stores all the memories of the people in the town and "That's our soul, that story" (723). In *The Child Garden*, Milena's memories, her story, are saved in a very similar way: they are "eternal Nows. The Nows were no longer linked by time or by a self. They went beyond time, to where the whole truth can be told" (388). In *Air*, that story, that soul, that transcendence is born into a babe:

The babe had been formatted.

It was full of Beethoven, the history of Karzistan, the hysterical voices of joy live from Beijing, a new wall of Collab music rolling across the landscape from New York, and a sudden, huge warm hand of love reaching into it. (386)

Time, memory, love, transcendence.

Did these few lines from a few of Geoff Ryman's works lift your heart, make you feel included in his concern, teach you something compassionate, haunt you, maybe even make you hold back a dignified sob? If so, they passed your test as well as mine. Great of heart.

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ON GEOFF RYMAN

{Gavin J. Grant}

Publishing Geoff Ryman's books—and reprinting his backlist—has been a fantastic experience, in most senses of the word. But first I should mention: Geoff Ryman is a busy guy which makes his signature line actually worth reading: there's always a new project or collaboration or a project he thinks is worth pushing.

And pushing is what he's good at. In his writing, he's pushed across every boundary he's ever come across from his very first stories right up to the present day, and, with luck, he'll continue to do so for many more years. There are many of his stories where the reaction I've had has been, "No, please don't go there! Don't... oops." Which is generally followed by "Wow." There were readers who could not stand the thought of "Pol Pot's Beautiful Daughter," but once a writer has an idea like that how could he resist writing the story? Forty-nine percent of the readership of "Omnisexual" probably winced along with me when something burst. And let's not talk about "Birth Days." Or, rather, let's. It's so uncomfortable, but so optimistic; so light to begin with, so huge by the end.

The way he pushes out beyond the comfort zone with his omnivorous gaze for the uncomfortable and telling detail makes for fascinating reading. Two of his recent stories, "The Film-makers of Mars" (first published on Tor.com) and "K is for Kosovo (or, Massimo's Career)" (first published in *Paradise Tales*) capture something of the breadth of his writing. The former is a slow-burn instant science fiction classic that by the impossible and inevitable end has the audience in the bleacher seats standing up and cheering for more. The latter is an intense, hard-hitting realistic story of a series of post-war interviews with a Kosovar family that could have been background for a piece right out of the *New York Times*. The story is not at all fantasy or science fiction, but it is pure Ryman: an uncomfortable story aired out with respect for all concerned, a very human weariness at the things we do to one another, and just a touch of humor.

We're lucky to have someone who isn't afraid to write such stories who also happens to be a great storyteller, and I'm looking forward to reading many more of Geoff's stories and novels with their unique mix of nitty-gritty human moments and mind-blowing ideas.

THE ANGEL, EVERYWHERE

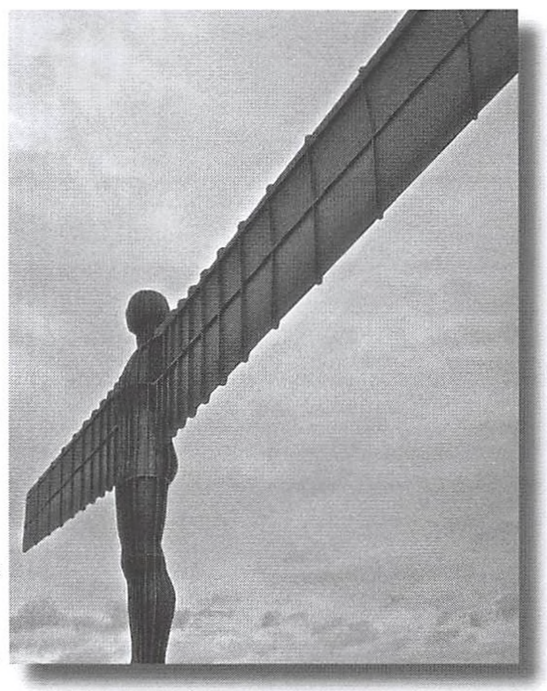
{Veronica Hollinger}

The first time I saw the Angel of the North was in the beautifully imagined utopian world of Geoff Ryman's story, "Everywhere" (1999). His young narrator begins by telling us: "When we knew Granddad was going to die, we took him to see the Angel of the North... The last time I saw this, he says to me, I was no older than you are now, and it was brand new, and we couldn't make out if we liked it or not." In Ryman's story, the Angel houses the digitized histories of everyone in the area. What a lovely idea, I thought: the statue of an angel, with steel wings like airplane wings, housing an archive, a record of everyone and everything.

The following year I took a train from London up to Newcastle and, just before arriving, I saw it—a towering angel off in the distance with rust-colored wings like airplane wings. The Angel of the North was installed in 1998, the creation of sculptor Antony Gormley, and it towers 20 metres (66 feet) over Gateshead, a glorious piece of the real world that Ryman introduced into his fictional utopia. The real-world Angel is a magical combination of technology and metaphysics and this same combination is at work in Ryman's story, in the idea of uploading everyone's history into the Angel, preserving all those stories in the atemporal 11-dimensionality of quantum spacetime. As Ryman writes, "that Angel is laying down the story of the North" and "That's our soul, that story." This is one of the few instances I can recall in which a kind of technological transcendence isn't cheap or flawed, but is instead a promise of how we might live a life through technoscience, a life that is at once startlingly simple and immeasurably rich.

In Ryman's utopia, the technological network connects everyone, including the dolphins in the municipal swimming pool. Extended families—themselves a kind of network—are the norm, and there are bacteria that eat rubbish. The church choir opens with the Muslim call to prayer, followed by a rousing chorus of "Nearer My God to Thee." Everyone can work to pay for the little extras that make life fun, such as car-shoes and computer watches. This modest utopian future has useful advice for the present: "all the evil in the world, all the sadness comes from not having a good answer to that question: what do I do next? You just keep thinking of good things to do..."

Thomas More's punningly-titled *Utopia* is a good place that is also no place. Ryman's mundane utopia—a wish, a potential, a goal—is everywhere. In the 11-dimensional universe, "There's no time there, so once something happens, it's like a photograph, you can't change it." It is, in fact, like a story: once something happens, it's like a photograph, you can't change it. And it's like a gift, as every good story is. I first saw the Angel of the North in Ryman's story, and whenever I see it again I can't help but consider that—somehow, really—it's there towering over Gateshead because it's also in "Everywhere."



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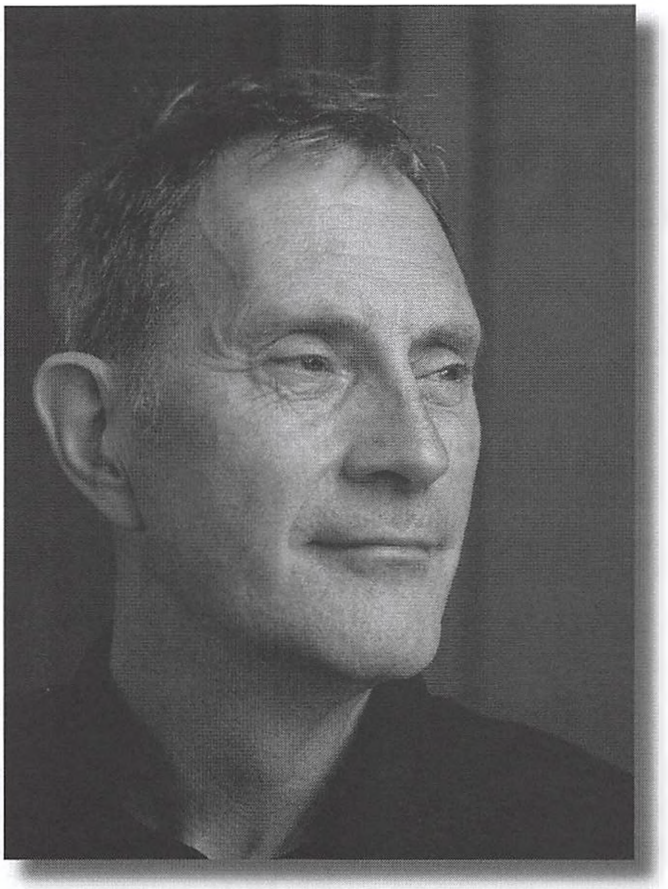

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FOR GEOFF

{Roz Kaveney}

Almost apologizing, he looks down
on a harsh world of folly shedding blood
as if it were his fault, as if he should
have found some better way, written it down

so words could heal. He tells us what we need.
Sometimes we listen. He portrays the links
of sex and death, language and crime. He thinks
bad metaphor can incite angry deed

and he'll go carefully. His conscience writes
these moral fictions. Women and gay men
breathe, fuck, make art. Are born and die again
And life is as it is. Full of delights

and misery. He makes art that consoles
instructs, amuses, stitches tattered souls.

THE WRITER WHO CREATED FICTION: THOUGHTS ON GEOFF RYMAN

{Claude Lalumière}

In the 1980s, while everyone seemed disproportionally bedazzled by the flickering gunmetal glitter of cyberpunk, my imagination was galvanized by the imaginative fiction being published in the UK—comprised mostly of UK authors but also of a few North American visionaries whose work was finding a more receptive audience in the home country. Unwin Hyman, Grafton Books, Century Hutchinson's Legend imprint, David Pringle's *Interzone*... these editors and publishers where channeling and nurturing a literary context and culture that built upon the excitement and innovations of the nineteenth century, the pulp era, 1960s New Wave, and world literature to synthesize something altogether new and exciting—a fantastic fiction more relevant, ambitious, imaginative, and multiculturally aware than anything we'd seen before. (I'm a Canadian of the Trudeau era: "multicultural" is a value hardwired into my personality.)

One of the key authors of that literary moment is a writer whose precise nationality is as elusive as any label we might want to affix to his masterful and uncompromisingly idiosyncratic fiction: Geoff Ryman, a fellow Canadian living in the UK (but it's actually a little more convoluted than that).

There's a lot to admire in Geoff's oeuvre, but for me it's still his first novel that resonates the most urgently: *The Warrior Who Carried Life*, published in 1985 by Unwin Hyman.

I must admit to having a fondness for first novels. There's often a rawness to be found in them, coupled with a desire to cram in as many of the author's fetish themes and obsessions into one narrative. That effervescent excitement... that brash arrogance... that eagerness to establish a new voice... that potent brew of originality and freshness... it's thrilling to encounter. The first novel is often where we can distinguish the bland career novelist from the visionary author embarking on a quixotic quest of the imagination.

There's no question on which side of this dichotomy falls Geoff Ryman, a visionary artist of the first order, and one of the writers who has most deeply influenced me.

The way Geoff plays with myth, pulp, and gender in *The Warrior Who Carried Life* provoked in me a powerful of sense of communion: it felt as though the entire thing had been ripped from my own subconscious and laid down on the page for me to see, for me to explore, for me to try to understand who I was. To say that it triggered something profound in me is a risible understatement.

Reading *The Warrior Who Carried Life* was an important milestone in the slow process that eventually unlocked the fiction writer within me.

Today, I'm quite honoured to know Geoff Ryman as a friend—it's a rare privilege and opportunity to be able to befriend an artist who has had such an important impact on one's life. But, given that *The Warrior Who Carried Life* is something of a guide map to my inner life, I'm not entirely surprised that we so easily forged such a bond.

WHAT DOES GEOFF RYMAN STAND FOR? (AND WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?)

{Chris Moriarty}

So. Where to begin?

I am not going to try to list Geoff Ryman's brilliant novels, let alone his numerous short stories —so numerous that when I looked his bibliography up in order to prepare this appreciation, I realized that even I haven't read a large number of them. Instead, I'm going to talk about one novel—*Was*—and what it meant to me as a reader and a writer.

I read *Was* just after I had published my first science fiction novel, during a moderately ill-starred stint at an MFA program where I learned a lot but also contracted a nearly fatal case of writer's block. Frankly, I was completely out of my depth. I knew that I could write a pretty decent commercial SF novel. But I also knew that I had more to say—and that a lot of what I wanted to say didn't fit neatly into any of the standard-issue genre categories. I had spent enough time in Latin America and Italy to know that the airtight, rigidly defended division of stories into 'genre with a small g' and 'Literature with a capital L' was largely a North American phenomenon. But though I admired writers like Primo Levi and Italo Calvino, I had no idea how to translate that freewheeling approach to genre into English.

There was, of course, a homegrown model. Ursula K. Le Guin had succeeded brilliantly in walking the razor's edge between genre and Literature without doing disservice to either tradition. But as much as I loved her work and still do, it never quite seemed to match up with the world I grew up in: the world of New York in the 1980s, where refugees from America's Heartland lived elbow-to-elbow with newly-arrived immigrants, and we all watched Jerry Falwell rant on TV about God's Just Punishments while AIDS progressed from a dark rumor to a deadly disease that filled up entire wards of city hospitals. If Le Guin provided a model for writing modern fantasy, then it was one forged a long time ago and in another country. Her experience of what it was to be a writer—and of what it was to be a woman—was so different from mine that it was hard for me to imagine I would be able to ever match her map up with my territory.

Then one of my MFA teachers told me to read *Was*.

It changed my life.

I almost didn't write that last sentence. In fact, I can barely think it without cringing. Because it's what everyone says about *Was*. It's what everyone has been saying about *Was* for so long that if I were Geoff Ryman I'd be damn sick of hearing it. But it's true. It did change my life. And a lot of other people's lives.

So what is the power of this book? What is it about *Was* that makes people feel this way? Is it just that it was an early and great AIDS novel? Perhaps partly. But there are many excellent novels on this topic, and none of them has spawned an *it changed my life* meme.

For me it was, above all, the shocking directness of the book. It was the way Ryman broke down the barriers between reality and fantasy: not as part of some clever metafictional game, but with an almost childlike desperation, as if he had grasped that a subject so awful could only be dealt with by going back to the fairy tales we armored ourselves with in childhood when we still believed—correctly, as it turned out—that there were monsters under the bed.

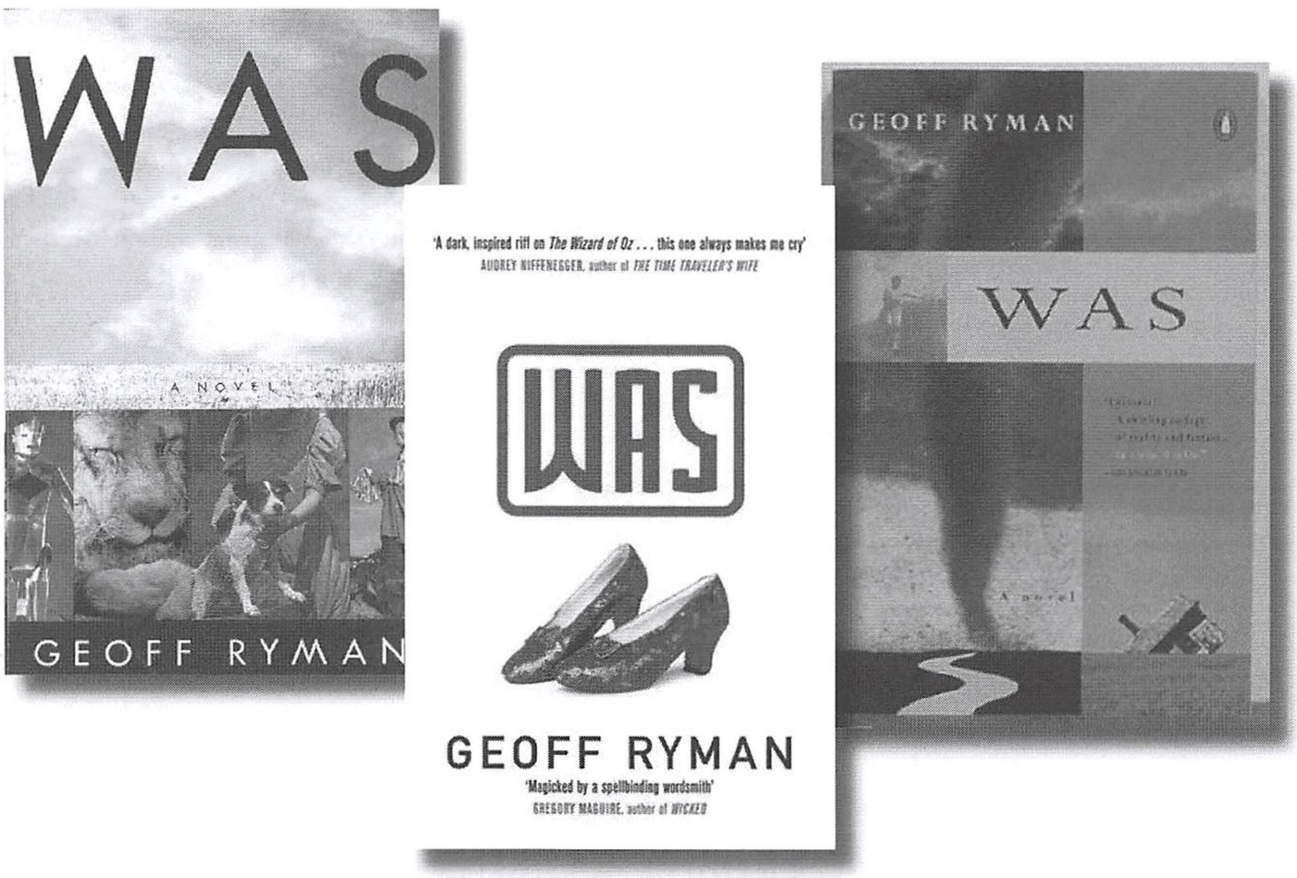
When I reread *Was* in order to write this appreciation, it shocked me all over again. Geoff Ryman's landscape of the imagination was more unsettling than I remembered. The entwined storylines were more hauntingly ambiguous than I remembered them being. And the insights into the peculiar time in American history that I grew up in were less tidy, more multivalent, and far more profound than I had been able to grasp on my first, long-ago reading of the novel.

It was the sheer breadth of the book that most amazed me at this reading, however; an expansiveness that I suppose shouldn't be surprising in a book partly set in Kansas. But the horizons of *Was* are wider even than the horizons of the Great Plains. They are as broad as the stories of a new country whose mythology is still a work in progress. Or rather, they are as broad as the horizons of American storytelling *could* be if all of our writers were willing to venture into the No Man's Land between our national myths and our daily reality as bravely as Geoff Ryman does.

Read *Was*. And if you've already read it, read it again. It's the kind of book that grows with every reading. What you find in the 'fantasy world' inside the book will change over the years as you move through your life in the 'real world' outside the book. Why? Because, unlike the hermetically sealed and ultimately lifeless worlds contained in safer and simpler books, *Was* lives and breathes in both realities.

That sense of almost childlike bravery, of willingness to break down boundaries, is what I ultimately took away from the book on this rereading. Like all truly great fantasies, *Was* is a story of transfiguration. It puts the lie to the tired accusation that fantasy literature is mere escapism. It takes us back to the fairy tale landscape of childhood—the landscape of the Grimm Brothers, not Disney, where fairy tales are dark and dangerous and able to speak the truths that grownups deem unspeakable. It reminds us that escaping into fantasy is not just an evasion, but an act of defiance.

Geoff Ryman took huge risks on every page of this book, both as a writer and a human being. His willingness to take those risks gave birth to a book that challenges us all to ask more of ourselves. It challenges us to lay ourselves open to *seeing* the world as it is, so that the beautiful defiance of fantasy can be more than an empty gesture. And it reminds us that we all are writers, regardless of whether we write 'fantasies' about 'imaginary' people or that much more important kind of fiction—the silent inner story of our own lives that helps us understand who we are, which side we're on, and what we stand for. ~



TWO NOTES ON GEOFF RYMAN

{Rachel Pollack}

1. Geoff Ryman taught me about names, and changed my writing and even my way of seeing.

When I first began to write what used to be called "anthropological science fiction," which means more or less, primitive tribes on other planets, I assumed, like most people, that you should make up names whose sounds evoked qualities of the character or the culture. Sometimes you aimed for a personal trait—something like Leeuula for a shy princess, or Ukkalbaakok for a brutish warrior. Some people went to extremes, usually with more zz's and qq's than vowels, or else ripped off actual names from Celtic myth, or Sanskrit myths, or the polysyllabic tongue-twisters of Hermetic ceremonial magic (as Lovecraft did for some of his monsters).

I liked to think back then that I was hip enough to avoid some of the more cliched name shticks, all the zz's or ll's, for example. I aimed for truly alien sounds, inserting clicks or whistles, or commas to suggest glottal stops in the middle of words. Cle[click]vel(whistle)an,d. But all this cleverness was missing the point about names, and narrowing my way of seeing as well as my writing. It was all from outside.

One of the peculiarities of our melting-pot culture is that names don't mean anything. They're just sounds. In fact, they do mean things, we just don't know unless we think to look it up. "Rachel," for example, means Mother Sheep, "Geoffrey" Peaceful Region. In cultures more connected to their origins names are words or descriptive phrases; for us they are just sounds, and so if we want to evoke an alien people we just make up weirder sounds.

And then came *Unconquered Country*, with a heroine named Third Child, or simply Third. A ways into the story we learn she has a fuller name, Dastang Tze-See, and for a moment we feel on more familiar ground, a name that is just syllables. But immediately, the book tells what those syllables mean—Desperate Flies in Filth, and we are right back in that strange world where words and people's names form their story and destiny.

This is more than just a clever trick; it immerses us enough in Third's own mind that we can never quite trust the descriptions. Are the houses in the slums really alive? Do they really climb on top of each other? By "really," of course, I mean the way a Canadian or American might see it. But Geoff teaches us to see the way his character does, and this is a lesson that can change more than just our writing.

2. Sometime in the 1980s Geoff and I shared one of those late-night convention moments that we like to think happen all the time but usually don't. We had a few drinks and plotted a financial empire built on selling celibacy. It would be a pyramid scheme. We would set up workshops, then franchise our students to set up their own, and roll on from there. The idea was to attract people weary of constantly trying to be hot, or sexy, of comparing themselves to everyone else in the desperate attempt to find a partner or just sex. "Love yourself first!" would be our motto, and we would get people to take The Pledge—"No relationships, I pledge to love myself first!"—for periods from six months to two years. Of course, to maintain this they would have to go to official celibacy meetings, and work with a counselor, and follow a program, all licensed by us. My favorite idea was a line of celibacy clothing—luxurious beautiful fabrics, but only on the inside where nobody could know about it but you.

I thought of this because it was the '80s, and people like Werner Erhard and "Bhagwan" Rajneesh were getting rich off of people's desire for instant enlightenment and self-improvement, and hell, why shouldn't we cash in? As for Geoff, well, it was the '80s, and I suspect he had more serious reasons for fantasizing about the promotion of celibacy. Most of all, though, it was just one of those rare moments, and a sweet memory of a lovely friend, who also happens to be a great writer.

THE JOY OF GRAPEFRUIT, OR: DISORDER AND EARLY SORROW

{Kit Reed}

I saw Geoff Ryman coming years before we met in, as they say in cybercircles, Real Life. I read and loved *Was* the year it was published in the States. I argued for it at the National Book Critics' Circle meeting the year we solemnly concluded that Geoff's magnificent novel could not be considered for an award, for we were "national," and he is Canadian by birth. Never mind that it's the best thing I'd read in years.

Then *253* caught me at the crest of the wave that swept us all onto the Internet; so many options, so many stories embedded in Ryman's Web-based marvel—an underground train with many passengers, interwoven stories for each, and at the end...

But wait. A confessional moment. I was perfectly at home reading nonstop conversation scrolling up my screen in LambdaMOO, a text-based community with some 8,000 players in its prime in the early 1990s. I spend my life staring into a screen, but I've never had the patience for hypertext.

I was impressed by the surface of the online version of *253*, I loved the premise and the design, but I never made it past the first few screens. I didn't read *253* through until I bought the book. And in case you were wondering, as real rather than virtual text, *253* is an elegant and intricately woven novel, engaging and swifter than any speeding train.

Before he left publishing to take over *F&SF*, Gordon Van Gelder was deep in editing Geoff's big, challenging and enormously complicated novel about Internet matters, which is kind of, sort of, how Geoff and I met.

No, it was not an Internet romance.

On LambdaMOO, I met a character who later revealed herself as Sue Thomas, a professor in the UK who ran an ambitious Web-based resource for writers. 'There's a whole 'nother story about her real-life betrayal by an online lover she'd taken up with on LambdaMOO, but that's a different story, for another time. An addicted MOOer, I was running a real-time text-based fiction workshop at Wesleyan, in my own little place called StoryMOO. Sue was preparing to launch a major event. Incubation 2000: a trAce International Conference on Writing and the Internet was scheduled at the University of Nottingham in the summer of 2000. In addition to being a terrific novelist, Geoff was, OK, the queen's Webmaster, and a featured speaker. Most of us need day jobs.

I got travel money to talk about StoryMOO at the conference. I carried Gordon's greetings to Geoff—great way to open a conversation, no matter where you are. We hit it off. Now, whenever we manage to be in the same place at the same time, usually in London, we look forward to hanging out and laughing a lot.

Now, moving right along. I could go on and on about the amazing, eloquent and completely engrossing novel that Gordon was so excited about before I ever met Geoff. *Air* is a marvel; if you haven't read it you must, but in this context, that's beside the point.

I'm here to instill great guilt in Geoff Ryman, and if he's seen the header for this story, he knows why.

This necessitates a *flashback*, in which Geoff is not present, although his time will come. It's 1970-something, and Joe and I are in London, back when the underground worked smoothly and theater seats were cheap. We're

heading downstairs for a production of *American Buffalo* at the National Theatre. We're early, so in spite of warnings about actor spit and broken glass, we head for seats in the second row. As it turns out, Tom Disch and Charlie Naylor came even earlier, and staked out their front-row seats—nice coincidence! It's early. Too early, and the four of us gossip until Tom says, "Do you know that any recipe can be ruined by the substitution of grapefruit?"

Wow!

The conversation takes off. We mull, we weigh hideosities and construct recipes to match. Add grapefruit and your dish will not only be hideous, it will *look* hideous. Joe's a painter. He'll do the illustrations if Tom will... Tom loves the idea. he will!

The *Great Grapefruit Cookbook* is born.

Written by Thomas M. Disch, Illustrations by Joseph Reed: it was going to make us all famous—although I forget why that meant me too. Meanwhile, it made us all laugh, which we did until the actors came onstage and actor spit began to fly; the bottle smashed but did not shatter—a little miracle of Scotch tape. By the time we left the theater we had several recipes. "Grapefruit à la King," for instance. "Grapefruit Kiev" alone!

In the years before e-mail such enterprises took longer, but in the years before e-mail, we were all a lot more patient. Instantaneous meant turning things around by fax, if you happened to have a fax. So what if it didn't happen right away? Recipes went back and forth, with watercolors of each magnificent dish. To make your half-grapefruit shell seal in whatever you put inside to make "Grapefruit Kiev," for instance, secure it with a rubber band.

At some point in the mid-'80s, we had an agent salivating, ready to go forth with the finished work, which wasn't exactly finished. Tom wanted to, he didn't want to, he would but he didn't and he hadn't; Tom was, and is always, Tom, and we'll always miss him.

Cut to Readercon—Geoff, was it three years ago? That Friday, Geoff and Joe and I converged at dinnertime and, inspired by the elaborately described *amuse-bouche*-type items on the menu, talked about recipes, cookbooks, illustrations, grapefruit, and...

Geoff was inspired. Joe was inspired. I was inspired. Geoff had his laptop open on the table before the amusing main courses were cleared. We were on a roll; before we were done Geoff had several screens of recipes with wicked descriptions, and we'd agreed the soon-to-be-completed masterpiece would include (maybe it was in the subtitle—it's been a while, and memory blurs details) a tribute to the originator, Tom Disch.

We had a new title, Geoff's inspiration; reader, he was into it!

THE JOY OF GRAPEFRUIT

Add grapefruit to *anything* and everybody laughs. There were larger, probably festive groups in the dining room that night but when we talked about it last summer at Geoff's house, we concluded that in that place that night, the three of us had the most fun.

Now, about last summer, and this is the guilt-producing part. When we left our story after that particular Readercon, Geoff and I were agreed. *The Joy of Grapefruit* was a go. We mailed him scans of Joe's illustrations and whatever recipes Tom had made. He ran his hands over what he'd typed and mailed the file back. I ran my hands over it and turned it around, *instanter*. E-mail, so wonderful, so swift. So...

Things happened. Time passed.

Last summer we hung out in London again. Lovely dinner at Geoff and David's place. GREAT, WE'LL TAKE HIM A PRESENT. An addition to the grapefruit canon, a hand-colored drawing of *Grapefruit Pizza*, suitable for framing. The painting was lovely, and the recipe? I will spare you the details. It will spur him to action, it must!

And for a bright, shining moment, it did. He scoured his hard drive for the scans, as well as the file I'd lost when my laptop crashed; he found my emendations to his version, he found... That's all he found, because that's all there was. Oh, and we were laughing as we remembered how much we'd laughed in the dining room on that first grapefruit-kissed night. We hugged goodbye with many renewed promises to get right on it and...

Geoff?

We're waiting, Geoff. The world is waiting. Guilted much? Enough?

Geoff?

A CONVERSATION: GEOFF RYMAN AND KIT REED

[Excerpted from "Geoff Ryman interviewed by Kit Reed" (http://infinityplus.co.uk/nonfiction/intgr.htm). The Infinity Plus—SF, Fantasy, Horror website, edited by Keith Brooke, features fiction, book reviews, critical essays, viewpoint pieces, and discussions. Kit and Geoff met online for two live conversations totaling two hours in July 2004, using a "StoryMOO" system hosted at Wesleyan University. The text is taken, subject to a few stylistic formatting changes for this Souvenir Book, from the logfile of their real-time synchronous chat, where questions and answers flowed as quickly as the participants could type.]

[FROM SESSION ONE]

Kit Reed: Since you brought it up, what's your Mundane Philosophy about?

Geoff Ryman: OK, SF content is the future, but the function of most SF seems to be about avoiding the future. So much of the inherited tropes are actually highly unlikely. Take faster than light travel… there is a ghost of a possiblity there, but people have run away with it. This is because they like it. It seems to open up horizons of adventure. It also conveys the message, we can burn through this planet and escape to the stars. I don't think we can. I think we're stuck on Earth. I want to write stories that are stuck on Earth and throw out the unlikely tropes.

KR: What's mundane about that? It strikes me as completely realistic in the best sense.

GR: Well the word Mundane means of the world. So by and large Mundane SF sticks to Earth or the nearby solar system. For example if we can't get to the stars, aliens can't get to us. Quantum uncertaintly works only at the micro level. Parallel universes are unlikely. So two years ago, out of Clarion a bunch of young writers decided they wanted to limit themselves to the most likely future. This meant facing up to what we know is coming, dealing with it and imaging good futures that are likely.

KR: This is probably where I should ask you what you think the S and the F stand for. Science Fiction or Speculative Fiction.

GR: For me right now Science Fiction.

KR: OK, good futures. Good as in happy or good as in accurate projections?

GR: Not so much accurate as more likely futures than bouncing around star systems talking on the radio.

Because I think we've been fooling ourselves for a while. I think we need to face up to the loss of oil and the immense impact that will have. Climate change, overpop, yeah, need to be faced with tough challenges. Then we can move on to the life that will grow out of how we adapt, despite loss. That's a tale of overcoming, new solutions, and a renewed sense of wonder about truly new ideas. Theres no SoW [*Sense of Wonder*] for me in 40 year old Star Trek scenarios.

KR: I like it. Dunno how to ask this. OK. Will the next novel come out of this line of thought?

GR: I'd say *Air* grew out of similar impatience.

[FROM SESSION TWO]

KR: WHEN DID YOU FIRST KNOW YOU WERE A WRITER?

[Kit grins at Geoff.]

GR: Before I could talk.

KR: Of course. When did you first commit words, like dictate to a parent or what?

GR: Well, more like at about 6 when my mom published my first story in her newspaper column.

KR: Brilliant. What was it about?

GR: Sindbad. He takes a pill and gets a tiny fish's head underwater.

KR: Nice. Mine was about a rabbit named Harbor Wilson. I dictated it to my mother when I was five.

[I] had no 'ins' with print media, however.

GR: Oh, so you need a devoted mum to be a writer.

KR: Gimme some time to think on that. Emanuensis, let's say, w/o getting into psychohistory. Mine was baffled that I was in *Who's Who.*

GR: You're in *Who's Who*? Doesn't that baffle YOU? I'd be stunned to be in *Who's*... Darling, you're a celebrity!

[Geoff makes Kit laugh.]

KR: As *if.* If you get a Gugg[*enheim*] you're automatically in *Who's Who*, dunno why.

GR: I wish I did the same for me.

KR: So on from age six, what was next in your life as a writer?

GR: Anyway, writing, it's a hard slog, don't do it, there's no money in it and the only nice writers write SF.

KR: You can also get kicked OUT of *Who's Who* if you stop producing.

GR: The bastards!

KR: Right on all counts. And furthermore it works better if you go into dentistry or just get a job in a bank!

GR: Dentists? How big is this directory?

KR: oh nooo, not getting into *Who's Who*, making MONEY.

[Kit grins at Geoff.] ...Were you writing in grammar school, high school, etc?

GR: Yes, I kept writing, but I was no damn good. Long answer follows. The first story I submitted sold, which confirmed every single bad habit I had. I wrote a huge unpublishable novella with pictures and equations next, thinking of course I was a genius. Nobody else did. So I slogged away and at about age 28 I was beginning to think that dentistry would be an option. Sigh. Then I read Virginia Woolf's letters... at 28, she was thinking of giving up.

KR: agh, Virginia!

[I] wonder furthermore when you figured out that you were gay. And whether what you wrote expressed or reflected that when you were a kid.

GR: I knew when I was nine. I had the crisis then, and then forgot about it for a long while.

KR: Or fiction writers had you committing suicide. Did the crisis show up in your pre-coming-out work?

GR: Well there wasn't much pre-coming out work. I guess the first story just was ambiguous, the second the two lovers were plainly post-body and could be either sex. No, the crisis at nine consisted of a sudden realisation in a bowling alley. It totally messed up my bowling scores and lost me cool points with the gang. After that I forgot it again, tried to go straight, gave up in late teens.

KR: How old were you when you sold the first story? The second sounds *very* like an act of transformation, which is something the best writers do.

GR: OH I didn't make a pro sale until 21. The second was a calling card and ended up in the collection *Unconquered Countries*... it's "A Fall of Angels"... and ultimately was the grandfather of *The Child Garden* (the Angels kinda come back).

KR: Cool. Explain calling card?

GR: Calling card... I knew it was impressive. Just not publishable. BBC said do it as a radio play, this is what we want. I'd show it to people and they'd react to me as a writer with a future.

KR: Hey, that's *not* such a bad thing. You were living in the UK by then?

[I] also wonder if the Beeb indeed *did* said radio play.

GR: "A Fall of Angels" had my first lines in which the character suddenly spoke internally from the heart to themselves, which was a breakthrough for me... this regarding the transformation stuff. Yeah, I was living in the UK, much encouraged by Hilary Bailey who was editing *New Worlds* by then. Beeb did not do said play. My own take on adaptations is that one medium is never perfect

for another UNLESS the original was very much less than perfect. F'instance, there was a play version of *Was* that was SO faithful... the acting and direction were fab, but faithfulness doesn't do it. The script for the movie if it ever gets made is very different, and the musical version that is coming up is out of its mind, just wonderful, but entirely different.

KR: I think you're right about adaptations...

KR: and I'm interested in characters speaking from the heart, and that the reason I like your work is that it's character driven. This is going to be a complicated question...

KR: I wonder if the 'mundane' philosophy springs partly at least from the fact that most HARD SF...

GR: ... would meet humanistic SF if the science were good.

KR: i.e. the flying saucer space alien kind is *concept* rather than idea driven. As in, the mechanics substitute for characters...

KR: and nothing real emerges in terms of substance.

GR: I have great faith in hard SF writers, especially if they wanted to take on playing the Mundane game. *Timescape* would be a Mundane novel if Benford had declared himself to be. A story of his I read in *Omni* was almost fantasy. So I don't know that hard SF is in a box. In fact I kinda hope Mundane will be a way for humanistic and hard SF to become one and the same.

KR: Humanistic SF with science. How does that differ from Speculative Fiction?

Kit is thinking all the twice-told subgenres are... well... twice told.

GR: Good Question. Spec Fic to me is also interested in formalism as per old *New Worlds*. They were always playing around with the techniques of experimental fiction and it was very exciting at the time. I remember a story (but not the title) by Brian Aldiss that knocked me out. It was just a series of stunning surreal images.

So for me in Speculative Fiction, the speculation extends to questions of form, almost like OULIPO. You know people like Georges Perec, Italo Calvino, Raymond Queneau. I have a feeling that a lot of Mundane fiction will be classical in form.

KR: By classical you mean what I guess people call mainstream or 'literary' fiction?

GR: Yes indeed, the story telling techniques that get taught at Clarion or any course teaching the basics of creative writing.

[Kit nods to Geoff.]

KR: OULIPO fiction, None of them very character driven, right? All conceptual?

GR: OULIPO is short for something like Ouvreirs de Literature Potential (pardon my French) [*Ouvroir de littérature potentielle—eds.*]. They were (still are?) a group that did stuff like write verse for dogs or in early programming languages. Perec ended up using the form to get at characters.

KR: Rightright, I'm supposed to know these things, but they just make me cranky.

KR: So you think the Mundanes will be experimenting with form, substance, i.e. a whole new ballgame?

GR: I'm not sure. It will be up to them as individual writers. I suspect that SF writing needs to convince photorealistically, in the same way SF art does. So it uses very classical conventional techniques.

KR: I guess conventional is the troublesome part, if you're talking about conventions as in space-mechanics, how things 'port or what makes them fly.

GR: Re Mundanes. Actually, I suspect Mundanes will end up being very concerned with content and getting visions and ideas across. I think Mundanes could end up being conservative technically in their writing. But maybe not.

KR: What I like about what you just said was the word: VISIONS. The best SF is visionary. Makes a leap to places conventional writers can't go. And I mean conventional SF writers as well.

GR: I mean technical in how they write. I hope Mundanes steer clear of teleportation as it doesn't seem too likely. I hope the Mundane rules force Hard SF writers to focus on life on Earth lived by people and force humanists to get their facts right and to do some original SF speculation. The rules, not the group does the forcing, like a corset can feel great, liberating as well as confining, as it's more fun to play tennis by the rules.

[Kit stands up, cheers at "force... writers to focus on life on Earth lived by people." Italicizes *people*.]

GR: But people are of course the key to any story... as is having the characters make decisions and change.

KR: Exactly! And FEELING what they feel and making the reader feel it too.

KR: Back when we got talking about transformation I wanted to ask the following, but we were moving too fast. Does being gay make you a more empathic writer?

More in tune with what other people, therefore your characters, are thinking?

Am I crazy or are women more likely to be empaths, and are women and gay men more empathic than straight guys?

GR: I've met some pretty un-empathetic gays, and since the Iraq prison photos I think everyone has to extend their ideas of feminity. I guess a straightforward answer is no, I don't think being gay makes me more empathic... it may shift the focus of my empathy a bit from where it would be if I were straight. But if I accept that I have a good quality because I'm gay, then I may have to accept I have a bad quality because I'm gay. I'm worried that would shift responsibility for my faults and actions from me and what I do, to some convenient story. (I'm gay and that's why I forgot my house keys/got stressed/did a bad bad thing)... I don't think anyone has defined the difference in flavour between being male and female. If they did we would still have to remember that there would be women and men who were not in the middle of their bell shaped curve (tough women prepared to be torturers; men who devote their lives to nurturing others).

KR: Excellent, thanks. Take care. And think of whatever you want to be your Famous Last Words.

GEOFF RYMAN

{Gordon Van Gelder}

I really wanted to write a big, personal piece about Geoff Ryman for this Souvenir Book. I wanted to talk about working on *The Child Garden* while still an assistant editor back in 1990, about reading the book on the back porch of my father's house and marveling at some of the brilliant creations in it. I wanted to write about losing out on the chance to publish *Was* in the United States and then, a few years later, playing volleyball with the company's new rights manager and hearing him say, "That book changed my life." I hoped to say something about the brilliance of *253* and how Geoff recognized so quickly the strengths and weaknesses of this new medium known as the Internet. On the way, I figured I'd say a bit about editing *Unconquered Countries* and then some more about commissioning *Air* and then add some notes about his brilliant short fiction—not just his *F&SF* stories like "Pol Pot's Beautiful Daughter" and "Blocked" but his stories that appeared first in England, like "Dead Space for the Unexpected" and "O Happy Day!"—and a few personal tidbits I've gleaned about Geoff over the years, like his work on the Website for the Queen of England...

But then a new novelette by Geoff Ryman landed on my desk.

Do you blame me if I dropped everything to read Geoff's new story? If you do, I suggest you read some of Geoff's work.

Because if you think my time is better spent blathering on about his books than it is reading his new one, the odds are very high that you've never read his stories before.

In which case, you're in for a treat.

THE STORYTELLER

{Geoff Ryman}

[Originally published by www.themanchesterreview.co.uk, issue 6, March 2011.]

We shoe-blacked the old boy's hair and washed him in greasy water so his skin shined. Lizzie found one of her old corsets and we laced him up so tight that he could actually stand up straight. Put him in one of our regular blue serge suits and he looked like there'd be at least ten years of life left in him.

I spun my story. "This is Joseph. He's a skilled carpenter, very nice in his habits, not up to hard field labour frankly, but then that would be a waste. Fix anything from a gin to a wheel. Cooper and wainwright all in one, ain't that so, Joseph?"

Joseph knows he better say yes.

Joseph was a dead man, but we finally managed to sell him to a horse-trader from Hannibal as a toolroom negro. Don't know what we'll do with the rest of this last batch.

I wish the wenches wouldn't keep having babies. I guess if they didn't we wouldn't have anything to sell in ten years' time, but right now, you can knock at least $50 off the fanciest stock in the pen if she's got babies attached. No matter how often you say that the mother's worth more with a babe attached, the buyers don't want 'em. They take the mother and leave the children.

I hate it. The mothers put up such a fight you fear for damaging your stock. You can't sell even a No 1 domestic if she's got a bruise on her face. Means she's trouble and nobody buys trouble.

Then you got the babes left behind with all that caterwauling and wailing. But it's even worse when they realize that their Mama really has gone. Sometimes they break, go silent, stare, won't eat. I get mad at Pa, I say, why you got to sell those mothers and babes separate for? He just tells me this is no business for the soft-hearted and I'm lucky he found a use for me.

So I go back and look at this clutch of babies who won't be fit for work for another ten years and I start thinking how on earth we're going to unload these?

Sellable stock we can sort by category. Prime, No. 1, No. 2. We pull apart the men and women and line them up by height. Then we call them Mulatto or Griffe or Quadroon. My Pa sorts them to what people understand: a category and a category means a price.

It's my job to make them special again. I'm the storyteller. Pa found a use for me, all right.

You see what I know in my bones is that in the end what we're selling is folks. And folks always have a story.

So I look at the babes. It ain't no story to tell customers that they're by themselves cause we sold their Daddy to Natchez and their Ma to Louisiana. No, no, no. I call them 'poor wee babes' and say they 'lost' their mama. Nobody's going to ask what lost means. Lost, it bespeaks of a tragedy that left these little angels behind.

I'll sell them as dolls.

I see widow ladies who come in they think for a laundress, but I know they secretly need something to smother with love. I can see them putting those little darlings in starchy pinafores and letting them ride ponies. Til they start getting tall and uppity that is. I also see some poor simple black gal 20 years from now still dazed with love talking about the old days with her white mama, who died. I see her scrubbing smalls in a tub.

Right now I got to get them sold. I reckon sets could help us shift them. I pair them off one big, one small. We get some ribbons, we get some sweet little skirts. I give them some boiled taffy to make them hug each other and then I say "Look how fond he is of his little sister, can you bear to part them?"

Same as we put the fancy stock in gloves and tell folks some yarn about their refined and genteel upbringing as a member of the family.

You can see these busted up old farmers with whiskers as big as shoulders of lamb, their eyes go all misty. They want to believe the stories. They want to believe they're getting something special. They want to believe that the United States is full of devoted slaves

who nursed their master on his deathbed and who must be sold as a sacrifice. They don't want to believe this is what it is. They don't want to believe that there are no white families who raise black women as delicately as they raise their own. What they think they want don't exist, but I help them see it anyway. That's what storytelling's all about.

So I'm sitting there, working out stories about consumptive young women whose faces hang as low as a bloodhound's. I give them back their bosoms with handkerchiefs, and if the buyer wants to squeeze them I say Please! The young lady has not been subject to such inspections!

Yes, I say, Emily was Returned but only because her mistress did not like the New Orleans style of dressing the hair.

Lord, what a mess of negroes we got cooped up in this pen now. Negroes as thin as pine saplings. Bucks whose eyes beam hatred and whose backs are a cobweb of scars from whipping.

Whipping! Can you beat that for ignorance? We never whip our negroes. We use a paddle instead. Blisters them up, but leaves no scars. Keeps their value.

I say, Jim here is a likely negro of fine character. Those scars are the result of a miscarriage of justice, he was whipped for another slave's thievery. I have a letter from his previous master to that effect. It's a good letter, too; I wrote it myself.

You see to tell the story, I have to see them as people too, and that's the clincher.

I look at each and every one of them. That evil old buck I see as little boy with his mama. I see the consumptive getting herself a nice warm bed to die in.

Then there's George. George is twelve. His mama got sold and we saved him up for New Years. He doesn't beam hatred. He hangs his head and rolls in his lips and says Sir soft and low. He's skinny and small and shy and sweet. You like reading George? I ask him.

I ain't supposed to read, he says. I know he does. Just something in the way he moves.

"I like reading too," I say. "I can loan you books. Or read to you if you like."

"My Mama taught me to read," he says, and a slow tear comes crawling down his little face, and Lord, it was fit to bust my heart. "Well I'll bring you books," I tell him.

So I come back the next day with *Oliver Twist*, and I start reading it to him. The sight of me sitting on my haunches and reading to a pickaninny makes my Pappy charge like a bull. He's shaking and he's got his riding stick in his hand and wants to know what in a billygoat's ass I think I'm doing.

"Don't you know it's illegal to teach a negro to read!"

"I reckon we can sell this one as a child's companion, Pa. Story I'm going to tell is he took care of an invalid child for years and when she died, he got sold."

"I wish you took the same trouble over the fancy stock."

"The fancy stock sells itself and you know what for."

So I get to sit with George. He's a bit wary at first. But I read to him, and bring him good food, and I pretend to Pa it's all just grooming. But I know it's not. I feel sorry for him, I want something good to happen to him. You can't help taking a special interest in some of them.

Well, I been grooming George for three weeks, before it all came to a head. By now George feels comfortable around me. He tells me jokes about chickens and calico. He shows me how to make fishhooks out of cornhusks. He starts teaching me songs, he likes songs. He's scared and he's lonesome and he's grieving. I just want to stroke his head and tell him everything will be all right.

Today was New Year's Day and somebody wanted to buy him, and that somebody was Jason Jackson Turner. He's a people too and his story is this; his grandfather owns half the docks in New Orleans but he comes all the way up here every New Year to buy a boy. It's always a boy. I can see straight through him. I hate the man, he makes my skin crawl, there's something about him makes my thumbs prickle. He comes shameless into our yard in a white and red striped jacket looking like a candy cane, and a huge top hat. That's what they call fashion.

How these poor folk dread Christmas as New Year follows sure as sunrise when they get sold south or rented south. Every year there's ice on the ground and he makes the boys take off their shirts and more if he's given half a chance. He thumbs their nipples. I told him once; I don't think boys make good wet-nurses. He just grinned like I'd said something clever.

So today he descends like Calliope all fluttering scarves and heads straight for George. My Pa is right there, so I can't say, this one's not for sale.

He bends down low so George has to look into his face. "What's your name?" he asks. George turns

away. He asks again and George murmurs it out and I can see this purchaser has been struck. The same thing that won me, the gentleness, the shyness, as self-contained as a birthday parcel.

"It's too chill to make the child undress," I tell him.

"There's no need. He's very satisfactory."

"What will you use him for?"

"Oh," he says with a smile. "Ornament."

"And when he's 24?"

"Oh, by then the whole world will be different. Get used to it, young Mr. Jameson. Your trade will have changed considerably by then." He slaps my shoulder and puts a kerchief over his face like I smell. Of course all these fine and fancy folks don't even want to dine with slave-traders.

"I'll see about the paperwork," I tell him. I look at George and he looking right at me and those eyes say plain as pumpkins *don't leave me. Don't leave me with this man.*

My heart roils and my fists clench and I can't think straight, I walk around the yard wondering why the Earth does not open up to prevent such enormities. I shiver inside with disgust and misery and I know I cannot bear to dispose of George in this way.

"Father," I say. "I...I refuse to sell that boy to that man."

"I'll do the refusing, not you."

"Father. He's... he's... a sodomite."

That brings the old man up short, but he doesn't yet lift up his eyes from the accounts. "Is he now?"

"Every year he comes here and buys a boy, and from the way he handles them it's plain what his purpose is. I ask him what he wants them for and he says ornament."

He finally looks at me. "Hmm. A terrible thing, if true."

"Look at how he dresses. Look at his eyes!"

"What do you think happens to the fancy stock? Why do you think there are so many mulattoes? Boy, You've been believing some of your own stories." He shrugs like he's under a yoke. Something makes his hand shake and suddenly he throws down the quill. "Look, being cornholed is not one jot worse than picking cotton in summer. What our customers do with their property is not our business. Selling is. So get out there and sell your little friend."

This has been coming for some time. It's been swelling up inside me. I hear myself say, "I'll buy him myself instead."

That makes my pappy blink. I push on. "I need a manservant, I've been saving for months."

I have been, without realizing and it was for just such a moment as this. I've just told the truth.

My father blinks again. "Well, if you can pay the price." My father chuckles. "The little sodomite will just have to find another boy to buy."

It gives me great pleasure to crunch across the ice to Jason Jackson Turner and tell him, that there has been a mistake, that George had already been reserved for sale.

He smiles at me like something amuses him. "Forgive me, dear boy. If I had known I would not have trespassed." I didn't like the greasy way his eyes latched on to mine, or his smile.

Then as airily as if selling a boy, buying a boy were nothing, he went about his inspections. He bought the Griffe we had in from Cape Girardeau.

My father counts the money.

Tonight the wind whistles round my room and it is cold, and there is George, looking uncertain. I've given him some of my old clothes to wear, so he looks respectable, if not yet a manservant.

In my heart, I know what I am. I am a negro lover, one of those crawling, two-faced, cowardly men who love the brown eyes, the soft voices more than they love their own kind. I try to hide it, but my father knows and sees it. What perversion is it to prefer the black man and his whelps to your own species? And to spend a lifetime, hiding this secret in your heart? When the black men are freed, I shall rejoice. But I shall lose them, too.

What will I do with George? I don't want somebody to dress me or polish my boots. I want a friend. "It's cold," I tell him. "We'll have to share a bed."

I'll tell my father some story in the morning.

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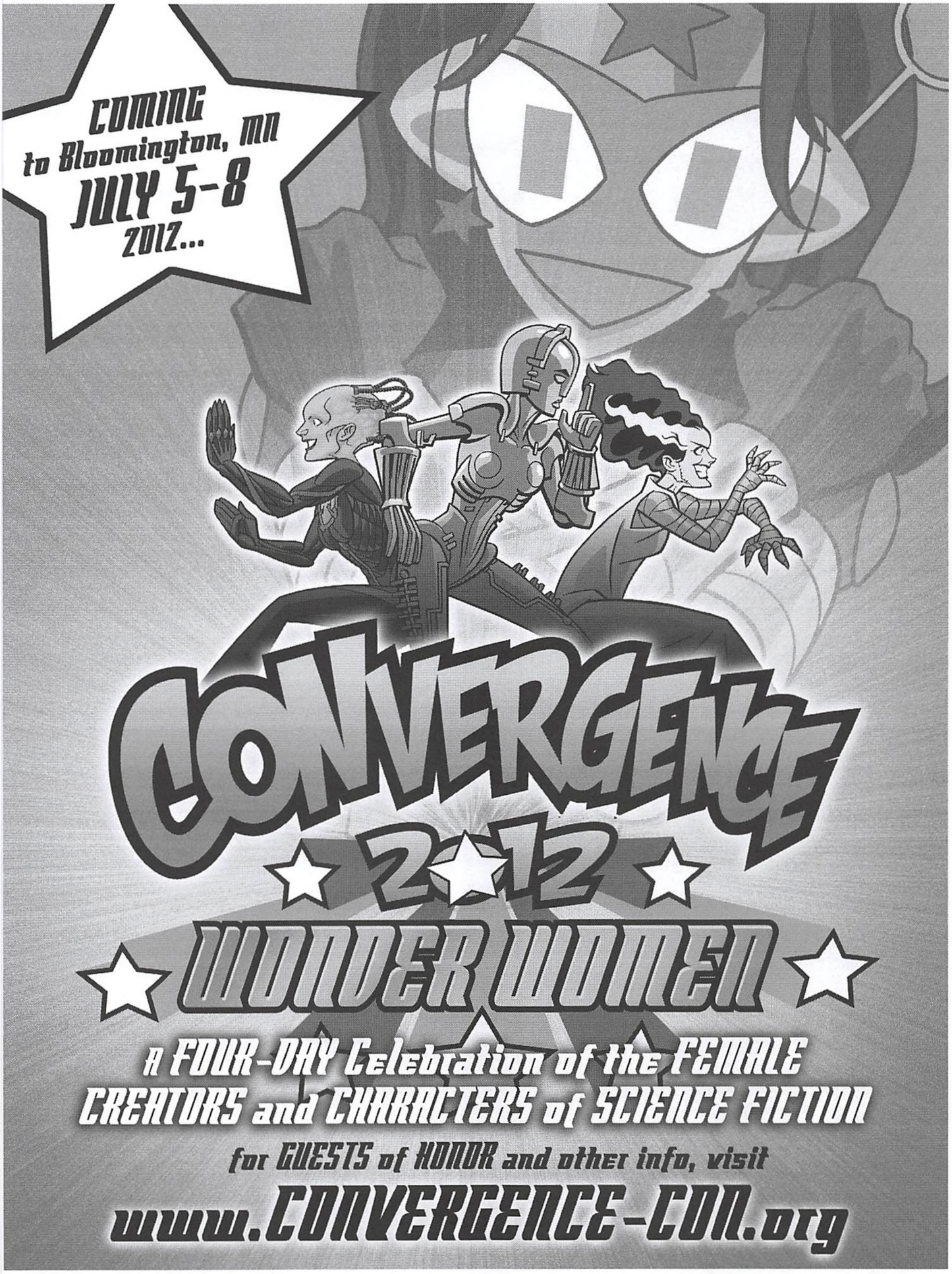
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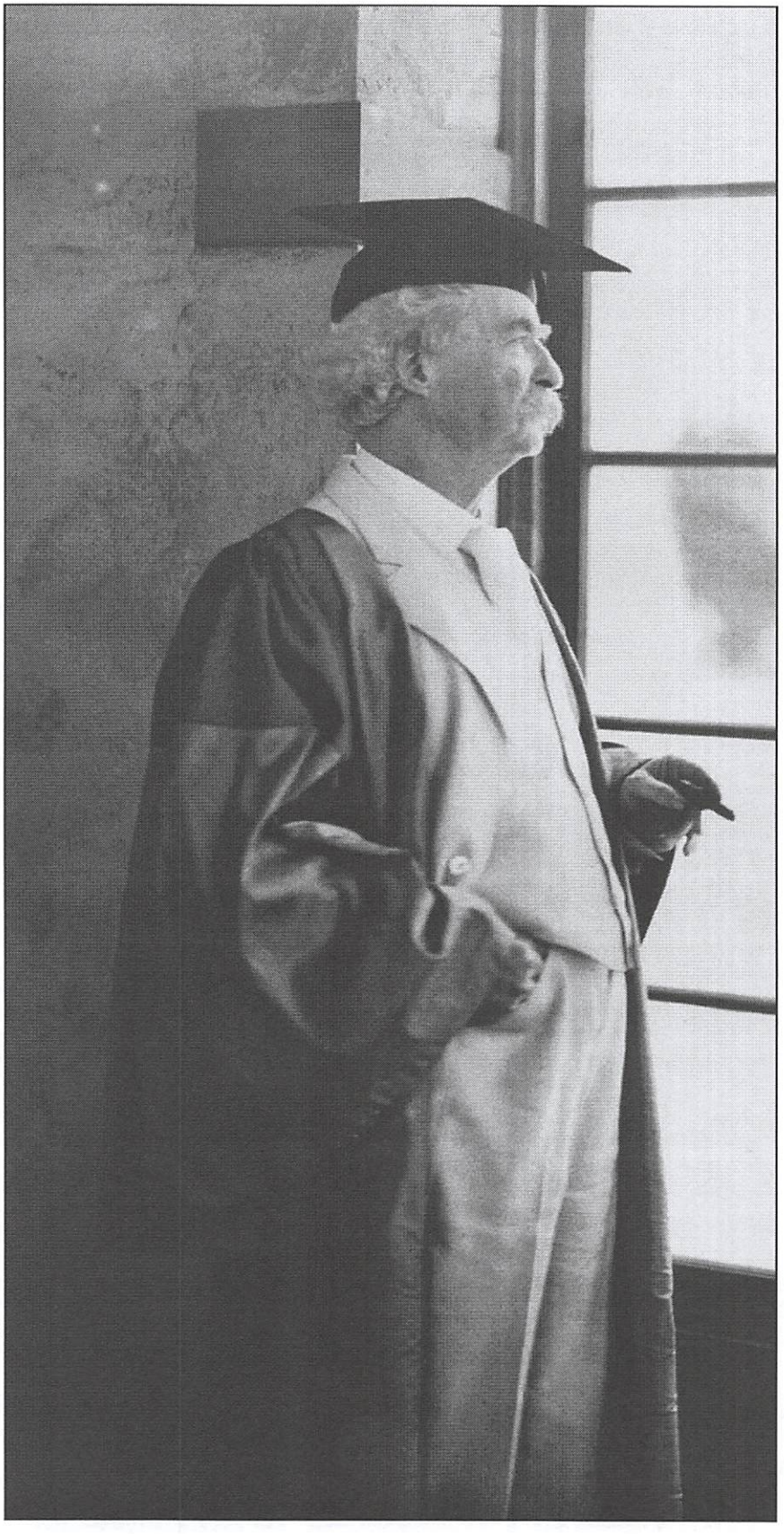


{Photo by Alvin Langdon Coburn, 1908}

MARK TWAIN

MARK TWAIN'S *HUCKLEBERRY FINN*

{John Clute}

There is an underlying premise here. To unpack it fully would take more space than I have here to spend, and far more specialist knowledge of the pitfalls inherent in the particular case I want to talk about briefly than I can pretend to access comfortably. The premise can be stated simply: that great books mean what they say: that great books *meant to do that*: that when we come to the conclusion that a great book is great in spite of itself, in spite of egregious errors committed by the idiot savant who wrote it, we are probably thinking we are smarter than Mark Twain.

Chances are pretty high we are not. As the current unfolding publication of his autobiographical writings from 1906 to 1910 in their original form has begun to demonstrate, Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910) knew a lot more than we did about what he had done with his life in order to live it; knew that in his later years he had made himself as blind as a mask without eyes in order to survive a world he could not tolerate naked; knew that by calling himself Mark Twain—a name that can mean very little if it does not mean He Who Tells Truth About the River—he was coming very close to the edge of dangerous self-revelation.

What I am suggesting, therefore, is that *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Tom Sawyer's Comrade)* (1884 in the UK; 1885 in America) is not only a great book; that (as so many of us think) it may indeed be the genuine Great American Novel; and that Mark Twain knew exactly what he was doing when he wrote it. I don't claim any special gift of reading to make these suggestions, for they are easy enough for *me* to say—easy enough in fact for anyone to say in 2011, now that a radical reconsideration of the nature of Twain's manuscript has been unpacked in the current edition of *Huckleberry Finn* in the Mark Twain Project of the Bancroft Library (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2003). The Project's first attempt in 1988 at establishing a definitive text was rendered almost instantly useless—tragically for its editor, who died too soon to redo his work—when the first half of the original manuscript of the novel was discovered in 1991; the new edition seems definitive.

What the 1991 manuscript gave scholars, over and above rectifying a huge number of minute typographical corrections, was an unshakeable chronology of the composition of the actual text. Before 1991, it had generally been assumed that in 1876 Twain had drafted the novel from its beginnings in Hannibal (St. Petersburg), including Huckleberry's escape from his father (and "sivilization") by faking his death, his rebirth in the river, his meeting up with Jim, their ecstatic (see Leslie Fiedler) crypto-quasi-amorous idyll on the famous raft immersed in the infinitely nutrient Mississippi (skipping the scene on the barge, which only seems extraneous if you think Twain was an idiot) until they oversleep in a heavy caul of fog and drift past the point where the great river is joined by the Ohio, which Jim had needed to follow north and east upstream to freedom. Just then, in the middle of Chapter 16, a steamboat rams the raft, sinking it. It is at this point—when it is assumed Twain was stymied by the realization that his storyline had become impossible, as Jim was now heading straight south down the Mississippi (with Huck) into inevitable slavery—that he stopped work on the book for four years or more. And that the remainder of the novel shows signs of a lost fight against a destiny Twain had—idiot-savant-like—not anticipated, that he had *not understood* when he began that the Mississippi

led into the heart of darkness, and that in his creative desperation he introduced the garish prank-playing Tom Sawyer in the final chapters as an idyll-destroying deus ex machina whose presence revealed the bankruptcy of his vision.

So then. Back to 1991. The manuscript evidence makes it absolutely clear that Twain did not in fact stop writing at the "obvious" caesura point, that he continued work unbroken and untroubled for another two chapters, ending his 1876 stint in the middle of Huck's first of several sojourns downriver in various island-like enclaves exemplary of American life, over-inked almost to the point of allegory: his encounter with the Grangerford-Shepherdson families and their insane feud. Then he stopped for four years, but Twain's practice, which he apparently concealed from most of those around him, was to work on several books simultaneously: stopping had little or nothing to do with the state of the story; it was all about working on *The Prince and the Pauper*, all about recharging batteries.

So then. We are faced with an *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* that *means* to go down river into darkness. (It was always pushing the envelope to suggest that Twain, whose knowledge of the literal geography and the metaphysical pathos of the Mississippi was necessarily intimate, had somehow forgotten where the river ran when he began to tell his tale far upstream, where the sound of the waters was the sound of something like Eden.) If we are to believe the evidence unpacked with such astonishing amplitude in the 2003 edition (the text itself, cleanly and impeccably presented, takes up 362 pages; the apparatus occupies a further 800), then we must try to understand *Huckleberry Finn* as one thing: as the American tragedy.

Mark Twain and Herman Melville do not share very much in common, but I thought it might be interesting to mention *Mardi and a Voyage Thither* (1849) here, because it too is an archipelago novel. Five characters lost in the Pacific encounter, one after another, a number of islands known collectively as Mardi. Each of these islands unveils a truth or falsehood about the nature of life and civilization. Melville's allegorical bent, here unchecked, soon loses most readers in congested vacancies of thunderation; but it remains possible to gain a sense of an accumulation of visions that amounts to something like a glimpse of something like the American Destiny: which may be defined in terms of aspiration and reflux: every trip beyond the furthest frontier—every Fantastic Voyage like *Huckleberry Finn*—ending either in death or return to sivilization.

I've no knowledge of Twain's reading in other Americans, and would be pretty surprised had he encountered *Mardi*; but that is hardly the point. *Mardi* and *Huckleberry Finn* share more than the fact they are both archipelago tales, or that each progresses from prelapsarian waters into post-baptismal, deafening calamity (when writers of genius "overplot," they are probably telling us the shit is about to hit the fan); what they most importantly share, for a reader who tastes the waters of America from abroad, is an exactitude in the limning of dread. *Mardi* and *Huckleberry Finn* are prolepses of American dread.

But of course the one is a very great novel, and the other is anything but. The greatness of Twain's novel lies in the exactitude of its framing of Huck's idyll in terms of the dread to come, in the utter security that any reader whose eyes have been washed in the 2003 text can feel that not a word is out of place, not an episode unintended. The current edition's intensive restorations of Twain's setting instructions—"In this book," as he says at the very start, "a number of dialects are used," and he *means* to use them, and finally we are allowed to see just how exactly he meant what he was saying—also remind one that the often-cut episode on the barge (chapters 12 to 14) is anything but extraneous, that it gives Twain a chance to unfold several versions of the ways America talked, and to add yet another island to the unfolding cascade of exemplary Places Where Americans Do and Dwell upon the darkening river. Liberated from fears that the text is corrupt or in any sense adventitious, the reader is now even freer to grasp the point that Huck himself is meant to be understood as not only supernaturally hard to describe or give an age to, but also as deeply vulnerable as the outside of a naked soul: that he is the naked Sam Clemens, who managed to do what Huck never can: to mask himself in twain: to shutter his inner eye. (In 1906 he awakens to babble of green fields.) Huckleberry Finn is as passive and done-to as the protagonist of James Purdy's successor novel, *Malcolm* (1959), whose archipelago is the city, who writes down the conversations he has had or overheard, who passively embeds in this stenography the selves of urban America who have imprinted themselves upon this angel who cannot understand the messages he bears into engine summer, and as one of his burdens makes clear it is only to be "regretted he had not lived to record all the conversations he had ever had with all whom he had ever met." In all this, Huck prefigures Malcolm: for everything in *Huckleberry Finn* conveys Huck onwards.

Including Tom Sawyer. If the novel means what it tells us, it tells us that when we go far enough downriver in

America we lose track of the rules of time, we discover on being jostled awake that the con-artist lad we left behind in Hannibal has taken over, with his Chamber of Commerce jollities, his squid-ink pranks, his developer's instinct for the fungible. But Tom Sawyer is essential to *Huckleberry Finn*, as essential as the river he will soon pollute beyond humane imagining. He is the Gilded Age. He is progress. He is the edisonade. He is Future History. Mark Twain put him there for that. The great final paragraph of the novel, which I used to think of as a hymn to Huck's escape from prison, seems altogether different now that it is possible to read what Twain wrote without thinking we are outsmarting Twain. It now reads like surrender, belatedness, an attempt to shut the eyes, an epitaph afloat on cemetery scum. "I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest," Huck says, "because aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize me and I can't stand it." And he shuts the book: but we know he will come back, for there is no place for him to arrive, we know about the Indian Nations when snow was on the ground. There is no exit from America. ≈

EVERYTHING I KNEW WAS WRONG

{F. Brett Cox}

When I was a boy, there were but three books I came back to again and again in my village near the banks of the Waccamaw River. (OK, it was 20 miles away, but near enough for rhetorical purposes.) They were: Robert A. Heinlein's classic sf novel *Stranger in a Strange Land*, Harlan Ellison's collection of social commentary in the guise of television criticism, *The Glass Teat*, and Mark Twain's posthumous analysis of the "damned human race," *Letters from the Earth*. Although only Heinlein's novel was straight-up sf, all three books sent the fundamental message of science fiction: things almost certainly are different than they seem and can absolutely be different if we choose to make them so. And in sending that message, all three writers made it quite clear that everything I knew was wrong.

Of the three, it was Heinlein I reread the most, over and over and over again (a fact that surprises people familiar with my own fiction, but as I've explained to both of you, that high-impact narrative of elitist rebellion—yes, this and this and even that are perfectly OK, but only if you're Martian—knocked it out of the park for me). But in retrospect, it was not Heinlein's Jubal Harshaw, but Twain's Satan, who led me most thoroughly away from the received "truths" of my particular time and place. And while the issues of Ellison's moment have faded, and a few decades of life experience have adjusted my responses to Heinlein's vision, I'm not sure I've ever really come up with a response to *Letters from the Earth* other than, "Well, *yeah*..."

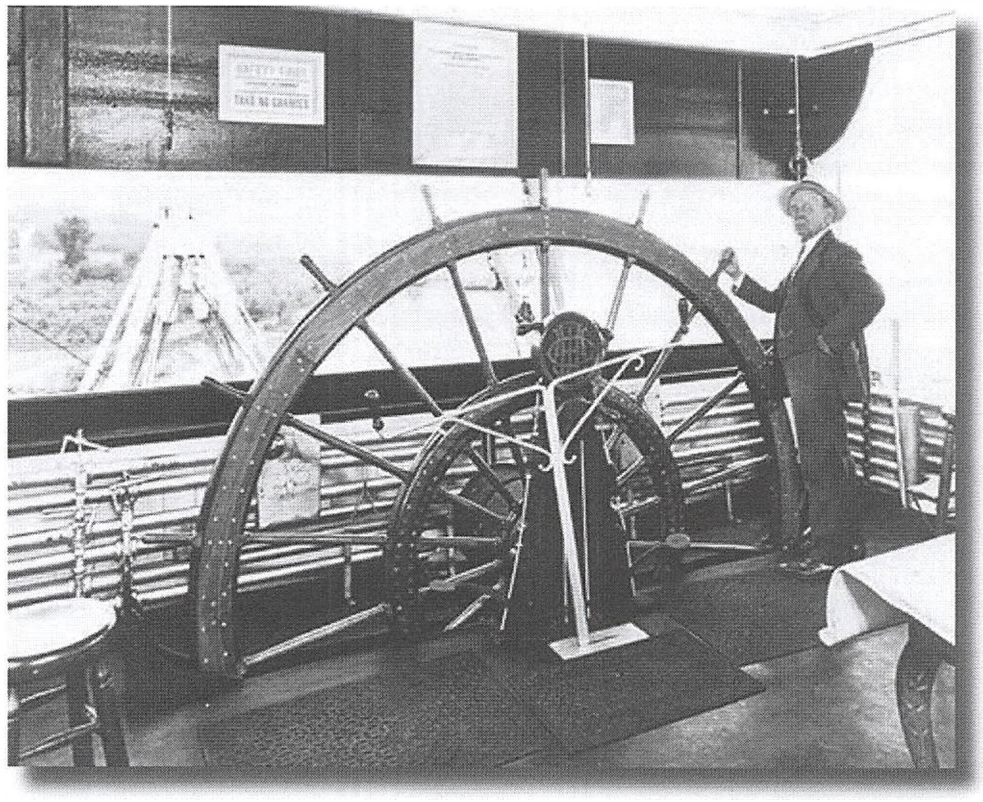
Others can, and I'm sure will, talk about *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and *The Mysterious Stranger* and all the fascinating stories, sketches, and tantalizing hints David Ketterer so ably assembled in *The Science Fiction of Mark Twain*, an achievement for which we cannot thank him enough. But I came to all that much later. If we're honoring Mark Twain at an sf convention—and high time we did—in my head it is for all of the above, but in my heart it is for *Letters from the Earth*. Let's hope that Twain's diagnoses will always be accessible to the young person in the village who needs so desperately to know that there is something different beyond the village at the end of the river, something he or she has never thought of before.

≈

A RIVER PILOT WE CAN STILL FOLLOW

{Samuel R. Delany}

As much as any American writer, Mark Twain (1835-1910) is responsible for the general critical assertion that none of note got through his or her career without trying her or his hand at something resembling science fiction, if not science fiction and fantasy—if you want to include ghost tales as fantasy. In Twain's case it was his level-headed scientific enthusiast, the son of a Hartford blacksmith, whom Twain befriends on an English tour of Warwick Castle who takes Twain and us into science fiction. The use this gentleman has apparently made—sometime in the distant sixth or seventh century—of his knowledge of a solar eclipse to terrify the locals and get himself out of his latest scrape is a rousing one and roundly satisfying in the novel named for him, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889). Twain's mystic novella *The Mysterious Stranger* plunges us right into a fantasy, as does his wonderfully touching "Diary of Adam and Eve." Twain's repeated attempts to find a language both broadly comfortable and richly expressive between the literary and the demotic loom like the sky itself over anything we might call American literature. If we agree with Hemingway's claim that modern American literature begins in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885)—and I do—then either by direct influence or by direct rebellion, all of us here today are his children. The attitudes we associate with Heinlein or Sturgeon, however diametric, and even Asimov's direct concerns with science, can be read as outgrowths of Twain's own. His ubiquitous and principled skepticism about all social givens, especially if they caused pain, is still exemplary. (Twain paid a black student's tuition through Yale Law School when that university was as staunchly segregated as any in our history, and counted Frederick Douglass among his friends.) It is warming to see him honored around us.



{Photo of the Horatio G. Wright from the Dave Thomson collection}

HE DIDN'T WANT TO BE A WRITER

{Bradley Denton}

He didn't want to be a writer.

Not at first. No, as a boy and as a young man, what he wanted—more than anything on earth—was to be a steamboat pilot.

"Steamboat pilot." It sounds so quaint in the year 2011. But consider what those words must have meant to a daydreaming kid growing up in Hannibal, Missouri in the mid-nineteenth century. The Mississippi was a broad, shining path that stretched to infinity both northward and southward. And the great steamboats that stopped at Hannibal brought magnificent goods and even more magnificent people from still more magnificent places. From anywhere. From everywhere.

And even more magnificent: Those great steamboats could *take* you anywhere and everywhere, too. If you could afford it.

Or if you were a pilot.

It must have been like growing up next to Cape Canaveral in the late 1960s and early 1970s, watching the Saturn rockets blasting off... and wishing you could be going to the Moon, too.

That kind of intense longing can do one of two things to a kid. It can make him bitter and angry. Or it can make him fierce and determined.

Young Sam Clemens chose the second option. And against all odds—because there were *hundreds* of other kids who wanted that job—he actually did it. He gutted it out, jumped through all the hoops, learned all of the endless rules and tricks, and memorized every snag and sandbar up and down the great length of the greatest river in the nation. He scrapped and clawed and won his dream job. He freaking *did* it.

No, Sam Clemens didn't become a writer.

Sam Clemens became one of the heroes of the Mississippi. And even the death of his younger brother Henry in a boiler explosion couldn't deter him. Because no matter the pain or the guilt, he knew what every pilot knew, and still knows: There is no glory without danger.

And that was who Sam Clemens was.

He was a *steamboat pilot.*

Then:

The nation split in two. State fought state, and brother fought brother.

And the Union blockaded the Mississippi River.

Just like that, Sam's dream was over. The only job he had ever wanted was yanked away, and there was nothing to be done about it.

"Heartsick" probably doesn't even begin to describe how he felt. It must have been like finally earning that ticket to the Moon, and then having it torn up before your eyes.

So for a short time, at least, Sam's fierce determination must have warped into bitter anger. Years later, in fact, he wrote that he had joined a group of Confederate recruits, the "Marion Rangers," in eastern Missouri. His intent, apparently, was to strike back at the faceless, unfair powers who had snatched away what he had struggled so desperately to secure.

But his stint as a Confederate soldier didn't last long. Two weeks, more or less. After all, Sam might have been bitter, and he might have been angry... but he didn't believe in the cause, and he didn't have it in him to kill anyone.

So Sam deserted the Marion Rangers. And instead of fighting in the Civil War, he went to Nevada with his older brother Orion, who was a political appointee working for the same government that had shut down the river. Talk about irony.

And talk about Nevada. Talk about a place that was about as alien to life on the Mississippi as you could get.

Yet it was in Nevada, not in the place he loved most, that Sam Clemens began to sculpt the shape of another career, of another life. Of another man. Of the character who would become the most iconic figure in American literature.

It was in Nevada, a world away from the river, that the riverman's cry for two fathoms, for safe water, began to mean something far more.

Sam Clemens was a *steamboat pilot.*

But *Mark Twain* was a writer.

And of all the characters he created—Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn, the Shepherdsons and Grangerfords,

Pudd'nhead Wilson, Hank Morgan, Satan, all of them—the most astonishing and unlikely was the character he created to write them.

Sam Clemens had been robbed of all the places he would go, all the people he'd meet, all the things he'd see. But Mark Twain went to all of those places and a thousand more, both on the page and in life. He met more people and saw more amazing things than Sam would have seen in a dozen lifetimes.

Sam had the river stolen from him. So Mark just made his own damn river.

And even as he went to all those places and saw all those things...

Like every great steamboat pilot, Mark Twain never failed to come back and deliver the goods to those of us waiting on the riverbank. He did it over and over again. Right on schedule.

To our amazement, he's doing it still.

But given who he was—who he *made* himself to be—we really shouldn't be surprised.

At the end of my sophomore year in high school, one of my English teachers, Ms. Daisy Patterson, wrote a note on my final paper of the semester:

Come see me before you leave for the summer. I want to give you a book every student should read.

Huh, I thought. That's weird. If we should all read it, why didn't we just read it this semester?

But I stopped by her room before I left. And she gave me a paperback copy of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.*

I had read *Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* a few years earlier, so I figured I knew Twain. But after reading *Connecticut Yankee* that summer, I realized I hadn't known Twain at all.

Then, when I re-read *Huck Finn*, all of the subtext, all of the irony, and all of the dark social satire just about jumped out and slapped me.

How come I hadn't seen that stuff the first time around?

Well, part of the reason was that I was just too young to "get it" the first time. But part of it was also because I hadn't read *Connecticut Yankee* yet.

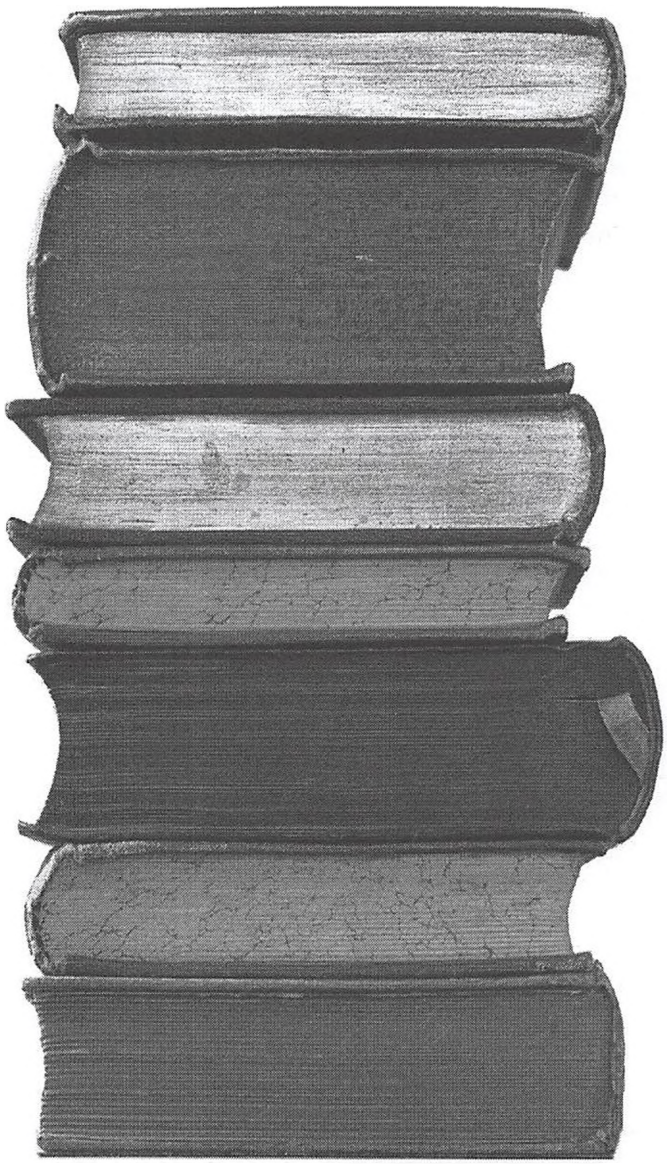
Ms. Patterson is gone now. But I'm going to take this opportunity to thank her anyway:

Ms. Patterson, you taught literature and writing like it *mattered*, even though you were teaching it to a pack of 15-year-old boneheads who mostly didn't care.

And when you gave me a book for summer reading, you didn't just give me *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.*

You gave me Mark Twain.

Thank you.



THAT STARTLING, BLUE MIDDLE: READING MARK TWAIN

{John Langan}

I.

I was supposed to read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in high school, for my sophomore year Honors English class. I can still see the edition of the novel I had, a floppy trade paperback with a salmon-colored cover. I think I started the book, but my fifteen-year-old self didn't find it particularly compelling, and anyway, I had learned from the previous reading assignment, *The Crucible*, that the text was less important than the study sheet the teacher passed out along with it, whose interpretations would be the principal subject of our test on the reading. I paid attention to the study sheet, and did reasonably well on the exam. I hung onto that edition of *Huckleberry Finn*, but didn't open it again.

II.

If I reflect on the matter, I find Mark Twain's works scattered across my childhood. In sixth grade, the young nun who was our homeroom teacher read my class *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* over the course of a couple of weeks. While I enjoyed being read to probably more than I would have expected, I don't remember much about the material of Sr. Anne's reading, except for the section in the cave, late in the novel, when Tom and Becky are in fear for their lives. To be honest, the character of Tom Sawyer didn't appeal to the eleven-year-old me, much. With his famous fence-painting scam, he was too brash and self-confident for the bookish and insecure me to identify with. (That said, why do I suspect I tried my own version of his con on my younger brother and sisters?)

I had similarly mixed feelings towards the hero of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, which I encountered in classic comic, cartoon, and film adaptations, and the original of which I may even have read, too. The prospect of being transported back to the time of King Arthur never failed to appeal to me; though I was more ambivalent about what happened to Twain's Connecticut Yankee once he had arrived in the distant past. It was hard to argue with some of the modern innovations he introduced to Camelot—interior plumbing is always a good thing—but I was less happy with the sidelining of Merlin and various of Arthur's knights. I suppose you might say I read and watched those versions of the narrative less for the Connecticut Yankee and more for King Arthur's court. (Now, I wonder about the book as a kind of coded narrative about colonialism.)

I was happier with *The Prince and the Pauper*, which also came my way via a variety of media, including a Disney cartoon. Strangely, though, I don't recall a lot about it, except for a visit Tom Canty, the book's prince-impersonating pauper, makes to the dying Henry VIII, a massive bulk heaped on a bed. The scene struck me as both deeply frightening and deeply sad.

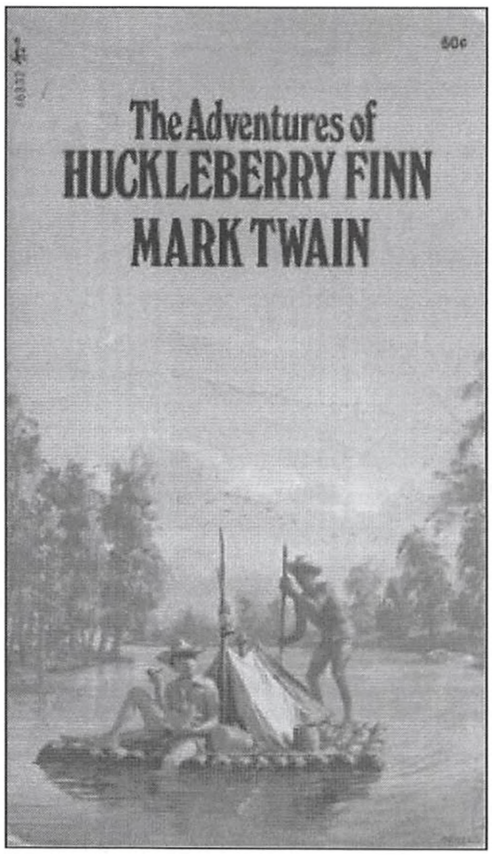
To the best of my memory, I neither noticed the underlying similarities among Twain's narratives (young men who found themselves unexpectedly thrust into bigger worlds in which they must play bigger roles), nor their surface differences (Gilded-Age Missouri, Arthurian England, Renaissance England). Only now does it occur to me that Twain's stories were, in fact, a greater part of my youth than I had realized.

III.

The edition of *Huckleberry Finn* I finally read was a paperback published by Bantam. I was a sophomore in college. The cover illustration was the standard boy and man on a raft on the Mississippi, executed in a not-ter-

ribly-exciting style. What was remarkable was the shade of blue of the river, a color which extended to the book's spine and back cover. Somewhere between azure and deep sky blue, it was bright, rich. I'm more susceptible to a good book cover than I probably should be; this one worked on me powerfully.

For the first few chapters, though, it was slow going. Yes, I got what Twain was doing with Huck's voice, and the whole meta-narrative conceit of Huck commenting on the job Twain had done with *Tom Sawyer*, but that was hardly new to me. The book seemed like *Tom Sawyer* redux, more boys' adventures. Very nice, but hardly the wellspring of American literature both Hemingway and Faulkner had claimed it to be. Even when Jim showed up and he and Huck set out along the Mississippi, the narrative felt as if it were still trying to find itself.



I can't recall at what exact point it did so for me, but on that trip down the river, the novel opened up. The comparison can't be denied: like the Mississippi itself, the book broadened, became more expansive. First the feud between the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons, Twain's version of *Romeo and Juliet*, whose lovers' happy escape did not forestall further family tragedy, then the appearance of those con men nonpareil, the Duke and the Dauphin, then the chilling narrative of the proud Sherburn and his ruthless enforcing of his own sense of honor, transformed the narrative into something rich and compelling. Twain had brought Shakespeare into the novel explicitly and hilariously with the Duke and Dauphin's attempted theatrical performance, and it was hard not to be reminded of the tremendous variety and vitality you find in Shakespeare's plays. Yes, the last few chapters, where the novel draws in and tries to return to its original, more constrained form, were a letdown, but they could not erase that startling, blue middle.

IV.

At about the same time I was discovering *Huckleberry Finn*, I picked up an edition of Twain's *Collected Stories*. I did not read it cover to cover; I was mostly interested in stories like "Extract from Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven" and "Extract from Adam's Diary," in which Twain took what might have been the seeds of short, humorous sketches—What would a contemporary version of paradise look like? What would the Adam of the Book of Genesis have written in his diary?—and developed them at length, into vivid excursions. There was no denying the satiric edge of both stories. Twain's heaven was a crowded place in which each individual had the chance to realize his or her true gifts, with the result that the greatest general, say, was not Grant or Washington, but a farmer whose bad leg had kept his brilliant tactical mind from ever being allowed to exercise itself upon the battlefield. His Adam was a kind of amateur naturalist who was constantly amazed and confounded first by his wife, Eve, and then their child, Cain, whom he mistakes for a number of animals before realizing his humanity. Yet that edge had behind it a wildness of imagination. On his way to heaven, Captain Stormfield witnesses a flaming comet crammed with the damned, a mobile chunk of hell, condemned to roam the universe. Wandering Eden, Adam is constantly amazed at the sheer strangeness of creation.

V.

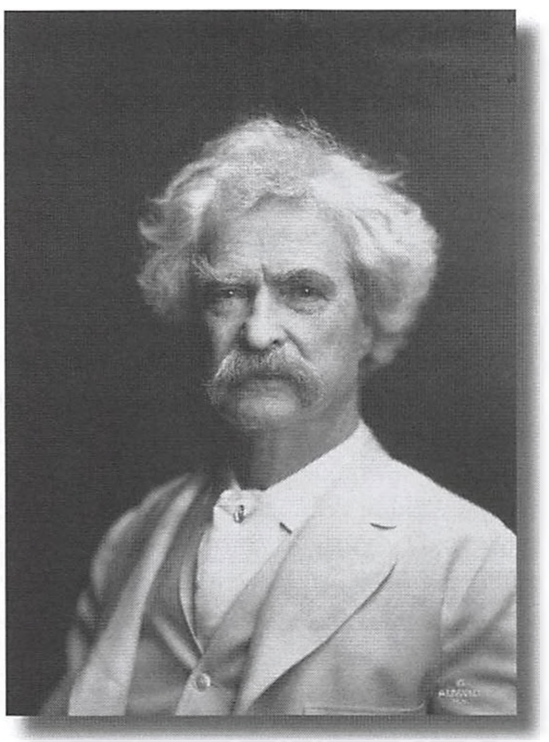
It's been a while since I read any Mark Twain. This is not so much his fault as it is mine; there are books to read for classes I'm teaching, for articles I'm writing, for introductions or blurbs I've agreed to provide. It's nice to be reminded, though, just how large Twain's novels loom in my life—larger, to be frank, than I'd realized when I agreed to write this. It's funny: about twenty years ago, I kicked around the idea of writing a contemporary *Inferno*, updating Dante. I had it in mind to make Twain my Virgil. I shared my plans with a professor friend of mine, one of those people who's read everything, likely in the original language, and he was most enthusiastic about the choice of Twain as guide. At the time, I didn't exactly understand why he was so struck by the comparison of Twain and Virgil; now, I think I have a better idea.

These past few days, I've been wondering about the moment when I'll introduce my younger son to Mark Twain, the text I'll choose. Maybe *Tom Sawyer*; maybe *The Prince and the Pauper*. I wonder what he'll take away from our reading. I wonder what I will.

MARK TWAIN, AN APPRECIATION

{M. Rickert}

My father decided to read the Old Testament to us, right after dinner, as we sat around the table, the dishes still not done. Imagine seven children, a tired mother eyeing all those dishes, and the Old Testament. My aunt intervened and suggested he read Mark Twain instead. She was probably the only one who could have altered my father's plan, as she came to it with the authority of being both an English teacher, and a nun. So it came to be that we veered from the Bible to *The Prince and the Pauper*. Thus began my education in Mark Twain, a writer of contrast, who was introduced to me with one of the great novels of contrast, in the context of its contrast to the Bible. My father was gifted with a powerful reading voice, a talent he was quite proud of—perhaps that was his reason for wanting to share it with us; all his physical limitations had not touched this singular talent. So he began reading this story of a pauper and a prince so similar in appearance that they are able to switch lives for a while, an issue I found incredible, but not impossible to believe. After all, I was raised on miracles, the possibility of them, if not the actuality. There is more to be said about Mark Twain, of course, than can be said in such limited space, but I will always be grateful to him for introducing me to this idea of contrast. What would my life be like, I wondered, if I had been born into the "rich" family in town (oddly, the plumber's) instead of my own, where we were offered the bone of my father's steak as some kind of after-dinner treat? Childhood is a long awakening into life. Mark Twain awoke me into mine. Suddenly it seemed possible that I could be defined by something beyond my own family, my father's illness, and those miracles that never arrived. I was young, too young to have the words for all of this, but I still remember sitting at that big kitchen table, crowded with dishes, listening to my father, and wondering...what if?



{Photo by A. F. Bradley, NY, 1907}

MARK TWAIN'S *DIARIES OF ADAM AND EVE*: AN APPRECIATION

{Eric Schaller}

I owe my discovery of the *Diaries*, indirectly, to Ursula K. Le Guin. In her collection of essays, *The Wave in the Mind*, she describes the joy she found in reading the *Diaries* as a girl and the, perhaps surprising, freshness she still found in their rereading fifty years later. I never had the thrill of unearthing this treasure as a child but, because of Le Guin's recommendation, it did not remain buried to me forever. I do not use the term "treasure" lightly here. These twin Diaries, one from Adam and one from Eve, originally published separately but now usually conjoined, are humor polished to gem-like perfection. I love them so much that I even take a strange patriotic pride in the fact that Twain wrote *Eve's Diary* while living in my home state of New Hampshire.

Adam, by the evidence of his words, is the quintessential couch-potato, in a time before there were couches or television, disheartened when Sunday is made the day of rest because he already had six days of rest before this sad turn of events. Much of the humor in his diaries comes from his dunderheaded misreading of the world about him and his desire to avoid change, something very difficult to accomplish once Eve is in the picture. The first entry in his diary is about the arrival of Eve and already one gains a sense of how she is going to stir things up:

The new creature with the long hair is a good deal in the way. It is always hanging around and following me about. I don't like this; I am not used to company. I wish it would stay with the other animals... Cloudy to-day, wind in the east; think we should have rain... We? Where did I get that word?... I remember now—the new creature uses it.

Eve is ever curious, the antithesis of Adam. She is the namer of places and animals ("I have taken all the work of naming things off his hands, and this has been a great relief to him, for he has no gift in that line"), the experimenter, the discover of fire, someone who would make a pet out of a brontosaurus and consider milking it so as to start a dairy.

Part of the joy in reading the two diaries is how well Twain gives each character a distinctive and personable voice and, when it comes to voice, there are few who can match Twain. Likewise humor. But although humorous, often knee-slappingly so, there is also a great deal of depth, of tenderness, a knowing awareness of relationships between men and women, both from a personal but also from a worldly standpoint. And the last lines, where Adam expresses his love for Eve at her grave, are perhaps the most heart-rendingly romantic words that I have ever read. I won't tell you what they are because I want you to go out and buy this book. All I will say is that I tear up every time I think of them, as I am doing now.

Which edition should you buy? I recommend *The Complete Diaries of Adam and Eve*, published by Coyote Canyon Press. This edition contains all the original illustrations, approximately one hundred in all, found on each left-hand page. Although the illustrations in *Adam's Diary* are nothing much, those by Lester Ralph in *Eve's Diary* are masterful. A hundred years ago, they were pornographic by American standards (a naked Eve, oh my!), now they are merely beautiful, stunningly so, and a suitable accompaniment to Twain's words. Don't buy just one copy of the *Diaries*, buy a dozen. Then give your extra copies away as gifts to your favorite couples to read aloud in bed. Along with an appropriate bottle of wine, of course, such as Eve chardonnay, The Velvet Devil merlot, or Cardinal Zin zinfandel.

A VISIT FROM HIS CONFIDANT

{Gene Wolfe}

I woke with a start and at first saw only that the fire was dying. Long minutes passed before I realized that the room in which I found myself—high ceilinged and decidedly odd—was not that in which I had gone to bed.

Indeed, it appeared that I had not gone to bed at all, for I was seated in a comfortable Russian leather chair and wore a smoking jacket over my pajamas. That in itself would have been sufficiently strange, as I do not smoke; but the room was stranger still, a long room and a wide one with a large window at one end and a wall of glass at right angles to it. There was a fireplace, as I have indicated; there are none in my home. Just as in my own home, there were a great many bookcases of various designs; but while mine are stuffed to bursting, these were more than half empty. In fact, some shelves were entirely empty.

"Howdy."

The voice was to my left. I turned my head.

"Or else hello. Might be you'd cotton more to that 'un."

At first I thought my visitor a large brown caterpillar.

"I calc'late you'd like me to state my name an' the nature of my business, if any."

Perhaps I nodded.

"As to a Christian name, I reckon I ain't got none, as I was not yet thought of when ol' Mark was baptized. The nature of my business won't take but a moment, do you see. I'm... well... I guess I was hopin' you, you bein' the man you are, might recognize me from the daguerreotypes an' all."

Until I heard those words I had not, but hearing them the answer came in a rush. "You are Mark Twain's mustache!" I am afraid I blurted it.

"Well, that's gratifyin', I got to say. It satisfies a mustache to be known so. I did not think it would, but by Jupiter it does! I wouldn't have come to see you if you had not a fair mustache of your own, but knowin' of it, you see, I knew straight off that you would be the kind I like. Not a good man. I wouldn't say that. Nor not a brave one neither. But a good, steady, reliable sort of man that can be counted on to act no worse 'n most men, though I'll allow that's bad enough. You ain't goin' to that Boston readin' soireé this year, I take it?

"To Readercon? No. Or at least I don't think so. My wife—"

"We don't speak of 'em here. 'No' is good enough for us, an' what's more 'n good enough is over much. You're not goin', an' that's settled. Or else you *are*, an' that's better. Mark's goin', too. You tell 'em Mark's a reader. A writer is what they all say, an'—"

"Mark Twain? A great writer!"

"See now? There you go, jest like all the rest. What you got to tell 'em was he was a reader, an' he done a sight more readin' than he ever done writin'. You know 'bout that book 'bout Joan?"

"*Joan of Arc*? I certainly do. He considered it his finest work."

"I don't mean Mark's, I intend that 'un he found the manuscript of when he wasn't half growed. He read it. Read it? Why he lived an' breathed it for more 'n a year. He lost it, too, the way boys always lose things, an' that was when he settled on writin' one of his own someday, an' a better 'un than that. Think he didn't read a-fore he done it? I'm here to testify that every last thing he could lay hands on, an' it was to see 'em all to once. Why, one man *couldn't* see 'em all to once. It'd take three or it might be four. 'Twarn't a book here an' a book there, you know. It was piles an' stacks of 'em, some so high a man couldn't see across 'em. Books on the billiard table an' stacked in the corners an' out in the hall."

I said, "I know he must have read Cooper extensively in order to write 'Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses.'"

"He read them books an' he cared about 'em," the mustache declared. "He spoke of 'em often, an' I heard every word of it that come from his lips, though 'twould be beneath me to repeat 'em. Pass me the good book an' I'll testify."

"That won't be necessary," I said. "I believe you."

"I reckon you ain't even heard of it, but he wrote takin' the side of Harriet Shelley. Know who she was?"

"I do, but only because I've read 'In Defense of Harriet Shelley.' She was the first wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley, and was cast aside by him though she had borne his child. Perhaps you feel, as I do, that Mark ought to have taken Shelley's beliefs concerning marriage into account. He judges him very harshly—or so it seems to me."

"Why he *did* take 'em into account, an' he rejected 'em, too, as reason an' justice demanded. Ever had a thing stolen?"

"Yes, a bicycle when I was a boy."

"You had it locked up, I reckon? Put it in the livin' room of your folks' house, did you?"

I shook my head.

"Locked in the barn, I guess?"

"No, I didn't even have a bicycle lock on it."

"There's folks," the mustache's tone was musing, "who believe that when a thing ain't locked up tight, nor yet bein' watched good by him that's got it, it's public property. Meanin' theirs. You took that into account, did you, when they stole it?"

I admitted I had not.

"Only now you would. Ain't that all correct? If somebody was to steal your car, you'd say to yourself I got to consider that he don't feel the same way about hot wirin' an' all that as most folks. Or not unless it's his that's bein' hot wired?"

I could only say I got his point.

"Harriet was sixteen when Shelley wed her. You know that, I reckon, since you've read Mark's piece. Probably you figure they had lessons on the stretchable an' bendable nature of morality in that girl's school she was goin' to. It might come between the spellin' an' the 'rithmetic, I reckon. Shelley sort of boned her up on it when he proposed so she'd of knew jest where she stood. Why, *I* can see that, an' I guess you'd see it clearer than me."

I confessed that I could not.

"That bein' the case, ain't you bein' a mite hard on Mark?"

"He himself is very hard on Shelley," I ventured.

"Says he was good an' generous an' considerate to the bone an' what he did to Harriet was the only bad thing he ever done. Says he was a great poet, too. That's bein' hard on a man, I reckon."

"Mark Twain was skilled in argument, or so I've read. I'm beginning to believe he must have gotten that skill from you."

"Not me!" Mark Twain's mustache exclaimed. "No, them arguments was beneath me, don't you see? Jest like the cigars. The kisses, likewise. You got a wife, I know. You was about to talk about her when I hobbled you. You ever lose a daughter?"

"I have not, thank God!"

"Mark had, an' he lost his wife. He's bitter, which is a bad thing, I reckon, but there's times when a man can't help it. Bitter, but it made him look kindly on the women folk, such as Harriet an' Joan. There's bitter men that's taken worse than that. I've met a few. You ain't, I reckon?"

"I have," I admitted. "More than a few, I'm afraid. I will certainly tell the fans at Readercon that Mark Twain was a wise man and a learned man. Better than both, he was a man who thought. Men who think go wrong at times. Men who don't, never go wrong because they don't go at all."

"Mark'd say they go wrong anyways. It's goin' right that's a stretch for 'em."

I raised my hands in surrender.

"You tell 'em he never saw the inside of no high school, only he'd had a good grammar school education, an' the grammar schools was better then."

"They don't call them grammar schools now," I remarked. "They're called elementary schools, since they teach no grammar."

"You tell 'em Mark learned arithmetic an' spellin' an' grammar. Besides 'em, geography an' jest enough history to keep out of trouble on the fourth of July. Only he got apprenticed to a printer. That made him read, an' he never stopped. You tell 'em that comes from somebody that was moved every time he smiled an' ought to know."

"I will," I said. "You and Mark can count on me."

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{Compiled by Ellen Brody and Richard Duffy}

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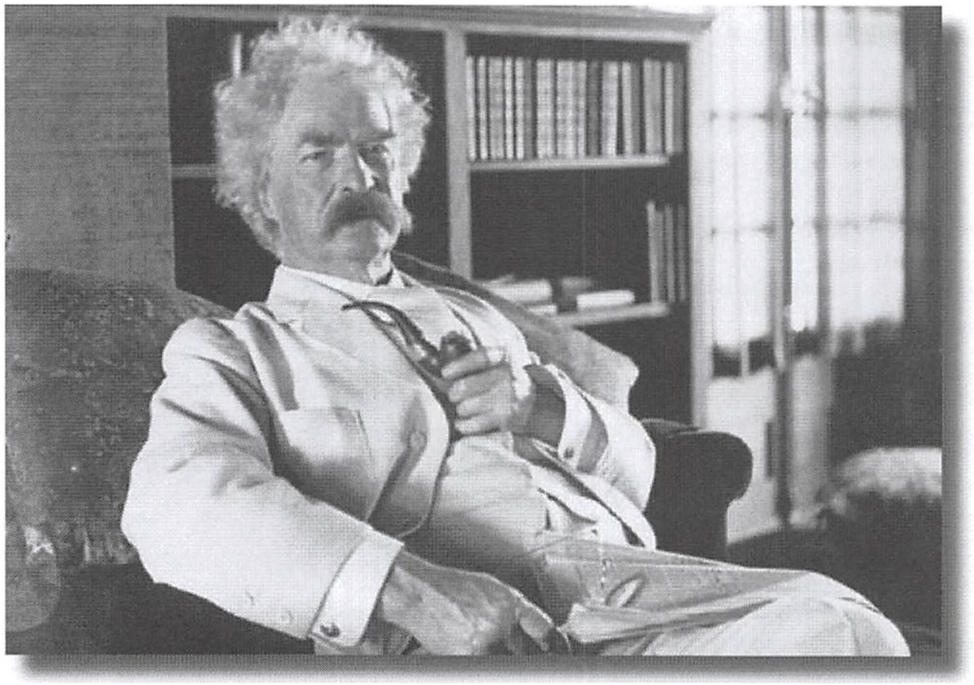
"A Fable"
"The Mysterious Stranger"

OTHER:

Many other works including essays, travelogues, speeches, letters, journals, and autobiographical writing exist in numerous volumes. Twain bibliography is itself a large field of scholarship, as are criticism and commentary of all kinds.

Notable sources include the University of California Press's authoritative editions of *Mark Twain's Letters*, *Mark Twain's Notebooks & Journals*, and the in-progress *Autobiography of Mark Twain* (ed. Harriet Elinor Smith)—Vol. 1 published 2010; Vols. 2 and 3 forthcoming.



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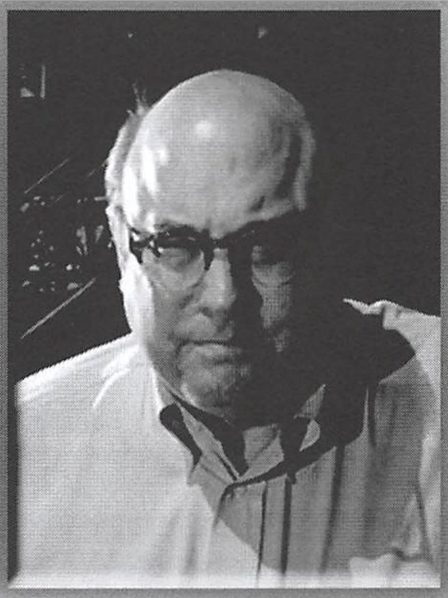

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{Photo from dust jacket of *The Science Fiction of Mark Clifton*,
ed. by Barry N. Malzberg and Martin H. Greenberg, pub. by Southern Illinois University Press}

MARK CLIFTON

HE'D RATHER BE RIGHT; THEY WANTED HIM WRONG

{Barry N. Malzberg}

Well, here is Mark Clifton, for the five minutes of general attention he is guaranteed every odd decade. Clifton (1906-1963) had a brief, blazing (by the standards of our little genre) career 1952-1961, fell into despair and silence, died in California so quietly that his best friends in science fiction didn't know he was dead for at least a year. Clifton, a paradigmatic 1950s figure in so many ways (enter with enthusiasm, perform with diminishing glee, limp offstage to the sound of an apathetic, departing audience), receives our attention as last year's winner of the Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award, an award conceived to celebrate anonymity and failure. ("Not forgotten enough? Well, wait until next year." "Fail again. Fail better.") A substantial Cordwainer Smith collection bore the title *Rediscovery* and thus gave the award a name. It has found recent station for annual presentation at Readercon and Mark now struts and frets (but only by proxy) his five minutes on the stage.

Clifton's novel *The Forever Machine* in collaboration with Frank Riley won the second Hugo Award in 1955 for best novel (*The Demolished Man* was the first) and is generally regarded as the least deserving and most obscure of all the winners in that category. It is a novel which celebrates the augmentation of human intelligence and the deploying of human destiny by Bossy, a Boss Computer, and Clifton's cast struggle, not always cooperatively, toward those higher horizons. There's more than a whisk of Dianetics to Bossy, the Boss Computer and Campbell's obsessive psionics are the wheel which makes the engine go. The version in *Astounding*, running in four parts beginning in 8/54, was titled *They'd Rather Be Right*; that's a better title. (That 8/54 issue also contained Godwin's "The Cold Equations" which was concerned with the utter hopelessness of human destiny faced by the implacably astronomic laws of physics; Campbell contained multitudes thematically even if his indifference to style seemed in the 1950s to spread across most of his landscape.)

Clifton, when he won the Hugo, was *Astounding*'s dominant figure; his first story "What Have I Done?" appeared in early 1952 and was succeeded by about a dozen others through the next years which crowded thematically the central issues of the novel although they did so with a kind of pessimism, even despair, against which the longer work reacted. That first story, narrated by a humanoid alien invader, portrayed humanity as inalterably vile, and his body of work seemed to make poles of his first novel's optimism and the despair of that first story. "Clerical Error," a long novelette in *Astounding*'s 2/56 issue, was an attempt to fuse those poles—a physical scientist is driven mad by the cruelty of his work, a sympathetic psychiatrist tries to drag this Oppenheimer figure, now institutionalized, away from the brink. Clifton himself lost his poise on the brink and eventually any pretense to optimism; he wrote (without a collaborator) two more perfunctory novels and then retreated to silence. In *When They Came From Space* the narrator remembers "an obscure science fiction writer" of some time past. "I wonder what happened to him," he mutters.

This writer's journey could be called a microcosm of science fiction's journey through the 1950s and past the crash of late decade which plunged the category into economic despair and caused most of its best writers to flee. Clifton's correspon-

dence to Judith Merril, which I've seen, shows very little hope, no tenacity and a good deal of self-revulsion. Perhaps this was a fitting outcome for an industrial psychologist most of whose time was delegated to talking workers out of striking. Perhaps it was some kind of internal contradiction which led to the whopping, nearly fatal heart attack which forced Clifton into retirement in 1951 and turned him into a conscience-stricken science fiction writer. Perhaps. It would be pretty or at least cheaply ironic to think so—and to then contemplate how much further pain Clifton's seeming escape-career gave him—but we can leave that to the historians.

An interesting, highly intelligent, tormented soul serving masters for whom he probably had contempt. Bore a ghostly resemblance (in the 1955 World Convention photos I have seen) to my late Uncle Herbert the real estate mogul, another divided and tortuous soul. His cover story in the 3/55 *Astounding*, "Sense From Thought Divide," the Swami on the levitating carpet sweeping all before him, entranced me in the month it went on sale and undid the first of what were subsequent renunciations of science fiction: It had great poise and humor, I loved it. The protagonist was an industrial psychologist, Ralph Kennedy, who liked himself and his work. Surely an idealized figure.

It's hard to realize Clifton has been dead for almost fifty years. "Thanks to the Web," my friend John Lutz said to me years ago, "All of us, however obscure, will live forever." Go get 'em, Mark.

MARK CLIFTON

{Thomas J. Remington}

Excerpted from: Thomas J. Remington, "SF: Mapping the Territory," *The North American Review*, Vol. 266, No. 2, June 1981, pp. 58–61.

If the *Astounding* facsimile [*cited previously in this multi-book review*] represents, in a sense, the origins of modern SF, *The Science Fiction of Mark Clifton* marks a progress. Clifton was a significant author in the genre in the 1950s. He won the Hugo Award, the major honor bestowed by SF fandom, in 1955, and—according to his erudite editor, Barry Malzberg—"changed the field irrevocably, proving to be one of the twelve most influential writers of science fiction during its fifty-four-year commercial publishing history." One may quibble with the precision of Malzberg's evaluation, but the fact is that he knows the SF field about as well as anyone, and he's not ordinarily given to hyperbole in discussing others.

If Clifton's stories anthologized here are seldom high art in any absolute sense, their literacy is a majestic leap forward from the *Astounding* pulp. Moreover, there is a haunting bleakness in many of the stories that, at least to some extent, signals the pessimism which eventually came to characterize so much of the SF of the decade following Clifton's death in 1963.

Significantly for the 'fifties in which most of these stories were written, Clifton tends to focus on bright and decent people, often supernaturally gifted ones, who are stupidly bound by the constraints of society, or completely snared in the red tape of a monstrous bureaucracy. Even when these stories end happily for the gifted victim—as "Star, Bright" does—the happiness lies in an *escape* from society, not a reconciliation with it; the society itself doesn't change.

This focus gives Clifton's stories a modernity that belies their age. "Star, Bright," with its stress on society's attempts to inhibit its most talented members, anticipates Kurt Vonnegut's "Harrison Bergeron" by nine years. "What Thin Partitions" presents a nursery-school girl, gifted with the power to move objects and to start fires through mental effort alone. Terrified by others' fearful reactions to her powers, the child decides to be a "good girl," only to have a personnel expert hired by the government use technological sophistication to frighten her into manifesting the powers again. It's difficult not to see the story as an influence (albeit perhaps unconscious) on Stephen King's recent bestseller, *Firestarter*, and the story is made even more poignant through being told from the point of view of the personnel expert, himself a victim of the bureaucracy, who hates himself for what he does.

It is Clifton's pessimism, rather than any notable stylistic innovations, which signals his departure from Campbellian "Golden Age" SF and which foreshadows the more experimental science fiction which was to bloom during the 'sixties. In an editorial note to one of the few stories in the anthology with a marginally upbeat conclusion, Malzberg points out that the story was written for

"the imperious John W. Campbell, Jr., *Astounding*'s editor... It can be reasonably assumed that Campbell either insisted on the ending or that Clifton tacked in on before submission as a kind of self-censorship to insure the sale of the story."

But if Clifton's stories are *good* (and, with a qualification or two, they are), and if they're historically important to the SF field (and they certainly are that), why aren't they better known? Malzberg provides the answer: "Clifton...died intestate. Because of this, publishers and anthologists found his works extremely difficult to procure, and consequently, he fell totally out of print almost immediately after his death." Sadly, Malzberg adds, "Mark Clifton—a major writer of his time, innovator who made a lasting impression on his field, winner of a major award—earned for the totality of his science fiction something considerably less than twenty thousand dollars."

MARK CLIFTON BIBLIOGRAPHY

{Compiled by Ellen Brody and Richard Duffy}

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Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction, Dec 1959

"Hang Head, Vandal!"
Amazing Stories, Apr 1962

COMMITTEE BIOS

Adina Adler has been enjoying rerouting misdirected e-mail and encourages everyone to keep writing to info@readercon.org

Inanna Arthen owns and operates a small press, By Light Unseen Media, and is the author of the Vampires of New England Series of contemporary dark fantasy novels.

Ellen Brody has worked on many aspects of many Readercons (including serving as Program Chair) through many years. Having collaborated with Richard Duffy intensively this time around to co-edit the Souvenir Book, she is independent-thinking enough to insist on her own uniquely individual committee bio. Any appearance of Concom co-editorial collusion is complete coincidence.

Ironically enough, Readercon founder **Bob Colby**'s life revolves more around video than anything else these days, as can be seen at http://youtube.com/user/bob1colby

Richard Duffy has worked on many aspects of many Readercons (including serving as Program Chair) through many years. Having collaborated with Ellen Brody intensively this time around to co-edit the Souvenir Book, he is independent-thinking enough to insist on his own uniquely individual committee bio. Any appearance of Concom co-editorial collusion is complete coincidence.

This is **Rose Fox**'s first year as Readercon program chair, so please, be gentle.

Merryl Gross is the committee member who knows where you all live, mwahaha. When not wrangling the membership database or answering e-mail late, she's making the world a better place through User Centered Design.

Lisa Hertel is a con-running slut; she's unable to say no to virtually any non-profit SF convention. She is on the committee for Arisia, Boskone, Lunacon, Albacon, Philcon, and the occasional Worldcon, in addition to Readercon. She also is clerk of NESFA. She passed working on 100 cons some time in 2004. In her spare time she makes things out of clay and occasionally pays attention to her long-suffering husband and kids. Find her on Twitter or LiveJournal under the name cogitationitis, or Facebook under her real name, which is much easier to type.

Dawn Jones-Low arrived at the first Readercon only to overhear a plea for assistance with some task or another so she offered to help. Then as now, volunteering to do various menial essential tasks was so rewarding that she brought another helper, **Thom Jones-Low**, to Readercon 2. They've both been trying to be useful to the concom ever since. In response to another plea for help just prior to Readercon 11, Dawn and Thom officially joined the committee and began meta-volunteering by co-ordinating the wonderful people who are actually doing the volunteering. When not at Readercon, they reside in beautiful Vermont where Thom writes software and breeds horses. They live blissfully on their 40-acre farm with an ever growing herd of Arabian sport horses, an assortment of dogs and cats, countless Legos, and even more books.

J. Spencer Love has been reading science fiction since 1963, aware of science fiction fandom since 1973, and providing sound and recording services for Readercon since 2003, when he was detailed to Readercon by a secret organization.

B. Diane Martin is thrilled that she is participating in her first Readercon panel this year. She now has an ironclad reason to attend at least one panel instead of handling issues that come up when you support a conference (pay no attention to those people behind the curtains). Diane takes great pride in helping Readercon grow financially during her time as Co-CEO, for bringing the Tiptree Awards to Readercon, and for making offers to past GoHs who were not allowed to refuse our invitation. She thanks all of the wonderful and talented authors, editors, and artists that she's had the opportunity to work with over the years, and continues to remind them to name a literary executor in their will. Diane (a/k/a She Who Must Be Obeyed) lives with her husband, David G. Shaw, and their son Miles (He Who Will Not Be Ignored) in a Victorian home filled with books, games, and cookware.

David G. Shaw is a web designer, cook, parent, blogger (blog.belm.com), skeptic, and atheist, in no particular order. He has a biology degree from MIT, and worked for the General Foods Corporation—experiences that occasionally get in the way of his attempts to cook more intuitively than scientifically. He is married to She Who Must Be Obeyed, together they live in an uneasy truce with their son He Who Will Not Be Ignored. After years of active Readercon involvement he is enjoying his first year spent in an advisory capacity.

William A. Sherman III attended his first Readercon in 2001 as a one-day, Saturday, visitor for Readercon 13. From then, he has become an annual, full weekend at-

tendee and frequent volunteer. So much the volunteer, in fact, that the Convention Committee (Concom) elected him to membership in January 2010. (Please, help me.) An attendee of both MIT and Salem (MA) State College, he has attained B.S.'s in Mathematics, and Business Administration-Accounting, and a humble B.A. in English Literature, with minors in Economics and Spanish. He comes to Concom from careers in long-term healthcare management and real-estate management; yet, his real preparation for Readercon began in 1976, when he first read Jack Williamson's *Trapped in Space*, and 1983, when he joined MITSFS. He resides in Boxford, MA, with his parents, two bulldogs, and about two thousand books and SF pulps.

Rachel Silber is writing her first committee biography, and hopes to make a habit of it in the future. Although a Readercon newbie, she has over a decade of experience volunteering for a little local con named Arisia. Rachel looks forward to seeing her art on this years Souvenir Book cover. Other than working on conventions, Rachel keeps busy in her art studio and in her work in software QA.

Nevenah Smith still lives in New Orleans (13 years now), with only two cats and the requisite overflowing bookshelves. She works variously as an art roadie for a fiber artist, driving around the country in a cargo van; as a vendor in the French Market, store clerk and graphic designer for a stationery shop; and as a general factotum for a gallery/studio specializing in etched glass jewelry. In her spare time, she still works on her own etched glass. This is not the first time she's been roped into designing the Souvenir Book.

deo Mercurio **SonyaTaaffe** omnia quae perierunt tibi credo. qui haec involavit, si vir si mulier, si puer si puella, si servus si liber, non redimat nisi sanitate et sanguine vitaque sua.

Eric M. Van is no longer Program Chair of Readercon, leaving him much time for a long list of other pursuits (cf. his bio in almost any previous Souvenir Book). To that list, he this year adds eating more fruits and vegetables and blogging (finally!) about the brain. He looks forward to someday accomplishing something more impressive than being nominated for the World Fantasy Award, so that he can rewrite the first sentence of his standard bio (the one in the Program Guide and for other conventions)—which otherwise seems all too likely to remain unchanged in perpetuity. He feels that fruits and vegetables are unlikely to be involved, but the brain has a pretty good shot.

Robert van der Heide, though not yet dead, is however both white and male, and is an active participant in the military-industrial complex.

David Walrath attended Readercon 2 and was quickly roped in; he is currently the Readercon treasurer. David is the father of two young book-lovers Rosa and Matteo, and lives in Stow, MA where he serves as the Town Moderator. David spends his days writing software to optimize performance for very large databases, but when tired of technology, the family dresses in funny clothes and lives in the 18th century.

Longtime Childcare Professional and Cat Herder **Louise J. Waugh** put in a couple of years providing superlative childcare for Readercon, and a year following Diane Martin around, trying to learn how to chair a con. Louise was then Readercon Conchair for four years. She is still as sane as she ever was. You may make your own determination of just how sane that is.

Nightwing Whitehead spent her early years playing with the encyclopedias in the living room and the Science Fiction pulps in her father's room. As soon as she learned to read them, there was no stopping her. Before she got her first job or learned to drive, Nightwing had worn out 4 library cards and started to write SF/F stories of her own. A very nice handwritten rejection letter from MZB convinced her that her real career lay elsewhere.

After more than a decade talking to room-sized computers, Nightwing was sent for re-training, and has since been trying to reclothe the world. She now sews for 3 companies, lends her talents to community theaters, and views her computer as equipment not a best friend.

When Nightwing is not otherwise occupied with being the Green Room Goddess, she can be found steampunking around town or hanging out with the gypsies. And, she is still working on creating wearable versions (wearable by the author that is) of as many SF/F covers as possible, reading them all first to make sure she gets it right.

Karl R. Wurst first attended Readercon 7 to see Ursula K. Le Guin. Once he got through the line at registration, he sat down at the table to help out. A few hours later he was handed a Committee badge and he's been at registration ever since (except for one year as co-conchair). He's also been putting together the program guide and creating the cover image since Readercon 12. He's spending more and more time in the 17th century with his 16-foot pike and in the 19th century with a bayonet with the Salem Zouaves. The rest of the time he's the Chair of the Computer Science Department at Worcester State College.

Other committee members (no doubt relaxing on a pristine Hawaiian beach away from pesky e-mail during the solicitation of these bios): Jeff Demers, Mandy Eberle, Josh Jasper, Rachel Sockut.

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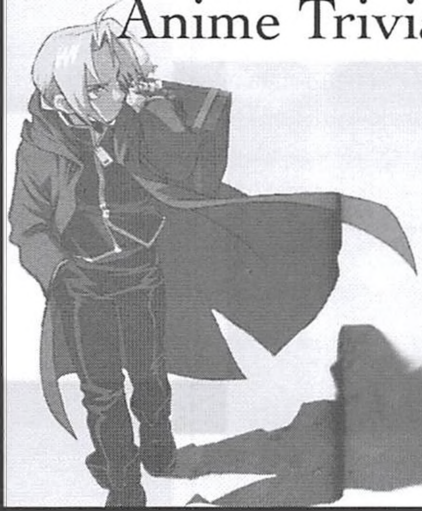

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