



\*  $\frac{1}{3}$  mile \$ US. 00 right  
was anyone's business

of Liberty (out on Bail)\* on his own recognizance  
to keep property of

the dream; sociopathic, recurrent, year,  
& monochromatic  
a) kafka  
b) dante  
c) gerontion  
d) the Artist with  
a cap A; the only one  
to pick any two  
but no  
show me.  
custom for studying reasons.



READER CON 5

SOUVENIR BOOK

## ABOUT THE COVER

The cover by Richard Powers is an illustration commissioned for an edition of Dante's *Purgatorio*. The handwritten notation reads: *"the Dream; sociopathic, recurrent & monochromatic for budgetary reasons, yea, obsessive of*

a) kafka

b) dante

c) gerontion

d) the Artist with a cap A; the only one of them presently at liberty (out on bail — 3/4 mil \$ US as if it were anyone's business — on his own recognizance)

*pick any two but no more than two"*

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**T**he Readercon 5 Souvenir Book was edited by Eric Van and David Shaw and designed by Nevenah Smith. Page layouts were created on a Macintosh II using Quark XPress, layout program of the gods. Text is 10 pt Palatino, Headers and footers are Avant Garde. All material © Readercon, copyrights revert to contributors on publication. Photo of Michael Bishop by Neil Rashba, manipulated by Rick Lieder. Photo of Richard Powers by Honest Roy Hoopes, manipulated by Rick Lieder.

## INTRODUCTION

The great thing in the world is not so much where we stand but what direction we are moving... we must sail—sometimes with the wind, sometimes against it—but we must sail and not drift nor lie at anchor.

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*

The way I see it, there are only a few basic types of introductions you can do for something like this until you start to repeat yourself. You can actually introduce things, (as I did for Readercon 1), trying to give your public a coherent statement of principles and letting them know what you intend to accomplish. You can use the page as a platform to expound on the state of whatever field you happen to be involved with (Readercon 2). You can clarify and expand upon earlier definitions (Readercon 3). Or you can do a progress report, measuring your actual accomplishments against your original goals (Readercon 4).

Since I've managed to use those all up, I suppose it's providential that the committee and I came to an agreement earlier this year where I would no longer have to complain about the endless frustrations and small annoyances involved

in gluing together the myriad forces and personalities involved with putting one of these conferences on, since someone else would be doing all of that instead. So now I get to do one last type of intro (the Farewell Address).

The reasons why I won't be overseeing the production of Readercon 6 are strongly related to my reasons for starting Readercon in the first place. The motives of the original Gang of Four (yours truly, Eric Van, Kathei Logue, and Spike McPhee) that got together one spring day in 1985 at Elsie's in Harvard Square were fairly modest; establish a con where books were the center of attention, and where writing was viewed as an art form. Along the way, we developed sub-themes (a determination to encourage alternatives to mainstream publishing lead to the establishment of the Readercon Small Press Awards).

However, that was probably the last new idea we had that actually got off the ground until this year's Powers exhibit. The Small Press Review did not, and many of the projects listed in "Readercon, Inc.: An Agenda" never got beyond the phase of idle speculation.

At the same time, our

original goals had been all but fulfilled. We had created a con. Several hundred people came every year. Our fidelity to our original ideals and our commitment not to run the same batch of panels people could see everywhere else had given us a national reputation among professionals in the field. Besides our inability to get a few of our favorite writers to come down, our biggest problem was internal disorganization, and we've been lucky enough not to have effected you too much with that. I began to see that running this conference would, once we had fine-tuned the mechanics, involve pretty much the same experience year after year. As in the beginning, I was feeling the need to do something different.

After thinking about all of this for awhile, I've come to some conclusions. As long as everyone in Readercon the organization is focused on Readercon the conference, we're never going to do or be any of the other things that I believe we should if we are to be of greater service and consequence to the literate public. Somebody has to be responsible for expanding our mission, and seeing that some resources get devoted to that expansion. Right now I feel that that should be me.

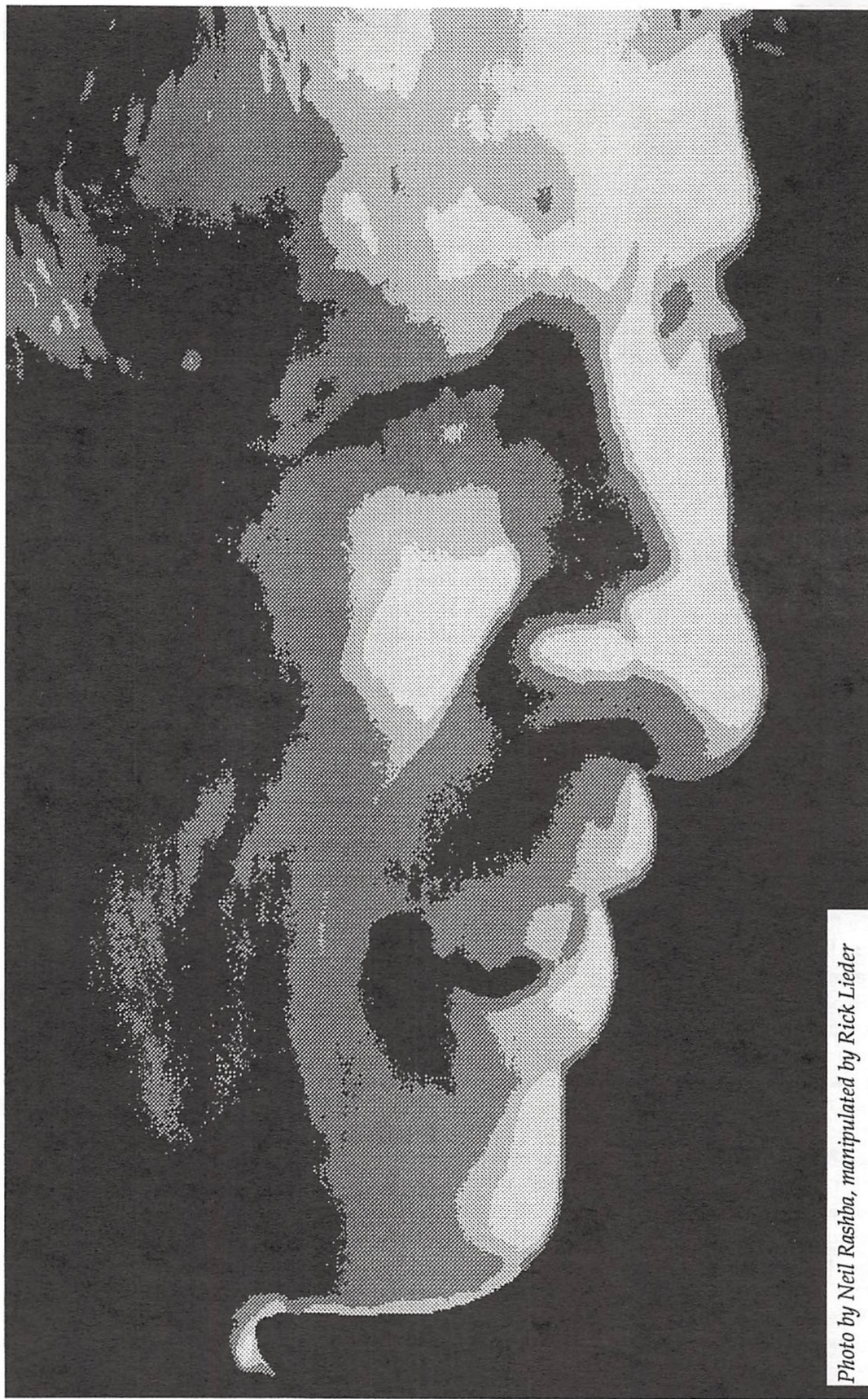
To do this, I need my hands free from the endless little responsibilities that consume the time of the con chair even in a well-delegated organization. And I am lucky to have found a capable (and much better organized) person who is eager to take on those responsibilities.

Not that I won't keep my hand in. I expect you will still see my name on various pages here and there in our publications. Still, this page, the one I've enjoyed doing the most, will next year be handled by my worthy successor, Terra Witkop. I hope she enjoys these somewhat one-sided conversations as much as I have.

And there are other compensations. For one, after being in charge of these affairs 5 times, I think I've earned the right, when it's actually time for Readercon 6, to just attend it for once, and see what all of this is like for someone with no responsibilities to get in between them and the experience. Even in future years, I expect to see and hear a lot more of the con than I do now. So if you've been with us a while, please feel free to introduce yourself and let me know what you think of our work of the last few years.



# MICHAEL BISHOP



*Photo by Neil Rashba, manipulated by Rick Lieber*



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

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

Those letters—all scrupulous in their syntax (unlike my own letters), all crafted with that blend of conscious diction and quirky colloquialism which characterizes Mike's stories and novels—are a record—ahem—

of writerly striving for the sublime, of human striving, or activity for his community (I'm a sucker for that sort of unpaid carry-on too), of helpfulness, courtesy, humor, wit, persistence, and courage.

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

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

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

Cares take their toll on a person—those grinding mundane economic

cares—but they have never taken their toll of the artistic care Mike lavishes on any project.

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

Mike can work such miracles.

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

How peculiar our interconnected, travel-shrunk world. So I really don't know Mike at all. Though at the same time, through his letters, I seem to know him intimately as

one of my best friends and closest colleagues.

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

Yet I envy your chance to meet Mike here.

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

His novels—likewise unique, beautiful, strange, and compellingly human—have addressed alien societies, human societies of the near and further future which suffer from peculiar belief structures (yet strive for joy and fulfillment), our own prehuman past, prehumans in the present day, and the scourge of AIDS, the last intercut with ailing unicorns from a parallel Earth which might equally be a metaphysical dimension,



though perceptible on a miraculous television set, a uniquely Bishopesque, a uniquely episcopal, conjunction. Who else, in another story, would have sent gypsy caravans through a doorway of the imagination to cross the dust seas of the moon?

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

Which are my favorite

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

playfulness and love. But those are only my favorites this morning.

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

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

But you already know all the wonderful characters—who invariably have

wonderful names to match. You already know all those books and stories.

If not, or if you have missed out on one or two... what convention is without a bookroom?

Put down this book and buy now.

Unlike a lot of authors Mike writes a neat signature.

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



**JESSICA  
AMANDA  
SALMONSON** **R** E. MICHAEL BISHOP

I am a lover of the short story generally and of the fantastic in particular. It occasionally seems to me that anyone devoted to the art of fiction and the fantastic has to seek outside the genre to find transcendent writers. Is there anyone publishing their tales mainly within the lingering pulp magazines, or amidst the garbage-packaging of mass-market genre anthologies, who

compares to Gabriel Garcia-Marquez, Carlos Fuentes, Wolfgang Hildesheimer, Michael Bullock, or Dino Buzzati? At least one author does compare—Michael Bishop.

Rated as a literary stylist, or as a mystic whose fiction has depth and meaning, or even on the level of a "mere" genre writer, Michael is a world-class short story writer however he is judged. This can be said of very few

writers "within" in the defensively closed clique of category-practitioners, whose work looks good only to readers who have elected to remain ignorant of the likes of Bullock or Fuentes. It is easy to picture Michael Bishop alongside Garcia-Marquez in an anthology of literate fantasy—he comes out no worse for the comparison. In any ten issues of our field's pulp magazines and anthologies, you'll be hard

pressed to find even one other writer for whom this is so.

In my own quest as a reader, and as a writer struggling for the highest quality in my own work, Michael stands out as a reassuring presence. By his work it is proven that to read and write within our community category writers is not yet totally a lost or artless cause.



**M**ichael Bishop is pleasant, intelligent, witty, diligent, mature, articulate, a man of principle, winner of the Nebula Award (and many times a nominee), one of the most respected science fiction writers in the world, and, as far as I can tell, in all ways admirable. You will have to ask his wife, Jeri, for insight into whatever flaws this man has. I have never cared to do so. From the late 1970s to the present, I have worked with him editing his novels at four different publishing houses and never found it anything but stimulating and friendly and profitable. We worked very closely on the new one, *Count Geiger's Blues*, and it is one of his best (Locus has already called it his best ever) and now he's working on a book at Bantam about Frankenstein as a bush league baseball player in the South in the 1940s. Arnold Schwarzenegger is optioned to play the film role(!)

He is a serious reader and a serious writer and is therefore a perfect guest of honor for Readercon. He writes reviews, essays, stories, scripts, novels, all particularly well. He writes a

carefully crafted and balanced sentence every time, and that is the absolute foundation of really good writing, a commitment that many storytellers do not share with Mike Bishop, to the detriment of their written work (regardless of how popular it was or is at the moment). As a result, he tells better, deeper, richer stories.

If I may take a moment to educate those of you who are not widely familiar with Mike Bishop's work, the best place to start is with his two short story collections, *Blooded on Arachne* and *The Quickening*, and with *Catacomb Years* (a book built of shorter pieces, like Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* or Clifford D. Simak's *City*, about the future history of domed Atlanta). Then proceed to his novels, starting perhaps with *Eyes of Fire* (a complete and improved rewriting of his first novel, *A Funeral for the Eyes of Fire* into the third person past tense), *No Enemy But Time* (his Nebula-winning novel), and *Ancient of Days* (just as good—perhaps even better). After that, there are immense riches in both the earlier and later work. Don't skip *The Secret Ascension* (starring, among

others, the ghost of Philip K. Dick), or, of course, *Count Geiger's Blues*. One of my personal favorites is *A Little Knowledge*, a really quite strange, religious sf novel about aliens who come to Earth, hole up in the Hyatt in Atlanta, and eat apples and live cats. Not everyone's cup of tea, but if you're a jaded, hip, disenchanted type of person with a weakness for religious doubt, you just might love it.

I don't see Mike often enough. He tends to stay with his family in Pine Mountain, GA, not far from Atlanta. He likes them a lot. I've been there, and he has a fine house in a lovely and relatively obscure little town. He made one memorable trip to Philadelphia to be guest of honor at Philcon. I recall his GoH speech with particular fondness because it was, in part, riotously funny. On another occasion, he came to New York and danced in the street, I believe, after spending a couple of days at my home in Pleasantville around my kitchen table taking a whole novel draft apart and putting it back together in different order. He writes science fiction as well as anyone alive, and better than most. He also

writes horror fiction in the Southern Gothic mode, most often as well as anyone in the 20th century. That's what he stays at home and does.

You can be well read in science fiction without having read a majority of the works of say, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Mack Reynolds, or Mike Resnick, to name three writers who have written significant books and a lot of others one might skip. It seems to me that the significant works of Michael Bishop outnumber the aggregate of the previous three writers. If good writing was not to your taste, if you didn't like serious (but often subtly humorous) fiction, you would probably not be attending this particular convention, so I feel comfortable in telling you that you will enjoy Michael Bishop's stories as much as I am sure you will enjoy meeting Mike himself this weekend.

And since he doesn't travel often, buy up every Bishop hardcover in sight and get him to autograph them for you. It's a wise investment in future pleasure.



# CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH MICHAEL BISHOP

Many of us Readercon regulars, I suspect, are haunted by the scene from Kurt Vonnegut's *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*, in which the title character crashes the Milford Science Fiction Writers Workshop, cheerfully informing the assembled authors that, while they can't write "for sour apples," it doesn't matter.

"To hell with the talented sparrowfarts who write delicately of one small piece of one mere lifetime," says Eliot Rosewater, "when the issues are galaxies, eons, and trillions of souls yet to be born." This is, of course, Vonnegut talking, expressing his admiration for SF's agenda even as he laments the field's tendency to mistrust talent and rationalize bad writing (or worse, not recognize it). It's a scene that makes me grasp and gasp for counterexamples, and inevitably I seize upon the name "Michael Bishop," Mike being an SF author who *can* write for sour apples (and sweet apples and golden apples and Nebulas and the Mythopoeic Fantasy Award and the Deep South Con XV Phoenix Award and the Clark Ashton Smith Award and other prizes) and who intuitively senses—as anyone discovers upon coming

to terms with that marvelous collection called *Close Encounters with the Deity*, not to mention *No Enemy But Time*, *Ancient of Days*, *Unicorn Mountain*, *Count Geiger's Blues*, and *Philip K. Dick is Dead, Alas*—that writing powerfully about "the issues" means having talent, it means caring about style.

Here's Bishop, for instance, in "Diary of a Dead Man," one of the *Close Encounters* stories:

...Bodiless, I continue to be buffeted by the ravaging winds of biological memory. Cut off the leg of a wounded man. Give him time to heal. Invariably, he will still experience twinges in his phantom limb. That's me. Although wholly severed from my palate, bowels, and privates, I am still a slave to the tyranny of their phantom clamor. I crave the earthy taste of potatoes and beer. I imagine cracking open the albino legs of a snow crab and sucking from the break thread after succulent thread of meat. I imagine, too, spreading the legs of a willing woman and nursing her salty lips with a similar insatiable

greed. Are these the secret imaginings of an angel? Would a member of God's celestial militia ever contaminate itself with such calculated stupidity? Not on your life. Nor on mine, either.

Get it? See—or, rather, hear what I'm talking about? Those varied sentence rhythms, that nifty little bit in the middle there—that "phantom clamor" with its internal alliteration (a euphonic short-a effect, or something): it's not good, it's *perfect*, the left-brain telling the right, "Stop, kid, mission accomplished."

Most SF authors instinctively reject the pernicious principle that the heart of fiction is autobiographical anecdote (a point John Gardner, John Irving, and other mentors of the Talented Sparrowfarts of the Future have attempted, sometimes with success, to drum into their constituencies' heads). We know not to write what we know. After all, who can claim the same degree of intimacy with "galaxies, eons, and trillions of souls yet to be born" that he or she enjoys with, say, Italian weddings or fornication or the Jewish dietary laws or that lovably

old grandmother from Lapland? But with Mike we have an author for whom the things he doesn't know that he nevertheless writes about (after much meditation and research, I'm sure) include dimensions of the human psyche few SFWA-ans would ever dare tackle. The protagonist of *No Enemy But Time* is black. The characters in *Unicorn Mountain* include an urban gay, a female ranch owner, and a Native American. Most of that fine novella *Apartheid*, *Superstrings*, and *Mordecai Thubana* occurs from the perspective of an Afrikaner. It's as if Bishop had never heard the silly argument that an "authentic voice" is synonymous with one's ethnic heritage. Here, we feel, is a writer who takes enormous risks, a writer who pushes himself, a writer who plays to win.

I'll end on a personal note. Like a supernatural helper appearing out of nowhere in some godawful fantasy trilogy, Mike Bishop entered my life when I most needed him. My first two novels—Vonnegutian epics that had each taken me over two and a half years to complete—had been roundly ignored by the publicity arm of their publisher and concomitantly disregarded by the SF

*Continued on page 13*

### Stories

by Phil Stephenson-Payne and Gordon Benson, Jr.

with additional material by Michael Bishop & Sheila Lightsey

The material presented here is excerpted from *Michael Bishop: A Transfigured Talent* by Payne and Benson, a bibliography that succeeds admirably in its effort to "cover all the published works in English by or about Michael Bishop." What follows are the stories and novels sections from this work:

This section contains all pieces of fiction (excluding poetry) that appeared as part of a larger publication (e.g. a magazine or a collection). Entries for each item are in chronological order although, generally, no attempt is made to identify the month in which an anthology or collection first appeared. If an item appeared under multiple different titles, then all appearances are listed under the most common title, with variant titles mentioned explicitly and with cross-references from all such variant titles.

Only the first printing of anthologies and collections is given, unless a reprint was under a different title or had differing contents, in which case all such variants are listed. Conversely, all magazine appearances are given, except where the same magazine was published in the same month in several different countries.

The approximate length of each item is identified by an abbreviation in brackets: sss—short-short story or vignette, ss—short story, NT—novelette, NA—novella, SN—short novel, N—novel. Abbreviations followed by a number indicate that the item was serialized in that many parts.

- A1. "Alien Graffiti (a Personal History of Vagrant Intrusions)" [ss]  
*Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine* 6/86  
*Close Encounters With The Diety* (1986)
- A2. "Allegiances" [NA]  
*Galaxy* 2/75  
*The 1976 Annual World's Best SF*, Wollheim, DAW, 1976  
DAW, 1981 (as *Wollheim's World's Best SF Series* 5)  
*The Best From Galaxy: Volume IV*, Baen, Award, 1976  
*Catacomb Years* (1979)
- A3. "And the Marlin Spoke" [NT]  
*Fantasy and Science Fiction* 10/83  
*Close Encounters With The Diety* (1986)
- A4. "Aparthied, Superstrings, and Mordecai Thubana" [NA]  
*Aparthied, Superstrings, and Mordecai Thubana* (1989)  
*Full Spectrum* 3, Aronica, Stout, Mitchell, Doubleday, 1991
- A5. "At the City Limits of Fate" [ss]  
*Shayol* #5, Winter 1981/82  
*Pulphouse: The Paperback Magazine*: Issue 3: Spring 1989  
Rusch, Pulphouse, 1989
- A6. "At the Dixie-Apple With the Shoofly-Pie Kid: A Story by Julian Kosturko-Cawthorn" [ss]  
*Cosmos SF&F Magazine* #4 1981/82  
*Catacomb Years* (1979)
- A7. "The Balloon" [ss]  
*Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine* 1/92
- A8. "Blooded on Arachne" [NT]  
*Epoch*, Elwood, Silverberg, Berkley, 1975  
*Blooded on Arachne* (1982)
- A9. "The Bob Dylan Tambourine Software and Satori Support Services Consortium, Ltd." [ss]  
*Interzone* #12, Summer 1985  
*Close Encounters With The Diety* (1986)
- A10. "Cabinet Meeting" [NT]  
*Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine* Summer 1977
- A11. "The Calling of Paisley Coldpony" [NT]  
*Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine* 1/88  
*Unicorn Mountain* (1988) [exp]  
*Trancendental Tales From Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, Dozois, Donning/Starblaze, 1989
- A12. "Cathadonian Odyssey" [ss]  
*Fantasy and Science Fiction* 9/74  
*The 1975 Annual World's Best SF*, Wollheim, DAW, 1975;  
Elmfield, 1976 (as *The World's Best SF Short Stories* #2)  
DAW, 1980 (as *Wollheim's World's Best SF Series* 4)  
*Blooded on Arachne* (1982)
- A13. "Close Encounters With The Diety" [ss]  
*Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine* 3/86  
*Close Encounters With The Diety* (1986)  
*Trancendental Tales From Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, Dozois, Donning/Starblaze, 1989
- A14. "Cold War Orphans" [NT]  
*Their Immortal Hearts*, McAllister, West Coast Poetry Review, 1980  
*One Winter In Eden* (1984)



- A15. "Collaborating" [ss]  
*Rooms of Paradise*, Harding, Quartet (Aust), 1978  
*The Year's Best Horror Stories Series VII*, Page, DAW, 1979  
*Fantasy Annual III*, Carr, Pocket, 1981  
*One Winter in Eden*, (1984)  
*Top Fantasy*, Pachter, Dent, 1985
- A16. "The Contributors to Plenum Four" [ss]  
*New Dimensions 5*, Silverberg, Harper & Row, 1975
- A17. "The Creature on the Couch" [ss]  
*The Ultimate Frankenstein*, Preiss, Dell, 1991
- A18. "Darktree, Darktide" [ss]  
*Fantasy and Science Fiction 4/71*  
*Terrors*, Grant, Playboy, 1982
- A19. "Dear Bill" [ss]  
*All the Devils Are Here*, Deyo, Unnameable Press, 1986  
*Emphatically Not SF, Almost* (1990)
- A20. "Death and Designation Among the Asadi" [NA]  
*Worlds of If 2/73*  
*The 1974 Annual World's Best SF*, Wollheim, DAW, 1974  
 Elmfield, 1975, (as *The World's Best SF Short Stories #1*)  
 DAW, 1979, (as *Wollheim's World's Best SF Series 3*)  
*The Best From If: Volume Two*, Editors of If, Award, 1974  
*Transfigurations* (1979) [exp]
- A21. "Death Rehearsals" [NA]  
*Catacomb Years* (1979)
- A22. "Diary of a Dead Man" [ss]  
*Close Encounters With the Diety* (1986)  
*Afterlives*, Sargent, Vintage, 1986  
*Twenty Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy*, Bowie, Michaels & Solomon, Harcourt Brace Johanovich 1988
- A23. "Dogs' Lives" [NT]  
*The Missouri Review Volume 7 #2*, 1984  
*Light Years and Dark*, Bishop, Berkley, 1984  
*The Best American Short Stories: 1985*, Godwin, Houghton Mifflin, 1985  
*Nebula Awards 20*, Zebrowski, Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1985  
*Close Encounters With the Diety*, (1986)  
*Dogtales!*, Dann, Dozois, Ace, 1988  
*The Literary Dog*, Schinto, Atlantic Monthly Press, 1990
- A24. "Effigies" [ss]  
*Fantasy and Science Fiction 10/78*  
*Blooded on Arachne* (1982)
- A25. "The Egret" [ss]  
*Playboy 6/87*  
*Emphatically not SF, Almost* (1990)  
*When the Black Lotus Blooms*, Suanders, Unnameable Press, 1990
- A26. "An Episode in the Death of Philip K. Dick" [ext]  
*New Pathways #8 7-8/87*  
*Philip K. Dick Is Dead*, *Alas/The Secret Ascension* (1987)
- A27. "A Father's Secret" [ss]  
*Pulphouse Fall 1984*  
*Pulphouse: The Hardback Magazine: Issue 1: Fall*, Horror, Rusch, Pulphouse, 1988  
*Emphatically Not SF, Almost* (1990)
- A28. "A Few Last Words For the Late Immortals" [ss]  
*Analog 7/79*
- A29. "For Thus Do I Remember Carthage" [ss]  
*The Universe*, Preiss, Bantam Spectra, 1987  
*The Year's Best Science Fiction, Fifth Annual Collection*, Dozois, St. Martin's, 1988  
 Robinson, 1988 (as *Best New SF 2*)
- A30. "A Gift From the Graylanders" [NT]  
*Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine 9/85*  
*Close Encounters With the Diety* (1986)  
*Terry Carr's Best Science Fiction of the Year #15*, Carr, Tor, 1986  
*Future on Fire*, Card, Tor, 1991
- A31. "Give a Little Whistle" [ss]  
*Whispers #19 10/83*  
*Emphatically Not SF, Almost* (1990) [revised]
- A32. "God's Hour" [sss]  
*Omni 6/87*
- A33. "The Gospel According to Gamaliel Crusis; or, The Astrogator's Testimony" [NT]  
*Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine 11/83*  
*Close Encounters With the Diety* (1986)
- A34. "Gravid Babies; A Novel of Horrific Menace in Considerable Synopsis" [ss]  
*The Dodd, Mead Gallery of Horror*, Grant, Dodd Mead, 1983
- A35. "Her Habiline Husband" [NA]  
*Universe 13*, Carr, Doubleday, 1983  
*The Best Science Fiction of the Year #13*, Carr, Baen, 1984  
*Ancient of Days* (1985) [exp]
- A36. "The House of Compassionate Sharers" [NT]  
*Cosmos SF&F Magazine #1 5/77*  
*The 1978 Annual World's Best SF*, Wollheim, DAW, 1978, 1983 (as *Wollheim's World's Best SF Series 7*)  
*The Best Science Fiction of the Year #7*, Carr, Ballentine, 1978  
*Best Science Fiction Stories of the Year 1977*, Dozois, Dutton, 1978  
*Blooded on Arachne* (1982)
- A37. "Icicle Music" [ss]  
*Spirits of Christmas*, Cramer; Hartwell, Wynwood, 1989  
*Fantasy and Science Fiction 11/89*  
*Pulphouse: The Hardback Magazine: Issue 10: Winter 1991, Special Issue* Rusch, Pulphouse, 1991
- A38. "If a Flower Could Eclipse" [NT]  
*Worlds of Fantasy #3*, Winter 1970/71  
*Catacomb Years* (1979)
- A39. "In Chinistrex Fortronza the People Are Machines, or Hoom and the Homonculus" [ss]  
*New Constellations*, Disch; Naylor, Harper, 1976  
*Blooded on Arachne* (1982)
- A40. "In Rubble, Pleading" [ss]  
*Fantasy and Science Fiction 2/74*
- A41. "In the Memory room" [ss]  
*The Architecture of Fear*, Cramer; Pautz, Arbor House, 1987  
*Western Ghosts*, McSherry; Waugh; Greenberg, Rutledge Hill Press, 1990
- A42. "The Last Child Into the Mountain" [ss] with Lee Ellis  
*Omni 3/83*  
*Nuclear War*, Benford, Greenberg, Ace, 1988
- A43. "Leaps of Faith" [ss]  
*Fantasy and Science Fiction 10/73*  
*Blooded on Arachne* (1982)
- A44. "Life Regarded as a Jigsaw Puzzle of Highly Lustrous Cats" [ss]  
*Omni 9/91*  
*You Haven't to Deserve*, Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless, 1991  
*Magicals 2*, Dozois, Dann, 1992

- A45. "Love's Heresy" [ss]  
*Shayol* #3, Summer 1979  
*Close Encounters With the Diety* (1986)
- A46. "The Monkey's Bride" [NT]  
*Heroic Visions*, Salmonson, Ace, 1983  
*One Winter in Eden* (1984)  
*Who Made Stevie Crye?* (1984) [as chapter XL]
- A47. "Mory" [NT]  
*Shadows*, Grant, Doubleday, 1978  
Headline, 1987, (as *Shadows II*)
- A48. "Murder on Lupozny Station" [NT] with Gerald W. Page  
*Fantasy and Science Fiction* 4/81
- A49. "No Enemy But Time" [N]  
*No Enemy But Time* (1982)  
*SF Digest* 5/82 [exts]  
*Nebula Awards* 18, Silverberg, Arbor House, 1983 [ext]
- A50. "Of Crystalline Labyrinths and the New Creation" [NT]  
*Chrysalis* 7, Torgeson, Zebra, 1980
- A51. "O Happy Day" [ss]  
*Rigel* #2, Fall 1981
- A52. "Old Folks at Home" [NA]  
*Universe* 8, Carr, Doubleday, 1978  
*Catacomb Years* (1979)  
The Best Science Fiction Novellas of the Year #1, Carr, Ballantine, 1979  
Best Science Fiction Stories of the Year 1978, Dozois, Dutton, 1979
- A53. "The Ommatidium Miniatures" [ss]  
*The Microverse*, Preiss, Bantam, 1989  
*Nebula Awards* 25, Bishop, Harcourt, Brace Johanovich, 1991
- A54. "One Winter in Eden" [NT]  
Dragons of Light, Card, Ace 1980  
*One Winter in Eden* (1984)
- A55. "On the Street of the Serpents, or the Assassination of Chairman Mao as Effected by the Author in the Spring of 1992, a Year of no Cerain Historicity" [NT]  
*Science Fiction Emphasis*, Gerrold, Ballantine, 1974  
*Blooded on Arachne* (1982)
- A56. "Out of the Mouths of Olympus" [NT]  
*Omni* 12/81 as "Vox Olympia"  
*The Second Omni Book of Science Fiction*, Datlow, Zebra, 1983, (as "Vox Olympia")  
*One Winter in Eden* (1984)
- A57. "Patriots" [ss] chapter excised from *No Enemy But Time*  
*Shayol* #6, Winter 1982  
*One Winter in Eden* (1984)  
*Emphatically Not Science Fiction*, *Almost* (1990)
- A58. "Pinon Fall" [ss]  
*Galaxy* 10/70  
*Blooded on Arachne* (1982)  
*A Pocket Full of Angst: a Mini-Anthology* (group title for A19, A27, A31, A25)
- A59. "The Quickening" [NT]  
*Universe* 11, Carr, Doubleday, 1981  
*Fantasy Annual V*, Carr, Pocket, 1982  
*The Year's Best Fantasy Stories: 8*, Saha, DAW, 1982  
*Nebula Award Stories* 17, Haldeman, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1983  
*One Winter in Eden* (1984)  
*The Quickening* (1991)
- A60. "Reading the Silks" [ss]  
*Omni* 8/89
- A61. "Rogue Tomato" [ss]  
*New Dimensions* 5, Silverberg, Harper & Row, 1975  
*Blooded on Arachne* (1982)  
*The Road to Science Fiction* #4, Gunn, Mentor, 1982  
*Changes* Bishop, Watson, Ace, 1983  
*Hunger for Horror* Adams, Adams, Greenberg, DAW, 1988  
*Welcome to Reality* Anton, Broken Mirrors Press, 1991
- A62. "The Samurai and the Willow" [NT]  
*Fantasy and Science Fiction* 2/76  
*Best Science Fiction of the Year* 1976 Dozois, Dutton, 1977  
*Catacomb Years* (1979)
- A63. "Saving Face" [NT]  
*Universe* 10, Carr, Doubleday, 1980  
*One Winter in Eden* (1984)
- A64. "Scrimptalon's Test" [ss] with Gerald Page  
*Light Years and Dark*, Bishop, Berkley, 1984  
*Close Encounters With the Diety* (1986)
- A65. "Seasons of Belief" [ss]  
*Shadows* 2, Grant, Doubleday, 1979  
*One Winter in Eden* 1984
- A66. "A Short History of the Bicycle: 401 B.C. to 2677 A. D." [ss]  
*Interfaces*, LeGuin; Kidd, Ace, 1980  
*Close Encounters With the Diety* (1986)
- A67. "Snapshots from the Butterfly Plague" [ss]  
*Omni* 12/90
- A68. "Spacemen and Gypsies" [ss]  
*Fantasy and Science Fiction* 9/71  
*Blooded on Arachne* (1982)
- A69. "A Spy in the Domain of Arnheim" [NT]  
*Pictures at an Exhibition*, Watson, Greystoke Mobray, 1981  
*Shayol* #7, 11/85  
*Close Encounters With the Diety* (1986)
- A70. "Storming the Bijou, Mon Amour" [ss]  
*Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine* 6/79  
*Close Encounters With The Diety* (1986)
- A71. "Taccati's Tomorrow" [ss]  
*Fantasy and Science Fiction* 6/86  
*Emphatically Not SF, Almost* (1990)
- A72. "A Tapestry of Little Murders" [ss]  
*Fantasy and Science Fiction* 6/71  
*Midnight*, Grant, Tor, 1985
- A73. "Tears" [ss]  
*The Chattahoochee Review* Fall 1987  
*Emphatically Not SF, Almost* (1990)
- A74. "Three Dream Woman" [ss] with Craig Strete  
*New Dimensions* 8, Silverberg, Harper & Row, 1978  
*Dreams That Burn in the Night*, Craig Strete, Doubleday, 1982
- A75. "The Tigers of Hysteria Feed Only on Themselves" [ss]  
*Fantasy and Science Fiction* 1/74
- A76. "Unicorn Mountain" [N]  
*New Pathways* 3/88"  
[Chapter 20]  
*Unicorn Mountain* (1988)
- A77. "Unlikely Friends" [ss]  
*Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* 11/82  
*Emphatically Not SF, Almost* (1990)



A78. "Vernalfest Morning" [ss]  
*Chrysalis* 3, Torgeson, Zebra,  
 1978  
*Best Science Fiction Stories of  
 the Year 1979*, Dozois,  
 Dutton, 1980  
*One Winter in Eden* (1984)

A79. "Voices" [NT]  
*Heroic Visions* 2, Salmonson,  
 Ace, 1986  
*Close Encounters With The  
 Diety* (1986)

"Vox Olympia" (see under "Out  
 of the Mouths of Olympus")

A80. "The White Otters of  
 Childhood" [NA]  
*Fantasy and Science Fiction*  
 7/73  
*Beneath the Shattered Moons  
 & The White Otters of  
 Childhood* (1978)  
*Blooded on Aracine* (1982)

A81. "The Windows in Dante's  
 Hell" [ss]  
*Orbit* 12, Knight, Putnam's,  
 1973  
*Best SF: 73 The Seventh  
 Annual*, Harrison;  
 Aldiss, Berkley, 1974  
 1975 (as *The Year's Best  
 Science Fiction* (11  
 stories of 16))  
*Time of Passage*, Olander;  
 Greenberg, Taplinger,  
 1978  
*Catacomb Years* (1979)

A82. "Wished-For Belongings"  
 [ss]  
*Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery  
 Magazine* 12/82  
*Emphatically Not SF, Almost*  
 (1990)

A83. "With a Little Help From  
 Her Friends" [NT]  
*Fantasy and Science Fiction*  
 2/84

A84. "Within the Walls of Tyre"  
 [NT]  
*Weirdbook* #13, Spring 1978  
*The Year's Best Horror Stories  
 Series VI*, Page, DAW,  
 1978  
*The Year's Finest Fantasy  
 Volume 2*, Carr, Berkley,  
 1979  
*A Treasury of Modern  
 Fantasy*, Carr; Green-  
 berg, Avon, 1981  
*One Winter in Eden* (1984)  
*The Dark Descent*, Hartwell,  
 Tor 1987  
 1990, Grafton (as *The  
 Dark Decent: The Medusa  
 in the Shield* (20 stories of  
 56))  
*Within the Walls of Tyre*  
 (1989) [screenplay]

A85. "The Yukio Mishima  
 Cultural Association of  
 Kudzu Valley, Georgia"  
 [ss]  
*Basilisk*, Kushner, Ace, 1980  
*One Winter in Eden* (1984)

A86. "000-00-0000" [ss]  
*The Last Wave* #5, Winter  
 1986

## Books

This section contains all pieces of fiction that were published separately, even if they consisted only of a pamphlet. Entries for each item are in chronological order of first publication by a given publisher (or publisher's imprint). Reprints and reissues under the same imprint are collected together, in chronological order, under a single entry header.

Each entry is of the format:

Publisher (type),  
 ISBN, Date, Pagination,  
 Price, (Artist)

The type field indicated the category of book

and may be "hb" for hard-back books, "pb" for mass-market paperbacks, "tp" for trade paperbacks, and "ph" for pamphlets that have no form of binding at all.

The cover artist is listed where credited or where known. An entry of "?" indicated that the artist could not be identified or that the edition in question has not been seen.

B1. *Ancient of Days* (expanded from A35)  
 Arbor House [hb] 724-8,  
 8/85, 354pp, \$16.95 (?)  
 SFCB [hb] 1604, 11/85,  
 337pp, \$7.98 (?)  
 Tor [pb] 53187-3, 9/86,  
 409pp, \$3.95 (?)  
 Paladin [tp] 08618-8, 11/87,  
 368pp, £4.95 (Peter  
 Knock)

B2. *And Strange at Ectaban the  
 Trees*  
 Harper [hb] 010352-3 3/76,  
 154pp, \$7.95, (Jonathan  
 Weld)  
 DAW [pb] 305-6, 6/67,  
 189pp, \$1.50, (H. R. Van  
 Dongan)  
 (as *Beneath the Shattered  
 Moons* in *Beneath the  
 Shattered Moons & The  
 White Otters of Childhood*,  
 1978  
 (as *Beneath the Shattered  
 Moons*) Tor [pb] 55964-9,  
 1/90, 133pp, \$3.50,  
 (Brian Waugh) with *The  
 Color of Neanderthal Eyes*  
 by James Tiptree, Jr.

B3. *Apartheid, Superstrings, and  
 Mordecai Thubana* [A4]  
 Pulhouse/Axotol [tp] 7/89,  
 95pp, \$10.00, (Donna  
 Gordon) 500 trade copies  
 and 35 publishers copies,  
 signed by Michael  
 Bishop and Lewis Shiner  
 Pulphouse/Axotol [hb]  
 7/89, 95pp, \$35.00,  
 (Donna Gordon) 300  
 numbered copies and 25  
 Publishers copies, signed

by Michael Bishop and  
 Lewis Shiner  
 Pulphouse/Axotol [hb]  
 7/89, 95pp, \$65.00,  
 (Donna Gordon) 100  
 numbered leatherbound  
 copies, and 10 publish-  
 er's copies, signed by  
 Michael Bishop and  
 Lewis Shiner

*Beneath the Shattered Moons* (see  
 under *And Strange at  
 Ectaban the Trees*)

B4. *Beneath the Shattered Moons  
 & The White Otters of  
 Childhood* (B2, A80)  
 Sphere [pb] 1682-9, 9/78,  
 221pp, 95p, (Fred  
 Gambino) (as *Beneath the  
 Shattered Moons* on the  
 front cover)

B5. *Blooded on Aracine* (A8, A12,  
 A24, A36, A39, A45,  
 A55, A58, A61, A68,  
 A80)  
 Arkham House [hb] 093-9,  
 1/82, 338pp, \$13.95,  
 (Ron Walotsky, Int:  
 Glenray Tutor)  
 Timescape [pb] 41319-8,  
 1/83, 305pp, \$3.50,  
 (Walotsky)

B6. *Catacomb Years* (C11: G61,  
 A38, A52, A81, A62, A2,  
 A6, A21)  
 Berkley/Putnam [hb]  
 12255-9, 1/79, 384pp,  
 \$10.95, (Ron Walotsky)  
 Berkley [pb] 04050-X, 2/80,  
 296pp, \$2.25 (Ron  
 Walotsky)

B7. *Close Encounters With The  
 Diety* (A13, A79, A69,  
 A45, A70, A23, A30, A66,  
 A22, A64, A9, A1, A3,  
 A33, )  
 Peachtree [hb] 96-7, 9/86,  
 306pp, \$15.95, (Ralph A.  
 Masiello)  
 Peachtree [tp] 07-0, 9/86,  
 306pp, \$8.95 (Ralph A.  
 Masiello)

B8. *Count Geiger's Blues: A  
 Comedy*  
 Tor [hb] 85305-X, 7/92,  
 374pp, \$19.95

- B9. *Emphatically Not SF, Almost* (A77, A82, A19, A27, A31 A25, A73, A57, A71)  
Pulphouse [tp] 215-2, 12/90, 102pp, \$4.95, (George Barr)  
Pulphouse [hb] 265-9, 12/90, 102pp, \$25.00 (George Barr)  
Pulphouse [hb] , 12/90, 102pp, \$50.00 (deluxe leatherbound edition)
- Eyes of Fire* (see under *A Funeral For the Eyes of Fire*)
- B10. *A Funeral For the Eyes of Fire*  
Ballantine [pb] 24350-1, 2/75, 294pp, \$1.50, (Gene Szafran)  
Sphere [pb] 1684-5, 4/78, 294pp, 95p, (Melvyn Grant)  
Pocket [pb] 82835-5, 1/80, 262pp, \$2.25, (Gene Szafran)
- Revised as *Eyes of Fire*  
Timescape [pb] 46752-2, 5/83, 262pp, \$2.95, (Gene Szafran)  
(as *Eyes of Fire* 1980 text)
- Kerosina [hb] 38-9, 6/89, 255pp, £13.95 (?) 1980 text, 750 copies  
Kerosina [hb] 38-9, 6/89, 255pp, £40.00, (?) 1980 text, 250 numbered copies, signed by Michael Bishop  
Kerosina [hb] 6/89, 255pp, (?) 1980 text 26 lettered copies, quarter-bound in leather
- B11. *A Little Knowledge*  
Berkley/Putnam [hb] 11943-4, 5/77, 293pp, \$8.95 (Dean Ellis)  
Berkley Medallion [pb], 03671-5, 3/78, 209pp, \$1.50 (Ellis)
- B12. *No Enemy But Time* (ext publ as A49; excised chapter published as A57)  
Timescape [hb] 44973-7, 4/82, 397pp, \$17.50, (Vincent Di Fate)  
Gollancz [hb] 03121-2, 7/82, 397pp, £6.95(?)  
SFBC [hb] 2019, 10/82, 339pp, \$6.50, (Vincent Di Fate)  
Timescape [pb] 83576-9, 4/83, 387pp, \$3.50 (?)  
Sphere [pb] 1945-3, 8/83, 397pp \$3.50 (?)  
Bantam Spectra [pb] 28187-9, 10/89 338pp, \$4.95 (?)  
BOMC [hb] 7/90, 397pp, \$14.95, (?)  
Easton Press [hb] 4/91, 397pp, no price (?; Int: Ellen Farley)
- B13. *One Winter in Eden* (A54, A85, A65, A14, A15, A46, A56, A57, A63, A78, A84, A59)  
Arkham house [hb] 096-3, 3/84, 273pp, \$13.85 (Raymond Bayless; Int: Andrew Smith)
- B14. *Philip K. Dick Is Dead, Alas* (Ext as A26)  
Tor [hb] 93031-3, 10/87, 341pp, \$16.95, (?) (as *The Secret Ascension*)  
Grafton [pb] 20151-3, 11/88, 411pp, £3.99, (Luis Rey)  
Tor [pb] 51357-4, 7/89, 341pp, \$4.50, (?) (as *The Secret Ascension*)
- B15. *The Quickening* (A59)  
Pulphouse [pb] 512-7, 6/91, 45pp, \$1.95, (George Barr)
- The Secret Ascension* (see under *Philip K. Dick Is Dead, Alas*)
- B16. *Stolen Faces*  
Harper & Row [hb] 010362-0, 3/77 176pp, \$7.95, (Jonathan Weld)  
Gollancz [hb] 02285-X, 7/77, 176pp, £1.75, (?)  
Dell [pb] 18328-6, 7/78, 207pp, \$1.50, (Steve Hickman)  
Sphere [pb] 1681-0, 10/79, 158pp, 95p (?)
- B17. *Transfigurations* (exp from A20)  
Berkley/Putnam [hb] 12379-2, 10/79, 362pp, \$10.95 (Mike Hinge)  
SFBC [hb] 3619, 1/80, 311pp, \$3.50 (Mike Hinge)  
Gollancz [hb] 02833-5, 5/80, 362pp, £6.95  
Berkley [pb] 04696-6, 12/80, 311pp, \$2.25 (John Campert)
- B18. *Under Heaven's Bridge* (with Ian Watson)  
Gollancz [hb] 02927-7, 2/81, 159pp, £6.95  
UKSFCB [hb] 81, 159pp  
Ace [pb] 84481-2, 4/82, 198pp, \$2.50 (Don Punchatz)  
Corgi [pb] 12031-6, 9/82, 160pp, £1.50 (?)
- B19. *Unicorn Mountain* (exts publ as A11 & A76)  
Arkham House [hb] 953-6, 6/88, 367pp, \$18.95 (Bryn Barbard)  
SFBC [hb] 14230, 11/88, 406pp, \$7.98, (?)  
Bantam/ Spectra [pb] 27904-1, 7/89, 418pp, \$4.95 (?)  
Grafton [hb] 13462-3, 8/89, 348pp, £12.95 (Steve Crisp)  
Grafton [tp] 13465-8, 8/89, 348pp, £7.95 (Steve Crisp)  
Grafton [pb] 20617-5, 8/90, 495pp, £4.50 (Steve Crisp)
- B20. *Who Made Stevie Crye?* (incl A46)  
Arkham House [hb] 099-8, 10/84, 309pp, \$15.95 (Glenray Tutor; Int: J. K. Potter)  
Headline [tp] 3043-9, 11/87, 309pp, £4.95 (J. K. Potter; Int: Potter)
- The complete version of this Michael Bishop bibliography (and those of Philip K. Dick, Gene Wolfe, James Tip-tree, Jr., and others) is available from:  
Gordon Benson, Jr.,  
P.O. Box 40494,  
Albuquerque, NM, 87196.

"Close Encounters..."  
Continued from page 8

community. I fully expected the same runaround with my third book, a nuclear-war fantasy called *This Is the Way the World Ends* and said as much in a letter to the *SFWA Forum*.

And then, a few weeks later, here was this guy Bishop, warmly introducing himself at the '86 Worldcon in Atlanta, telling me that he'd read my *Forum* letter and understood exactly what I was going through. Don't give up, Mike told me. A writer's only reliable weapons are the words he or she sets down on paper, and if those words tell some sort of truth, there's a good chance people will eventually notice. Mike returned to Pine Mountain, Georgia, read *This Is the Way the World Ends*, and subsequently went to bat for it, talking it up with Greg Bear and others. It was the first time I'd ever sensed the science fiction community might be open to me and my peculiar ambitions. *This Is the Way the World Ends* subsequently became a Nebula finalist, and while I can't credit this honor entirely to Mike's machinations—I also engaged in the tawdry practice of sending out free copies—I am forever grateful to this goodhearted man for perceiving my pain and soothing me at exactly the right moment.

Thanks, Mike.



## HER SMOKE ROSE UP FOREVER

*I wanted to do an original story for Readercon's Souvenir Book, but an overdue novel and my responsibilities to a writers workshop to which I committed myself last summer (naively assuming I would finish my novel by the spring of '92) interposed themselves to make that desire an impossibility. (But the embers of hope yet glow, awaiting only a breath to rekindle them... .) In the place of a story written expressly for Readercon, then, I somewhat sheepishly offer this mainstream story, "Her Smoke Rose Up Forever," which first appeared in The Georgia Review (Winter, 1991) under the title "Cutouts," and which I dedicate in this introduction to the memory of Alli Sheldon.*

*Let me quickly add that despite its new title, "Her Smoke Rose Up Forever" (aka "Cutouts") isn't much like any James Tiptree, Jr., story ever published, nor do I think it much resembles any piece of mainstream fiction that Alice B. Sheldon would have written, had she had any serious interest in writing it. Rogers Tilghmon, my narrator, preaches the Gospel in a host of "backroads churches," to congregations going by monickers like "Disciples of the Pentecost" and "Scepter-out-of-Israel Temple." Alli forthrightly professed herself an atheist and looked legitimately askance at the sorts of fanaticism and intolerance too often animating believers, whether Christians, Muslims, or Vaudun Druids. I am not an atheist, but it hasn't escaped my notice that some of the most admirable people I know or have known (Alli, Isaac Asimov, Steven Uitley, Jerry Page, and too many other science fiction writers to list here) live, or have lived, with courage and integrity in the absence of any faith except a hopeful humanism and the existential imperative to define themselves by their talents and/or actions. Like Gene Wolfe, Walter M. Miller, Jr., Orson Scott Card, and hardly anybody else in the SF field I can immediately think of, I'm a Christian, but a questing one who can only nod in assent when an artist like Tiptree/Sheldon points to the accidents, cruelties, and terrifying astrophysical and microcosmic anomalies that seem to typify, if not actually squeeze to inconsequentiality, Life in This Universe.*

*Anyway, although Alli would never have written this "Her Smoke Rose Up Forever," or perhaps even cared much for its tone, I think she would have recognized, and approved, the honesty with which it limns two decent people's lives. I also have a feeling that she would have appreciated the matter-of-fact stick-to-it-iveness with which Merle Jeanne Draper Tilghmon faces these hardships. I can scarcely know for sure, of course, but I can hope.*

—Michael Bishop—June 3, 1992

**W**hat drew me to Merle Jeanne Draper was smoke. She threw off a charcoal haze that untangled beyond the curls of her hair. I don't mean that as a put-down. Her "smoke" gave her mystery. Even when she was doodling with a pencil or scratching her elbow, Merle's haze would fan out across the room and nigger at you, until — in my case, at least — your eyes were close to tearing.

It wasn't sex. Or not only. Not "Hey, Rogers, ain't old Merle a looker," or "That baby could really sizzle your Simmons, couldn't she, Rodge?" The smoke Merle threw off was more than the product of internal combustion — her brain at work. Her real feelings, pent by adult rules and other kids' ideas of what was cool, flickered just under the skin, just behind her eyes.

I wasn't a goody-goody in those days. (And I don't think I'm one now, but a Calling marks you, as it should, like a brand.) I smoked then. I drank some. I honky-

tonked with rowdies who, after high school, had hired on with Georgia-Pacific as cutters, with the mills as loom operators, with local contractors as bricklayers and dry-wall men. But even if no walking saint, I wasn't quite an outright rakehell either.

One long-ago October, I turned away from a homecoming bonfire, to duck the smoke gusting off it. When I did, I stumbled straight into a pocket given shape by Merle Jeanne Draper's smoke. She was with some girlfriends, all of them so much more "with it" than me that I covered my redneck clumsiness by lipping a cigarette, James Dean style, and mumbling, "Anybody got a light?"

"Try the bonfire," one of Merle's friends said. But Merle, who had an old Zippo, lit me up, her eyes sliding off me as if I'd been greased. I stood wind-whipped beside her and her smirking friends under the pale stadium lights, talking trash in the hope she might fix on me.

Cheerleaders were leading cheers, letter-jacketed play-

ers were boasting how they were going to cream Central (or whoever), a dunce with a cowbell and an ooga horn was serenading everyone. All of it together was irritating and silly. All of it was magic. I talked my trash even harder. I pressed. Merle focused. Soon the various smokes at our rally knit into a bowl-wide haze that still veils that week's game, the postgame dance, the whole year.

I was at sea. And Merle, no doubt about it, began to fancy me — Rogers Tilghmon — right back.

What happens first is you figure ways of earning your rent money, and then you get married. I went to work in the mills: Milliken. And when my foreman griped to a higher-up that I'd given him "back sass," I skipped to West Point Pepperell. (For years, I yo-yoed between the two companies, until settling in at Pepperell.) Merle landed a job right out of high school in the jewelry and cosmetics department at Gayfer's in West Georgia Commons Mall. These jobs were enough to convince our folks — I had Mama, Merle her mama and stepdad — not to oppose a wedding. They didn't, finally, and Merle and I drove up into Tennessee's Unicoi Mountains for our honeymoon, where we canoed, rode horses, and inner-tubed.

By rights, I should've been drafted and sent to Vietnam. I was a working-class cracker with a high-school sheepskin, no record to speak of (a speeding ticket, a night in the Troup County stockade for disorderly conduct), a back strong enough to hump the boonies with any other draftee, and a gut conviction that Uncle Ho Chi Minh wasn't really kinfolk, and needed his tail kicked.

But I didn't get drafted and I didn't go over. My mother wrote and called our Congressional representatives, noting that I was her sole surviving son (my older brother Guy hadn't been killed in war, but in a motorcycle crash on his fourteenth birthday). I oughtn't to be called up, she said, unless the Viet Cong was rowing attack-rafts toward our Gulf Coast beaches. I knew Mama was doing this, and I knew Merle's stepdad, Mr. Pugmire, was working on a "save my son-in-law's heinie" campaign of his own. Well, so what? I didn't see our president as bloodthirsty scum, the way some hippie college kids did, but I'd've been a fool — I thought, and so did Merle — to *volunteer*. In the end, all Mama's and Mr. Pugmire's string-pulling got me officially certified exempt.

**M**erle and I did okay. We rented us a trailer in a shabby court between LaGrange and Pine Mountain, bought shutters, slapped paint around, dug up some sprawling nandinas and crape myrtles. Then Merle got pregnant, but come its time, the baby stuck. Merle's doctor had to do a C-section. A slap, but no cry. Richland — Merle called the boy by her real daddy's name — had no lungs. There was a funeral, a quick one. You can't say much about the dead in such cases, so the minister, unless he's a dolt, uses his skills to comfort. It's not easy. Even a fellow who isn't a pious jerk can end up mouthing watery oatmeal and sounding like one. Scientific explanation

don't help, and religious ones just soak the heart in wormwood.

Still, Merle and I did okay. Not that we didn't hurt, not that it wasn't bad for months on end, but there's your work, and people to palaver with, and funny surprises to bump against. You creep by the worst parts on your hands and knees before coming erect the way those evolutionists theorize. (But it's an emotional evolution I'm talking here, not a phony biological one, and by the time you're up on both feet, the terrain around you doesn't look so bombed out and smoke swept. There's a clean blue spreading, a dazzle on the joints and leaves of sycamores.) So we hobbled ahead, me at the mill, Merle with her necklaces, Isotoner gloves, and face creams. In less than a year, the smoke gusting from her had to do with sex again — the tumbly sort — and we made us another baby. No one had told us not to, and it only seemed right to try.

This was when we were happiest at home with each other. But it was also when I was having troubles with my boss (half the words breaking his gullet were curses) and receiving genuinely sick news through the mails from Ev Cromartie, my high-school buddy who'd signed up and gone to Nam. His every letter was a casualty list of guys from his company or a revelation of small atrocities, taken or given, that Ev couldn't gear up to "share" with his mama. In a school sense, Ev was never much writer, but what he managed to say — misspelled, comma free, smudged with erasures — could make me queasier, quicker, than any evening edition of Cronkite. I hated hearing from Ev, but I always wrote him back, right up to the day Mrs. Cromartie told me I didn't need to anymore.

By then Holly, our kid, was soccer-kicking Merle's taut belly from the inside out. We didn't know Holly's sex or name yet, but Merle was doing fine: the morning ralphs, then no appetite at all, then these oddball hankerings after raspberry sherbet and raw onions, frozen yogurt and fried shrimp. In fact, Merle had been eating good again when Ev's mama hit us with *her* evening news.

One night later, dreaming our new baby lungless, cradled in the crimson-streaked arms of a "doctor" in battle fatigues, I had my conversion experience.

"Save her, Rogers," the figure said, "and save everybody else too."

Then he turned and hung our dead baby on the wall — she stuck, as if to a patch of Velcro — just like she'd been spreadeagled by centurions. My heart clenched, my feet were clammy as two caught bass. I raised up from bed expecting to see the baby and her haint doctor. I raised up sweating through my soul.

Not just a conversion. A Call.

A Voice, mimicking Ev's or maybe my daddy's (who'd skedaddled when Guy was six and I in diapers), had called me, but I knew it for Who it in truth was. (Your skin prickles, your arms buoy up like water wings.)



# HER SMOKE ROSE UP FOREVER

Continued

Granted, as a teenager I'd been dunked and spoken over, but suddenly, what with Richland and Ev dead and our unnamed wombchild in danger, this Voice sledgehammered me — to new life, though, not to terror and nothingness. I prayed, and Merle, still sleep-fuddled, held me.

You don't quit a job to preach, especially if you haven't been to seminary, but I started toting everywhere, and reading, the King James Study Bible Mama'd given us when Merle and I were married. I studied it, close. To keep our new baby from ending like Richland, I had to do that: study and pray. Same time, though, I worked my looms, watched TV, took Merle to Hardee's, and dug around our trailer. You can't go around acting like a God-spooked fool. I wasn't then, and I'm not now, which is hard to get across to folks who want you to see a shrink if your religion sends down roots.

Even Merle, who believes or says she does, wasn't thrilled: "I don't want a born-again, Rogers. They're holy snoops."

"I'm not," I said. "Honest."

We got past it. Besides, my being a born-again isn't the point here. You have to live beyond the mountaintop event, for not much that follows is in any sense a glimpse of the Kingdom.

"And we're not calling this baby after some Bible character," Merle said. "A boy isn't Abraham, or even Peter, and a girl isn't Naomi or Ruth or Mary. You hear me?"

"Yessum," I said.

She listed her boys' names, including Rogers, and said any girl would be called Holly. I said okay. There aren't any Rogerses in the Book, and about the closest you'll get to Holly is Asher's wife Helah in First Chronicles.

I met some part-time preachers. I studied and wrote. Pretty soon I was preaching two Sundays every month at little backroads churches called the Full Gospel Holiness Congregation, Disciples of the Pentecost, the Scepter-Out-of-Israel Temple, and so on. Some were black churches, but I didn't care. I preached, they *amen'd* God's Word, and many a Sunday evening, as a bonus to my outreach, I went home with thirty to fifty bucks more than I'd started out with. It helped. Every congregation met with, every sermon delivered, every love offering banked or spent on family, was one more stone in the foundation of my Calling.

When Holly came, there never was any doubt about her lungs. She had them. To care for her, Merle had to leave Gayfer's again. At home, she threw off a glittering smoke-halo that wreathed Holly too, turning their sprung Goodwill chair into a kind of throne. But after

three months, Merle was ready to hop off it and go back to work. She took a job clerking at a gift shop in Pine Mountain, eight miles from our trailer. The manager didn't shout or huff around if Merle brought Holly in a car seat or folded out her playpen next to the register. It was the perfect job, really, and because I was still yo-yoing between Milliken and West Point, with no guarantees of a pulpit to preach from come Sunday, it was also a grace and a blessing.

The days shuttled. We crept home handdog from Vietnam, which made Ev's death seem like all the others — just a dumb joke, never mind the patriotic English you put on any eulogy. If God'd been with Ev on that last patrol, how explain the *thinness* of His presence to Mrs. Cromartie or, even harder, to a vet who'd lost an eye, a foot, his whole clan-binding faith?

Holly grew, bless her. And our boys — Cecil and Bernal, names not Biblical that pleased Merle for that reason and for others that escape me — were born about a year apart in the early 1970's. They grew too. Merle quit the gift shop, then found us a clapboard house with a metal outbuilding and a carport on the northern outskirts of Pine Mountain to rent and to remodel.

She'd learned some things from her gift-shop work, namely, that tourists will blow honest cash on clutter a junkman wouldn't hoard (plywood ducks, T-shirts with cottonballs glued on for bunny tails, mugs glazed and fired to look like melted pizzas). She'd also discovered that she was as capable as anybody else of designing and overseeing the crafting of such shiny rubbish.

Mr. Pugmire gave Merle a start-up grant. With it, she opened a mail-order business out of our new place: *Merle's Mountain Works*. She hired some black women to sew Raggedy Anns, potholders, and dish towels, and also a retired cop to run the table saw. At the same time, Merle kept an eye on the kids, designed new products, and helped her workers as they made their gewgaws or filled the mail orders that came tumbling in from all over. From day one, Merle's Mountain Works thrive.

Merle started carrying MMW items to weekend crafts fairs around the state; later, the Southeast. She became an exhibitor in loose association with antique dealers, cloggers, rosin-potato vendors, artists, ponyride operators, clowns, and blacksmiths. I could go with her on Saturdays (if the Pugmires would babysit our kids), but Sundays were out because by then I'd become the only pastor of the Living Bread Tabernacle on a spur of Lower Butts Mill Road.

The Living Bread Tabernacle had twenty-two members, seventeen active. Their welfare was a lot more important to me than selling another polka-dot pig or a

dozen lacquered peanut-shell necklaces. Merle understood, but if I didn't go to the crafts fairs with her, she had to hire someone to help her pack, drive, and unload. Once, she didn't get home until Monday night, after a steamy run through Mississippi and Alabama farmland pagodaed with kudzu.

For the first time in our lives, Merle and I had money. Extra money. MMW employed seven people who weren't even family members. Merle repaid DeWayne Pugmire's loan (money he didn't want, swearing it'd been a stand, free and clear) and rented three classrooms in the abandoned primary school. These rooms became a new Mountain Works production plant. MMW had outgrown our house, the carport, the metal storage building. I wasn't sorry. It was sweet to get back our house (where paint, lumber, and ribbon spools, among other fixings, had been stored for way too long.)

One day, this old couple came in to Merle's Mountain Works to look around. We found out they were New Yorkers who'd retired down here. The woman wore a weird sort of paisley turban and a kind of roomy overgown, her husband some gaudy maroon slacks and a bright yellow shirt. They were handsome people, though, sagging just a little at the jowls and throat, and I remember their visit because MMW is really a manufacturing plant, not a wholesale outlet. Also, the wife was so taken with Merle's crafts, the coping-sawed ducks and forest animals, that she bought three or four ducks and asked just a ton of questions.

"We feel like prodigals who've finally come home," the wife said as her husband stood by beaming at her. "This is where we've always belonged." She smiled. "And your work, Mrs. Tilghmon, is delightful."

They didn't look or sound like they belonged in Georgia, but I guess they felt they did — retirees self-separated from all the run-amok go-getters in Manhattan. By the time they left, I'd already pigeonholed them in one of my mental file drawers as a pair of friendly Jews. The wife's talking about herself and her husband as "prodigals" had struck me as maybe heartfelt but definitely shrewd, an example of the funny things folks'll sometimes do to cut themselves in.

Our kids were long since in school. Merle was busy, and I was too. If we were lucky, we'd say grace together every third night. Even Sunday was no sure bet because of crafts fairs. I'd prepare a roast or bake a chicken, and we'd eat it in gulping silence. Holly was first to excuse herself, and then the boys, eager to escape the musk of fatherly piety I'd been giving off ever since carrying them to my church that morning. (My church was as foreign to them, despite weekly attendance, as a day on the New

York Stock Exchange would've been: a "drag.") My offers to play pepper or to head up a trail hike got scoffed at. So I'd run for my office, and the kids would busy themselves, by themselves, for themselves: Sunday afternoons without end.

Two years ago, Holly ran away. She wasn't kidnapped, or slain, or the victim of some freak accident — she left us a note and took about a quarter of her wardrobe with her, probably in a duffel bag I haven't been able to find. Holly's note said: "*Dear Mama, Dear Daddy, I'm cutting out. Dont worry and please dont look for me. Ill be alright. Love, H.*" The note was pinned to her cork board. We just about didn't see it because she'd stuck it up there among 4-H ribbons, theater ticket stubs, and rock-star posters.

We told the local police, the highway patrol, and the GBI, but nothing has happened. Holly could be in Seattle, about as far away as she can get inside the continental U.S., hooking with a pack of runaways and courting AIDS. (You see these stories on TV. It's a commonplace.) I should fly out there and see — the good shepherd rescuing the lost sheep — but it's a needle-in-the-haystack deal, and, my Calling aside, I'm scared.

"I think I know what it is," Merle told me right afterward. "A slap in the face. Mine, Rogers, not yours."

Maybe. I could see some reasons. But it felt, and still does, like a slap in my face too. Because I won't fly around looking, I spend a lot of time on the telephone and beaucoups of money faxing photos to search agencies and big-city police departments. (There are networks. A break could occur at any time.) Both Merle and I believe Holly's still out there, alive...

The boys were thirteen and fourteen when Holly took off. They acted at first as if a world-sundering catastrophe had befallen our family: apocalypse, Armageddon. (It had, I guess.) In only a few months, though, they were acting as if Holly'd only gone on a hiking trip up the Appalachian Trail, or off to college somewhere. They were always out skateboarding, or in their room plugged into razzle-dazzle video battles, or in a creekbed tossing rocks at crayfish. They even began wondering aloud why they couldn't divvy up the stuff Holly had left behind.

Merle was busy at Merle's Mountain Works. I was pulling third shifts at the mill and taking care of pastoral duties for my Living Bread congregants. The work was there. Not to've done it would've pointed our minds like tracking disks toward Holly's absence. And there was balm in the supplications I could make while watching the looms or that Merle could manage while deciding how to tie up a potpourri sachet or to finish a coping-



sawed raccoon. We also had our boys to worry about.

Cecil was the instigator, Bernal his fetcher and dupe. It was Bernal — you called him Bernie only if you fancied Merle down your throat in hipboots — who crept into our room one predawn, the sun not even a promise, to demand a motorized three-wheeler, a sport vehicle he and Cecil could ride on the ballfield or in the nearby dunes. Something to do when we weren't home, a passtime that'd keep them, in Bernal's words, "out of miss-shev." Other kids had them. Their bikes — Cecil poking his head in, self-cued — were wrecks: mangled spokes, flat tires, slipped chains. In this way Cecil and his buddy-roo stayed after us until Merle and I, guilt-strapped, gave in to the boogers.

Two weeks later? — something like that — I came home to find Merle standing in the driveway in a raincoat, surrounded by DeWayne Pugmire, two neighbors, and Terry McAdoo, our police chief. Merle eyed me sidelong, through my pickup's windshield, from an absence of smoke, a vacuum, that sucked the wind from me. Why a raincoat? It was sunny, almost New Mexico-ish.

"Go with Terry," Merle gesturing into the dunes over the ridge behind our house, "and see about the boys."

I already knew what I'd find — I'd overheard Mr. Pugmire telling Vivian Ludy that the county coroner was en route — but Terry led me out there, as Merle had directed, and I found my young sons dead as a result of their squatty three-wheeler's failure to reach the crest of a sixty-five-degree incline. In loose, gravelly dirt, it had somersaulted backward on them, crushing Cecil's rib cage, shooting cartilage splinters into his lungs and heart. Bernal, although thrown clear, had landed on his neck, snapping it. They lay thirty feet apart at the bottom of the dune — closer than they'd ever been, their ravine-jockeying aside, but who could be glad of that?

"If Bernal'd had a helmet, he might've been okay," Terry McAdoo said. I gave him, not even on purpose, a look that made him go red and plunge his hands into his pockets.

Like my lost daddy's decamping, like Holly's flight — and, now that I thought of it, like my brother Guy's crackup on a borrowed Harley — our sons' accident seemed to me a fated thing: a rebuke, a judgment, a test, a lesson. It struck Merle about the same way, except that — raincoated indoors and out until the morning of the funeral, as if readying herself for tears that didn't come — she seemed too distracted by making arrangements, notifying friends and kinfolk, and tidying up to ponder the lesson. She prepared for the burial as she would've prepared for a dinner party, dipping and floating.

I didn't do the funeral. Perhaps another daddy could've, but I wasn't that daddy. Merle called in Rick

Tyree, her favorite pastor at the church she'd been raised in, who had to drive down from his latest Methodist assignment, up on the Tennessee line, to preside. Tyree made a sweet, easy job of it, which was all the harder on us, I think, for being so gentle.

The gray time that follows hard on any wrapped-up ceremony fell upon us. To Merle, who would smoke cigarettes without herself smoking, I'd read passages of comfort: "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope."

Or: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

Merle, smoking, heard me, but her eyes said I might as well've been reciting census forms. Once, then, I closed the Book, went to her, hugged her. She let me, but the glints in her pupils looked like nicotine flares.

"Never talk to me about Job," Merle warned. "If you ever bring up that son of a bitch, I'll take off faster 'n Holly."

Later, Merle did some things to stare down her grief. She had baby Richland's casket dug up from its plot in a LaGrange cemetery and moved to the Living Bread Tabernacle churchyard where the boys are buried. She started designing plywood figures, two-dimensional cutouts, to stand by the graves already in our family plot. She had me use the table saw — Farrell Peck, the ex-cop she'd hired to operate it, had retired for good shortly after the funeral — to free her silhouettes from the wood.

And, last, Merle showed me where and how to anchor her figures when it was time, as she calculates it, to replace an old cutout with a new one. They're always visible from Lower Butts Mill Road, but because the churchyard's set back a way, and because we've put up a chain-link fence to discourage vandals, you have to look fast and sharp to glimpse them as you go breezing by in a car.

In one sense, the painted figures are simply more plywood ducks for the tourist trade, more coping-sawed cows with long eyelashes and outside udders the color of uncooked hot dogs. Merle tries to make her churchyard figures seasonal, but her motives are hard to read. She won't talk about the memorials, she just does them. (Once, a reporter from the *Ledger-Enquirer* saw one and telephoned to ask if he could write a story about us. "No way," Merle said.) There's a boy in a baseball uniform for baseball season, one in football gear for the fall, a manger scene of snowmen for Christmas, a boy flying a kite for the early spring (complete with a reinforced kite that I wire to a bough of the pecan tree overarching our plot).

Every few weeks, Merle trades out figures or works up a batch of new ones for installation later. She also does cutouts intended as nothing but backdrop ornament: Walt Disney chipmunks, smiley-faced sunflowers, a lop-sided bicycle-built-for-two.

It's not sacred, but so what? A month ago, one old congregant bellied up to Merle after a service to protest the way her figures "cheapened" the grounds: "I'd as soon put old jalopies with prices soaped on their windshields out front." (He'd already protested to me, with results not to his liking.) Merle asked Adamson how many children he'd lost. He said he was a bachelor. "Doesn't answer my question," Merle said. That confused him. He said he'd *never* had any children. Merle told him to have at least one and then to lose that one before opening his mouth again. Which wasn't fair, or loving, but it tightened his jaw and drove him and two others to the Disciples of the Pentecost. Well, Adamson and his friends were a sour bunch, anyway, and unreliable titthers.

**A**nother Sunday, after dinner, Merle went on an overdue cleaning binge. I helped. We worked in Cecil and Bernal's room, more or less dismantling it. "I won't have this room a shrine," she said, meaning frozen in time the way Holly's was: "Holly may come home, but the boys're gone." "Not for good," I said. "You expect to see them sleeping in here again?" she asked. Well, I didn't. Even if the Parousia restored them to us, it wouldn't be to their bunkbeds and fitful, earthly sleep.

Merle got to work on clothes while I rummaged in a closet. I came upon some boxes, including a pair from our local grocery store with detergent labels printed on them. They were full of some old record albums: all dusty, all spider-webbed.

"What're these?" I asked Merle, gripping an album jacket by one corner and sliding it out of its cardboard storage box. The sleeve had a five-sided hole punched in the corner I'd eased it up by, all the way through the front and the back covers so that it missed the vinyl disk between them. I stooped. Every album jacket in the box had such a corner hole, as if it'd been pierced by a snake with one five-sided fang.

"Records," Merle scarcely giving them a look. "Old LP's."

"I mean the holes."

She stopped sorting jeans, glanced at me. "Those're discards. Music stores weed their stock and put a lot of junk on sale. Cecil always checked the discard bins — to make his grass-cutting money go further."

Hunkering beside the box, I flipped through the battered record jackets. Not much I recognized, not much I'd

even heard of, not much my mama would've appreciated: folk singers with one name, heavy-metal bands that may have backward-masked their lyrics, stupid bubblegum music, a monaural Edith Piaf recording, some country-rock groups that'd disbanded before Cecil was born. Maybe a dozen items that would've actually been worth putting on a turntable.

"Cecil bought these? He listened to them?"

"Cecil and Bernal both. Not to the records, though — to tapes they'd made of them. Every night, come bedtime, they put the tapes in Cecil's player so they could fall asleep to music."

"All these albums are on tape?"

Merle grunted, "Yeah." She was through with levis, starting in on flannel shirts.

"Why didn't they just chuck the records? Or sell them back to the record stores?"

"Discards, Rogers. The stores're glad to be shut out of them. And Cecil thought maybe we'd like to have them. 'Daddy listened to the Beatles,' he'd say. 'Daddy listened to the Byrds, and the Mamas and the Papas.' He was waiting for you to come back around — him and Bernal both."

"I was around," I said, not reckoning the impact of this defense, "more than you were."

Then, feeling what I'd done, I braced for counterattack. Merle sat down on Cecil's lower bunk. She let her upper body topple into the stack of flannel shirts beside her.

"I knew what those records were," she said.

"I'm going to throw them out," I said through the gritty pinch of unfamiliar tears: "Okay?"

"Sure. Toss them. Who's going to listen to them, right? They can be discards twice."

I carried the boxes one after the other to my pickup and drove them to the nearest county dumpster, where they sailed over its rusted side in a shingle storm of album jackets and a skeet barrage of sleeveless disks.

**T**hree weeks back, on a Monday evening, Merle and I were taking a ride. When we passed the churchyard at Living Bread Tabernacle, we saw that a Lincoln town car, as steely black as a crow, had parked slantwise under the pecan trees.

An old guy in checked pants and a Banlon shirt ("Another goofy golfer," Merle said) was pulling up the most recent cutout she'd had me install: a straw-haired boy with a cane pole in his hands and a plywood bull-head swinging from its line. (Neither Cecil nor Bernal had had the patience to fish, but true-to-lifeness isn't the point of our cutouts.)

I spun our pickup into the Living Bread lot and



shouted out the window, "Sir! Sir, what're you doing?"

"The bastard's stealing it," Merle said sidelong. "Anyone with a scrap of sense can see what he's doing."

The man stopped. We had nabbed him — not exactly "red-handed," because the cutout was too well sealed with polyurethane for paint to rub off on his hands — but clearly "in the act." I leapt out and ran to confront him.

"Don't hit me," the old man said.

"I'm the pastor here, and I don't hit old men." Having thought about that, I added: "I try not to hit anybody. Why're you taking that?"

"I like it. If it's yours, I'll pay you for it."

Merle was at my shoulder. "I made that for my sons," she said. "You can't afford it."

Merle's presence, along with what she'd said, blew some of the sand out of the old bird. "Oh, Mrs. Tilghmon," he said, apparently assuming that her last name would be the same as the boys'. "Forgive me. My name's Samuel Halterman. I'll put it back."

After nearly tripping on a low plot wall behind him, he ambled slew-footedly toward our sons' headstones, his trousers cuffs flapping in a fresh breeze. Even though he had pulled the figure up himself, he couldn't reposition it securely, so I had to help him, using a mallet from the pickup. When we were finished, the three of us sat down together at a concrete picnic table between the tabernacle and the graveyard.

"I wanted it for my wife," Samuel Halterman said. "To go with the ducks."

"Where is she?" Merle asked.

"Dead like your boys, Mrs. Tilghmon. We always used this road to drive back and forth between our house and West Georgia Medical Center. There were shorter ways — *faster* ways, at least — but Neva had to take this route to and from her chemo so she could see whatever it was you'd done new here. It always gave her a kick. A lift. Honest to God."

"Where's her body?"

"Cremated, Mrs. Tilghmon. I scattered her from the edge of Dowdell's Knob. It's what she wanted."

"Please, Mr. Halterman, take the fisherboy."

"Merle," I said, "we just got it planted good again."

"I'll put a used figure over there," Merle said, nodding at the graveyard, "until I've finished something new."

"I was going to send you a money order," Halterman said. "It would've been anonymous, but it'd've come. Ah, crazy. What have I got to mark? Is that why I wanted it?"

Merle urged the fisherboy on Halterman a couple more times, but he wouldn't take it, which was fine by me. I'd've had to wrench it up, stow it in his trunk, and tie his trunk lid down with a length of wire coat hanger.

Even a brief absence of a cutout near the boys' graves would've niggled hard at Merle, a hook in her mouth, a goad to bigger and better plywood markers.

Our chance meeting with Halterman, while he was trying to pull off his thievery in broad daylight, worked no deep magic on Merle. It was making, and then setting up, her memorials — as she'd felt in her bones it would be — that redeemed her grief. Nowadays, the smoke gusting off her, rolling at times in glimmering dark billows, seems to me like the smoke that rises forever from the ruins of Babylon. That smoke speaks of Babylon's earthly fall, but also predicts the coming of the City of God.

I preach that, I preach it hard — but the only place I find it working in my life is in the gleaming charcoal haze uncurling again from Merle's face and hair.

"What're you doing?" I asked a day or two ago. She was hunched at her sewing machine in Holly's room, an onionskin pattern spread out beside her on the bed. "Giving up on your markers?"

"Uh-uh," she said. "It's a new wardrobe for Holly, something pretty and new for when she gets back."

"Merle, who says she's going to get back?"

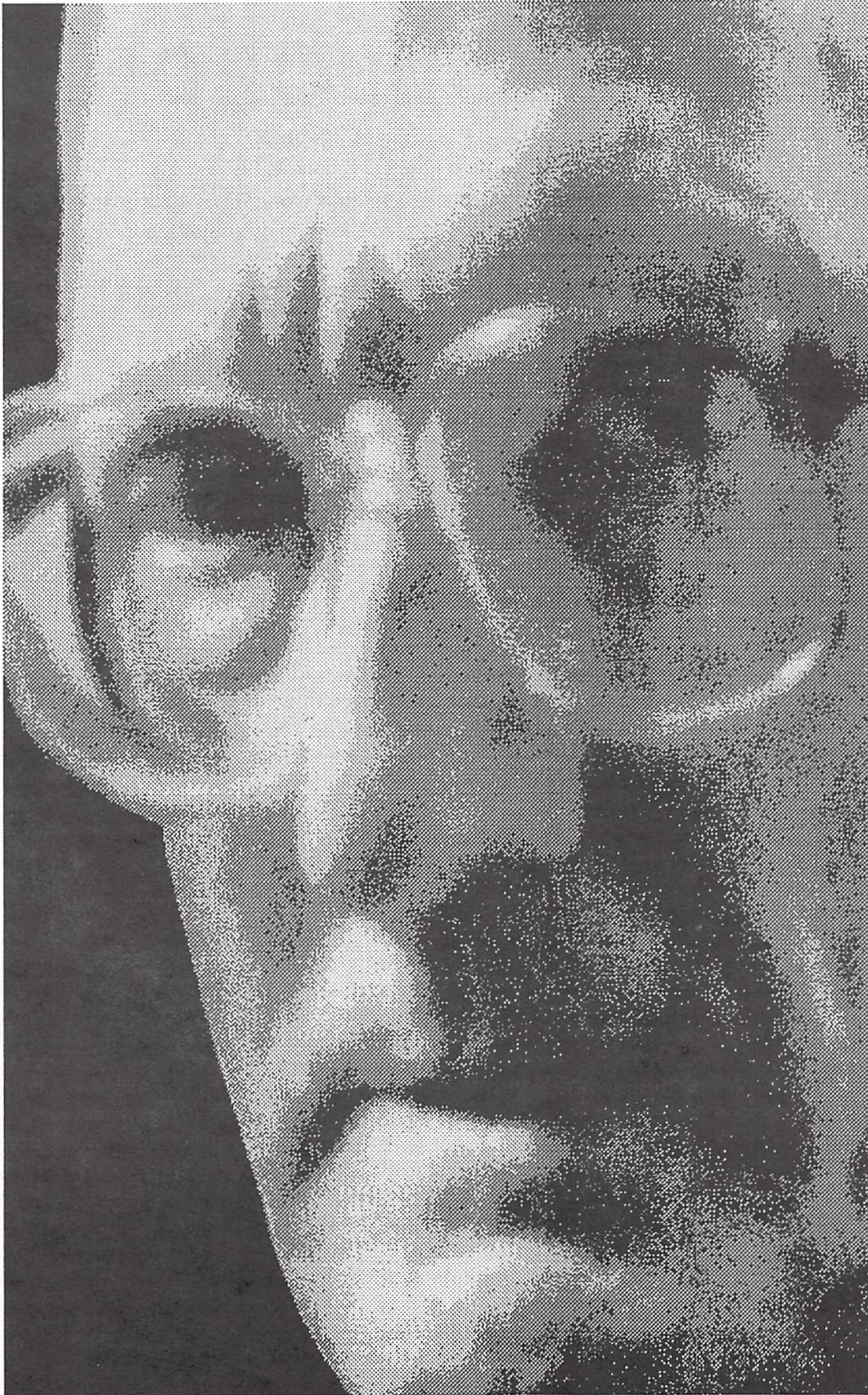
"She'll come. And when she does, that'll be your Living Bread coming again, and Cecil and Bernal, and maybe even you too."

"Hey now," I said.

"Leave me to it. If you're looking to help, there's a sheet of plywood on the table saw, ready to cut."







# RICHARD POWERS

*Photo by Honest Roy Hoopes, manipulated by Rick Lieder*



# ART AT READERCON: AN INTRODUCTION

As anybody reading this knows, Readercon was established with the readers' interests in mind. Our primary strategy for serving those interests has been to limit ourselves to literary considerations. But even from the beginning, we didn't define "literary considerations" so narrowly as to merely examine texts. The process of literature does not end with the production by an author of a large amount of type. Text lives within a context both social and physical. From the beginning, our panels have examined the social side of that context, mostly by examining the effects upon writers and writing of prevailing conditions in the publishing industry. (Indeed, since writers are people and you might find different sides of them interesting, we even showed a film at Readercon 3 because it happened to have been written by that year's GOH, John Crowley). Now we are starting to examine the other side of the equation.

In years to come, we may yet arrive (probably through electronic means of delivery) at a reading experience with a negligible physical component, no more than lines of print on a screen. But today, the vast majority of the print

most of us (except for the most extreme net-heads) take in is printed on something. Usually the something is paper, and usually those pieces of paper are gathered into a physical package. When we read, we are being affected not only by text, but by artwork, overall package design, choice of materials, and typography, all of which either consciously or subliminally effect our impression of what we're reading. (I'd like to think that most people who join things like the Folio Society do so not to acquire expensive objects to impress their friends, but because they appreciate how the vanishing arts of fine interior illustration and high quality bookcraft add a sensual level to the experience of handling and reading a book).

A good example of this was the (perhaps unconscious) effect that Richard Powers' covers had on me when I was just discovering science fiction in my pre-teen years. Almost as much as the texts themselves, those abstract, ambiguous but evocative shapes on the cover were telling me not to expect anything obvious from what was inside, that wild ideas were at work, that these were important books, a vital part of our modern culture. What sub-

liminal impressions would I have carried away had Powers not been the dominant SF artist of those years, and had people like Leo and Diane Dillon not exercised enormous influence later on during my adolescence? What if those impressions had been formed by the kind of simplistic, action-figure art so prevalent today? I can't say for sure, but someone else might have had to put together this con.

So how do we talk about these things? We've had a few panels on these themes, and hope to have more artists and writer/artists (i.e. graphic novelists) on the program (and not just in an "art ghetto" of specialized panels, either). However, this year we will also be doing something a bit more direct: an exhibit of Richard Powers' art (plus a few pieces from Special Guest Rick Lieder, a man who considers Powers his artistic mentor). But if you're familiar with standard "Art Shows," you might want to forget everything you know about them before checking this one out. This (and any future exhibits we may do in the future) are designed to be a small, focused examination of the work of someone (or a team of someones) who we feel is an important

contributor to the literary process. More than likely this will be someone who will combine the strong personal vision you expect from a Readercon GoH with an unusual ability to offer an imaginative interpretation of challenging literary material. To emphasize the special nature of what we are doing, we should note that this is not going to be an every-year event. We will do it when we feel it's right to do it.

Still, for longterm Readercon loyalists, the notion of an Art Show may seem like an indication that we plan to go the way of all cons and gradually abandon our focus. Not so. This exhibit, like anything else we occasionally do that is not "pure book" (like the VALIS opera presentation at Readercon 2) comes out of the same philosophy that animates everything else we do in that it is an attempt to answer one question: what would a serious, discriminating reader in this field find fascinating and memorable? The day we stop basing our work on this idea is the day we sell you down the river, and that is something we are determined not to do.

# RICHARD POWERS APPRECIATION

The first real book I can remember reading—not a children’s book but a book for adults—was Wells’ *The Time Machine*. It was a Berkley edition, and the cover pictured the time traveller watching the death throes of the earth after stepping out of his machine, the machine itself a construct of light and lines, capturing for me exactly the feel of the book, the way it made me feel. It was the first cover by Richard Powers I had ever seen. I was nine years old.

I don’t know when I began to read—in the womb, I suppose, but there was a lot of darkness in there, it was hard to really see but I managed—ask my mom some time. After my emergence, the reading that I did—and the taste I developed as a result—was influenced to a very great degree by Powers, as I began to recognize and buy books with his covers. At this time he was doing a lot of work for Ballantine, basically given carte blanche to create the look of their science fiction line, doing covers for books by people like Kuttner, Simak, Ted Sturgeon, Richard Wilson, books like Clarke’s *Reach For Tomorrow*, Farmer’s *The Alley God*, *The Purple Cloud* by M.P. Shiel, *Cycle of Fire* by Hal

Clement, *Out of the Deeps* by John Wyndham, *3 From Out There* (edited by Leo Margulies)—all special favorites of mine, all covers by Powers. They all shared one characteristic—they represented things in a way I had never seen before: the wonderfully alien, the different, the unique. It was a way of seeing, as well as a particular style, that influenced me—at that time unconsciously—in my own career as an artist, which did not begin till many years later.

Powers’ surrealism was another powerful factor in this attraction. I am also fascinated by Surrealism, by the element of chance that is its heart. Learning more about Surrealism led me to other artists, other approaches to art, and in the learning discovered where Powers’ own influences lay: people like Yves Tanguy, Roberto Matta, Arshile Gorky, and finally led to my becoming an artist myself. But the trail begins, I think, with Powers, and that cover that meant *The Time Machine* to me.

Powers’ influence on the field has been enormous, but in some ways unappreciated. Much of what is wrong with the work seen today on book covers, in all its vapid

banality and paucity of adventure as well as taste, is that no one is willing to take artistic chances, to reach as Powers reached—there is no chance involved, no risks taken. Some of this is the fault of the art directors (and behind them the huge maw that is marketing, which is determined to grind out the same product for Book B as it did for Book A, since Book A sold a requisite amount of copies) but surely much is the fault of the artists themselves, caught by a vicious chicken-egg circle in which Powers has never participated. He is seeing with those alien eyes, still trying to do what he wants to do and make it work within the confines of the publishing world. For an artist like Powers, his commercial work is not so far removed from his fine art (some of which is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art) in that the sensibilities it reflects, and the avenues it uses to achieve its expression, are the same. “Commercial” need not be a dirty word—it can, and in Powers’ work obviously does, transcend the aspect of commercialism, of product. If the people involved care enough about the ultimate consumer—the reader—the work will be presented in a

way which respects that reader’s intelligence. Just because the cover art is there to sell the book there is no real reason why the artist must illustrate that book with a slavish rendering of a particular scene, rather than do what an artist does best and use the visual medium to give to the reader—in another way—what they hope to find between the book’s covers. Powers is a perfect example of this—while his covers can be representational, they are never there as mere tools and always serve to enlarge the experience of the book.

The more I learned about Powers, how he worked, and what he was trying to do with his art, the different mediums in which he worked—he was never afraid to mix mediums, using collage, and sculpture, as well as painting to create something new—the more I saw the chances he took, and the more I observed other artists who were equally unafraid of risk, the more I took chances in my own work. Although his style and mine are not at all alike, it is his approach to being an artist that has influenced me the most. Which is one of the reasons why I’m so pleased to see Powers being honored this way by Readercon, the

*Continued on page 24*



first convention to really devote a major part of its programming and focus to him. I feel that more people need to be exposed to Powers, not only to enjoy his art, but also to realize how influential he has been within this field in particular and the larger art community in general.

I remember encountering his work for the first time at a convention art show—it was in 1977, and I remember being really shocked to find his paintings there, and shocked somehow too to realize that I could afford one of his pieces—that I could own it and take it home. From then on I began collecting his work.

Richard Powers has set, by his permanent excellence, a standard which should be used as a high-water mark by all artists both in the field and out of it. He has demonstrated that commercial art can be both—that the words are not mutually exclusive. And I would like to personally thank him here for all the pleasure he has given me through his art, through the years, and for the inspiration that led me to begin creating on my own.



# MARK RICH THE MAN WHO DIDN'T PAINT PEACHES

Stephen King has pointed out that part of adulthood is going back to confront childhood.

I'm sure it's true. Part of adulthood is identifying the features of childhood: you grow up among so many influences taken for granted — because they're your influences, and they belong to you — that you grow up knowing almost nothing about yourself. Take me. I grew up with the handiwork of Richard Powers, never knew it, and didn't think about it: it was my world, and Powers paintings weren't a part that I questioned. They were there: they were among those things that made sense, and didn't need to be changed. Unfortunately, as with many things you like when you're little, things did change. Book publishers stopped using nifty paintings, and started putting dragons, NASA-white spaceships, and gun-toting super warriors on book covers. And, at least until recently, my awareness of this more imaginative vision as painted by Richard Powers disappeared bit by bit.

In his recent memoirs, Brian Aldiss speaks of a

wonderful event in British publishing when a publisher opted to use the work of Klee and other modernists on sf covers. What a logical thing: outré art for outré fiction. A prospective reader could pick up a paperback and be turned on. She wouldn't have to think, "Hell, this looks kinda like dumbshit." The reader could, instead, cock an eyebrow with interest and buy the fashionable thing.

Hell, I'm still self-conscious about toting around a book with a silver-coated space bimbo with big peaches like the one on this country's edition of the new Colin Greenland novel. The book itself won't have much to say about peaches. The cover sure does, and it's making it hard for me to get past it. Is it possible to hold up a book like that and offer it for general conversation? Won't you invariably end up talking peaches and fruitcake?

The work of Richard Powers graced paperback covers in a time when publishers were unashamed of speculative fiction, and unashamed of being unashamed. Those paintings had a lot to do with why a lot of us read

the stuff. In my case, I grew up knowing that books with Powers covers could mix on my dad's bookshelves with tomes by Kant and Mann and Charles Pierce and other hotshots. I knew that conceivably here was stuff I might like all my life. The spiky little abstractions floating above a barren, featureless plane that stretched into the vast nothingness of abstract infinity: hey, they reflected a philosophic point of view! They showed a mind at work; they showed that the fiction inside the covers might well reflect endeavors of a fully human nature, rather than animal endeavor on the glandular level.

It's so easy pointing to this or that author as having uplifted our youthful years, when we know damn well we mooned over weird cover paintings longer than we did over any individual pages of the enclosed texts.

I bow deeply to the man who didn't paint peaches.



Anyone over the age of forty, who is a lifelong reader of fantasy and horror, I believe will always retain a surrealist interpretation in the mind's eye, the strength of which far exceeds the merely pictorial that has come to dominate the genre's paperbacks from the 1970s onward.

Those of us who read f/sf/h in the fifties and sixties were defacto collectors of Richard Powers' artwork, and very glad of it. While many of today's collectors of vintage paperbacks are interested in its value as kitsch, collectors of Powers covers are more apt to have an aesthetic rather than nostalgic understanding of the merits, comparable to Max Ernst rather than Spicy Adventures.

Many of my youth's favorite collections were grotesquely decorated in a manner that many today rightly consider classic, an elegance brought about by the good taste of Betty Ballantine and the genius of Powers. Groff Conklin's *The Graveyard Reader* — a classic little collection that came out in 1958 — was rendered the more "power"ful by a Powers painting that included a woman's face gazing out from a screaming mouth, and a monster's

mismatched eyes bulging with an alien thyroid condition. It was genuinely scary. Margaret Clingerman's collection *A Cupful of Space* was a best seller for Ballantine in 1961, although today this author is unjustly neglected. The Powers cover was of an egg or an egg-like being into whose unearthly geological multilayers the observer peered, guessing at its weird secrets. The cover of Don Congdon's anthology *Tales of Love and Horror*, also from 1961, took the themes of a flayed head and bizarre grasshopper and melded them into a singular, repulsive divinity that inspired poetic nightmares in the sensitive owner of this handsomely horrible little book.

Powers showed a grotesque humor as well, in his Ballantine days. In *Zacherley's Midnight Snacks*, a 1960 anthology, a hideous face (somewhat resembling the then-famed midnight movie introductionist Zacherley) leers lecherously into a pyrex jar wherein a blood-drenched maiden smiles obliviously. On the companion volume *Zacherley's Vulture Stew*, an even more obvious portrait of Zacherley consists of his head poking out of a boiling caldron, along with the heads of numerous birdlike demons, one of whom

flashes the viewer a peace sign.

Powers' approach to science fiction invited the imagination to participate, unlike pictorial (and I believe comic-bookish) cover artists who today invoke nothing beyond the immediate "frame." But it was his horror illustrations that most appealed to me, and I felt then, as I feel now, that there were genuine mysteries to be unwoven from the accumulation of threads and dripping globs and the glowering eyes of malicious faces.

When I sold a horror novel recently to Abyss Books, I looked at the publisher's covers for the last year, which I found mostly indistinguishable one from the next, and I lamented deep in my heart, longing, instead, for a Powers interpretation of my winged sprite. Alas, I'm bound to have, instead, an embossed cover-for-the-blind, and the most I can hope for is that it is no uglier than anyone else's book that comes out that week. Oh, Richard Powers! Where are you when I need you?

■

JESSICA  
AMANDA  
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# Richard Powers' SF Works: A First Pass

A complete accounting of every appearance of Richard Powers' artwork is a daunting task that has yet to be undertaken. There are a few devotees, however, who have begun to compile extensive lists that may one day serve as starting points for some future chronicler or Powers' output. One such fan, John Anderson, has provided his extensive listing (which includes many of Power's non-SF cover appearances) for us to excerpt.

Rather than attempt to list Powers' cover paintings by the titles he gave them (which, when titled at all, differed radically from the title of the book), we instead provide a partial list of the SF authors and their titles on which Powers' work has appeared.

## SF Novels

Abe, Kobo  
*Inter Ice Age 4*  
*Woman In The Dunes*

Alban, Anthony  
*The Day Of The Shield*

Aldiss, Brian  
*No Time Like Tomorrow*  
*The Primal Urge*

Altov, Genrikh & Zhuravlyova, Valentina  
*Ballad Of The Stars*

Anderson, Poul  
*After Doomsday*  
*The Enemy Stars*  
*Guardians Of Time*  
*The High Crusade*  
*Homeward and Beyond*  
*Mirkheim*  
*Shield*  
*Strangers From Earth*

*Tau Zero*  
*Three Hearts & Three Lions*  
*Time and Stars*  
*Trader To The Stars*  
*The Trouble Twisters*

Anthony, Piers  
*Chthon*  
*Phthor*

Asimov, Isaac  
*2nd Foundation*  
*The End Of Eternity*  
*The Martian Way*  
*Nine Tomorrows*  
*Pebble In The Sky*  
*The Stars Like Dust*

Ayme, Marcel  
*The Walker-Through-Walls*

Baker, Scott  
*Symbiote's Crown*

Ballard, J.G.  
*Billenium*  
*The Burning World*  
*Chronopolis*  
*The Drowned World*  
*The Impossible Man*  
*Passport To Eternity*  
*Terminal Beach*  
*Vermilion Sands*  
*Voices Of Time*  
*The Wind From Nowhere*

Beliaev, Alexander  
*Professor Dowell's Head*

Bester, Alfred  
*The Computer Connection*  
*The Light Fantastic*  
*Starburst*  
*Star Light, Star Bright*  
*The Stars My Destination*

Biggle, Lloyd  
*The Still Small Voice Of Trumpets*

Blish, James  
*A Case Of Conscience*  
*Earthman, Come Home*  
*The Frozen Year*

*The Star Dwellers*  
*So Close To Home*  
*Year 2018*

Bloch, Robert  
*Strange Eons*  
Boland, John  
*No Refuge*

Bond, Nelson  
*No Time Like The Future*

Boucher, Anthony  
*Far And Away*

Boulle, Pierre  
*Time Out Of Mind*

Bradbury, Ray  
*The October Country*

Brennan, J.P.  
*Nine Horrors And A Dream*

Brin, David  
*Earthclan*

Brown, Fredric  
*Starshine*

Brown, Rosel G.  
*A Handful Of Time*

Brunner, John  
*Out Of My Mind*

Bryant, Ed  
*Particle Theory*

Budrys, Algis  
*Blood And Burning*  
*Budry's Inferno*  
*Man Of Earth*  
*Rogue Moon*

Burroughs, Edgar Rice  
*Tarzan Of The Apes*  
*Return Of Tarzan*  
*Beasts Of Tarzan*  
*Son Of Tarzan*  
*Tarzan and The Jewels Of Opar*

*Jungle Tales Of Tarzan*  
*Tarzan Untamed*  
*Tarzan The Terrible*  
*Tarzan & The Golden Lion*  
*Tarzan and The Ant Men*  
*Tarzan, Lord Of The Jungle*  
*Tarzan and The Lost Empire*  
*Tarzan at The Earth's Core*  
*Tarzan The Invincible*  
*Tarzan Triumphant*  
*Tarzan and The City Of Gold*  
*Tarzan and The Lion Man*  
*Tarzan and The Leopard Men*  
*Tarzan's Quest*  
*Tarzan & The Forbidden City*  
*Tarzan The Magnificent*  
*Tarzan & The Foreign Legion*

Busby, F.M.  
*Rissa Kerguelen*

Campbell, John W.  
*Who Goes There ?*

Carr, Robert S.  
*Beyond Infinity*

Chalker, Jack  
*Four Lords Of The Diamond*

Cherryh, C.J.  
*Voyager In Night*

Clarke, Arthur C.  
*Against The Fall Of Night*  
*Childhood's End*  
*The City and The Stars*  
*Earthlight*  
*Expedition To Earth Space*  
*Reach For Tomorrow*  
*Tales From The White Hart*

Clement, Hal  
*Cycle Of Fire*  
*Natives Of Space*

- Clifton, Mark  
*When They Come From Space*
- Clingerman, Mildred  
*A Cupfull Of Space*
- Coleman, James  
*Seeker From The Stars*
- Compton, D.G.  
*Synthajoy*
- Coon, Horace  
*43000 Years Later*
- Cooper, Edmund  
*Deadly Image*  
*A Far Sunset*  
*Seed Of Light*  
*Tenth Planet*  
*Tomorrow's Gift*
- Corey, Paul  
*Planet Of The Blind*
- Crane, Robert  
*Hero's Walk*
- Cross, J.K.  
*The Other Passenger*
- Crossen, K.F.  
*Year Of Consent*
- Crowley, John  
*The Deep*
- Davenport, Leonard  
*Man Of Double Deed*
- Davidson, Avram  
*Enemy Of My Enemy*  
*Or All The Seas With Oysters*
- de Camp, L. Sprague  
*Genus Homo*  
*The Glory That Was*  
*The Incomplete Enchanter*  
*Rogue Queen*
- de Ford, Miriam Allen  
*Xenogenesis*
- del Rey, Lester  
*Mortals and Monsters*  
*Nerves*  
*Pstalemate*  
*Robots and Changelings*
- Delaney, Samuel  
*The Jewel-Hinged Jaw*
- Dick, Philip K.  
*The Broken Bubble*  
*Confessions Of a Crap Artist*  
*The Man In The High Castle*  
*Locus Mary and The Giant*  
*A Maze Of Death*  
*The Transmigration Of Timothy Archer*
- Dickson, Gordon  
*Hour Of The Horde*  
*No Room For Man*  
*The Space Swimmers*
- Disch, Tom  
*The Genocides*
- Doyle, Arthur Conan  
*The Lost World*
- DuBois,  
*Solution T-25*
- Duncan, David  
*Beyond Eden*  
*Dark Dominion*  
*Occam's Razor*
- Edmondson, G.C.  
*The Aluminum Man*
- Emtsev, Mikhail & Parnov, Eremei  
*World Soul*
- Farmer, Philip Jose  
*The Alley God*  
*The Green Odyssey*  
*The Lovers*  
( Powers says that not all of this cover is his work )  
*Night Of Light*  
*To Your Scattered Bodies Go*
- Finney, Jack  
*Invasion Of The Body Snatchers*  
*The Third Level*
- Foster, Richard  
*The Rest Must Die*
- Gantz, Kenneth  
*Not In Solitude*
- Garnett, David  
*Mirror In The Sky*
- Garrett, Randall  
*Unwise Child*
- Gernsback, Hugo  
*Ralph 124C41+*
- Gillon, Diana  
*The Unsleap*
- Gotlieb, Phyllis  
*Sunburst*
- Grant, Charles  
*Shadow Of Alpha*
- Gunn, James  
*Kampus*  
*Hadley, Arthur T.*  
*The Joy Wagon*
- Hamilton, Edmond  
*City At Worlds End*  
*Star Of Life*  
*What's It Like Out There ?*
- Harness, Charles  
*Paradox Men*  
*Wolfshead*
- Harrison, Harry  
*Adventures Of The Stainless Steel Rat*  
*Bill, The Galactic Hero*  
*Make Room ! Make Room !*  
*The Stainless Steel Rat*  
*The S.S.R.'s Revenge*  
*The S.S.R. Saves The World*  
*Tunnel Through The Deeps*
- Heinlein, Robert  
*Assignment In Eternity*  
*Double Star*  
*Friday*  
*Number Of The Beast*
- Herbert, Frank  
*Destination: Void*  
*Whipping Star*
- Hoyle, Fred  
*A For Andromeda*  
*Ossian's Ride*
- Hughes, Zach  
*The Stork Factor*
- Jackson, Shirley  
*The Sundial*
- Jakes, John  
*Six Gun Planet*
- Judd, Cyril  
*Outpost Mars*
- Kerr, Geoffrey  
*Under The Influence*
- Kersh, Gerald  
*Men Without Bones*  
*On An Odd Note*  
*The Secret Masters*
- Knight, Damon  
*Analogue Men*  
*Beyond The Barrier*  
*Far Out*  
*Hell's Pavement*  
*In Deep*  
*The People Maker*  
*Three Novels*  
*Three Novels*
- Kolupaev, Victor  
*Hermit's Swing*
- Kombluth, Cyril M.  
*A Mile Beyond The Moon*  
*The Explorers*  
*The Syndic*
- Kube-McDowell, Michale P.  
*Alternities*
- Kuttner, Henry  
*Ahead Of Time*  
*Destination Infinity*  
*Mutant*  
*No Boundaries*  
*Return To Otherness*
- Lafferty, R.A.  
*The Reefs Of Earth*
- Laumer, Keith  
*Assignment In Nowhere*  
*Bolo*  
*Catastrophe Planet*  
*Earthblood*  
*Galactic Diplomat*  
*Galactic Odyssey*  
*Greylorn*  
*The House In November*  
*The Infinite Cage*  
*It's A Mad, Mad, Mad Galaxy*  
*The Long Twilight*  
*The Monitors*  
*Night Of Delusions*  
*Nine By Laumer*  
*A Plague Of Demons*  
*Retief: Ambassador To Space*  
*Retief And The Warlords*  
*Retief's Ransom*  
*Retief's War*  
*The Shape Changer*  
*The Star Treasure*



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*Time Trap*  
*A Trace Of Memory*  
*The World Shuffler*
- Le Guin, Ursula K.  
*The Word For World Is Forest*
- Leiber, Fritz  
*Gather, Darkness*  
*Night Of The Wolf*  
*Night's Black Agents*  
*Our Lady Of Darkness*  
*A Pail Of Air*  
*Shadows With Eyes*  
*The Silver Eggheads*  
*The Wanderer*
- Leinster, Murray  
*The Aliens*  
*Checkpoint Lambda*  
*Creatures Of The Abyss*  
*Operation Terror*  
*The Wailing Asteroid*  
*War With The Gizmos*
- Leourier, Christian  
*The Mountains Of The Sun*
- Lightner, Alice  
*Space Olympics*
- Livingston, Harold  
*The Climacticon*
- Lovecraft, H.P.  
*Cry Horror!*  
*The Survivor*
- McCaffrey, Anne  
*Decision At Doona*
- MacDonald, John D  
*Wine Of The Dreamers*
- Maclean, Katherine  
*Missing Man*
- Maine, Charles Eric  
*He Owned The World*  
*High Vacuum*  
*The Tide Went Out*
- Mcintosh, J.T.  
*Born Leader*  
*World Out Of Mind*  
*Worlds Apart*
- Mead, Harold  
*Bright Phoenix*
- Meredith, Richard  
*At The Narrow Passage*
- Merritt, A.  
*The Metal Monster*  
*Ship Of Ishtar*
- Miller, Walter  
*Conditionally Human*  
*View From The Stars*
- Moorcock, Michael  
*The Twilight Man*  
*The Winds Of Limbo*
- Moore, C.L.  
*Doomsday Morning*
- Moore, Ward  
*Bring The Jubilee*  
*Greener Than You Think*
- Morgan, Dan  
*High Destiny*  
*Inside*
- Moudy, Walter  
*No Man On Earth*
- Nathan, Robert  
*Innocent Eve*
- Nolan, William F.  
*Impact 20*
- Norton, Andre  
*Android At Arms*  
*Beast Master*  
*Catseye*  
*Dark Piper*  
*Dread Companion*  
*Judgement On Janus*  
*Lord Of Thunder*  
*Night Of Masks*  
*Operation Time Search*  
*Postmarked The Stars*  
*Sea Siege*  
*Star Gate*  
*Star Guard*  
*Star Rangers*  
*Victory On Janus*  
*The X Factor*
- Nourse, Alan E  
*Tiger By The Tail*
- Offutt, Andrew J.  
*The Castle Keep*
- Oliver, Chad  
*Another Kind*  
*Winds Of Time*
- Pangborn, Edgar  
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- Panshin, Alexei  
*Farewell To Yesterday's Tomorrow*
- Pohl, Fred  
*The Abominable Earthman*  
*Alternating Currents*  
*The Case Against Tomorrow*  
*Gladiator At Law*  
*Preferred Risk*  
*Search The Sky*  
*Space Merchants*  
*Tomorrow Times Seven*  
*Wolfbane*  
*The Wonder Effect*
- Poyer, Joe  
*Operation Malacca*
- Pratt, Fletcher  
*Double In Space*  
*The Undying Fire*
- Priest, Christopher  
*Indoctrinaire*
- Rankine, John  
*Moons Of Triopus*
- Reed, Kit  
*Armed Camps*
- Roberts, Keith  
*The Chalk Giants*  
*Pavane*
- Robinson, Spider  
*Telempath*
- Russell, Eric Frank  
*Men, Martians, And Machines*  
*The Mindwarpers*  
*Wasp*
- Russell, Ray  
*Sardonicus*
- Saberhagen, Fred  
*Beserker*  
*Broken Lands*  
*Brother Assassin*
- Savchenko, Vladimir  
*Self-Discovery*
- Saxon, Peter  
*The Torturer*
- Schmidt, Stanley  
*The Sins Of The Fathers*
- Schmitz, James  
*The Eternal Frontiers*
- Sellings, Arthur  
*The Quy Effect*  
*Telepath*
- Sheckley, Robert  
*Citizen In Space*
- Shefner, Vadim  
*The Unman/Kovigins Chronicles*
- Silverberg, Robert  
*Needle In A Timestack*  
*To Open The Sky*
- Simak, Clifford  
*All Flesh Is Grass*  
*All The Traps Of Earth*  
*City*  
*Cosmic engineers*  
*Destiny Doll*  
*The Goblin Reservation*  
*Other Worlds Of Our Children's Children*  
*Out Of Their Minds*  
*Strangers In The Universe*  
*They Walked Like Men*  
*Time Is The Simplest Thing*  
*Way Station*  
*Werewolf Principle*  
*Worlds Of*  
*Worlds Without End*
- Smith, E.E. (Doc)  
*Skylark Of Space*
- Smith, George O.

- Space Plague*  
 Sohl, Jerry  
*Costigan's Needle*  
*The Time Dissolver*
- Soule, George  
*The Shape Of tomorrow*
- Stapledon, Olaf  
*Odd John*  
*Star Maker*
- Strugatsky, Arkady & Boris  
*Beetle In The Ant Hill*  
*Definitely Maybe*  
*Far Rainbow/Second*  
*Invasion*  
*From Mars*  
*Noon:22nd Century*  
*Prisoners Of Power*  
*Roadside Picnic/*  
*Tale Of The Troika*  
*Space Apprentice*  
*The Ugly Swans*
- Sturgeon, Theodore  
*Caviar*  
*The Cosmic Rape*  
*E Pluribus Unicorn*  
*More Than Human*  
*A Touch Of Strange*
- Taine, John  
*Seeds Of Life*
- Tenn, William  
*Of All Possible Worlds*
- Transue, Jacob  
*Twilight Of The Basilisks*
- Tucker, Wilson  
*The Long Loud Silence*  
*Tomorrow Plus X*
- Turner, Frederik  
*A Double Shadow*
- Vale, Rena  
*Day After Doomsday*
- Van Scyoc, Sydney  
*Cloud Cry*  
*Star Mother*
- van Vogt, A.E.  
*Away And Beyond*  
*The Beast*  
*Destination: Universe*
- The House That Stood Still*  
*Slan*  
*Voyage Of The Space*  
*Beagle*  
*World Of Null-A*
- Vance, Jack  
*Future Tense*  
*Light From A Lone Star*  
*Maske: Thaery*  
*The Palace Of Love*  
*The Star King*  
*To Live Forever*
- Verne, Jules  
*Around The World In 80*  
*Days*  
*From The Earth To The*  
*Moon*
- Vidal, Gore  
*Messiah*
- Vonnegut, Kurt jr  
*Sirens Of Titan*
- Wakefield, H.R.  
*The Clock Strikes 12*
- Wallace, Ian  
*Deathstar Voyage*
- Wallis, G.M.  
*Legend Of Lost Earth*
- Wells, H.G.  
*First Men In The Moon*  
*Food Of The Gods*  
*In The Days Of The Comet*  
*The Invisible Man*  
*Island Of Dr. Moreau*  
*Time Machine*  
*War Of The Worlds*
- Wells, Robert  
*The Spacejacks*
- White, James  
*Star Surgeon*
- Wilhelm, Kate  
*Mile Long Spaceship*
- Williamson, Jack  
*Starbridge*
- Wilson, Richard  
*30 Day Wonder*
- Girls From Planet 5*  
*Those Idiots From Earth*  
*Time Out For Tomorrow*
- Wormser, Richard  
*Pan Satyrus*
- Wylie, Philip  
*After Worlds Collide*  
*When Worlds Collide*
- Wyndham, John  
*The Day Of The Triffids*  
*The Infinite Moment*  
*Midwich Cuckoos*  
*Out Of The Deep*  
*Rebirth*  
*Tales Of Gooseflesh &*  
*Laughter*  
*The Trouble With Lichen*
- Anthologies, by title**
- Alone By Night*  
*Alpha 6*  
*Assignment In Tomorrow*  
*Astounding SF Anthology*  
*Astounding Tales Of Space And*  
*Time*  
*Beachheads In Space*  
*Best Of New Dimensions*  
*Beyond*  
*Big Book Of SF*  
*Br-r-r-r !*  
*Clarion SF*  
*Crossroads In Time*  
*Deals With The Devil*  
*A Decade Of Fantasy And SF*  
*18 Greatest SF Stories*  
*Epoch*  
*The Fiend In You*  
*First Contact*  
*5 Tales From Tomorrow*  
*Flashing Swords*  
*Fourth Galaxy Reader*  
*The Frankenstein Reader*  
*The Frozen Planet*  
*Future Corruption*  
*The Future In Question*  
*Get Out Of My Sky*  
*Ghosts And Things*  
*The Graveyard Reader*  
*Great SF Stories*  
*The Hugo Winners*  
*Imagination Unlimited*  
*Invisible Men*  
*John W Campbell Awards Vol 5*  
*Mathenauts*
- Men Against Tomorrow*  
*More Adventures On Other*  
*Planets*  
*Nebula 8*  
*Nebula 10*  
*Neutron Stars*  
*New Dimensions (8 & 12)*  
*New Dreams This Morning*  
*New Soviet SF*  
*New Worlds Quarterly (1-4)*  
*Annual Worlds Best SF (DAW)*  
 (1978, 1983-1985, 1987-  
 1990)  
*Off The Beaten Orbit*  
*Other Side Of The Moon*  
*Outsiders: Children Of Wonder*  
*Path Into The Unknown*  
*Possible Worlds Of SF*  
*Post Reader Of F & SF*  
*Ruins of Earth*  
*SF Omnibus*  
*SF Showcase*  
*SF Thinking Machines*  
*Seven Come Infinity*  
*Shadow Of Tomorrow*  
*6 Fingers Of Time*  
*6 Great Short SF Novels*  
*Sometimes, Never*  
*Space Odysseys*  
*Space Time And Crime*  
*Spectrum*  
*Star*  
*NS Weinberg Star*  
*Star (2-6)*  
*Star Of Stars*  
*Star Short Novels*  
*Stories Of The Supernatural*  
*Tales Of Love And Horror*  
*Tales To Be Told In The Dark*  
*Things With Claws*  
*Framed 13 Great Stories Of SF*  
*3 From Out There*  
*3 \* INFINITY*  
*Tomorrow The Stars*  
*Treasury Of SF Classics*  
*Treasury Of SF*  
*Ursula K Le Guin's SF Writing*  
*Workshop*  
*Way Out*  
*What If (Vol. 1 & 2)*  
*Worlds Of Tomorrow*  
*Year 2000*  
*Year's Best (Judith Merrill) (1-*  
 5)  
*Zacherley's Midnight Snacks*  
*Zacherley's Vulture Stew*



## BRINGING IT ALL BACK HOME

**M**uch could be—indeed, has been—written about the woman who, when she sends the lovely wares of her imagination into the world as stories, so often styles herself “James Tiptree, Jr.”

For a long time, of course, everyone thought that Tiptree was a man, even those who had been carrying on correspondences with her. As Ursula K. Le Guin confesses in an introduction to *Star Songs of an Old Primate* (Del Rey, 1978), Alice Sheldon’s third collection of eloquent and moving stories, “I don’t think I have ever been so completely surprised in my life — or so happily,” as when she learned that “Tip,” too, was a woman.

The delightful shock of a delightful recognition.

Others may not have been so happily surprised, however, and I am sure that at least a few received the news with a brief inner sinking. In any event, the aftershocks of the revelation rumbled through the terra cognita of the science fiction field — where everybody, it too often seems, knows absolutely *everything* about everybody else — for months. All that quake-riven ground, as I say, has been surveyed before and will

undoubtedly get stepped off and marveled at again, every time that a curious reader with an abiding affection for truly *human* SF stories tries to come to terms with Tiptree territory. As I am doing now.

My own reaction to the startling news that James Tiptree, Jr., had undergone a change of sex?

First, I have no clear recollection of the year. 1975? 1976? 1977? Somewhere in there, maybe '77. Nor do I remember whether I first read the story in a newsletter or heard it from a colleague in a telephone conversation. What I do recall is afterward going to the bookcase here in my study and picking out from it the only two paperbacks bearing the magical Tiptree byline, a pair of story collections (for “he” had not yet published a novel): *Ten Thousand Light-Years from Home* (Ace, 1973) and *Warm Worlds and Otherwise* (Ballantine, 1975). Some of my favorite stories in the field sat shoulder to shoulder in these two books, elbowing one another with their diverse styles and storytelling approaches but somehow achieving a unity of theme and vision that made them... well, unmistakably Tiptreesque.

From the early Ace

volume, let me cite such titles as “Beam Us Home,” “The Peacefulness of Vivyan,” “The Man Who Walked Home,” and “I’ll Be Waiting for You When the Swimming Pool Is Empty” (all four included here), which is not even to mention “And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hill’s Side,” “Painwise,” and “Forever to a Hudson Bay Blanket.” And from *Warm Worlds and Otherwise*, “The Milk of Paradise,” the Hugo-Award-winning “The Girl Who Was Plugged In,” the Nebula-Award-winning “Love Is the Plan the Plan Is Death” (included here), “On the Last Afternoon,” and the uncannily fine “The Women Men Don’t See,” this last title, as Le Guin, with amused approval, was later to note, now redolent of irony.

Anyway, I thumbed through these two books, savoring the titles, rereading certain passages, and now and again closing my eyes and shaking my head. The inimitable Tiptree a woman? One of my fleeting first responses to the news may have been a *small* twinge of dismay.

A decade ago, you see, it was popular among some fans and critics to argue that all the best new writers to have made their debut in the SF field since

'62 or so were women, with maybe three or four exceptions. In the early to mid-1970s, I was sometimes singled out as an exception, and sometimes not, but James Tiptree, Jr., *always* made that grudging list, and I was proud of him for showing the feminist movers and shakers and their supporters (among whom I enthusiastically counted myself) that a man could indeed write as perceptively and sympathetically about women as women could write about themselves. “The Women Men Don’t See,” in particular, proved the point; and in a story called “Allegiances,” whose narrator is a young woman named Clio Noble, I had even gone so far as to write my own version of the confrontation with aliens that gives the Tiptree story so much of its impact.

Think, then, about the irony implicit in my (first) (fleeting) reaction to news that James Tiptree, Jr., was in astonishing fact of the, uh, contrary gender. Michael Bishop, enlightened male feminist and science fiction writer, had just lost an ally in his secret struggle to prove that “a man could indeed write as perceptively and sympathetically,” etc., etc. In other words, my (initial) (evanescent) reaction

was both selfish and sexist. Yes, Alli/Tip, S-E-X-I-S-T, *sexist*, and I suddenly had a picture of myself snapping my suspenders, smoking a big green cigar, and shouting down the stairs at my wife to bring me, double-damn-quick, a cup of coffee and a Danish.

And then I leaned my head back and laughed. I was laughing at myself, I was laughing at the perfection with which Alice Sheldon had disguised her workaday identity without really playing anyone false, and I was laughing at the immense, rotten scaffolding of prejudices, assumptions, halftruths, and outright lies that bigots and believers alike so often erect around themselves to give their hatreds or their hobbyhorse a home. I may have even done a giddy little tapdance, who knows? For in having once claimed "James Tiptree, Jr." as an exemplar of the fact that men can "write as perceptively and sympathetically about women," etc., etc., I now saw that the obverse was manifestly true—namely, that women can write as perceptively and sympathetically about men as men can about themselves. And yet that was no revelation at all, for I had believed *that* almost intuitively — for a long time. Why, then, had I such a strong need to garner praise for creating believable female characters in my own work?

The answer to that question says more about me, and about the profound social corrective of the women's movement

from the late 1960s to today, than it does about James Tiptree, Jr., or about the stories in this book, and I do not want to go into the matter here. Instead, let me point out that those writers with the most humane understanding of the species are those with either a built-in or an arduously acquired empathy for people of *every* race, age, faith, nationality, and sex (there may be more than two sexes, you know) under our tiny sun. Alice Sheldon demonstrably possesses this kind of empathy, and her stories reflect it. They reflect it in a way that enriches the science fiction field by bringing humanity — not, specifically, either maleness or femaleness — to settings beyond our experience, to conflicts beyond our unaided imagination, and to characters of alien as well as earthly origin.

Which was one of the points I had intended to make by calling this introduction "Bringing It All Back Home." For even in her most highflying and far-flung fantasies, Alice James Raccoona Tiptree Sheldon, Jr. (to borrow once more from Ursula Le Guin), always takes care to bring the story home. To make it, even as it soars, sing and belch and weep and sweat and somersault. She does this by guying it securely to the upright and/or crooked constants of the human heart. Which is a fancy way of saying that no matter how strange the place that Tiptree takes us, or how distant, or how lightless, we will ultimately find our way to both

comprehension and compassion because she makes us want to understand and she encourages us to care. And that of course is what a real writer must do, bring her stories home by never forgetting where home actually lies. Tiptree, bless her, never forgets.

*Abominations, that's what they are: afterwords, introductions, all the dribble around the story.*

—J. Tiptree, Jr., 1971

Le Guin prefaced her introduction to *Star Songs of an Old Primate* with the daunting little epigram you see above. She got around the problem of dribbling on the stories themselves by discussing instead the *significance* of the revelation that James Tiptree, Jr., was also Alice Sheldon. Her remarks there bear reading, or re-reading, and if I had Le Guin's grace and wisdom, I would quit the field without another word. But Tip, or Alli, asked me to do this, and I am unable to retire without dribbling, maybe in a fashion *forgivably* abominable, over the contents of this new book, *Byte Beautiful* (Doubleday, 1985).

You see, I am one of those people who *like* introductions, prefaces, forewords, afterwords, auctorial asides, and gratuitous oh-by-the-ways. I used to go to the movies early so that I could see the previews of coming attractions and stayed late to catch the trailers. If you are not a person similarly afflicted, you probably

bailed out of "Bringing It All Back Home" long ago, assuming that you even stopped to sniff its first page; you are now flying high on the wings of the Good Stuff that follows. But if you are a fellow forewordphile, intent on getting a little extra for your dollar, even if what you get is really only the literary equivalent of a Cracker Jack prize (a Chinese finger cuff, say, whose grip is feeble and easily broken), let me try to hold you for another two or three minutes.

(Delaying gratification, I have been informed by experts, is sometimes a means of heightening one's pleasure.)

(Of course, even experts have their off-days.)

Consider "Excursion Fare," a story first published in Judy-Lynn del Rey's *Stellar # 7 Science-Fiction Stories* in August 1981. Previously uncollected and unaccountably not much remarked in its only previous appearance, this novelette demonstrates the patented attention-grabbing Tiptree technique to a fare-thee-well. Two downed balloonists, with whom the reader willy-nilly sympathizes, face what seems an inescapable death in a storm at sea. I give very little away reporting that they are rescued — for the worried reader, helplessly flipping ahead, can see that this is a *long* story, with dialogue, and not a survival-experience tale in the mode of Stephen Crane's "The Open Boat." A shift of mental gears, then, as the reader, grati-



fied by the rescue, settles in to enjoy a tale that now appears designed to illuminate what the author herself may consider the most viable and humane approach to caring for people who are terminally ill. In other words, "Excursion Fare" has made a sudden but apt transition from pure adventure story to the kind of information-imparting narrative favored by utopian didacticists from Sir Thomas More to H. G. Wells to B. F. Skinner. How do these happy, as opposed to terrifying, "death ships" work? What impact are they likely to have on the laws and customs of the "civilized" nations that the mercy ships have sailed to escape? And so on.

Tiptree, however, complicates the story yet again, and this time I leave it to you to encounter the unexpected and gripping twist for yourself. In many ways an old-fashioned story, as even its *Astounding/Analog-ish* title forthrightly suggests, "Excursion Fare" derives its power from our concern for Dag and Philippa, and for all the other people aboard the *Charon*, and from Tiptree's ability to underscore the human dimension of an event that might in other hands assume vast and impersonal proportions. As nearly always in a Tiptree tale, we are brought home to the indefatigable resources of the human spirit—without being

swamped by mere rote or Pollyannaish sentiment.

Now consider all the stories in *Byte Beautiful* that deal in one way or another with the deep-seated human homing impulse. I think that with only a little effort I could make a case for putting every story herein gathered into that category, not omitting the aforementioned "Excursion Fare" and the hilariously satirical "I'll Be Waiting for You When the Swimming Pool Is Empty." Two stories in this collection—significantly, to my mind—have the word *home* in their titles, "Beam Us Home" and "The Man Who Walked Home." The former takes the *Star Trek* phenomenon, which began in the late 1960s and has lately obtained new impetus from the success of three feature films, and uses one of its lovely but hackneyed premises—the technological fellowship of the starship *Enterprise*—to shine a caustic light upon the contrasting reality of our own malodorous and hate-filled times. Who among us feels comfortably at home strolling through the antique furniture of our twentieth-century condominium? Certainly not Hobie, the protagonist of "Beam Us Home," a story that ends on a note of such ironic poignancy that you may find yourself torn between laughing and crying. "The Man Who Walked Home," on the other hand, upends

Hobie's wish (the desire to realize, *now*, a conjectural future of love and sanitized adventure) in its documentary portrait of the victim of a gone-awry scientific experiment struggling as valiantly as Sisyphus to reach again the imperfect world from which the mishap evicted him.

Robert Frost has written: "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, / They have to take you in," and also "I should have called it / Something you somehow haven't to deserve"—but Tiptree's people, almost always deserving, characteristically have to think, fight, suffer, scheme, and endure simply to *find*, or *refind*, the place that they can recognize spiritually as home. This is true of Hobie in "Beam Us Home," John Delgano in "The Man Who Walked Home," the crazy female courier in "Your Faces, O My Sisters!", the mind-wiped title character in "The Peacefulness of Vivyan," the alien Moggadeet in "Love Is the Plan," and the facially deformed Carol Page in the extraordinary novella "With Delicate Mad Hands," printed previously only in the Tiptree collection *Out of the Everywhere* (Del Rey, 1981).

Indeed, "With Delicate Mad Hands" contains one passage of headlong movement and urgency—the approach of the spacecraft *Calgary* on the veiled

radioactive world called Auln—that bears out Robert Silverberg's contention that one of the identifying talents of Tiptree is the "ability to create a scene of sustained and prolonged movement, a juggernaut." And it is telling that the scene here in question describes a movement that the reader comes to view in retrospect as a *homing*, for Carol Page (a/k/a Cold Pig), like Hobie in "Beam Us Home" and John Delgano in "The Man Who Walked Home," has had to travel wide and far to find a place in spiritual consonance with her own modest, and altogether human, longings.

It sounds almost corny to say so, but what almost all Tiptree characters are searching for, the "home" toward which the private tropisms of their hearts invariably orient them, is a four-letter word, *love*. A foolish introducer, which I have already proved myself, could milk from this conclusion another five or six stodgy pages of dribble, but even I am not that pathetically lacking in grace and wisdom. Therefore, reader, if you are perusing this introduction in a bookstore or a library, do the sensible thing and either buy the book or check it out. Then go home.

Go home and read the stories.

*Pine Mountain, Georgia*  
January 11-13, 1985 ■

## An Afterword to an Introduction

I wrote “Bringing It All Back Home,” my introduction to the hardcover Tiptree collection *Byte Beautiful* (1985), more than seven years ago. Alice B. Sheldon, who invited me to call her Alli was, after the less than welcome revelation of her identity, she invited all her friends to do), asked me to write it in a telephone call in the latter part of 1984. I felt singularly honored. Early in my I’d felt both honored and daunted when my story “Death and Designation Among the Asadi” had prompted Alli (whom her best pen pals back then called “Tip”) to wonder in a letter to Virginia Kidd what I would do for an encore. Anyway, feeling honored and daunted again, I jumped to write the intro to *Byte Beautiful*.

It was hardly Alli’s best collection. Indeed, in his introduction to the near-definitive Tiptree anthology *Her Smoke Rose Up Forever* (1990) from Arkham House, John Clute excoriates Doubleday’s *Byte Beautiful* as a volume “complete with expurgations to fit its contents to the library market, a collection of old and new work oddly sorted and poorly argued as a conspectus of her distinguished career.” I mostly

agree. However, if Clute meant the latter part of his criticism to apply to “Bringing It All Back Home,” I can say only that I never meant to represent the eight stories in Doubleday’s visibly cheapjack edition as a distillation of Alli’s career, merely to point out one strong unifying element in her work (Clute nods more convincingly towards death, itself a kind of homecoming) and to celebrate the vividness, intensity, and compassion of Alli’s prose.

Nearly all her writing had these qualities. For example, when I was assembling my omnibus anthology *Light Years and Dark* in 1983 and ’84, I didn’t choose one of Tiptree’s remarkable stories, but instead a vividly gritty autobiographical essay called “How to Have an Absolutely Hilarious Heart Attack” from the fanzine *Khatru*. I retitled the essay “Painwise in Yucatan” and used it in *Light Years and Dark* as if it had all the cachet and resonance of a fine piece of fiction. I justified its use by observing that one of Tiptree’s identifying pre-occupations was “the theme of human contact with the uncompromisingly alien,” and by insisting that in her essay she confronted “this same [science-fictional] theme as a

relatively well-to-do Westerner in a relatively unspoiled, and so less than luxurious, outpost of the Third World.”

Whether you approve or condemn the unorthodoxy of my choice of Alli’s essay for a comprehensive SF omnibus makes little difference here. You see, I have an embarrassing story to tell about myself in regard to “How to Have an Absolutely Hilarious Heart Attack,” and in my (retrospective) embarrassment resides at least a degree of my fondness for it. First, when I read it in *Khatru* a year or so before anyone knew for certain, and few suspected, that Tiptree was — my God! — a woman, it struck me as so humorously masculine a reminiscence that I made complete identification with its narrator, right down to the discomfiture “he” had experienced wearing a small “blue nylon nurse’s dress” as a hospital gown. Later, knowing that Alice B. Sheldon had written the essay, I felt sure that at a spot or two in it she had fudged the facts of her true gender to deepen the reader’s implicit belief that James Tiptree, Jr. was male. At some point, I relayed this feeling — this benign accusation — to Alli in a letter.

I don’t have her reply

at hand, but I remember that Alli didn’t believe she had played the reader false; indeed, she wanted to know what textual support I had for my feeling.

I wrote her back to the effect that in her heart-attack piece, her world-weary Tiptree persona had had a chivalrously masculine reluctance, not to say self-consciousness, about revealing “my grizzled, uh, nudity” to “beautiful young ladies, or young ladies beautiful or otherwise.” Later, a dilapidated portable X-ray unit in the Mexican hospital goes off “like fireworks, spraying me and everybody with a broadside of hard radiation,” and the Tiptree persona adds, not quite parenthetically, “I thanked my stars that my gonads had little future.” I was convinced that the Tiptree solicitous modesty before female nurses and his outright reference to “gonads” proved that Alli had written her reminiscence with at least a measure of coy duplicity. Alli, on the other hand, expressed surprise and befuddlement.

Our subsequent dialogue, which took place almost wholly through the mails, went something like this:

Alli: “Do you think it impossible for an older woman to feel self-con-



sciousness before attractive young hospital workers? Or to have some concern for their sensibilities?”

Me: “Uh, well, er...”

Alli: “It isn’t. Not at all.”

Me: “Okay, I guess not. I’m sorry.”

Alli: “What about Tip’s gonads remark led you to suppose it an exclusively masculine comment?”

Me (embarrassed): “Well, golly, aren’t they part of the male sexual equipment? Like the prostate? Like the masculine member? Like the testicles?”

Alli (flabbergasted): “You mean you actually didn’t know that females have gonads too?”

Me (babbling) (again): “Uh, well, er...”

Alli: “Michael, maybe you’d better go to a dictionary and look up the word gonad. Go ahead. Do it right now.”

Me (consulting my *American Heritage Dictionary*): “Gonad: The organ that produces gametes; a testes or ovary.”

Alli (pedagogically triumphant): “There. See? Gonad is a genderless biological term that doesn’t pigeonhole the identified object by sex. Every healthy mammal has gonads, regardless of its sex, just as every healthy mammal has kidneys or lungs. Can you tell me, Michael, what a gamete is?”

Me (distractedly con-

sulting my dictionary again): “Uh, well, yeah, here: ‘A neglected girl who roams about the streets’ or ‘A girl of impish appeal.’”

Alli: “That’s gamine, Michael, not gamete. How did a man of your years and education manage to sidestep knowledge of the word gonad? It’s hardly as esoteric as, say, choclea or thalamus.”

Me: “Do you really want to know? How my confusion about the meaning of gonad arose, I mean?”

Alli: “Well, of course. I want to know as much as I can about everything, Michael.”

Me: “At one of the schools I attended — in Tulsa, Oklahoma, or Seville, Spain, or Athens, Georgia — I once saw a young man getting ready to qualify for a track event. He wore a T-shirt with what I assumed to be the name NAD printed in capital letters across its chest. A contingent of his friends had come to cheer him on. When the starter fired his pistol and the young man began to run, his friends chanted loudly, ‘Go, Nad! Go, Nad! Go, Nad!’ Laughing, I assumed the name masculine and the organ so cutely alluded to also the property of my own sex.”

Alli: “A fantastic story. Is it true?”

Me: “Yes, ma’am. All of it. The part about the T-shirt and the chant, and the part about my auto-

matic assumption that because the runner using the alias Nad was male, gonad was synonymous with teste. Something about Nad’s T-shirt should have tipped me to the fact that it had a broader meaning, though.”

Alli: “And what was that?”

Me: “The lettering on the T-shirt was blue, while the T-shirt itself was pink.”

Alli (affectionately): “Men!”

In his introduction to *Her Smoke Rose Up Forever* (and what a powerful title that is, by the way), John Clute writes, “Most American writers burn out because they have ransacked too savagely experiences too slender to grow back after the frost of exposure; James Tip-tree, Jr., burns out from the freight and convergence of the years. The spirit is willing but the body is weak. She burns out *old*. She leaves behind her a body of work no young writer could have conceived, no old writer should have had the energy to shape. And that, in the end, is the secret of her Janus face — her antic glances so deathward-bound, her deathward gaze so full of life.”

I can add little to Clute’s eloquent epitaph that I haven’t already said in “Bringing It All Back Home” (unless I examine some of the individual stories in detail), other than

that I am proud to have known, through letters and telephone calls, Alli the forever-struggling-to-fulfill-herself human being, and genuinely delighted that James Turner at Arkham House has preserved so much of her best work in a 520-page collection. *Her Smoke Rose Up Forever* should be on the shelf of every literate English-speaking person who loves either the short story as an art form or the inimitable magic of science fiction when it truly soars.

June 2-3, 1992

In the spirit of her who has inspired us, depressed us, and turned us inside out, in whose names — Alice, James, Raccoona — we not only read more passionately and write more boldly but also sit down with chocolate in all its many manifestations and savor it without guilt...

For months after my first Readercon, which was Readercon 4, I threatened to write a short essay on why Readercon was the con I loved to hate. There was the "Keynote Panel" that had no women on it. There was "Reloading the Canon," which had one: me. Most aggravating was "All Men are Brothers, but My Brothers Were Scum: Female Chauvinist Fiction." We wasted ten minutes shoveling out from under the title.

On the other hand, the shoveling started a number of discussions, conversations, and tirades that I wouldn't have missed for anything. Around December, I found myself actually looking forward to coming back. Besides, now that James Tiptree Jr. has been invoked as guest "in memoriam," I'm willing to sacrifice the chance to score a few quick points in favor of exploring the fertile intersection of feminism and f/sf.

Alice/James (Alice James?) obviously lived there, and not complacently, as attested by her dozens of white-hot stories, her two novels, and the conundrum she offered us all on the uncertainties of gender. In the five years since her death, her legacy has continued to grow; now it includes the James Tiptree, Jr. Memorial Award and a proudly high-cal and wickedly witty cookbook, *The Bakery Men Don't See*.

I was at WisCon 15 in March 1991 and heard Pat Murphy's now-legendary GoH speech that launched a (soon to be!) thousand bake sales. I have a recipe in the cookbook, organized a fund-raising raffle, wrote a couple of articles about the award, nominated several books, and made it to WisCon 16 to see the first awards — plaque, check, and chocolate typewriter, not to mention airfare — go to Gwyneth Jones for *White Queen* and Eleanor Arnason for *A Woman of the Iron People*.

Reading my way through 1991 with the Tiptree Award in mind, I was struck by how few novels of the novels I read — most, since I review f/sf for *Feminist Bookstore News*, by women — fulfilled the criterion that Pat

sketched in her speech: "a fictional work that explores and expands the roles of women and men." Despite the dozens of strong (and often solitary) female starship captains, sorcerers, and mercenary soldiers that have ranged through f and sf in the last decade or two, the issue of gender has remained a relatively unexplored frontier.

I came to f/sf in the late 1970s by way of the feminist print movement. Of cons, fandom, and the sf small press I knew next to nothing. Not until I began work on what would become *Memories and Visions*, my first anthology of women's fantasy and science fiction (Crossing Press, 1989), did that change. Now that I travel regularly between the worlds, vertigo is my frequent companion. Border crossings are no picnic.

My attempts at translation started in the early 1980s, when I worked at Lammas, the feminist bookstore in Washington, D.C. I tried to interest customers in my favorite novels by Suzy McKee Charnas, Octavia Butler, Vonda N. McIntyre, Joanna Russ (whatever wasn't out of print), and Elizabeth A. Lynn. "I don't read scifi," all too many of

them said. "I'm not into science." "I don't do elves." "Yick! Those covers!"

Editing my anthologies took me deeper and deeper into *Catch-22* land. From the publishing/marketing angle, feminism and f/sf turned out to be the Mismatch from Hell. Trade paperbacks, far and away the format of choice in feminist publishing, don't even fit on the shelves of sf bookstores — which proved devilishly hard to locate. Silly me! Accustomed to the well-organized feminist independent-press network, I assumed that someone had a comprehensive, up-to-date list of stores and dealers.

These ever-escalating anomalies led me to suspect a time/ space warp. Feminist bookstores could carry my anthologies with no trouble, but since the feminist review media virtually ignored all three of them, readers weren't exactly beating down the doors. F/sf reviewers, in marked contrast, have been generous, especially considering that — at the beginning, at least — I was totally unknown. But gods help the poor reader of *Locus*, *Aboriginal SF*, or *Scavenger's Newsletter* who went looking for my books in the local sf bookstore or



the next convention; they weren't there.

My equanimity was en route to Pluto even before I learned that my books weren't eligible for the Readercon Small Press Awards, because Crossing Press (a) employed more than one person full-time, and (b) was not a university press. (Just as well: otherwise I would have bitched a lot louder that all this year's judges are men.) I hear that the rules have been revised somewhat, and I'm grateful.

After my long wanderings through this wilderness, gatherings like WisCon and Gaylaxicon are like glorious homecomings. No need to explain who James Tiptree, Jr. was, or why the dearth of lesbian characters in f and sf is a better

jumping-off point for discussion than "female chauvinist fiction." It's no fluke that the James Tiptree, Jr. Award came to life at WisCon, which has flaunted its feminism for years. Two hypotheses (1) neither feminism nor the conditions that spawned it are dead, and (2) great marvels grow in the valley formed by the confluence of f/sf and feminism.

What I would really like to see — and my reasons have as much to do with the nuts and bolts of independent publishing and distribution as with ideas and literary styles — is a lot more traveling between those rivers. Conglomerate publishing and chain bookselling do not have our best interests or deepest passions at heart. Plenty of good stuff "gets

through," true enough, but the more reliable alternatives we have, the better.

Feminism's undercapitalized miracle is its network of bookstores and book publishers, with the well-read bimonthly trade journal Feminist Bookstore News playing the essential role of Communications Central. A few independent distributors, like Inland Book Co. on the east coast and Bookpeople on the west, channel the books from publisher to store. I didn't fully appreciate how well this always-evolving system works until I floundered into a world that had nothing comparable.

On the other hand, the feminist periodical scene is anemic compared to its fantasy, science fiction,

and horror counterpart. How do feminist short-fiction writers hone their skills and develop an audience? Beats me. Also missing on the feminist side is the array of conventions, which draw writers and readers together and also provide an alternate distribution network for books, 'zines, and other stuff.

No matter how widely our literary and political assumptions diverge, we share a commitment to the writers and readers of nonhomogenized literature. The feminist and f/sf print networks have plenty of practical experience to offer each other about living up to that commitment. If James/Alice really does appear at Readercon 5, I have great faith that we'll at least get some fuses lit. ■



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# INTRODUCTION TO HER SMOKE ROSE UP FOREVER

It may not be the truth about American writers, but it is the story. So we print the story. American writers, we say, are like meteors. Flashes in the pan. Mayfly angels. Out of the nowhere, into the here they come, hurtling brazenly through their short day to give us joy, strewing largesse and seed about as though there were no tomorrow, which indeed there isn't—because the air of the planet soon gets them, seizes shut the wings of song, burns them out. Afterwards, stuck together with mucilage and pulp, they may linger for a few years in the atriums of America, for hire; but it is not a warm world for sharecroppers, and after the mating flight American writers are terribly fragile, like beehives in a frost. They rust. They crumble at the touch. That is the story we are told, the legend we print, half-right but vicious. It may have shaped the lives (it has certainly poisoned our perception of the lives) of writers like Truman Capote, Dashiell Hammett, Jack Kerouac, Theodore Sturgeon. And James Tiptree, Jr.?

Sometimes the shoe fits. Creative burnout is

not a curse peculiar to writers, nor to Americans; but writers, notoriously vulnerable in the solitude of their craft, find it terribly difficult in America to discover a middle ground between total obscurity and the fifteen minutes of crowded fame we're all supposed to get and catch our deaths from; and without that middle ground there is no respite. America, it might be said, is a land without a midlist, a land which affords no cushion — no community, no reciprocity, no clerisy, no network of readers — to sustain the writer in her flight. It is, therefore, all the more remarkable that, just a few generations ago, in the flat heart of this continent, a few men and women and boys and girls were able to give birth to the science-fiction community. They did not invent science fiction itself (though many of them thought they had), but they did manage to invent (or to reinvent) a mutual society in the heart of a cultural maelstrom, a society of readers and writers and workers which still exists, overgrown and market-driven and hype-ridden though it may sometimes seem to have become. From 1926 or so, unlike

his peers, the science-fiction writer comes from somewhere and has somewhere to land. From outside the kraal it must seem a warm world indeed.

For the woman who became James Tiptree, Jr., in 1968, and who nestled within that pseudonym for a decade — like an imago beyond price hiding deep inside the kind of Russian doll we now call a babushka — the world of science fiction may well have seemed irresistible. Though she remained invisible until her identity was uncovered, the SF community did nourish her, did constitute a middle ground she could (if only vicariously) live inside, as she attested in correspondence. We cannot know for sure why she became James Tiptree, Jr., nor why she began almost to confess her true identity through the creation in 1974 of Raccoona Sheldon as a second pseudonym; and it is almost certain that speculations about the motives of Alice B. Sheldon (1915-1987) would be an impertinence against her memory. All we can know at this stage is that — during the years of secrecy — she burned like a meteor. All we know for sure is that the

stories she wrote from 1970 until 1977 — when her health began to fail and her secret identity finally collapsed — comprise the finest and most moving single spate of creative energy the field has ever seen. In the secrecy of the male pseudonym she inhabited during the years of her astonishing prime, and under the cover of the gregarious, life-affirming, gemütlich personality she created in letters and nonfiction for that Tiptree self, Alice B. Sheldon wrote free. She wrote young. She wrote to the edge and beyond. And she wrote like a man.

(In 1975, in his introduction to Tiptree's *Warm Worlds and Otherwise*, Robert Silverberg gave voice to a biocritical speculation about the author which has since become famous. "It has been suggested that Tiptree is female," he wrote, "a theory that I find absurd, for there is to me something ineluctably masculine about Tiptree's writing." Given human nature, it's unlikely many of Silverberg's readers could have failed to enjoy the discomfiture he must have felt in 1977 when Tiptree's identity was uncovered; and there is no denying that what he said was both



inapposite in its self-assurance and culture-bound in its assumption that an artifact of language — in this case the phallogocentric *parole* of themes and tropes and rhythms and rituals and syntaxes greased for power which makes up “masculine discourse” — was in itself inherently sexed, so that only a biological male could utter it. This was surely careless of Silverberg. Artifacts — like jungle gyms, like pseudonyms — are in themselves inherently *learnable*. They can be climbed into. At the same time, of course, Silverberg did have a point. To deny that Tiptree did in fact sound “like a man” is to deny one’s clear sense that male hegemony utters itself in recognizable terms; it also scants the masterly uses to which Tiptree put that artifactual language which owns the world and *tells it*: tells it what it is, tells it what to do. Having aerated and ennobled that language, having turned the tables on the biological presumptions it rides on, she used the sly potent enablement pheromones of “man talk” as a kind of *speed*. She mainlined on the artifact, from within the babushka of Tiptree, itself snugly hidden inside the larger babushka of the SF community; and in that tongue she said things which burned. Like ice. Like fire.)

So she wrote like a

...many of us found it extremely hard to imagine that James Tiptree, Jr., was not, in fact, a person perhaps rather younger than he claimed and certainly in the very peak of condition. I myself thought of a wiry sharp man whose colour was the colour of marmalade, like a tiger out of Blake.

man, and a meteor, a flash in the pan, a mayfly angel. Three years after beginning to write science fiction, she was already nearing her astonishing peak, and by 1977 (as we’ve already noted) she had begun to flame out, though the evidence for this was obscured till later by variable gaps between writing and publication of stories. Before 1977, all we knew of James Tiptree, Jr., was that he was no longer young, because he’d told us that he was middle-aged; he also claimed to be (Chicago-born, often abroad in his youth, involved in intelligence work in World War II; and postal evidence suggested that he lived somewhere near Washington, DC. All the same, many of us found it extremely hard to imagine that James Tiptree, Jr., was not, in fact, a person perhaps rather younger than he claimed and certainly in the very peak of condition. I myself thought of a wiry sharp man whose colour was the colour of marmalade, like a tiger out of Blake. Whether or not I was ever induced to think of him as a woman I cannot remember; but I know I was not prepared to think of him as a sixty-year-old woman whose health was precarious, whose first serious heart attack would quite possibly mark the end of any hope she might have to launch herself again, like a tightrope-walker across the void, like a man

who walked home, burning energy like a tiger in the night, giving us the tale still taut from the young muscle of her hands, the touch of her secret breath.

But she was a sixty-year-old woman. Her health was indeed precarious. One way or another, the air of the planet did get her. And the work she produced in her last decade — though it would grace the oeuvres of many writers — seemed, in comparison with the work of her prime, churchy and fey, self-pitying and exiguous. Unfortunately, because her publishing career was oddly shaped, most readers by the end of the 1980s knew nothing more of Tiptree than that late work. She had written two novels — *Up the Walls of the World* (1978) and *Brightness Falls from the Air* (1985) — but only the latter, weaker volume seemed readily available. The late short stories had been generously hardbacked with the release of *Tales of the Quintana Roo* (1986), *The Starry Rift* (1986), and *Crown of Stars* (1988); and “The Color of Neanderthal Eyes” (1990), her penultimate tale, and the best work she produced in the final spate that preceded her suicide, finally received book publication as part of a Tor Double. Two stories from her prime had also appeared in doubles — “The Girl Who Was Plugged In” (1988) and

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"Houston, Houston, Do You Read?" (1989) — but the great mass of her best work had become difficult to trace for those who remember it. Her finest stories had appeared in four paperback volumes — *Ten Thousand Light-Years from Home* (1973), *Warm Worlds and Otherwise* (1975), *Star Songs of an Old Primate* (1978), and *Out of the Everywhere, and Other Extraordinary Visions* (1981) — and though each one of them could claim to be among the very few significant collections to appear during that period, not one of them was ever even published in hardback (except for the first, released in England by Methuen in a setting that boasted unjustified right margins and a whole new crop of proofing errors to augment the contemptible slurry of goofs that corrupted the ill-edited original version from Ace). Subsequently, Doubleday did publish, in *Byte Beautiful* (1985), complete with expurgations to fit its contents to the library market, a collection of old and new work oddly sorted and poorly argued as a conspectus of her distinguished career. James Tiptree, Jr., had become virtually unknowable.

The publication of *Her Smoke Rose Up Forever*, as edited by James Turner, comes therefore as an important event. Because almost every story James Tiptree, Jr., wrote at the apogee of her passage

across the heavens is here assembled, *Her Smoke Rose Up Forever* ranks as one of the two or three most significant collections of short science fiction ever published. Of the eighteen stories in the volume, I would have myself omitted only one, "And I Have Come upon This Place by Lost Ways" (published in 1972 but written at the end of 1968: all further citations will be to year of composition only), because the cartoon crudity of its telling conforms all too well to the melodramatic epiphanizing of its close. And of those stories Turner has had to omit, I would have argued fervently only for one, "All the Kinds of Yes" (1971), a tale which refines and darkens and speeds up and in the end utterly transforms the comic clatter of Tiptree's earliest work, so that "Yes" closes on a twist of plot (just who *isn't* an alien in the bloody thing) which is an epiphany which is a worldview which is a shrug which is a benediction, all at once. Of the seventeen remaining stories, every single one is a joy, a consolation of achieved form; swift in nuance, extravagant in density, extroverted, *athletic*; but also (because James Tiptree, Jr., was possibly the darkest writer ever to publish science fiction of the first rank) every single one tells some sort of death.

Almost every story

Like a shaping bone within the babushka of the world, the skull of death may ultimately stare the show shut, but the grin on the mask of James Tiptree, Jr., is the tender knowing omen-haunted gong-tormented grin of a wise lover with no time to spare, whose time is limited.

collected in *Her Smoke Rose Up Forever* ends in death, literal or metaphorical, experienced or nigh. Our touch upon the planet is death; sex is an intricacy of death; exogamy (our lust for other species and for the stars) is death; the ultimate taste of any human being (as in the 1973 title story) is of an anguish unto death. Death comes as the end; the end is Death's come The plan is Death. But none of this makes Tiptree a dour writer, though her messages are grim. Because she is an author who talks about the world before turning in, the extroversion of her stories is genuine and exultant. They are crowded with events and folk and things to think about; folding into one breath — one telling — the world and its outcome, they almost seem to *grin*. Like a shaping bone within the babushka of the world, the skull of death may ultimately stare the show shut, but the grin on the mask of James Tiptree, Jr., is the tender knowing omen-haunted gong-tormented grin of a wise lover with no time to spare, whose time is limited. As so many young writers in America have done she flashes across the firmament like a meteor, but with one difference. Most American writers burn out because they have ransacked too savagely experiences too slender to grow back after the frost



of exposure; James Tiptree, Jr., burns out from the freight and convergence of the years. The spirit is willing but the body is weak. She burns out *old*. She leaves behind her a body of work no young writer could have conceived, no old writer should have had the energy to shape. And that, in the end, is the secret of her Janus face — her antic glances so deathward-bound, her deathward gaze so full of life.

The stories collected in *Her Smoke Rose Up Forever* have been sorted into several rough thematic categories. The first two — “The Last Flight of Dr. Ain” (1968; rewritten circa 1974) and “The Screwfly Solution” (1976) — are lessons in what might be called eschatological ecology. Both are told in skewed and variable retrospect, exceedingly complicated to describe but crystalline in the reading. Both are famous. Dr. Ain spreads a virus which will destroy the human race, because the human race has destroyed the Earth its mother (he could be spreading his death seed in anguish and rage this very day). In the second tale, aliens destabilize the fragile equipoise that keeps the two human sexes masked from one another; and men begin to kill the women of the world, because that is the plan of our nature when stripped.

Four tales that further

frame our state now follow. “And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hill’s Side” (1971) argues that any superior alien race will have a cargo effect on humans, binding them most utterly in the region where they are most explosively at risk — which for Tiptree is always the stress-knot of sex. (But always she is Janus-faced, because clearly she loves sex, finds sex fascinating, writes finely of sexual love.) “The Girl Who Was Plugged In” (1969), along with “And I Have Come upon This Place by Lost Ways” (1968), shows a risky aggressiveness of diction and plotting, which the author has not yet fully controlled; the whole flip-pant time-travel narrative frame of “Girl,” for instance, while elbowing us ostentatiously away from the sentimental tale it glosses, in truth only underlines the nurse-romance premises that govern that inner tale. (But how brilliantly she almost carries the farrago off.) And “The Man Who Walked Home” (1971) inscribes the longing for a return to Eden in great flashes across the sky, so vividly that “Man” has become a kind of paradigm of the tale of exile.

Tiptree’s most famous single story heads the next three. “The Women Men Don’t See” (1972) manages almost miraculously (*pace* some feminist readings of

the tale as a univocal advocacy of radical misogyny) to retain a sense of the humanity of the aging alpha male who narrates, who miscomprehends the women with whom he is cast into extremis, who watches them leave the planet altogether rather than remain chinks in his world-machine. “Your Faces, O My Sisters! Your Faces Filled of Light!” (1974) and “Houston, Houston, Do You Read?” (1974) both carry the analysis further — the first in terms of experience traumatized beyond salvation, the second within a science-fiction frame whose orthodoxy makes the arguments it contains about the nature of male humans all the more crushing.

We are barely halfway through. “With Delicate Mad Hands” (1980) and “We Who Stole the Dream” (1977) both show some signs of burnout, the first through excessive length and sentiment, the second through moral gimmickry; word-perfect over its great length, and almost unbearably dark in the detail and momentum of the revelation of its premise that humans are gametes looking to consummate an exogamous fuck they cannot survive, “A Momentary Taste of Being” (1973) may be the finest densest most driven novella yet published in the field. “Her Smoke Rose Up Forever” (1973)

we have mentioned; “Love Is the Plan the Plan Is Death” (1971) has a juggernaut drive, a consuming melancholy of iron, a premise the author never backed away from; “On the Last Afternoon” (1971) pits personal transcendence against the Cultural/biological survival of the race in a tale of such cumulative dialectical drive that it nearly causes burnout to read, “She Waits for All Men Born” (1974) casts in fable form a lesson about Death, who is the dance and the Dancer and the very flesh of Love; and “Slow Music” (1977), Tiptree’s last great story, serves as a requiem for all the gay gorged gangrenous world she loved and gave us the pulse of. At the nub end of our span on Earth, two last young people meet, mate, fail to breed, trek a false river to an ambivalent alien transcendence, stop and trip and slide into the beam of transcendence to become an ode by Keats, deathless but thoroughly dead. It is the end. It was very nearly the end for James Tiptree, Jr.

Soon she was utterly spent. She died old. She is here.



# JEFF SMITH THE SHORT HAPPY LIFE OF JAMES TIPTREE, JR.

The two pieces that follow appeared in 1978 in Jeff Smith's fanzine *Khatru*. They are reprinted here for the first time.

How does one attempt a biography of someone who is more persona than person? When was James Tiptree, Jr. born? Was it 1915, when his alter-ego Alice Sheldon (then Bradley) came into the world? Was it at that childhood date when she discovered science fiction? Was it in 1967, when she began writing sf under the Tiptree name? Or not until March of 1968, when *Analog* published "Birth of a Salesman?"

And how about his death? Did he die in October 1976, or are reports of his demise exaggerated? Alice Sheldon is certainly still alive and kicking. There are still a couple Tiptree stories waiting to be published; two books (*Up The Walls of the World* and *Star Songs of an Old Primate*) have just been released; and a collection of essays and letters is forthcoming. So Tip will be at least illusorily active.

But Tip is not active. At best, he is dormant. At worst, he is gone.

For years, no one even knew that "James Tiptree, Jr." was a pseudonym, much less that "he" was Alice B. Sheldon. The reasons for using a male name? She wanted a non-

descript name, 90 editors would not remember rejecting earlier stories as each new one came in, and women writers tend to stand out because of their relative scarcity. Also, since she was taking a pseudonym anyway, a male one would remove any sexist prejudice. She was primarily aiming for *Analog* at first, and felt that Campbell would give a male by-line a fairer shake. (Using initials might have been better, "A.R. Tiptree, Jr.," or something, but that's hindsight.) Later she invented another writer-persona, Raccoona Sheldon, so that she could communicate as a woman at least part of the time, but the Raccoona project never really had time to get off the ground. (For one thing, most of Raccoona's short stories were rejected, until Tip sent along covering letters suggesting that editors might wish to look at this story by his friend...)

So, the name "James Tiptree, Jr." was supposed to be forgettable. As it turned out, the fact that apparently nobody is actually named "Tiptree" made the pseudonym distinctive rather than invisible.

On October 25, 1976, Alli's mother, Mary Hastings Bradley, died. People who knew Tip knew that his mother had been ill for some time — Tip had even written a story about it,

"Mother in the Sky with Diamonds" in *Galaxy*. When Tip wrote his friends to tell them his mother had finally succumbed, Alli had no idea that this would prove to be the first domino in an unwanted sequence.

On November 8, Tip sent me the following letter, and said it could be used in *Kyben* or *Khatru*:

Dear Jeff,

Whew.

Mother died last week, leaving me with a new dark strange place in the heart, and flashes of a lively, beautiful, intelligent, adventurous red-haired young woman whom I had once known. We were close, even through those godawful years at the end after Father went, when I could barely stand to look upon the wreckage. "Close" in the sense of empathy; I respected and understood her generous heart and witty mind. And her vulnerability... To give you an idea, she left her instructions on the disposal of her bodycheap and fast — in a very funny light verse.

She left me also with the most horrendous practical problem of properly disposing of the 94 years of accumulated memorabilia of Africa, Old Chicago, assorted literary figures, endless treasures mixed in with junk — letters from Carl Sandburg mixed in with grocery

lists, blank stationery, birthday-cards from once-eminences, lace panties, .38 calibre automatics, irreplaceable diaries of treks through Africa, irreplaceable diaries of her life as a war-correspondent (all under her writing name), manuscripts, socks to be mended, mementoes of the visit of the French Navy to Douala in 1935, correspondence with heads of state, unpublished poetry, old curtains. 2000 African moleskins each as big as a postage stamp, unsent letters to me, interminable bequests and codicils, Javanese cloth of gold, more socks to be mended, grocery lists, blank stationery, saved envelopes with obsolete stamps — three rooms full of filing cabinets, one hall and three storerooms (one "secret") — in all 26 rooms of STUFF. Oh, I forgot paintings. And in the middle of it all stands the figure of the Executor, an aged doddering Legal Eminence whom Mother regarded as a young man (he's 83) who has to be shown copies of every arrangement in writing in triplicate, and raises objections such as wanting the appraiser's — one of the appraisers' — curriculum vitae and credentials. Needless to say, appraiser is out of town and has to be tracked down by long-distance. In fact the whole thing is being conducted by long-distance; I was on





the phone FOUR HOURS STRAIGHT Friday — pause for writing confirming letters in triplicate — then another TWO HOURS dealing with financial matters. Luckily Mother died well, in her own home, among her things, independent to the last, but it was a close thing financially. That costs \$30,000 a year, and has been going on. I figured that was what Father had accumulated the cash for, and she ran out just before her capital did. (Before Medicare it cost \$50,000 a year for two years just to care for Father, without the 'round-the-clock nursing Mother needed.) ...Yesterday was easy, only two hours on the phone, but this time with the secretary whose aim is to break me down by reading letters to me she has found going thru Mother's papers I didn't let her know she succeeded. Also notifying Mother's old friends, who have to be told it all in excruciating detail; more break-down... I now have two museums and two Historical Archives fighting over the spoils, all by long distance, plus innumerable friends going in to choose mementoes Mother left notes about, plus — Oh, Jeff, it's a lesson. NEVER be the last of a line, and never *accumulate*.

And I still haven't dealt with her personal effects, clothes, furniture, etc. (26 roomful) — all of which bother the hell out of me. They lived in that

place — Father built the building and they took the whole top, and made the first roof-garden in Chicago — for 64 years. I was born in that fucking bed, the books (10,000) were my earliest companions, I know every chip on every chairleg and every ravel in every rug. And I have to go back and look before the movers roll in, because some of the fucking stuff is valuable... So you can see my head feels like the Bulgarian Tank Corps is holding maneuvers in it.

If you use this, it'll help me by explaining why Tiptree isn't writing anything any more for awhile... maybe it'll also be instructive to somebody. You should keep in the money part; people should know what it costs to die in their own beds at age 94, I intend to die alone on the VA wards, in case something overtakes me before I can get the trigger pulled. Leaving NOTHING.

Just as soon as the last essential paper is signed, I intend to take off — on the urgent advice of my doctor — for parts unreachable by mail. You know where. What is laughingly known as my other or real-life work can go screw it, I am not irreplaceable, I better not be.

If you have aging parents you will come to bless Medicare from the bottom of your heart. Jesus god, without it I shudder to think. And so will you.

Well, this is a weird letter.

Let me know how life goes with you, Jeff old friend. Best to Ann.

As ever, yrs  
Tip

I wrote Tip that I was worried there might be more information in this than he meant to reveal. In particular, I thought the letter was a roadmap to a newspaper obituary. After sending my response off, and worrying over the problem awhile, I decided to look for the obituary myself. If I found it, no harm would be done; no one — not even Tip — would have to know I'd looked, much less that I'd found. If I *couldn't* find it, it would be safe to publish the letter

So I went down to the library, and the very first issue of the Chicago *Tribune* I pulled off the rack contained a little piece in the obituary section entitled "Explorer's last right — no rites." There were a couple discrepancies with the letter (the article said she was 92, and had died in Billings Hospital), but there seemed no doubt to me that Mary Hastings Bradley was James Tiptree's mother.

The last line read, "She is survived by one daughter, Mrs. Alice Hastings (Mrs. Huntington) Sheldon."

This left me very confused. Sheldon was Raccoona's name, and it never occurred to me that Tip and Raccoona were the same person — I corresponded with Raccoona,

too. But if Raccoona was Mary Hastings Bradley's daughter, then why was Tip handling the affairs? And on and on. I could make sense out of no hypothesis.

So, despite my original intentions, I wrote Tip and told him what I had done, and what I had found, and expressed my total bewilderment. I asked him to either tell me the truth or to stop worrying about it. I could accept from Tip a reply of "Patience; all will be revealed in good time," but I couldn't just ignore it on my own.

So that's how I got my first letter from Alice Sheldon.

After revealing herself to me, Alli wrote some of Tip's other friends — some of whom keep secrets better than others. (This is the part of the story that I don't like, and I don't intend to go into it.)

So that's how James Tiptree's secret world died; and without it, could he survive?

Alli Sheldon invited Ann and me down to her home in Virginia. Her first invitation was awkwardly phrased; the way it came out of the typewriter, we were all going to sit around naked and feed cookies to raccoons. She later informed us she wasn't that kinky, but we said we'd go anyway.

She gave us directions to the gas station nearest her, from where we were supposed to call her so she could come out and lead

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us back through the maze of small roads to her place. When we called, she just told us she'd be coming in a stubby blue car. Several stubby blue cars later a woman got out of one, obviously looking for someone. But, we thought, this woman couldn't possibly be Alli!

I didn't have any sort of firm mental image of her as an individual, so I suppose I was looking for the stereotypical 60-year-old woman writer — and not at all for the slim, vital, young-looking person that Alice Sheldon is. (I became acutely aware of my flabby belly.) After brief greetings, she hopped back in her car and sped off, getting halfway down the road before I got off the parking lot. But I managed to keep her in sight and wend on back to the house.

She and her husband (a charming, white-bearded man) live back in the woods near CIA headquarters. They cleared the land by hand, and left some trees standing to build the living room around, the truest indoor garden I've ever seen. (They got used to the snakes, lizards and insects that are always coming in via the drainage pipe.) The place seems to be all windows, which was great on the sunny day we were there, but must be less so during gloomy drizzles. It also gets very cold in the winter, which is one of the reasons Tiptree was always sending postcards from Mexico.

While we were there,

she was Tiptree often, the raconteur telling stories with little or no provocation, the speculator running with ideas to logical, illogical and evocative conclusions. Sometimes (particularly when she and her husband clattered around the kitchen fixing dinner) she was Raccoona, the rather dotty retired schoolteacher supposedly in Wisconsin. These were unconscious — whenever she thought about who she was, she was Alice Sheldon, the one who doesn't write science fiction.

That's who she is most of the time these days.

Alli is pretty well retired now. She was a world traveler as a child (her mother wrote several travel books, one of which was entitled *Alice In Jungland*), a painter, art editor of the *Chicago Sun*, she was in the Army Air Force (where she worked variously as a designer of Christmas cards and in photointelligence), she was a teacher, a research psychologist, and, eventually, an award-winning science fiction writer.

But, it was James Tiptree who was the science fiction writer, and his life could be over, a ten years' wonder.

Whether Alice Sheldon will be able to recreate him, only time will tell. In Tip's stories, his characters were always searching for home. And the searching was always easier than the finding.



# EVERYTHING BUT THE SIGNATURE IS ME

FROM *KHATRU* 7, 1978

**H**ow great. At last it's out.

Yeah. Alice Sheldon. Five ft 8, 62 years, remains of a good-looking girl vaguely visible, grins a lot in a depressed way, very active in sports. Also, Racoon.

I live in a kind of big wooden box in the woods like an adult play-pen, full of slightly mangy plants, fireplace, minimal old "modern teak" furniture strewn with papers, hobbies, unidentifiable and unfile-able objects; the toolroom opens off the bedroom, there are six doors to the outside, and it's colder than a brass monkey's brains in winter, except when the sun comes out and shoots through all the glass skylights. We've added on porches (which turned into libraries), other excrescences — as somebody said, all it needs is a windmill on top. Not so ridiculous now. Ting (short for Huntington, my VERY NICE more aged husband of thirty years who doesn't read what I write but is happy I'm having fun) used to raise thousands of orchids before he retired and started travelling; he gave

them to the nation, i.e. the National Botanic Gardens, who wanted hybrids. So now in the middle of the living room sticks this big untended greenhouse I am supposed to be growing things in. What I'm growing is mealy-bugs — MUST get at it. We built the place very modestly in 1959, when it was all woods here. Now houses, sub-divisions, are creeping toward us. No more stags on the lawn — real ones. But lots of raccoons. Still private enough so you can sneak out and get the mail or slip a cookie to a raccoon in the buff if you want to

If you'd asked me any time from age 3 to 26, I'd have told you "I'm a painter." (Note, not "artist" — painter. Snobism there.) And I was. Oh my, did I draw, sketch, model, smear oils, build gesso, paint — paint — paint. (Age 3 I drew pictures of our bulldog, with lollipop legs.) I worked daily, whether I was supposed to be listening to lectures on Chateaubriand, whether my then-husband was shooting at me (he was a beautiful alcoholic poet), whether the sheriff was carrying our furniture out, whether Father was having a heart attack, whatever.

And I wasn't too bad; I illustrated a couple of books in my early teens, I had a one-man show at 16, I exhibited in the All-American then at the Corcoran — and the painting, which used me as model, sold. Somewhere my naked form is hanging in a bedroom in North Carolina, if it hasn't been junked. I bought a shotgun, a Fox C-E double-barrel 12-gauge full choke, with the money. (Those were the three years when I was a crazy duck-hunter, before I shot one too many cripple and gave it up never to kill another living thing, bugs excluded.) I believe the Fox is now far more valuable than anything I ever did

The trouble was, you see, I was just good enough to understand the difference between my talent and that rare thing, REAL ability. It was as though I had climbed the foothills high enough to see the snow-clad peaks beyond, which I could never scale. This doesn't stop some people; it did me. What's the use of adding to the world's scrap-heap? The reason people thought me innovative was that I was good enough to steal mannerisms and tricks they had never climbed high

enough to study. But I knew where it was coming from.

And then came the dreadful steady unstoppable rise of Hitler — a great spreading black loin-chop on the map — and I found out something else. There are painters who go on painting when a million voices are screaming in terminal agonies. And there are those who feel they have to Do Something about it, however little

So I came back to Chicago — I'd been living in San Angel, near Mexico City, mucking around on the fringes of the Diego Rivera/Orozco/Siqueres crowd, and took a job as the *Chicago Sun's* first art editor, while waiting for the Army to open female enlistments (I wasn't one of the famous first group of female potential officers; for some reason it was important to me to go in as an ordinary G.I. with *women officers*.) Besides, I was having a great time discovering that Chicago was full of artists, who had to exhibit in NYC before they could sell to their Chicago neighbors. Chicago then had two art critics: one was a lethal, totally politicalized Marxist (female), and the other was an elderly gent who

knew art had died with Cezanne, and whose feet hurt. So when people sent works to Chicago shows they didn't get reviewed — or it was worse when they did. Anyway, I rooted out about forty producing groups, started what was then a new thing, a New Yorker-type calendar, told people interesting things to look for in shows. (One Art Institute guard, coping with a host of people with my "guide" clipped out, demanding to know which was the East room, asked me, "Did *you* do this?" Nobody had asked him anything but "Where is the toilet?" for twenty years.)

But this was all waiting, while the paper shortage cut me from a page to a half and then to a quarter. And then the great day came, and I trotted down to US Army Recruitment Station Number 27 in three-inch heels and my little chartreuse crepe-de-chine designer thing by Claire somebody, and my pale fox fur jacket, and found a drunken second lieutenant with his feet on the desk. And when I said I wished to enlist in the Army, he caught an imaginary fly and said, "Ah, hell, you don't want to go in *that* goddamn thing." And I said if it was all the same to him, I did. And so — but that's another, five-year-long, fairly hilarious story.

People tell me I've had an exciting or glamorous or whatnot life; it didn't feel like much but work and a few adventures. A few, ah oui... All

I write is really from life; even that crazy duck-shooting boy breaking the ice naked at 10° below zero on the Apache reservation was me, once ("Her Smoke Rose Up Forever").

As to science fiction: well, you see, I had all these uncles, who are no relation at all, but merely stray or bereaved or otherwise unhappy bachelors whom my parents adopted in the course of their wanderings. (That sort of thing happened much more in the old, old days. The fact that Father was an intensely lovable man of bewildering varied capabilities, and that mother was a blazing-blue-eyed redhead of great literacy and gayety didn't hurt, of course; and in their odd way they were both secretly lonesome — having nothing but peculiar me for family.) This particular uncle was what used to be called a Boston Brahmin, dean of a major law-school, and author of a text on torts so densely horrible that I still meet lawyers who shudder at its name. In short, he was dignified and respectable to an extreme — on the surface, as it turned out.

The summer when I was 9 we were up in the woods of Wisconsin as usual, and Uncle Harry returned from an expedition to the metropolis of 1000 souls thirty miles away with his usual collection of the *New York Times*, *The Kenyon Review*, etc. (There was a funny little bookshop-hole there that ordered things for you ) Out of his bundle slipped a 7 by 9 magazine

with a wonderful cover depicting, if I recollect, a large green octopus removing a young lady's golden brassiere. We all stared. The title was *Weird Tales*.

"Ah," said Uncle Harry. "Oh. Oh yes. I, ah, I picked this up for the child."

"Uncle Harry," I said, my eyes bulging, "I am the child. May I have it, please?"

"Uh," said Uncle Harry. And, slowly, handed it over,

And so it all began. He would slip them to me and I would slip them back to him. Lovecraft — oh god. And more and more and more; we soon discovered *Amazing* and *Wonder Stories* and others that are long forgotten. We never discussed them; it was just Our Secret. But I'll tell you one thing: you haven't read fantasy or sf unless you have retired, with a single candle, to your lonely little cabin in the woods, far from the gaslights of the adult world; and set your candle-stub up in a brass basin and huddled under about sixteen quilts — the nights were cola and drafty, the candle-light jumped and guttered, shadows everywhere. And then, just as you get to where the nameless *thing* starts to emerge, the last shred of candle gutters out, leaving you in the dark forest. And a screech-owl, who has silently taken up position on the roof above, lets loose with a nerve-curdling shriek.

*That's* Tales of Wonder as they should be

read, man.

Well, of course I was hooked, from then on, permanently. By the time World War II came along, I had about 1300 mags and paperbacks stacked in that cabin alone. (I gave them all to the county library, despite the sneers of the librarian, who doubtless used them for door-stops. Alas, alas; rubies, pearls, emeralds gone to the gravel crusher.)

With the war came a break, after which I started all over again. (having discovered the magic of subscriptions). I now have about 40 running feet of them double-stacked, plus head-high shelves bulging in all bathrooms, plus miscellaneous deposits. In addition, there's another 40 feet of philosophy and politics and history, 60 feet of my old professional specialty (Experimental Psychology), 20 feet of math, astronomy and miscellaneous, 20 feet of fiction by dead authors and another 20 of same by live ones (horrible how quickly one seems to have to shift them), 20 feet of Women's Studies and related material, and 20 feet of mostly poetry. And *something* has got to give. (Oh well, who needs *Das Kapital* anyway?)

The painful part of starting like that is that you read, read, read — without, in most cases, noticing dull stuff like the author's name. Until I started to write it myself, of course; then names become acutely important. But I am still in the embarrassing position of not knowing who wrote some



fantastic scene that is forever engraved on my liver. And then finding out, Oh my god, yes of course — *he* or *she* did that! (Worse yet, finding it out in his or her presence, whether in the flesh or in one of my Victorian correspondences.)

Now maybe this is the best place to lay to rest one last ghost — the business of the anonymity and the male pseudonym. First, the important part: EVERYTHING I'VE EVER TOLD ANYONE IS TRUE, with one exception. David Gerrold came looking for me and I told him he was on a different street. If he'd waited before ringing the bell he would have seen through the glass a solitary figure staring at a *Star Trek* rerun in the dark, and I'm sure the jig would have been up. Other than that I have never told a lie or modulated my natural voice — I was very careful about pronouns, things like "child" instead of "boy," etc. etc. But it wasn't calculated. (I'm lousy at that.) All my letters have been just first draft typed as fast as I can go with my one finger, I can't help what people think sounds male or female

You see, when I started, I was in rather a stuffy job atmosphere. A university. And I was something of a maverick; I kept having ideas that didn't jibe with the official academic outlook at my department.

And when I started my own research it got worse. ("In this department we do feel rather strongly that recent PhDs do best when their work fits in with or amplifies some of the ongoing lines of research here.") Well, I wasn't about to fit in with or amplify anybody else's line; I had my own long-held desires, and I kept citing research nobody else had read, or had read and dismissed, and with great pain and struggle I set off on a totally independent tack, which had the ill grace, after four agonizing years, to pay off. (I still keep getting requests for it from obscure European universities, or behind the Iron Curtain.) With this background, the news that I was writing — as I said in that long-ago interview — science fiction would have destroyed my last shreds of respectability and relegated me to the freak department, possibly even to the freak-whose-grant-funds-should-be-stopped division; those familiar with older academe will get the picture. Anonymity seemed highly desirable. And besides, I had no idea the stuff would sell. So I just picked a name off a jar of marmalade, adding the "James" as one more bit of cover — and my husband threw in "Jr." for whimsy's sake. And then it all sold and I was stuck with it. What started as a prank

dreamed its way into reality.

You have to realize, this never was run as a real clandestine operation with cut-outs and drops and sanitizing and so on. The only "assets" were one PO box, a little luck, and the delicacy and decency of some people who decided not to pry

When Jeff Smith wrote asking for that *Phantasmicon* interview was the first time I was approached personally by anyone, and I told myself, Dammit, say no. But then this business of really loving the sf world and wanting to say so welled up and I thought I could kind of race over the bio bit without telling lies and start waving Hello. You'll note what I put in there about masks... So that's how it all started.

Then, from about the second year, when things began to get serious, "James" started to feel more and more constrictive. It was as if there were things I wanted to write as me, or at least a woman. (I still don't know exactly what they are, that's the odd part.) Meanwhile Tiptree kept taking on a stronger and stronger life of his own; if I were superstitious I'd say something was waiting for incarnation there in the Giant Foods import section... maybe I do anyway. This voice would speak up from behind my pancreas somewhere. *He* insisted on

the nickname, he would not be "Jim." And as to "Uncle" Tip — maybe I'm a natural uncle. See, I have no family, nobody ever called me Sis or Mom or even Aunt Alice.

And his persona wasn't too constricting; I wrote as me. Maybe my peculiar upbringing — where values like Don't-be-a-coward and Achieve! and Fight-on-the-under-dog's-side and Find-out-how-it-works were stamped in before they got to the You're-a-young-lady stuff (which was awful) — maybe this resulted in a large part of me being kind of generalized human being rather than specifically female. (I am very pro-woman, though; once when dabbling in NY politics I had the opportunity to personally thank one of the original Suffragettes, then a frail but vital 80, for the privilege of the vote. It was a beautiful moment.) But still I wanted to write as a woman. By this point it became obvious that killing Tiptree off, say by drowning him out on the reef here, wasn't going to be that simple. He — we — had all these friends, see. So all I did was rather feebly set up Raccoona Sheldon with a Wisconsin PO box and bank, and I confess to giving her some of Tip's weaker tales to peddle. (Except for the one called "Your Faces, O My Sisters! Your Faces Filled of Light!" in the anthology



*Aurora* by McIntyre and Anderson. Nobody much mentions that one, but I consider it as good as I can do.) Anyway, the upshot of all this was that where I lived I wasn't, and I didn't live where I was, and things were reaching some kind of crescendo of confusion. Frankly, I had no real plan. So I was really relieved as well as traumatized to have Mother's ghost do Tiptree in. But it left me with an extraordinary eerie empty feeling for awhile; maybe still does.

The problem caused by having a male pseudonym was that there was the desire to rush (by mail) up to many female writers and give them a straight sisterly hug. (And to some male writers, too; especially those I knew were feeling down. I guess I wrote some fairly peculiar letters here and there.) Another problem, that may seem trivial, wasn't to me; people kept saying how lifelike my female characters were, while all the time I was perishing to find out if the *male* characters were living!

Things like being hooted at in the Symposium really didn't bother me at all, because I doubtless would have done the same myself. And also I am used to being hooted at for unpopular ideas — the struggle I mentioned in the university was just one of a lifelong series. And then, too, I'm a femi-

nist of a far earlier vintage, where we worked through a lot of the first stages all by our lonesomes. There are stages in all revolutions of consciousness where certain things are unsayable, because they sound too much like the enemy's line. Then after some years, when everybody is feeling more secure about unity on the facts and the wrongs, those "unsayable" things can be looked at objectively again, and new insight gained. I refer, of course, to my real interest in why people are mothers. (I just saw an article in *Psychology Today* that triumphantly claims that Fathers Do It Too — but turns out on reading the data that what they "do" is quite different. They play with baby; mother takes care of it.) There were, of course, a lot more things I felt like saying in the Symposium, but I thought that one was safe for Tip. As indeed it was — typical "male" nonsense.

I've been amazed at the warm, kind, friendly reaction I've been getting, even from the most unlikely people. I worried deeply about what had unwittingly become a major deception. I wrote at once to everyone I could think of who might feel I'd let them go out on a cracked limb. They couldn't have been nicer. If someone does feel griped, they haven't gotten it to me. The only

problem seems to be that now I'm expected to produce something somehow grander, more insightful, more "real." Well, if I knew how, I would — the trouble is that Tip did all I could in that line. If there is something — other than "Sisters" — which is going to burst forth from my liberated gonads it hasn't peeped yet. In fact, I may be written out for awhile. With each story I dug deeper and deeper into more emotional stuff, and some of it started to hurt pretty bad. "Slow Music" reads like a musical fade-out or coda to Tiptree's group of work. And the story Judy-Lynn just bought is only an old idea finally written up.

Now, I've got one more thing to add to this terrible monologue. In a funny way, I found that as Tip I could be useful to my fellow female writers. There were times when Tiptree (male) queried anthology editors on why nothing from this or that female writer was being used. And as an old gent I may have been more helpful to sisters who were fighting depression than another woman could. They had to brace up and respond to my courtly compliments — Tip was quite a flirt — and they knew somebody quite different valued them. Whereas just another woman coming in with sympathy and admiration tends to dissolve in a

mutual embrace of woe.

Now adieu. Outside the Caribbean is in roaring high tide, storms are chasing themselves overhead, the palm-trees lit up olive and white by great bursts of lightning. And the generator is, as usual, failing. May you never be the same.



# A DAY LIKE ANY OTHER

*The story that follows has not been reprinted since its original appearance in Foundation 3, The Review of Science Fiction (March 1973, Transcripta Books, UK). It was the first Tiptree story to be published in Great Britain.*

*Man is a product, like so much else, of the play of natural garble*

He decided to be a man today. He dressed in his executive doublestripe carefully with medallion: Gloves not to match boots. Masterfully in Sphinx to offisolarium, put in creative morning on landline option. Lunch conference multimedia potential Ontario: Note. Afternoon was payoff matinee with partner's new secretary. She had gas pains but extra-dedicated. Appreciatively he put her name in the Fruit-of-the-Month file when he got

*Ill fares the land, to hastening  
ills a prey*

*Where garble accumulates  
and men de*

During the night he was a hamster. He ran 15,924 revolutions of his 45 cm exercise wheel. About 24 miles; too

much for a male hamster. Tired, he debated the anomaly, finally let it

*Your hooves have stamped at  
the black garble of the wood,  
Even where horrible green parrots  
call and swing.*

*My works are all stamped  
down into that garble mud.  
I knew that horseplay, knew it  
for a murderous th*

He awoke in the morning as a premenopausal housewife. He loved up the house all day, Windex on the windows, Soilex on the floors, Ovenex on the oven. In the evening he used Husbandex on the husband. His husband went to sleep

*Whose was the garble that  
slanted back this brow?*

*Whose breath blew out the  
light within this brain?*

*Is this the garble the Lord God  
made*

He went out in the night as a child laughing, zap-whirling Hey Hey Hey Holy spring leg of Lamb ecstasy-strobe FREEZE! Electric joke cascade! Cool vomiting angel ho ho ho he killed everybody &

threw the world away

*So long Mom! I'm off to garble  
the Bomb!*

*So don't wait up for me*

Only in the morning buttoning his aqua lab coat he forgot he had thrown the world away until just. Too. Late. When he perceived this down the gleaming corridors he knew something terrible had happened, he had lost his last chance. No help in the frost-free cryostats, lost in the fume-hoods he cried and cried, cried or

*Bequeath us to no earthly  
shore until*

*Is answered in the garble of  
our grave*

*The seal's wide spindrift gaze  
toward Paradi*

*"Everything But the Signature is  
Me" and "A Day Like Any Other"  
are from the forthcoming Serconia  
Press book Letters from Yucatan  
and Other Points of the Soul by  
James Tiptree, Jr.*

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## LIVING BY THE WORD:

A PERSONAL HISTORY OF THE 1992  
TOWNSEND FICTION AWARDS

This past year, I acted as one of the judges for the Townsend Fiction Award, a prize administered by the English department of Georgia State University in Atlanta. Named for journalist, editor, and writer, Jim Townsend, who died several years ago of cancer, the award goes to that work, novel or story collection, adjudged the most luminous and praiseworthy volume of fiction published by a Georgia-born or a Georgia-based writer during the designated period.

Until this year's awards, that period covered two full years; a bal- lot of qualified nominees. Past winners of the Townsend Award include — this list isn't complete — Philip Lee Williams's *In the Heart of a Distant Forest*, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Mary Hood's *And Venus is Blue* (a story collection), and Sara Flannigan's *Alice*. I daresay that only the Walker elicits an immediate "Oh, yeah, I've heard of that," even from moderately devout bibliophiles, although the other three books also deserved their recognition.

Virginia Spencer Carr, head of Georgia State's English department and author of definitive biographies of Carson

McCullers and John Dos Passos, serves as the Townsend Award coordinator. In August or September of last year, Dr. Carr invited me to be one of three judges for the 1992 prize, covering work published in 1990 and 1991. Although trying to do research for a novel, I happily agreed. (In the past, three judges have selected the award recipients. Traditionally, one judge is a Georgia-born or -based fiction writer with no work eligible for the period under review, the second is an out-of-state fiction writer, professional editor with a publishing house not otherwise involved in that period's awards process.) I agreed because I wanted to read some good work outside the science-fiction and fantasy fields (three years as editor of SFWA's Nebula Awards volumes had taken their toll), and because the invitation stroked my vanity and let me pass judgment on works by writers with greater social cachet than my own. (I may love books, but I descend from a long line of human beings.)

Very early in 1992, I found that the list of nominations for this year's Townsend Fiction Award had grown to twenty

books. At that point, I had read only about a quarter of them. The other books soon began arriving in padded mailers, and I began reading the titles one after another, sometimes with astonishment and pleasure, sometimes with astonishment and dismay. Let me here admit that I read every word of sixteen of the nominees, but only half of one slim and dreadful novel; four of the eleven pieces in a book of competently written but unmemorable stories; eighty-some pages of a somewhat operatic best-seller; and just one chapter, the prologue, of a fat historical novel touting itself as "Book One of the Georgia Trilogy." (Hmmm: Writers in fields other than fantasy and science fiction also promulgate this sort of dissolute glut.) I believe, though, that even among the books I read to the sweet or bitter limit, at least six received more consideration than they probably deserved.

That left another ten books with a good deal more to recommend them than dustjacket blurbs, press-agentry hype, and their authors reputations. Those titles included *Jessie and Jesus and Cousin Claire* (Peachtree Publishers, 1991) by Ray-

mond Andrews, a writer who died earlier this year and whose four other books included *Appalachee Red*, winner of the first James Baldwin Prize in 1977, and the 1990 memoir *The Last Radio Baby; Easter Weekend* (Houghton Mifflin, 1990) by David Bottoms, an award-winning poet (*Under the Vulture Tree, In a U-Haul North of Damascus, Shooting Rats at the Bibb County Dump*) and the author of one previous novel, the lyrical *Any Cold Jordan*;

*The Picture Makers* (Morrow, 1990) by Emily Ellison, author of *Alabaster Chambers*, a popular novel written under the influence of her mentor Terry Kline, and a more serious novel, *First Light*;

*Distant Friends* (Ontario Review Press, 1990), the first story collection by the teacher, reviewer, and talented story writer and novelist Greg Johnson;

*To Dance With the White Dog* (Peachtree Publishers, 1990) by Terry Kay, author of the humorous classic *The Year the Lights Came On* and of two distinctive thrillers, *After Eli* and *Dark Thirty*;

*When All the World Was Young* (Longstreet Press, 1991) by Ferrol Sams, a doctor from





Fayetteville, who in this book and two earlier novels, *Run with the Horseman* and *The Whisper of the River*, has chronicled his own growing up in the autobiographical character of Porter Osborne, Jr.;

*Perfect Timing* (Peachtree Publishers, 1991) by Philip Lee Williams, the author of a past Townsend Award winner and five other books, including *All the Western Stars*, *The Song of Daniel* (both optioned for films), and *Slow Dance in Autumn*, a detective novel;

*Palindrome* and *New York Dead* (both Harper/Collins, 1991), two suspense novels by Stuart Woods, best known for his first book *Chiefs* and the successful TV miniseries based on it, although *Deep Lie*, *Under the Lake*, *White Cargo*, and *Grass Roots* have all attained best-seller status as paperbacks;

and *The Lives of the Dead* (Linden Press/Simon & Schuster, 1990) by a boyish-looking, 44-year-old South Georgian, now resident in Manhattan, with the charmingly unprepossessing name of Charlie Smith.

Criminy. How did I (and the other two, yet anonymous, judges) propose to select one book out of these worthy ten for the 1992 prize? Twenty titles make for a damned long "short list," and even after

weeding the original twenty down to ten, I thought it unfair to restrict our accolades to one book. The next time I talked long-distance with Dr. Carr, I asked — proposed — *begged* — that she and her committee consider granting two prizes, one for 1990 and one for 1991. Investigation disclosed that ten nominees had appeared in 1990 and ten in 1991. This lucky breakdown argued far more eloquently than I for two awards, and eventually I got word that the committee had agreed to my request — recommendation — *plea*. I fell on my knees in gratitude.

A problem remained. Who were the other judges, and what did they think of the books that I had already read and tentatively evaluated? In early March, I learned from an apologetic Dr. Carr that nobody else had yet come aboard as a fellow judge. Did I know a capable editor in the industry who might accept an eleventh-hour appointment? She had an out-of-state writer in mind, but had come nearly to the end of her rope trying to find an editor, doubtless already laden with in-house projects, willing to read an additional twenty books by April the 25th. (The awards luncheon was to take place in the Governor's Mansion in Atlanta on Tuesday, May 5.) I mentioned two names,

thinking even as I did so that this was poor planning at its apogee; I knew that my impromptu candidates, David Hartwell of Tor and John Radziewicz of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, would strive to visit endless tsuris upon me should they learn I had tapped them for this aggravating recognition. As it happened, if Dr. Carr asked them, they said, "No, thank you," for no one ever did fill the role of editor-judge.

Another judge, thank God, did sign on. This was Jaimy Gordon, author of the novel *She Drove Without Stopping* (Algonquin Press, 1990) and a fiction-writing teacher at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. Faced with twenty books to read in about six weeks, along with her own workload, Ms. Gordon may have thought of putting all twenty titles on slips of paper, dropping them into a hat, and drawing one out blindfolded. She didn't do this. She examined all twenty books. And she did it much faster than I, who needed a six-month head start simply to consider shouldering the responsibility.

"This book is a juvenile juvenile," she told me. "This book mangles potentially powerful material. This person can't write. This book is the sort that middle-aged ladies with poodle slippers put on their bedside tables and

use as any other person would use Sominex. This book falls apart two thirds of the way through. And these stories have all the taste and vividness of oatmeal on a warm July morning."

Our tastes, I could hardly believe, coincided. We liked prose with bravado and heart. We found ourselves similarly unmoved by, even if conditionally respectful of, the same sorts of popular fare that prompts backed-up lines at autograph signings and palpitations in the concrete bosoms of underfunded film producers. We regretted the unfortunate missteps of the same books and stories, works that started well but that eventually tripped over their own ill-advised choreographies and smashed like ceramic ballerinas.

Although Ms. Gordon would readily cop to the tag "feminist," I found that she refused to let ideology count for more than literary merit. At least three titles on our original list had seemed to qualify not only as novels, or near-novels, but as *statements*; and none of them, despite the impressively innovative structure and style of the shortest of the three, had worked any real magic on me as a human document. I saw them as gender provincial in the same way that a blood-and-guts war epic or a hack crime novel is gender

provincial.

"I'd like to give one of these awards to a woman," Ms. Gordon said during one of our long-distance talks, "but I don't see how we can do it with the crap on tap."

I'm paraphrasing, but even if her language lacked the pungency of "crap on tap," her honest opinions of the books in question coincided with that ripe phrase in disappointment and opprobrium. I rejoiced that we again agreed, as well as in the fact that my objections would not automatically identify me as a male-chauvinist Neanderthal. Real feminists will here take me to task for entertaining degrading stereotypes of my own, but I had (uncharitably) feared pitched battles over four or five brummagen books by women.

Jaimy Gordon and I did have disagreements, but, on the whole, they seemed minor. We had no trouble selecting a winner from among 1990's candidates; we each enthusiastically championed the same book. The candidates for 1991 presented a bigger problem because we regarded this as the weaker of the two fields and even the best books in it aesthetically flawed or temperamentally off-putting; in fact, on this second choice, I felt I had to drag Ms. Gordon along with me. She esteemed my favorite lukewarmly, and

it became hers only because the other nine titles ferociously discouraged her best efforts to raise them in her regard. At length, though, we reached agreement and relayed our choices to Virginia Spencer Carr through her assistant, Kristin Marsh.

Soon thereafter, Dr. Carr gave me the anxiety-provoking task of announcing and explaining our choices at a (ritzy) luncheon at the Governor's Mansion. I did so, but only after an (ingratiatingly literate) apolitical greeting from Governor Zell Miller, a few remarks by Dr. Carr, and an affectionate reminiscence of the late Jim Townsend by Anne Rivers Siddons, author of *King's Oak*.

Here follows some of what I said:

"Jaimy Gordon had originally intended to be here for this ceremony, but the press of other business made it impossible for her to attend. I regret that. I had hoped to meet her. I had also hoped to have her present to deflect at least a portion of the grief that our *joint* decision would inevitably occasion among at least sixteen of our nominees. One common strategy for a judge in this predicament is to tell those disappointed, irritated, or just bemused by your decision, especially friends, that although you immensely preferred their

books, the other judges horse-whipped you until, bleeding and pulling out your hair, you cried, "Okay, okay — give the damned thing to whomever y'all want!" This tactic makes you appear a sniveling weasel, but many judges would rather look like helpless victims of intellectual assault and battery than like perfidious Quislings or loutish Philistines.

"I know I would.

"Unfortunately, I can't claim, even in jest, that Jaimy Gordon twisted my arm, nor do I believe that she would say that I twisted hers. (And if she would, she's forfeited that privilege by leaving me here undefended before you.) In point of fact, Ms. Gordon and I, who had never met or spoken to each other before consulting about the nominees over the telephone, found ourselves in strong agreement about what constitutes exceptional and thus praiseworthy fiction. The administrators of the Townsend Award have asked me to give you a brief summary of our criteria.

"Ms. Gordon and I together believe that fiction that lives — on the page and, later, in our memories — lives through the passion and grace of its language. Startling characters and moving narratives alike achieve heightened liveliness through the careful,

indeed the almost sacerdotal, deployment of words, sentences, paragraphs. We tilted, then, toward fictions that manifested a writer's love of the English language, and of what it can do to create a credible dramatic reality of some scope while imparting a coherent vision of the world. I apologize if this explanation comes across unduly hifalutin. Truth to tell, I think both Ms. Gordon and I searched for works that artfully kicked us in the teeth and yet cunningly revealed that we had never tasted — *really* tasted — our own blood before. A raw metaphor, but deliberately so: it may convey some notion of what we hoped to find in the way of poetry, as well as in the way of the mystery and mess, of human experience.

"Other judges with other biases might well have chosen two other titles from the list of books published by Georgia-born or Georgia-based writers over these past two years. Every award procedure is to some extent arbitrary, and it genuinely pains me — indeed, in a couple of instances it breaks my heart — that we can't hand out six or seven awards today. And I would here list my other favorites, except that doing so would 1) detract from some of the suspense of this announcement, and 2) restrict my conversa-



tional strategies away from this podium.

"However, I don't for a moment apologize for our final two selections, works that eloquently challenge, astonish, outrage, illuminate, electrify, exasperate, and even transfigure us — not merely at the surfaces of our eyeballs and skin, but down in our guts, straight through our hearts, to the deepest recesses of our proud or cringing souls. These two books seem to me to embody quite different existential visions of the world, but each has an ungainsayable artistic integrity, and I read them both with wonder, anguish, and delight.

"The Townsend Fiction Award for books published during 1990 goes to *Lives of the Dead* by Charlie Smith, and the Townsend Fiction Award for books published during 1991 goes to *When All the World Was Young* by Ferrol Sams."

Charlie Smith, a bespectacled man with his hair pulled back in a frizzy ponytail, and Ferrol Sams, a courtly-looking veteran of World War Two and still a practicing physician, stepped forward to accept their prizes. They each received an engraved silver tray and a check for a thousand dollars.

Charlie Smith expressed his thanks, acknowledging in particular the creative talents of David Bottoms and Emily

Ellison and the pride and gratitude that he felt simply standing in their company as a nominee.

Ferrol Sams, when he took the podium, leaned into the mike and said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. Live by the Word."

Obviously, I highly valued — I *still* highly value — the novels by these two men, but of the two (different as they are in conception, tone, and style), I prefer Charlie Smith's *The Lives of the Dead*, which I recommend to everyone as a magnificently harrowing reading experience. I should add here that if Emily Ellison's *The Picture Makers* or Terry Kay's *To Dance with the White Dog* had appeared in 1991 instead of in 1990, either of these two fine books might have put Sams's heartfelt, funny, and galumphing *When All the World Was Young* in the trundle seat. But they didn't — they ran headlong into *The Lives of the Dead*, as preemptively brilliant a novel as I can recall reading.

Had the awards committee forced Ms. Gordon and me to choose one prize-winner for both years, *The Lives of the Dead* would have carried the day. This confession may appear to undercut my earlier declaration that twenty books were too many to winnow to a sin-

gle victor, but in the midst of the selection process, before we'd had enough time to read and reflect on the candidates, and to place their accomplishments and shortcomings in perspective, we had felt that actually. And I still think that spreading the wealth around, when achievement warrants it, has aesthetic as well as economic and psychological benefits — to the individual writers and to the health of fiction writing in general. If the Townsend Award didn't exist, in fact, left to my own devices I probably would have read only two or three of the nominees. And I would have undoubtedly missed the best of the lot, *The Lives of the Dead*.

What to say about Smith's novel? In addition to its altogether lovely prose, which can blind or cut away your cataracts according to Smith's purposes, it tells a helluva story, which hums and dings along like a bumblebee assault on a swinging brass bell.

Buddy Drake, a landscape- and mayhem-obsessed New York-based film director whom Smith characterizes as a kind of melange of Sam Peckinpah, Ken Russell, and Roger Corman, has hit upon hard financial and emotional times. Some of Buddy's earlier films include *Blue Gun*, *Destiny*, *Death City*, and *Orchards of Fire*, but now he has an

idea for a brand-new film, about a character of unremitting evil, D'Nel Boyd, and Boyd's weird hold on a woman named Molly and "her tiny suitor Banty Jakes."

"I wanted them to take over my life," Buddy tell us, as he relates in gripping counterpoint both his own desperate efforts to raise the funding for this movie and some of the scenes from the unmade film itself.

Buddy's visionary but crazed films have stopped doing well at the box office. The public doesn't know what to make of them. The critics have grown increasingly hostile to his recurring obsessions and his apparent lack of discipline as both writer and director. Buddy doesn't give a damn, except insofar as the public's baffled aloofness and the critics' disapproval sabotages his ability to keep making films. He lives in his imagination. For Buddy, not to make films is to die. The scenes of his quest for funding and the scenes that he recounts from his unmade film carry virtually the same weight in *The Lives of the Dead* because they carry virtually the same weight in Buddy the narrator's head. The conceit of this equivalency structures the novel, drives its plot, feeds its theme of the artist's self-extinguishing immersion in the imagination, and maybe even

enriches its prose.

(I say “maybe” because I could have this point backwards — the alternately stark and hallucinatory beauty of the prose obviously enriches the idea that Buddy lives among his fancies, by showing us that he does. If Smith didn’t write so well, *The Lives of the Dead* could collapse into a farrago of philosophical conceits, character posturings, and melodramatic plot twists. The writing works hard to harmonize everything, just as Smith pretty clearly worked hard to shape his story, to individualize his characters, and to embody his theme.)

But what happens? impatient aficionados of the stories that novels are “supposed” to tell will cry. What does Buddy do? What happens to him? Well, he goes to Florida to research dolphins — because he wants to feature them in his film — and also to visit his ex-wife Bess, who has a big house on the Gulf Coast and who funded some of his projects in the past. And then there is a death, and then another death, and then... But it’s a crackerjack story, a sockdolager story, and if that’s what you read for, I don’t want to spoil *The Lives of the Dead* for you. Instead of recapitulating events and motivations, let me share with you my first impressions of Smith’s novel, which I scribbled in a haphazard sort of journal (an

engagement calendar featuring Barry Moser’s wood engravings for *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and four other classics) that I have been keeping this year:

This novel, I wrote, “glitters with the fascination and the terror of both death and evil... through the story of Buddy Drake, who would rather burn at white-hot intensity than cool to the tepidity of any conventional moral or religious outlook. Indeed, he appears to have no choice in this matter, or convinces himself that he has none. The book is aesthetically satisfying, as beautiful and repellant as a copperhead, and wholly seductive during the act of reading. It has no [apparent] moral compass but the celebration of language and the making of an artifact capable of sustaining its powerful nihilism to and beyond the final page, an affirmation that at least in part contradicts its own bleak message, which, in my view, is the novel’s central defining point — else Smith would have had no compelling reason to write it” (Thursday, January 30, 1992).

You can see me groping here. The judgment I would retract, along with the crippled syntax cradling it, is that “a powerful nihilism” animates *The Lives of the Dead*. What animates the book is Buddy’s berserk obeisance to the rigors of his own twisted, but awake and

vital, imagination. Nihilism rejects all distinctions among previous theories of morality; it views distinctions among individual lives as purposeless and illusory. An allegiance to the power of the imagination, though, embraces our capacity to augment life. It isn’t Buddy’s private philosophy that warrants our shock and censure, but the anarchic pathological twist that he gives it when denied the only satisfying outlet — filmmaking — that he has yet found for the living phantasms of his imagination. After all, it takes a sociopathic personality to call its narrative apologia for its obsession-driven misdeeds *The Lives of the Dead* (as if the only authentic imagination in the universe were its own.) Consequently, Buddy’s life is a debacle, whereas the novel Smith has written from the cockpit of Buddy’s persona is a triumph.

At this point in his career, the Charlie Smith canon includes two other novels, *Caanan* (1984) and *Shine Hawk* (1988); two volumes of poetry, *Red Roads* and *Indistinguishable from the Darkness*; and a volume of novellas, *Crystal River* (1991), whose contents comprise the title piece, “Storyville,” and “Tinian.” I recommend all these works on the admittedly rather limited basis of the only two I’ve so far read, *Shine Hawk* and *The Lives of the Dead*. Believe

me, I will get to the others soon.

From what I’ve read to date, however, Smith strikes me as the most inventive, accomplished, and challenging Southern — indeed, *American* — writer since Faulkner. In fact, the rhetorical excesses of some of Faulkner’s strongest work have no parallels in *The Lives of the Dead*, although they do crop up here and there in his second novel, *Shine Hawk*. No matter; “Storyville,” from the *Crystal River* collection, looks to be a recent piece of work, or at least a story recently brought into its final shape, and here I quote its opening to show you why I’m so eager to read more:

A man told him about a woman who married her own son.

— I can believe it, he said. I can see how that would happen.

— Can you? the man said; not me. It shouldn’t be possible. Even in the dark, even if he’s been gone for years, a mother ought to know her own son.

— No, he said. I can see it happening. The world’s a confusing place. Maybe she just got confused.

—Confused? The man stared at him. You’re drunk, he said, and perverted.

— Perverted? It’s *your* story. I didn’t tell it.

The man punched him in the face. He couldn’t





feel the blow, but it knocked him down. He lay on his back. He touched his mouth: there was a numbness under the numbness. He liked the feeling. Somewhere above him, the shape of the raconteur swam.

— Tell it to me again, he said. Tell it again. Maybe I didn't get it the first time.

As the 1991 Townsend Award recipient, Jaimy Gordon and I chose, as I've said, Ferrol Sams's *When All the World Was Young*. Earlier I also suggested that had either Emily Ellison's *The Picture Makers* or Terry Kay's *To Dance with the White Dog* met the Sams head on, we might have had a different winner. Let me amend that statement. I liked *When All the World Was Young* from the beginning and felt that Sams deserved public kudos for writing it. I don't believe that I do Ms. Gordon — or Dr. Sams, for that matter — a disservice by noting that in this case Ms. Gordon had some reservations.

Okay. What sorts of reservations? On a postcard, she wrote, "I'm glad you sent me back to the Sams: while the man rambles on shamelessly, with a total self-confidence no writer should allow himself, still he's an engaging idiosyncratic and the book teams with interesting information." In a tele-

phone call, she complained with some justice that although Sams struggles to avoid both racism and sexism in his handling of blacks and women (and in the mind set of his fictive stand-in, Porter Osborne, Jr.), the book nonetheless partakes of a world view inevitably shaded by the mores of Sams's youth and the social climate of his rural Southern upbringing. Ms. Gordon also had trouble with the comic-opera dialogue of some of the foreign characters that Porter meets, stateside and during his duty assignments overseas.

Why, then, single out *When All the World Was Young* for a prize? Because, despite (or perhaps because of) its self-indulgent digressions, its scattershot attempt to recreate the World War Two era, and its episodic treatment of Porter's journeys from medical school at Emory to basic training to field hospitals in battle-torn Europe, Sams's novel *lives*. On nearly every page, it takes a big gulping breath. It surprises, consternates, gooses, and transports you. Too many times to enumerate, it makes you laugh. Defending the novel in the face of its narrative excesses and its sometimes lumpy stylistics ("Within minutes Company B was transformed into the likeness... of a herd of hump-backed, long-legged armadillos,

weak-eyed and wide-gogged; everyone looked as akin to humanity as mechanical robots"), I told Ms. Gordon that, perhaps alone among the candidates from either year, *When All the World Was Young* had sweep and scope. She agreed. I suggested that it even had a kind of Dickensian generosity of spirit and largeness of humor that most American writers today rigorously eschew.

Ms. Gordon conceded that this, too, might be so. And so we picked *When All the World Was Young* to take the same award that *The Lives of the Dead* had won for the previous year. I don't know about Ms. Gordon, but I liked the countervailing symmetry of our choices.

Here I must confess that the jacket flapdoodle on Sams's novel unequivocally hypes it as the final volume of a trilogy that began with *Run with the Horsemen* and *The Whisper of the River*. I have a well-developed animus towards trilogies and other series "novels." (I've implied as much in this essay.) How, then, can I champion the third volume of a trilogy for a literary award? I can answer only that I still haven't read *Run with the Horsemen* or *The Whisper of the River*, and that *When All the World Was Young* feels less like a mercenary literary enterprise — YOU'VE READ THE FIRST TWO

BOOKS, NOW READ THE STARTLING CONCLUSION!!! — than it does an aesthetic venture undertaken out of psychological and emotional necessity (I use a like argument to defend my high regard for the four volumes of Gene Wolfe's category classic, *The Book of the New Sun* — which, in any case, he originally envisioned as a single book.) Further, you needn't have read either of Sams's earlier books to follow, or to appreciate, what he is about in this one (something you can't say about the falsely separated volumes of Wolfe's "tetralogy"). For, as Sams implied in his brief remarks at the end of the awards luncheon, he lives by the Word...

Other Strong Townsend Nominees:

Raymond Andrews's *Jessie and Jesus and Cousin Claire* is two loosely connected stories with a similar theme: the extremes to which two driven, but temperamentally contrasting women will go to achieve their aims. Andrews writes an easy, colloquial English, deploying the rhythms and vocabulary of a native African-American storyteller. He posthumously won the 1992 American Book Award, established by The Before Columbus Foundation to "respect and honor excellence in American literature with-

out restriction or bias with regard to race, sex, creed, cultural origin, size of press or ad budget, or even genre." (Past winners of the award include Allen Ginsberg, Isabel Allende, Toni Morrison, Louise Erdrich, etc.)

David Bottoms's *East-er Weekend*, a relentless James M. Cain chiller, as Cain would have written it had he possessed the poetic faculty that Bottoms has. Towards the end, though, Bottoms lays on the Easter weekend symbolism a bit thick.

Emily Ellison's *The Picture Makers*, a nicely made kaleidoscope of years and voices, centering on the voice of painter Eleanor Glass as she struggles to comprehend her family relationships and to define herself as an artist. The book works awfully well, but in the end two socially incompatible characters marry, straining credulity a bit.

Distant Friends by Greg Johnson contains eleven well-wrought and eloquent stories, my favorites being the first four — "Crazy Ladies," "Leavings," "El Paso," and "A Summer Romance" — and the seventh, "Grieving." The collection also contains a story first published in *The Ontario Review*, "The Metamorphosis," about the bizarre final concert of a world-

famous female impersonator, that could have run in either a science-fiction or a horror anthology.

Terry Kay's *To Dance With the White Dog*, of all the Townsend candidates, most nearly qualifies as a fantasy, even though it centers on octogenarian Sam Peck's life on a small Georgia farm in the wake of his beloved wife's death. A white dog, unapprehensible through the novel's first half, arrives to take scraps from Sam's porch and to run beside his pickup. My wife Jeri loved this book, and when Dr. Carr read out the titles of the nominees at the awards luncheon, Kay's novel received more applause than any other candidate. I felt especially bad that Kay, a gentle and generous man, could not go home with an award too.

William Lee Williams's *Perfect Timing* held me hard in its grip, with its quirky love story between music students Ford Clayton and Camille Malone, for its first two thirds or so. Then some of its zaniness begins to feel forced — at least to me. No one can deny Williams's nimbleness of mind, though, or the range of his erudition about music and books, or his ability to jump between the absurd and the tragic. Even so, my favorite of his novels remains his own

Townsend Award winner, *In the Heart of a Distant Forest*.

Unless hung up on Dostoevskian philosophical profundity and characterization, who wouldn't enjoy a well-crafted Stuart Woods novel? *Palindrome* and *New York Dead* fit the reader-pleasing Woods mold perfectly. I read them faster than any of the other nominees, continually wetting my thumb and turning pages I can't remember much about *Palindrome* now except that it involves a pair of twins and takes place on Cumberland Island. *New York Dead* sticks in the memory a little better, beginning with a body falling spread-eagled from a building and working through a progressively more intricate series of events to a satisfying conclusion. It will make a great movie, but read the novel first.

#### A Bonus Book:

The last book I want to mention didn't qualify for the Townsend Award because it falls in the non-fiction category. However, it represents one of the best pieces of work by a Georgian from 1991, and so I must direct you to Melissa Fay Greene's *Praying for Sheetrock* (Addison-Wesley), an account of the political awakening of the disenfranchised black community in McIntosh

County on Georgia's eastern coast in the 1970s. The story has two endings, one full of justice and satisfyingly upbeat, but the other human, demoralizing, and sad; even so, Greene's account of the changes in McIntosh County stir and uplift. In April of this year, her book received the twelfth annual Robert F Kennedy Book Award. If for no other reason, you should read it to discover the significance of her evocative, and appropriate, title.



The Neustrian Cycle by Leslie Barringer is three related, but free-standing volumes — *Gerfalcon*, *Joris Of The Rock* and *Shy Leopardess* — set in a fantasy kingdom resembling fourteenth century France. British Barringer was born shortly before the twentieth century. The first two books in his Cycle came out in the 1920's. *Shy Leopardess* didn't appear until after World War II. As little known as these books

were during his lifetime, it's clear that Tolkien and T.H. White were well-acquainted with them. Many of the names and places of Lord Of The Rings echo Barringer's. Young Raoul, the principal figure of *Gerfalcon*, ponders over the state of his soul while gazing at his distorted features in the armor he's polishing. The Cycle provides an impeccably delicious feast of every element for which we love high fantasy. Each of the three have events significant in the larger plot that turn around the practice of witchcraft, necromancy or alchemy. All three have the most fully realized, complex female characters that you will ever find in any fiction. Best of all, the young Duchess of *Shy Leopardess*, achieves absolute revenge, without guilt, against the man who foully murders her family, marries her, and then murders her kitten. She also, happily, passionately and guiltlessly, makes love with both of her two devoted squires before the consummation of her marriage. These books may be available in the 1970's reprint series of Forgotten Fantasy out of California.

*El Monte Igbo - Finda Ewe - Orisha . Vititi Nfinda* (Notes on the religions, magic, superstitions and folklore of the Congo and Yoruba people of the country and towns of Cuba) by Lydia Cabrera. Cabrera's books are essential to understanding the traditions, cultures, musics and mythologies

of the African-Latin Americas, and *El Monte* is the source of the sources. Cabrera's works are only in Spanish and difficult to find outside botanicás. However, very recently, or at any moment, the English translation of *El Monte*, many years in the making, will be available from the University of Miami Press.

*Afropop World Wide 1992 Listener's Guide*. This is a compact introduction to the popular musics that have evolved out of the West African religions as they traveled with chattel slavery around the world. The roots of the musics are found in Santeria, Candomble, Abakua and Voudon, as well as Hoodoo and Southern Baptist. Guides can be obtained by sending a self-addressed envelope with four first-class stamps on it to:

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Included in the *Guide's* information is where, in your region, you can tune in this nationally syndicated radio program, and obtain CDs and cassettes. Guaranteed, if you listen a year to *Afropop Worldwide*, you will get a basic education about African traditions and music in Africa itself, Europe and the New World.

**J O H N  
 M O R R E S S Y**

The complete *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, an ongoing series of reprints. They are astonishing. Winsor McCay's handling of form and color and perspective, his wild imagination, his special effects (I don't know what else to call them), are a treasury of mind-stretching raw material for anyone in our field, reader or writer. They are also great fun to read, though you will probably need a magnifying glass to catch everything, especially the dialogue (McCay was brilliant at every aspect of cartooning except lettering.) These pieces go back nearly ninety years, and in all that time, no one has come near his achievement.

Kipling's short stories, fine examples of lean, tight writing, not a spare word in them.

Richard Adams's memoir, *The Day Gone By*, which after a slow start opens into a wonderfully evocative account of a man who loves nature and books, and has led a life we would all love to have known, in a world now gone forever. You can see how such a man had to write *Watership Down*.

A. S. Byatt's *Possession*, the best novel by anyone, in any genre, that I have read in the past twenty years. ■

**T**he *Lost Language of Symbolism, VI&II*, Harold Bayley: Here in two complete volumes is a thoroughly detailed and documented exegesis of thought-fossils and -crystals, the living mythologies and metaphysics of the European peoples which were adopted into Christianity. Bayley's only agenda is making known the heritage of beliefs which were either incorporated or annihilated from the 13th century on. An excellent source for Wiccans, Mystery Students, Mythologists, and the curious probing their own psychic origins.

*The Book of J*, Harold Bloom, trans. by David Rosenberg: It is fairly well established that the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament; Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, Deuteronomy) was actually developed by five separate authors labeled J, E, P, D, and R. The oldest writings come from the Jerusalem of the 10th century BCE and are believed to have been written by J, the Yahwist. What makes this most interesting to me is the belief that J was a woman. Recognizing that the Christian Bible, which most people in Western Society are familiar with, is vastly different than the Judaic Bible, it is more staggering to discover the differences between the J book and the common, current Judaic Pentateuch.

*Diné bahanè, The Navaho Creation Story*, Paul G. Zolbrod: Perhaps the best written translation of the original Navaho oral tradition. Zolbrod uses elegant and poetic English language to evoke the symbolism, society, and significance of the Navaho story.

The *Diné bahanè*, is, perhaps, one of the many Native American versions of the great Greek and Hindu epics. While keeping with a singular metaphysic, it is fascinating to discover the pervasiveness of cross-cultural archetypes.

*Montaillou, The Promised Land of Error*, Le Roy Ladurie:

An in depth and apparently accurate reconstruction of the society and daily life of a medieval village. Basically, this book is forensic archaeology gone wild and excellent reading because everything Ladurie writes about — from "black" rituals covertly practiced while slaughtering animals to the sex life of the village priest — has empirical evidence behind it. If you want an authentic perspective of medieval life, this may be it.

*The Mabinogion*, trans. by Jeffrey Gantz:

This is a collection of eleven medieval Welsh tales, first written down in the 13th century and all based on oral traditions, which many consider the precursors and presages to the Arthurian Legend. Although some

backfilling has occurred, this collection maintains the original texts, including material often removed and reintroduced as the texts moved through the centuries.

*Public Appearances Private Realities, The Psychology of Self-Monitoring*, Mark Snyder:

Perhaps the first text of how people demonstrate themselves in public. Although not sited in the works of Bandler, Grinder, the Andreases, Diltz, and others, this volume contains many of their observations made from a purely psychological rather than neurological or linguistic perspective.

*The Hot House, Life Inside Leavenworth Prison*, Pete Earley:

First comment; Not a book for the genteel. Second comment; non-fictional, journalistic reportage at its best. Earley takes on the task of recounting a world and reality few of us are even willing to recognize exists and performs this task so well, so exquisitely, so remorselessly, that flash dreams remain long after the reading has ended.



# READERCON, INC.: AN AGENDA

**A**s mentioned in this year's Introduction, Readercon as a group have had plans whose scope stretches beyond that of the conference itself for some time now. However, except for the Small Press Awards, none of these have come to fruition. This should begin to change after this Readercon, now that our founder and President has decided to devote the bulk of his time to these special projects. Because the conference is not making a profit at this time, we plan to begin soliciting tax-deductible contributions for the support of some of these activities.

## The Readercon Small Press Awards

We have devised The Readercon Small Press Awards to recognize the work of small publishers in the field of imaginative literature, by which we mean science fiction, fantasy, horror, magic realism, and post-modernist fabulation. With the increasing trend of absorption of larger publishers into multi-national conglomerates (who then proceed to eat each other), there may soon come a time when small presses are the only ones that will treat their books as some-

thing more than bars of soap.

We feel that serious readers need to start making the acquaintance of the better small presses in this field, and we have designed these awards as an aid to both reader and publisher in establishing that relationship.

### *This year's model*

The judges for our fourth Awards, for books and magazines published in 1991, are: Arnie Fenner, acclaimed illustrator and publisher of Ursus Imprints; Donald G. Keller, critic for *The New York Review of Science Fiction*; Steve Pasechnick, editor of *Strange Plasma* and publisher of Edgewood Press; Carter Scholz, writer and critic; Stewart Schiff, editor and publisher of *Whispers*, and Michael Walsh, bookseller.

Arnie Fenner and *The New York Review of Science Fiction* are previous Small Press Award winners.

### *How it all works*

Awards are presented both to the publishers and the creators of works. They consist of a handsome framed certificate, and, for the publishers, a free half-page ad in an upcoming Readercon Souvenir Book.

If you're curious, we pick the judges this way. There are seven categories: writer, artist, editor, publisher, critic, bookseller, and reader. We ask the previous year's judges to suggest new ones, and then everyone on the committee adds as many names as they can think of. Each of us then ranks the nominees in each category, and the results are tabulated by the New Zealand (i.e., pseudo-Australian) ballot. We discuss the results, and after tweaking them for various balances, we come up with a slate of judges (and backup choices should folks need to turn us down) that we can approve by a majority vote.

We use *Locus's* "Books Received" and "Magazines Received" columns to compile a list of eligible items; the publishers are notified and asked to send review copies to the jury. Judges may nominate as many items in each category as they like. All nominated items go out on a preliminary ballot; the top four vote-getters (or more, if there are ties) in each category make the final ballot. Australian balloting is used throughout.

### *Some notes on eligibility*

— Awards to magazines

are based on the entire year's run.

— Books published as limited editions ancillary to a concurrent or forthcoming edition from a major press are eligible only for the Value in Bookcraft (which honors the publisher of the book which provides the most aesthetic pleasure per dollar of cover price) and Illustration Awards.

— Judges are ineligible to nominate their own works or to vote in categories in which they have been nominated; in the latter case, they may choose instead to withdraw the work from consideration.

## The Readercon Small Press Review

We had gotten fairly clear on the concept of what we wanted with this before we realized that we simply didn't have the time (or, to be honest, enough knowledgeable people) to do it. What we wanted was a collection of news, reviews, opinion pieces, publisher profiles and like material that would give readers and participants in the science fiction and fantasy small press scene a way to communicate with one another and keep up on developments. What we would need to begin accomplishing this is: first, someone

with knowledge, enthusiasm, (and the ability to recruit talented contributors) to co-edit the magazine with Robert Colby; second, someone with the ability both to sell booksellers (both stores and mail-order) on carrying it and to induce publishers, booksellers, etc. to buy advertising; third, some seed money to see the project through early losses. Eligible people need not be local. Interested? Call Robert Colby at 508-643-2247.

### Readercon Libraries Project

All over America, state and local governments are curtailing funding for educational and cultural services. Libraries are no exception. As money to buy new books dries up, giving the reading public a chance to keep up with the field is a uniquely appropriate activity for a non-profit organization devoted to that field. Shortly after Readercon 5, we will begin a readings series at Richards Memorial Library, a beautiful small library in North Attleborough, Mass. This library is about to lose significant funding both from the town and (*because of that local shortfall*) the state. The state will also remove its certification from Richards, which will imperil residents' access to the collections of libraries in surrounding communities (which have much more extensive SF/Fantasy collections). To do our bit, we will be purchasing a few copies of the work of each author appearing in

the readings series and donating them to the library, as well as a subscription to the *New York Review of Science Fiction*, and possibly other books and magazines as well. How often we get to do this depends on how much financial support we can raise in the form of tax-deductible donations. If this project takes off, we may be able to expand it to other libraries.

### Computerized Sf Text Archive (by Bob Ingria)

We intend to investigate the possibility of creating a centralized archive for machine-readable sf/fantasy texts for the use of the science fiction research community. We believe that the availability of such an archive will allow researchers to perform activities such as concordances, frequency counts, and various types of statistical and stylistic analysis more easily.

For the near term, we intend to explore the following necessary preconditions to any such project: 1) locating an academic institution that would be willing to serve as the actual repository of the archive; 2) determining ways of making this project attractive to publishers, so that they would be willing to allow their texts to be available in such an archive. (One possibility would be to convert the typesetting tapes into a standard format, such as SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language), and to return them to the publishers in this form, for possible future electronic

publication.)

### Readers' Lobby

There are some 250 million Americans. Somewhere in that mass there are sure to be enough people with ambitious reading tastes to provide an appreciative and substantial audience for books in this field that are both written for and marketed towards intelligent adults. But genre publishers don't appear to think so, preferring to treat us as consumers, rather than as aficionados. What if we decided to start changing their minds? Most people in publishing really do love good books, and would probably enjoy their jobs a lot more if they could sell the bean-counters on the feasibility of acquiring and promoting more art (and less product). To make this happen, readers who want more from this month's books than a slight variation on last month's need to start acting in concert.

How? We've just begun thinking about it. We had a discussion group on this at Readercon 3, where myriad ideas ranging from the mild and practical to the wild and difficult were proposed. We're still mulling this over; it may be wisest to let the conference's natural growth (we hope / fear that we'll reach our design limit of 750-800 attendees by 1994 or 1995) provide some momentum (and a higher profile) before we try some of our more radical ideas.

### Readercon BBS

With all the changes and developments happening around here, it would be nice if we could get regularly updated news to you modern owners out there. While we're at it, a discussion forum and opinion pieces would be nice, too. This one would be fun to do and relatively easy to start; the fear, of course, is that it could become a huge time sink (the more so the better it gets).

### What you can do

If the idea of Readercon as an organization with wider goals than simply putting on a great conference appeals to you, there are two concrete things you can do. One is to join the President in the Special Projects Group. The other (especially if you're an itemizer and can take advantage of our tax status) is to donate money to whichever of these projects seems most worthy (except the Awards, which are currently funded by the con itself). The Libraries project is our highest priority in this regard, but we promise to start work in earnest on any of the others that attract your support. Checks, as always, are payable to Readercon; please indicate which project you would like to support. Sometime between Readercons 5 and 6, the Special Projects Group will begin circulating within the SF community a fuller prospectus describing our plans and progress.



**T**

# HE 1991 READERCON SMALL PRESS AWARD WINNERS

**Best Novel:** *Red Spider, White Web*, Misha  
(Morrigan)

**Best Short Work:** *Entropy's Bed at Midnight*, Dan Simmons  
(Lord John Press)

**Best Collection:** *Slow Dancing Through Time*, Gardner Dozios  
(Ursus/Mark V. Ziesing)

**Best Anthology:** *When the Black Lotus Blooms*, Elizabeth Saunders  
(Unnameable Press)

**Best Non-Fiction:** *Across the Wounded Galaxies*, Larry McCaffrey  
(University of Illinois Press)

**Best Reprint:** *The Atrocity Exhibition*, J. G. Ballard  
(RE/Search)

**Best Value in Bookcraft:** *Slow Dancing Through Time*, Gardner Dozios  
(Ursus/Mark V. Ziesing)

**Best Jacket Illustration:** *H. R. Giger's Biomechanics*, H. R. Giger  
(Morpheus International)

**Best Interior Illustrations:** *H. R. Giger's Biomechanics*, H. R. Giger  
(Morpheus International)

**Best Magazine — Fiction:** *Journal Wired*, Mark Ziesing and Andy Watson, editors  
(Mark V. Ziesing)

**Best Magazine — Non-Fiction:** *The New York Review of Science Fiction*,  
David Hartwell et al., editors (Dragon Press)

**Best Magazine — Design:** *Journal Wired*, Mark Ziesing and Andy Watson, editors  
(Mark V. Ziesing)

# READERCON COMMITTEE & BIOGRAPHIES

## WHO AM US, ANYWAY?

**Robert Colby**, President, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Conference Chair; Program Subcommittee

**Eric M. Van**, Vice-President, Board member, Program Chair Emeritus

**Terra Witkop**, Treasurer, Conference Vice-Chair

**Bryan Cholfin**, Board member, Program Chair, Small Press Awards Chair

**Constance Hirsch**, Vice-Chair of the Board, Membership and Sales Chair; Program Subcommittee

**Robert Ingria**, Clerk of the Board; Small Press Award Certificates

**Kate Waterous**, Corporate Clerk, Art Show Chair

**Mike DiGenio**, Operations Deity

**Ozzie Fontecchio**, Hotel Liaison

**Janis Fontecchio**, Bookshop Chair

**Kathei Logue**, Publicity Chair

**Diane Martin**, Publications Co-Chair, Asst. Corporate Clerk; Program, Art, Publicity Subcommittees

**Barnaby Rapoport**, Recording Secretary; Logistics Guru; Program Subcommittee

**David Shaw**, Publications Co-Chair; Program and Art Subcommittees

**Elisabeth Carey**, Program Subcommittee

**Richard Duffy**, Publicity and Program Subcommittees

**Sheila Lightsey**, GoH Bibliographer, Green Room, Program Subcommittee

**Priya Mirkin**, Program Subcommittee

**Mary Poole**, Hospitality Suite

**Nevenah Smith**, Souvenir Book Layout and Design

**LuAnn Vitalis**, Newsletter Layout and Design; Information

**David Walrath**, Volunteer Coordinator; Program Subcommittee

## B I O S

**Elisabeth Carey** was dragged to her first convention (Boskone 9) twenty-one years ago and resisted for years before succumbing to the temptations of conrunning and NESFA membership. She has run Information and programming for Boskone and worked on Noreascon 3. This is the first year she has worked on Readercon.

In his time, **Robert Colby** has started three things (rock fanzine, literary conference, Small Press Awards). Before his time is up, he would like to start at least as many more (search me, who cares? what am I, a mind reader?).

**Bryan Cholfin** eats, drinks, and breathes publishing, which probably explains his pale, pasty complexion and increasing resemblance to the Pillsbury Doughboy. His success as a publisher has kept him continuously on the brink of personal bankruptcy. This must mean that he's publishing the right kind of books. Or maybe not. After all, hard as it may be to believe, sometimes books don't sell because they are very bad, but he hopes that this is

not the case. He would give up in disgust if such were not a sign of defeat at the hands of the complacent. Terminally unsatisfied by the current offerings of the commercial publishing scene (and, if the truth be told, much of the small press as well), he is dedicating himself to the fine art of guerilla publishing. In his spare time, he is a crank.

**Connie Hirsch** missed Readercon last year while she was attending Clarion West, but this year she has no excuse. She is currently unemployed, whiling away her time writing, collecting friendly, encouraging personal rejections, and pursuing her hobbies which include multiple personalities, aerobics, vampires, graphic literature, serial killers and quilting. Her secret identities include fuzzy@athena, Tale Chaser, and Dinosaur Damsel.

**Bob Ingria** lists among his recent accomplishments: being a Wizard of Oz (or, at least, the man behind the curtain to whom no attention is paid) in the service of the Great MAD-COW; MUCKing about with Central American



news reports about terrorism and discovering that the presence of Jesuit priests is a good indicator of murder; doing one week of work integrating speech and natural language systems and coming up with the lowest Weighted Error in the great Arden House Spoken Language System bake-off; and finally getting a copy of the *Codex Seraphinianus*. In the near future, he expects to: do still more MUCKing about, become a Tipster on English and Japanese joint ventures and micro-electronic technology, enjoy the start of his new decade, and take arms (and pens) against the diffusionist and uncritically theoretical pseudo-scholars that litter the Academy these days. If you see someone in a MADCOW or Saint Burroughs T-shirt, that's him.

Sheila Lightsey doesn't know what a biography is.

B. Diane Martin waits and schemes in anticipation of Readercon 7, which will host the 1994 Tiptree Awards. In the meantime, she and David Shaw plan to continue to amaze all with the number of page layout and design programs they have learned in order to ensure their positions as "the Katherine and Billy Graham or Readercon."

Pryia Mirkin still prefers to remain anonymous.

Paisley and Obie are the unofficial Readercon feline mascots. They share the furniture and lives of committee members Bryan Cholfin and Terra Witkop, and have faithfully attended every committee meeting since September 1991. Paisley enjoys eating, and sleeping in a little cave of bed-

clothes; Obie occupies himself by shedding on dark-colored things and chasing imaginary bugs. Both of them enjoy films, especially ones portraying insects or bouncing balls. While neither cat is yet able to read, we're sure that if they could many of Readercon's guests would be among their favorite authors.

Mary Poole still thinks it's none of your business.

Barnaby Rapoport is best known as a fanzine editor (*Let's Fanac*, *Sadie Mae Glutz*). He was Guest of Honor at Corflu 7, and usually remembers to tell people that Corflu GoHs are chosen at random from the membership. As recording secretary, he secretly controls Readercon by manipulating the contents of the minutes. His taste in SF is notorious among the Gene Wolfe buffs who make up the rest of the committee (he has a complete collection of A.E. Van Vogt).

Nevenah Smith has just finished her tenth year of higher education, and just barely managed to escape with a bachelor's degree in Art, with a second major in English, which means that she can be unemployed in *two* fields. She is a confirmed masochist, proof of which can be found in the fact that she volunteered (not once, but *twice*) to design and layout the Readercon Souvenir Book under very short time restrictions, and in her style of attire, which runs to black leather and chains. She resides in Madison, Wisconsin, but not for long...

David G. Shaw was found dead — facedown on the keyboard of his faithful Macintosh IIsi — in his office at T Cell Sciences, a biotechnology compa-

ny for which he performed immunological research. The cause of death was believed to be a cerebroventricular accident suffered while attempting to edit the kerning tables in Quark Express. "I knew he wanted to make Readercon even better, but I never expected him to give his life to it," remarked B. Diane Martin, his executor and former live-in attorney. "Now he'll never get all those Michael Bishop hardcover editions autographed."

Mr. Shaw is succeeded by his pet blowfish and a 3000-disc record collection.

Eric M. Van fears that he is acquiring a new all-consuming passion to go with his three existing ones (imaginative literature always having taken third place behind music and sabremetrics, anyway). It frightens him when, among the sixty odd magazines he receives, he gets *The Nation* and *The Sporting News* on the same day and reads *The Nation* first. It scares him silly that his grandiose but not entirely implausible daydreams these days run not to being the Red Sox statistical adviser (as opposed to his wish-fulfillment daydream of being their second baseman), acclaimed prose stylist, or geriatric rock 'n' roll star but to proposing Constitutional Amendments (anyone for a Bill of Reform?) and founding vast social movements. It chagrins him that, after years of being warned that one's youthful attitudes inevitably drift rightward as one grows older, at age thirty-eight he finds himself no longer a Liberal, but a Radical. In his spare time, he is trying to fall deeply asleep for the first time since 1988.

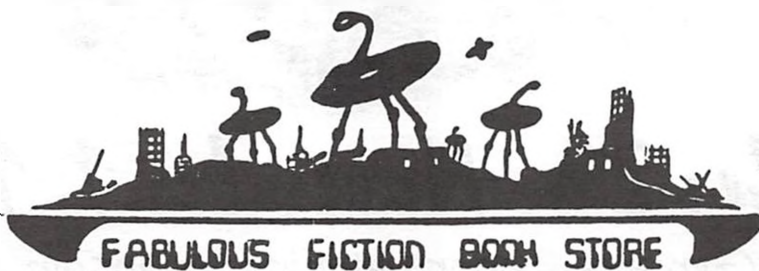
David Walrath joined Readercon shortly after attending Readercon 2 (after being coerced into going to a committee meeting by a friend who soon after moved, and never became a committee member himself). A reader of SF before he ever heard of the term, David first became interested in Readercon as a way to improve the quality of books he reads. Whether or not he succeeded, or simply increased his collection of impressive unread books, he stays active coordinating volunteers for Readercon each year.

Kate Waterous, having escaped from the frozen tundra a decade and a half ago, is now teetering on

the edge of the sea and does not truly know where she goes or what she does other than to see Readercon as a brilliant beacon promising enlightenment amidst the wilderness of the MacWorld. *Video et taceo.*

Terra Witkop (Treasurer) was raised by wolves in the forests of Western Massachusetts in the late sixties and early seventies, only discovering human civilization when disco came into vogue. She attended the University of Massachusetts at Amherst for two years. During this time, she realized that she'd already learned everything she needed to know in kindergarten, so she dropped out of college and

migrated to the Boston area, where she became the witty, urbane, totally hip gal we all know and love today. Terra is slated to be named as the next chairperson of the Readercon committee, after which she will declare her intention to run for President of the United States in the November election, owing to her obvious leadership qualities. By Readercon 6, Terra will have married Bryan Cholfin, our esteemed Program Chair (goodness knows why); she says proudly that thereafter she and Bryan will be known as "the Leona and Sherman Helmsley of Readercon."



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