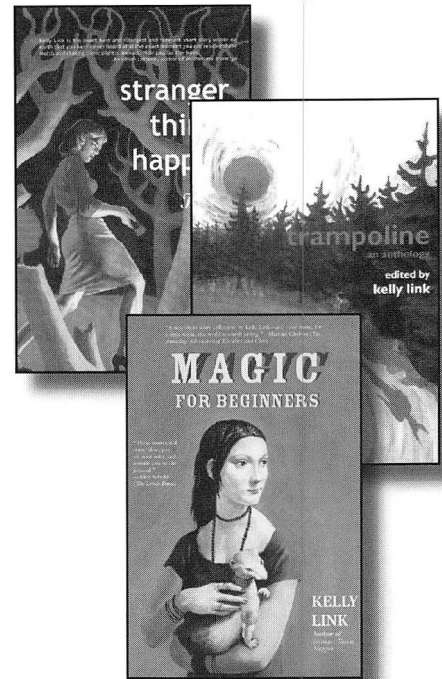




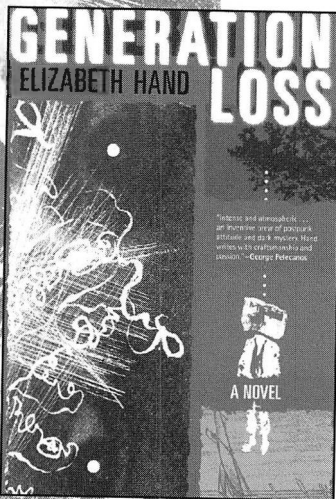
**WisCon**

**Kelly Link** would like to thank everyone who has ever worked (or volunteered) at or on WisCon. Since WisCon 20, the first she attended, there have been few events she has looked forward to as much and few places she has felt as comfortable. This is an amazing space and Kelly is very grateful to be asked to be a Guest of Honor (with Laurie J. Marks) and hopes that she can live up to the honor.

Please do not expect too much of her before she has had her coffee.

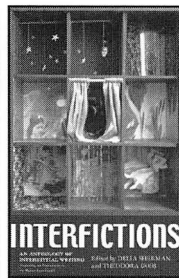
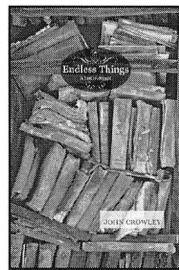


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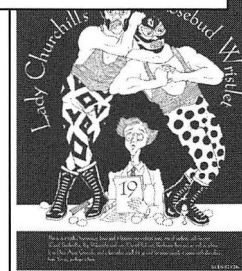


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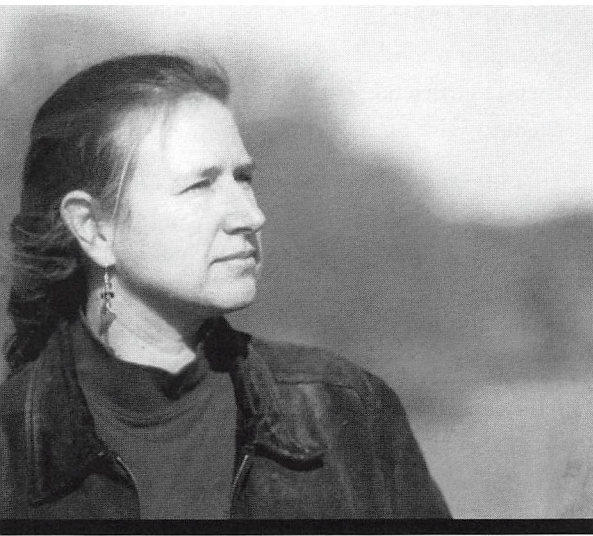
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courtesy of Laurie J. Marks

# LAURIE J. MARKS: DIRT UNDER HER FINGERNAILS

by Gretchen Marks\* and Deb Mensinger†

1957. Gretchen, a high school home economics teacher, became a full-time mother.

Laurie Jean Marks was born on March 27, 1957 in Costa Mesa, California, joining her father Don, who was an industrial arts teacher at the local middle school, and brother Rod. She grew up in Southern California, first in Riverside, where two sisters joined the family, and then in Santa Barbara.

Both a gifted artist and writer, Laurie won a city-wide award for poetry in fifth grade and another for illustration during her high school years. She lived on her bicycle during her high school and early college years, traveling many miles with her friend Sarah, as well as with her father. One day, she returned from a bike trip with her sister Teri, carrying a pet duck! After that, it was not unusual to see her walking early in the morning along with Dorcas duck (and later, Dara duck), gathering snails for the duck's breakfast.

On her high school graduation in 1975, she received a full scholarship to college, and spent her first two years at Westmont College in Santa Barbara.

She had always been active in youth groups during her teens so it was no surprise when she volunteered to work one summer in an orphanage in Tijuana, Mexico. Later, she spent a semester abroad in England, studying Shakespeare. She attended plays in the evening and studied plays and poetry in the daytime, and did some hitchhiking (to her mother's dismay). She also spent a few weeks in Rome, Paris, and Israel, where she floated in the Dead Sea.

She returned from her travels having become an activist, a Democrat, a thinker, and an adult. (Early signs of this had been seen when Laurie, 14, refused to iron the pillowcases: the Ironing Board Rebellion.) Unfortunately, Westmont is a strongly Christian campus, and

\*Laurie's mother

†Laurie's wife

it no longer fit with who she wanted to be. She was accepted as a mid-year transfer student to Brown University, which left her a semester in which to travel to Seattle to live with a couple of friends. I believe this is where she distinguished herself as the world's worst waitress, consistently giving customers the wrong pizza.

When it came time to go back to college, she flew into Providence armed with suitcase and bike. She landed during the Blizzard of '78, and Brown was soon closed, giving her the welcoming sight of helicopters dropping food onto the commons. No storm has topped this one to date.

At Brown, Laurie earned a degree in semiotics and married a young man she'd gone to school with. They moved to Southern California, where she worked full-time for a few years, then did part-time work in social service agencies, all the while working on her writing every day. Meanwhile, she was taking care of the 14-acre orange grove that we owned. (The land was a wedding present to my husband and me; we planted orange trees the year I was pregnant with Laurie.)

Six months before her 30th birthday, Laurie began writing her first published book, *Delan the Mislaid*.



1986. Deb Mensinger was an office manager at an autobody shop.

One day, I was lying on the sofa at a friend's house in Torrance, CA. I was sound asleep when this woman walked in the room. She was wearing a pink sweater and striped overalls, which I thought were absolutely adorable on her. I sat up and said, "You have the most beautiful blue eyes I have ever seen." People who know me know I would never say

a thing like that. But I did, I just blurted it out. Strangely, nobody told me that Laurie was my friend's girlfriend. That was a big detail for them to leave out!

That night, the three of us went to a fundraiser for the anti-LaRouche campaign. The fundraiser was a show with Holly Near and Kate Clinton. Another current girlfriend of this friend showed up—this was getting way too complicated for me—and the two of them left before intermission. Laurie and I had a good time anyway; we spent the rest of the evening talking and talking and talking. Laurie told me she was a writer and I was absolutely enthralled. Writing was something I have always valued. We both became much more talkative as the evening progressed—she was talking about her writing and I kept asking her questions and we were joking around. We were outside at one point because I was still a smoker at the time, and a friend of mine was outside having a smoke, too. She was dressed as a tampon, including the string. I have such a vivid memory of that, talking about writing standing next to a giant tampon.

The three of us were supposed to go to a party together after the show. Laurie and I were given bad directions and we ended up driving around for three hours, talking and talking. Finally, Laurie said, "If only we had a map," and I realized that I *did* have a map! In the glove compartment!

We got to the party, but it was over, so we went to my house, and I opened up the sofa for Laurie and her girlfriend. The next morning, I got up for my usual Sunday routine, going on a bike ride, reading the paper, drinking coffee, and turning on a religious show (Jimmy Swaggart was my favorite). Laurie woke up and thought it was absolutely hilarious that I was watching religious TV. I walked them

to their truck and got back to the house and noticed that Laurie had left her purse. I was thrilled because I knew she'd be back—and she was!

But when she got her purse, I forgot to get her phone number. I called her girlfriend to get her number, which she wasn't happy to give me, then called her house and left a message . . . with her husband . . . to have her call me. (I knew it was her husband and I left a message anyway! They were separated by this time, so it was okay.) Well, she got home and called me. We made a date to get together the next weekend and I spent the entire week completely redecorating my apartment. Until then, we talked every night for hours on the phone. She came over and we've been together ever since.

Around then, her husband moved on with his life. At Christmas, Laurie had company coming over and borrowed my sofa. After the holidays, we were sitting on my sofa and she said, "Well, as long as your sofa is here, you might as well move in." So I did, I brought over all my clothes and my antique refrigerator.

*Delan* came out in '87. We'd been living in a trailer in the orange grove, and moved to Paso Robles and bought our own place. First, we were Kelly Girls on a project on a military base that was investigated by *60 Minutes*. (We also got to ride in a tank once!) Then I became a cop, but the stress was killing me, so we decided that Laurie could get an advanced education and I could go to law school. We studied at night to get her through her GRES—she got 99% in English and logic, and 14 in math!

We wanted to get out of Southern California—maybe it was overkill, going to Boston, but what can you do? She was accepted at Northeastern, and we were thrilled. We had enough

money saved up to take our time moving, so we spent several weeks traveling across the country. My last day of work was Independence Day, and the next day we packed to move. It took us three days to load the car, unload the car, load the car, unload the car. It was very difficult to fit everything in, and we had to leave room for a huge stack of maps, books to read to each other, and my teddy bear, Beatrice Blueberry Bear (Bea). That was 1994, and we'd been together for eight years, which was a long time back then.

Our first stop was the eastern side of Yosemite, where we discovered that our propane stove didn't work (so much for bringing groceries!). Every day we had coffee and decided our route, and a 3,000-mile trip put 6,000 miles on the car. It was such a wonderful trip—we went to Wind Caves, where the wind was so strong, we couldn't get the tent staked out properly. In the middle of the night, the tent was lying on top of us, and we thought it was going to break. We learned a hiking secret in Yellowstone, that people will hike until it's time to make dinner, and then go back to the campground. They're still on a working schedule. So we would set off on a hike at 4PM and hike until 10 PM and saw no one. We've used that strategy ever since, and it's always worked. On the Upper Peninsula in Michigan, we had a bear come into our car. We were buying our food at fruit and veggie stands along the way, and we'd had a muskmelon that was so wonderful. We're sure that's what he smelled. We'd learned bear tactics in Yosemite, to stand together, wave your arms, and try to look big. But the bear hadn't read the same pamphlet. We tried to honk the horn, but it didn't work until the keys were in. Laurie hopped in and got the horn working and he finally left, but he tried to take our lantern with him.

In Boston, Delia Sherman let us stay at her place while we looked for jobs, and Ellen Kushner helped us find an apartment. Laurie started school and soon had a teaching assistantship. Then I went to school, but not law school. The thing is, back when we moved, Laurie discovered that we hadn't been able to get her printer in the car because I had packed all my tools. In Boston, people would invite me to dinner, suggest I bring my tools, and I would go around their house fixing things. It was lots of fun. Delia told me that lawyers are a dime a dozen and nobody likes them, but a good carpenter is hard to find and very well-liked. So when Laurie graduated with an M.A., I started at North Bennett School studying preservation carpentry. After school, I started my own business, but after a few years became disabled by porphyria, an inherited condition in which porphyrins in red blood cells aren't broken down correctly, leading to a build-up of toxic by-products. Ironically, people with porphyria show up in literature as vampires. I can assure you, though, that I've never bitten anyone's neck but Laurie's; I get my blood transfusions only in hospitals. Honest.

Laurie has been working at U-Mass Boston since 1997 teaching freshman composition. All the time, she was writing her books. She writes her first drafts in longhand, then types it and corrects it. She goes through three or four drafts before she's through.

Her novels come after incredible hard work (like all writers' efforts). She is part of a writers group, The Genrettes, with Delia Sherman, Rosemary Kirstein, and Didi Stewart. They have kept the group going for over ten years, and even distance does not keep these writers from their appointed rounds. They are all better writers for it.

Now we're coming to a really rough part of our lives. In 1994 she opened a box of *Earth Logic* books, leaned against the porch railing to admire them, and the railing broke. She fell twelve feet, breaking seven bones in her leg, knee, and back. I saw it happen and yelled at her to not move. I ran in the house, grabbed the phone, called 911, and when I got to her, she wasn't breathing. I started CPR on her and she came around. I held her until the ambulance got there. A neighbor from across the street who we didn't even know came out and directed traffic.

She ended up having two plates in her knee with four screws, and 22 screws in her back with two 12-inch rods. She was at Mass General for two weeks and then spent four weeks in a rehab hospital. Different people drove me to the hospital every day, and to my own treatments. At first Laurie was on a morphine drip—it's usually on a pushbutton, but hers ran freely, she was taking it in big-time. She doesn't remember much of that time.

Two weeks before she came home, Laurie's dad and brother came out and made the house accessible for someone in a wheelchair. Her mom came out and paid our bills and helped shop for things Laurie would need in our house—to use the bathroom and such. She didn't go back to teaching for seven months. Now she has flashbacks when she's in a hospital room. Since I'm in hospitals so often, it's tough on her.

A lot of people sprang into action during that time, and we're so incredibly grateful. A neighbor next door took our Welsh Corgi, Widget, out for a walk every day and to her house for naps. (Widget was very upset for weeks, until we got Laurie talking on the phone to



her. Once that happened, Widget cried a little, then calmed down and took a several-hour nap. From then on, every day we had Laurie call her.) A lot of people chipped in to give me rides to the hospital every day. Everyone was so supportive, it was just unbelievably incredible.

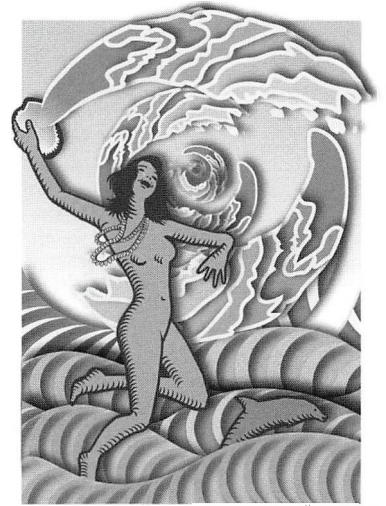
When Laurie got home from the hospital, I immediately developed an infection in my heart. For a while, we shared the same visiting nurse. Could we be more pathetic?!

But things got better. We got married on May 22, 2004. Laurie got permission to take her upper-body brace off for the ceremony, and friends arranged flowers and food. The previous Monday, the state legislature had approved same-sex marriages: our wedding was on Saturday (because nobody can come to a Monday wedding!) and it was the Justice of the Peace's first same-sex marriage. We had a great time: neighbors, friends, and school people all came to the reception.

These days, we try to go to Maine camping for one month in the woods. I make fabulous breakfasts, fresh blueberry pancakes and French toast with fresh strawberries. We get our fruit and veggies at local produce stands. One of our favorite things is to go to New Harbor in the evenings and to eat lobster on the pier the way it was made to be eaten, no bibs, no fancy clothes, just the lobster juice and butter sliding down your arms. Every other day, we go hiking in Dodge Point. It's a place where all three of us recharge our batteries, hiking by wildflowers, ponds and waterfalls and huge and varied trees. It's a place that makes us feel alive and close. Widget is part of our merry band of trekkers, and her high is to swim in a huge mud puddle.

Finally, here's what you should know about Laurie: she is really committed to the garden. She grows flowers like you wouldn't believe. We have a floral grow-light in the basement and we grow flowers from seeds, and plant them in the yard. In the summer, Laurie will write as long as she can, and then she goes out in the garden. It's where her spirit grows. She believes in dirt. After she broke her back, she would go out and lie down on the ground, one leg forward because it was in a brace and wouldn't bend, and would work the dirt. People out walking would stop and talk about her garden and what had happened to her, and everything looked so beautiful. I think that helped her get over the mental part of the fall, getting to spend time with her hands in the soil.

I could not be more proud of Laurie if I tried. Her being named WisCon's guest of honor is a recognition that thrills me. Laurie gets needed recognition for her writing, and I have found my own space and welcoming here: recognition for my past career (a preservation carpenter, working on old houses using old hand tools), and even a panel on porphyria. We have made cherished friends and eaten wonderful meals (including at the noodle shop). Just this morning I asked Laurie if we needed to go on Ebay and buy new clothes. (I have a new jacket.) She answered with a kiss.



Jeanne Gomoll, 2006

# LAURIE J. MARKS, LIVING STORY

by *Delia Sherman*

Laurie Marks is a storyteller. Once upon a time (which in this story is less than fifteen years ago—shortly after she and her beloved partner Deb Mensinger moved to Boston) I invited Laurie to join a small writing group I was putting together. Although its members wrote different genres and even defined genre differently, we all defined ourselves as genre writers, so we called our new girl-group the Genrettes.

The Incredible Genrettes: Laurie Marks, Rosemary Kirstein, Didi Stewart, and me. Over the years, we've seen each other through assorted severe illnesses and accidents, divorce, and the deaths of four parents. Also two weddings, four moves (two out of state), three new jobs, eight novels, and various short stories. Our meetings—inevitably held over lunch—officially begin with an hour or so of catching up.

Laurie had moved from California to go to graduate school, to get an MA in English with an emphasis in writing. Over the next two years, she took courses and wrote papers, and once a month, when the Genrettes met, we got to hear all about them. She never just talked about topics or facts, she made stories out of them, stories that allowed us (who knew nothing about writing theory) to understand the material she was grappling with and the

professors and colleagues she was dealing with. At the same time, of course, she was also writing her groundbreaking humanist novel *Fire Logic*.

Once she finished grad school and began to teach, the stories kept getting more interesting. We heard about this student who was writing his papers on the train during his two-hour commute to school and that student who had to drop out because of health or family issues and we all discussed what might be done to encourage them to come back next year instead of just dropping out entirely. We heard about paper topics and syllabi.

Being a teacher wasn't easy for Laurie at first—she doesn't really have a lot of use for authority, her own any more than anyone else's. Furthermore, she is a self-identified introvert, a listener rather than a talker. Her unorthodoxy has turned her into the teacher of your dreams. Her ability to listen in particular is one of her strengths as a teacher. I've seen her in a classroom only once, when I went to talk to her class about writing SF/fantasy stories, but I've been in countless conversations with her, and I know. Laurie makes sure she has all the data—about a text, about a student, about a problem—before she starts thinking about how to deal with it.

So why does she spend so much time and life force teaching kids to write? Maybe it's because for Laurie, storytelling is family. Storytelling is connection. Storytelling is salvation.

When she turned 40, the friends she'd made since moving to Boston threw her a small party. We gave her gifts—the usual utterly forgettable small change of friendship—and she gave us a story about how each one of us had touched her life over the years she'd known us. Not only did she capture our lives and characters, but gave us a window onto what each of us had meant to her, in ways we couldn't have imagined. It was a remarkable and generous gift.

No matter what's going on in her life, Laurie writes. Through moves and paper-grading, through the demands that having a chronically ill partner make on her life, Laurie manages to carve out a little time and space to work on her novels. And when she just can't, she becomes (she tells us—we probably wouldn't notice otherwise) incredibly cranky.

In Laurie's world, being a storyteller is a position of great responsibility. *Earth Logic* is about how powerful stories and the people who tell them can be. In the pre-industrial society of Shaftal, storytellers can go places politicians and soldiers and even ordinary people can't go. The stories they tell disarm prejudices, breach emotional walls, explain things to people who don't want to understand them. This is not to say that storytellers

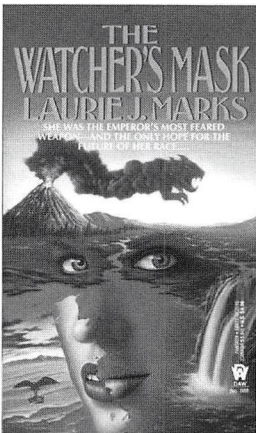
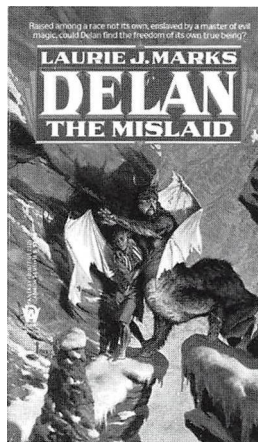
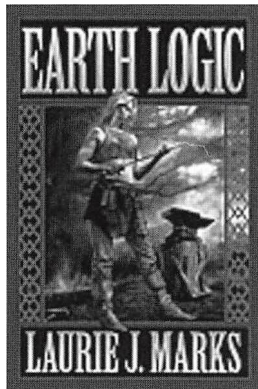
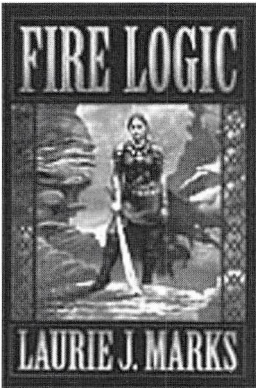
are necessarily highly honored or regarded in Shaftal. The soldiers of the invading Sainnites are entertained (and changed) by the storyteller, but they only listen to her in the first place because she is mad, indigent, and powerless.

Which is what civilized society has pretty much always said about writers, poets, and artists. Which is certainly what our post-modern, media-driven society thinks about writers of fantasy today. Which is why deeply subversive, quietly revolutionary books like Laurie's are important.

When you write a book or tell a story, you don't quite know where it's going to go or what it's going to do. This can be satisfying for dreamers. But Laurie is also a remarkably practical person. Perhaps that's why she's a cook and a gardener. When you make a soup, you nourish bodies and friendships. When you plant a seed, you get a flower. Laurie's garden is a beautiful and generous riot of bulbs and perennials and flowering shrubs. My birthday present for the past five years has been an annually renewed pot of dark purple calla lilies and sky-blue lobelia, which sat on my back steps all summer and fall until Laurie picked it up to prepare it for next summer.

Now that I've moved to New York, Laurie can't just drive over from the next town to drop flowers off on the back porch. But the Genrettes still meet in New Haven, half-way between our two cities, to share our writing and our lives. To tell each other stories.

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## Ten or So Things I Am Proud of But Wouldn't Put On My Resume:

I believe in dirt (in the religious sense).

I can pronounce "hegemony."

I understand why it is irrelevant to be right.

I make kick-ass espresso on my Coleman stove.

I have never been in fashion.

I have never been ideologically comfortable.

I rarely run out of patience.

I can grow and preserve food, turn raw wool into clothing, build a house and keep it warm; everything necessary to survive after a nuclear holocaust.

I understand internal combustion and steam engines, even though I can't fix my own car.

I wrote my first novel at age 12.

I can think like a plant.

I was nearly expelled from my Christian college because I couldn't force myself to attend chapel services.

My wife, Deb Mensinger, and I are one of about 2,000 legally married same-sex couples in the country.



courtesy of Kelly Link

# KELLY LINK IN THREE VOICES

by *Annabel Link\** and *Gavin Grant†*

<Cue Annabel Link, mother of Kelly, sitting in her sunny living room, birds cheeping in the garden>

The summer that Kelly had her first birthday, she, her dad, and I made a car trip of more than 2,000 miles to see her grandparents. For countless hours, sitting on my lap in a tiny Kharman Ghia, Kelly was entertained with Little Golden Books like *Saggy Baggy Elephant*, *Poky Little Puppy*, and *Tawny Scrawny Lion*. Although the stories were too sophisticated for her little brain, she seemed hypnotized by both the illustrations and the sound of the words. By the time the trip ended, Kelly had become nearly as passionate about books as she was about her blanket.

When she was in kindergarten, I began reading the Narnia tales by C. S. Lewis to her. Sick with strep throat and home from school one day, Kelly followed me around all day, pitifully begging for “just one more chapter because

I have to know what happens,” until all 216 pages of *Prince Caspian* had been read and I was almost completely hoarse.

During her 5th grade spring break, she and her younger sister, Holly, went on a Scandinavian cruise with their grandparents. Their grandparents were clueless that she could freely check out adult books unsuitable for a child from the unsupervised ship library. For two weeks, Kelly enjoyed the forbidden fruit (including one titled *Lace*), delighted to be free of any possible censoring from her parents. In the 10th grade, she and I joined an uncle’s family in New York City for a long weekend, and Kelly made her first visit to the Statue of Liberty. After climbing to the top, she sat down on the final step and pulled out a book from her backpack. The glorious view of Manhattan from the window of the crown was not her idea of a reward for so much exercise, but reading a few pages was!

\*Kelly’s mother

†Kelly’s husband

After arriving at Columbia for her freshman year and unloading all her gear, Kelly felt a few pangs of anxiety since she didn't know a soul at the school. She was finally bribed with \$20 at the entrance of a bookstore before she felt emotionally ready for me to drive back to NC without her. On her second day at Columbia, she took a bus south on Broadway for about 100 blocks to The Strand (undoubtedly this bookstore had played a large role in her decision to go to Columbia). After loading up on books, she discovered that the bus did not go north on Broadway for 100 blocks, and she ended up walking most of the way back, lugging the books. Anyone who has ever traveled with Kelly has probably felt more than a little pressure to help carry the books that seem to multiply every time a bookstore is sighted.

<Voice of mother in a reflective mood; drinks tinkling smartly in the background> As a young child, Kelly fell in love with fairy tales, fantasy, and science fiction almost as soon as she first heard stories about imaginary worlds. When her father read her *The Hobbit* in the second grade, Kelly's future as an author, editor, and publisher was probably sealed. Her imagination has been inspired by the thousands of books she has read, and her passion for reading continues unabated. Those who read Kelly's stories enjoy her unique ability to create worlds where stranger things do happen and magic is for beginners, as long as she can stop reading long enough to write.

<Voice of Gavin Grant, noted Kelly Link authority. Typewriters clack in the background as Small Beer Press whirs along.> Kelly Link was born in Coral Gables, Florida, on July 19, 1969. Between then and now she has read quite a few books, edited a few, and written two. Closer to now than then, she has also dabbled in beading, painting (mostly walls), and putting the most miles on a 1997 Saturn possible while not upgrading the stereo system. (We kept thinking we'd trade it in for a hybrid but the hybrids are either too small on the interior [Prius], or the mileage advance isn't enough.) Kelly likes to drive (or be driven) long distances because she can mull over her stories: there's a lot of mulling needed before the stories hit the page. Then when she gets to the actual writing, she tends to write a story out all the way through, then go back to the start and rework it again and again from there.

<Cue David Attenborough in his library> This is a critical point in the story. Should anything get in the way of her momentum here (travel, Small Beer knocking on the door, one of Gwenda Bond's Devil Bugs), it can all come to a crashing halt and it can be weeks or months before the young writer can be tempted to restart the writing process.

<Back to Gavin and the typewriters> Sometimes the reworking is more fun than others. (Kelly will tell you the reworking is always more fun than the writing.) When she was writing "The Girl Detective," she cut the story up into all the different sections and rearranged them on the floor to see what—

if any—difference it made to the story. That story, with its fractured narrative, has attracted the most interest in terms of interpreting it through different mediums. If that sounds clumsy, it's because there have been two different theater adaptations, and a university arts department has made a series of short films based on it. It also includes a woman who took lines from the story, turned them into Morse Code, then into music, and played it on her bassoon.

Some of Kelly's stories are more accessible. "The Faery Handbag," written in desperate haste after crashing through deadline after deadline for Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling's *The Faery Reel* anthology, is the best example. Kelly took things she knew and loved (the clothing store, the Garment District in Boston; Scrabble; dogs) and added a great family, an irritated librarian, and an imaginary country to create a modern fairy tale that won awards and still wows readers.

< *Gavin walks along a noisy urban street.* >

What does Kelly's writing mean? Really, don't ask me. Sorry! What is fiction? The narrative dream that sneaks up and knocks a reader on the back of the head? Kelly's stories seem at once timeless and of this time and are influenced by everyone from Joan Aiken to Angela Carter, Robert Aickman to Edgar Rice Burroughs, Robert Carver to whoever else is in your head at the moment? Mapping Kelly's stories is hard. Weird stuff happens in them and is accepted as part of life, which is an almost daily occurrence for most of us

reading the newspapers these last seven years, and perhaps everyday for kids, which is maybe why Kelly is very much attracted to young adult writing and writers.

Kelly went to high school in Florida and Greensboro, North Carolina. She did her undergrad degree at Columbia in New York, where she did a "concentration" in English. She did a junior year abroad at the University of St. Andrew's in Scotland and while there won a free trip around the world by answering the question "Why do you want to go around the world?" Her reply: "Because you can't go through it." (She would never be paid as highly again for her writing.) After the trip she persuaded the MFA program at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro that she was a good candidate by sending in a picture of her bungee-jumping off a bridge in New Zealand. She did not send a picture of herself miserably sick in Southeast Asia.

In 1995, ink barely dry on her MFA, Kelly attended the Clarion Writers' Workshop in East Lansing, Michigan. This was to prove fertile ground and began a long-term relationship with the organization that continues to grow. Kelly has since taught at Clarion, Clarion West in Seattle, and this January at the fabulous Clarion South in Brisbane, and is now one of the all-volunteer board of Clarion San Diego. Back in 1995, Clarion propelled Kelly into writing four stories in six weeks. She also sold her first stories about this time, "Water Off a Black Dog's Back" to *Century*, "Flying Lessons" to *Asimov's*, and "Vanishing Act" to *Realms of Fantasy*.

All would seem to be going swimmingly for our heroine. She moved to Boston in 1995 and shared a house in Somerville with a couple of her college friends. She managed to survive a three-hour job interview and started working at the Avenue Victor Hugo Bookshop, at the time a 20-year-old cultural institution (it was listed as one of the “1,000 Most Romantic Places in America”). It helped that Kelly had worked for a couple of years at a children’s bookshop in Greensboro (with her mother!) and was familiar with many of the bookshop owner’s favorite writers (such as Booth Tarkington or Georgette Heyer).

Avenue Victor Hugo’s floor-to-ceiling shelves, in-store cat, and post-work rooftop beer—and possibly the experience of working with me (I was already working there when she arrived)—spoiled Kelly for any other work and although she has done jobs as varied as freelance writing for health brochures, reading Ellen Datlow’s *SCIFICTION* slush, answering email for Del Rey, editing *The Year’s Best Fantasy & Horror*, and so on, she has never found another job quite as fun. (Not including everything *LCRW*, *Small Beer*, and *Year’s Best*-related, of course.)

Kelly was writing a little, not tons. Part of it was that she couldn’t sell the stories she had written. She knew she was supposed to put her head down and write some more stories, and she was getting back to writing post-Clarion, but after her three quick early sales the stories didn’t find takers. It soon became a familiar reprise, “I liked it but it doesn’t quite

fit our magazine/anthology/back of our cereal box.” Bryan Cholfin of (the late lamented) *Crank!* magazine did take “Travels with the Snow Queen” but it was never actually published there.

Eventually, as it seemed at the time, when I asked if I could put it in the first issue of my new zine, *Lady Churchill’s Rosebud Wristlet* (*LCRW*), she said, “Sure, why not?” So in late 1996, *LCRW* #1 came out. A couple of people bought it and copies got to the Tiptree jury, who decided to split the award that year between that story and Candace Jane Dorsey’s novel, *Black Wine*. And because they only saw the story after the award was announced, Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling reprinted “Travels . . .” in *The Year’s Best Fantasy and Horror*—along with “The Specialist’s Hat,” marking it the first of many stories bought or printed by Ellen and Terri.

It took a couple more years for Kelly to start selling stories regularly, until at some point there were suddenly more invitations than stories and since then Kelly has been enjoying trying to keep up.

By 2000, after getting evicted by a horribly smart landlord taking advantage of the rise in house prices, we decided to give living in Brooklyn a shot. We found a likely-sounding apartment in the *NY Times* but when the landlord offered us \$100 off if we took it, we were spooked and said we’d call back. Upon checking with other Brooklynites and seeing some very much more squalid apartments, we rang the landlord’s phone and went by the



apartment enough times to appease him and eventually signed the lease that moved us to a borough of The City.

Kelly had since signed a contract with Steve Pasechnik of Edgewood Press to publish her first collection. But as she published the stories that would make up the latter half of the book, she and Steve came to an amicable parting of the ways. At this point, some kindly writer friends gave Kelly's stories to their editor or agent with a nudge. But the reply was generally, "Lovely. Does she have a novel?" Fair enough, but no, she didn't. So in May 2000, under the new Small Beer Press name (pulled out of thin air to replace various other temporary nametags), Kelly's first chapbook, *4 Stories* was published. Something like 200–300 copies were printed. It sold well enough to persuade us to try it with another writer in October and the second Small Beer chapbook was published, *Five Forbidden Things* by Canadian writer Dora Knez.

Kelly had begun doing some freelance writing and reading editorial slush piles and Gavin was working at the Book Sense part of the American Booksellers Association. They decided, treating the chapbooks as singles and thinking of books as albums or CDs, that they could use the indie record model and publish a full-length collection of Kelly's stories. In May 2001, in time for WisCon, Small Beer Press

produced its first two book-shaped objects: Kelly's collection *Stranger Things Happen*, and Oregon-based Ray Vukcevich's first collection, *Meet Me in the Moon Room*. One of the stories original to Kelly's collection, "Louise's Ghost," won a Nebula the next spring. Kelly, who had been out in New York with ex-Clarion students rather than across the country at the awards, thought Jim Minz was pulling her leg about the award—especially as the phone connection gave out and neither could get through to the other for about twenty minutes.

In 2001, we were married and in late 2002 we moved up to the proverbial old farmhouse in Northampton, Massachusetts.

In the last few years Kelly has: driven across the country many times to read at bookshops, visit colleges, or go to conventions (ReaderCon, AWP, World Fantasy, and sometimes WorldCon . . . only flying if she *really* has to); published a second collection (*Magic for Beginners*) and written enough for a young adult collection; taught at Clarion; worked on the *Year's Best* and the Online Writing Workshop; edited *LCRW* and books for Small Beer; and made a pretty decent tomato sauce.

She has not kept up with email and does not ever really expect to.

# KELLY LINK, MAGICAL

by Karen Joy Fowler

A few months ago, I was in our small cooperative grocery store in Davis, California and found on a chalkboard above the excellent breads, the following quote:

*There are three kinds of food.*

*One is the food that your mother makes for you. One is the kind of food that you eat in restaurants. One is the kind of food that you eat in dreams. There's one other kind of food, but you can only get that in the underworld, and it's not really food. It's more like dancing.*

—Kelly Link, “The Girl Detective”

I've known for quite some time that Kelly was being noticed. I've known even longer what an amazing, thrilling, astonishing writer she is. She's won most of the available awards in the science fiction field at least once, she had a story in *Greatest American Short Stories* (“Stone Animals,” in my opinion, the best story in that or any other collection), she's been to MacDowell, been in *Entertainment Weekly*, been on NPR. Even so, I didn't expect to find her in my local grocery store. You can't always count on good taste, even in the subset of people who read. But I'm never surprised by Kelly's success. Her stories are magical trampolines. You never know exactly where

you'll land; you only know that until you do, you're airborne. Resistance is not only futile, it's no damn fun.



I first met Kelly in the summer of 1995 when she was one of my students in the Clarion Workshop. I've never thought I got quite enough credit for the fact that she wrote just as well when she left as she did when she arrived. I have a memory from the workshop on the day “Travels with the Snow Queen” was discussed. On the topic of stories in the second person, one of the participants said that she was always pleased to discover that she was the protagonist in a story. And then she read on and realized she was not only central, but also smart and witty. Kelly's stories make us all feel smart and witty. And inspired and delighted and creeped out and lit up. Moved and improved. Transported.

In my own life, Kelly has been an enormous gift. I've had some of my best meals (Grand Sichuan) and seen some of my worst movies (*Bulletproof Monk*) in her company. We've taken road trips and been in workshops. When I've been on the road alone, missing critical episodes of critical television shows, she's recounted them for me over the phone,

and her recounts tend to be far better than the originals. She's given me some of my favorite books, and some of my favorite music. She is an endless source of great British television. Kelly is the person who called me on the morning of September the 11<sup>th</sup> to let me know the first tower had gone down. We watched the second collapse while still on the phone. She is my best and most trusted reader.



Here is the bad stuff:

She loves zombies and cheerleaders. (The only zombies and cheerleaders I love are hers).

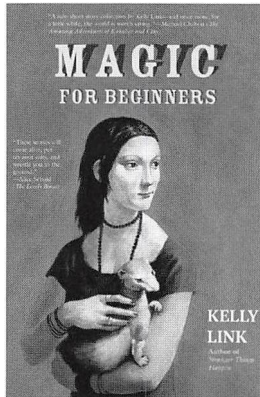
I've never played games with anyone as determined (and likely) to win. My advice if you find yourself playing mafia when Kelly Link is in the circle is to kill her first round. This advice was hard come by so I hope you'll take it. Don't ever let her hustle you into a game of ping-pong.

Though she routinely plans more things to do than there is time to do them in, she does manage to read great gobs, edit books, teach workshops, visit new friends and old, attend readings and conferences, co-edit the *Year's Best Fantasy* with Gavin Grant, and write her own killer stories. She does this all at the same time. I ask myself how. I don't know the answer, but I doubt it's entirely natural.

I've always assumed that any writer needs a powerful selfish streak. Of all the writers I know, Kelly is the hardest to catch in the act of selfishness. She reads everything. She is a passionate enthusiast—when she loves a book, and she is always loving some book or other—she buys copies for everyone she knows. To go into a bookstore with Kelly is to see the shelves stripped. Small Beer Press is, at least partly, a way for Kelly to turn her own success to the promotion of other writers.

So it's maybe appropriate that one of the strongest images I have of Kelly is a group shot. It's Clarion; it's dusk; it's July, it's Michigan. We've had a barbecue or something, because the workshop is gathered in the grassy courtyard. The fireflies are beginning and at the far edge of the grass, a rabbit has appeared. Tim Powers nudges me and I look up to see Dora Knez, Nalo Hopkinson, and Kelly Link moving in unison, slowly gliding across the lawn toward the rabbit. The light is falling and the fireflies sparking and we are all watching these beautiful, magical women. Even the rabbit is transfixed by the mesmerizing Kelly Link and her marvelous, magical friends.

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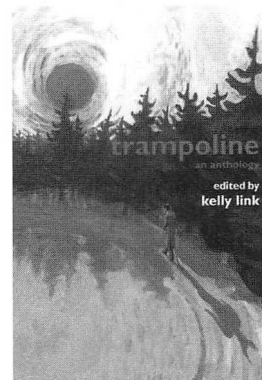
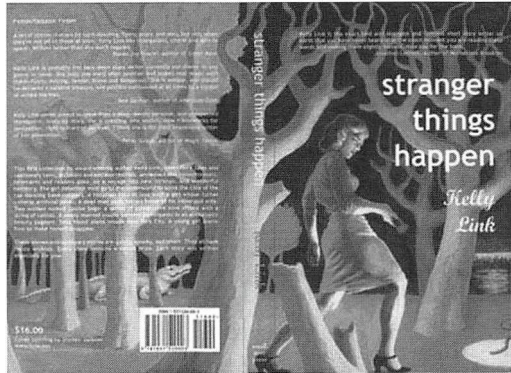
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# 2006 TIPTREE AWARD

## Winners of the 2006 Tiptree Award

Shelley Jackson, *Half Life*  
(HarperCollins 2006)

Catherynne M. Valente, *The Orphan's Tales:  
In the Night Garden*  
(Bantam Spectra 2006)

## Special Recognition

Julie Phillips, *James Tiptree, Jr.:  
The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon*  
(St. Martin's 2006)

## Honor List

Andrea Hairston, *Mindscape*  
(Aqueduct Press 2006)

Betsy James, *Listening at the Gate*  
(Atheneum 2006)

Ellen Kushner, *The Privilege of the Sword*  
(Spectra 2006)

James Morrow, *The Last Witchfinder*  
(Morrow 2006)

Michaela Roessner, "Horse-Year Women"  
(*Fantasy and Science Fiction*, January 2006)

Karen Russell, "Ava Wrestles the Alligator"  
(*Granta* 93, April 2006)

Karen Russell, "St. Lucy's Home  
for Girls Raised by Wolves"  
(*Zoetrope: All-Story*, Summer 2006)  
*St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves*  
(Knopf 2006)

Karen Traviss, *Matriarch*  
(Eos 2006)

Mark von Schlegell, *Venusia*  
(Semiotext(e) 2005)

The James Tiptree, Jr. Literary Award Council is pleased to announce that the 2006 Tiptree Award has two winners: Shelley Jackson's novel *Half Life* and Catherynne M. Valente's novel *The Orphan's Tales: In the Night Garden*. In addition, the 2006 Tiptree Award judges recognized Julie Phillips for her biography *James Tiptree, Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon*.

In accepting their awards at WisCon on May 27, 2007, Ms. Jackson and Ms. Valente will each receive \$1,000, an original artwork created specifically for the award, and a signature work in chocolate.

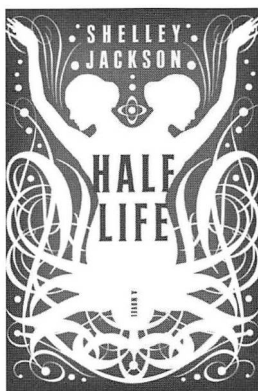
Jurors this year worked tirelessly and included Midori Snyder, Joan Gordon, Laurel Winter, Diane Silver, and Takayuki Tatsumi. They each read stacks of novels in search of those that explore and expand gender roles in science fiction and fantasy—and more specifically, works that are thought-provoking, imaginative, and perhaps even infuriating. The Tiptree Award is intended to reward writers who are bold enough to contemplate shifts and changes in gender roles, a fundamental aspect of any society.

In addition to the ceremony at WisCon, this year's awards will be featured at the World Science Fiction Convention in Japan in August 2007.

“*Half-Life* is a spectacular book,” says juror Joan Gordon. “Jackson uses the science fictional conceit of conjoined twins born in large numbers after A-Bomb testing in the 1950s to explore both sympathetically and satirically all the negotiations in the women’s movement, in gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgender movements, and in other rights movements—separatist, solidarity, identity, integration, etc.” Juror Takayuki Tatsumi notes that “Jackson’s speculation on Hiroshima and Nagasaki makes the novel more philosophical, inviting us to meditate on what will happen to sexuality and ethnicity in the post-nuclear future.”

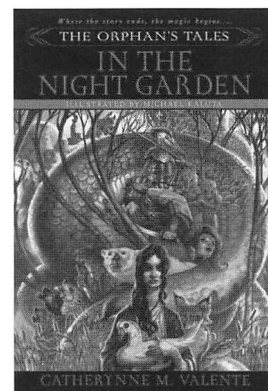
It is a brilliant, disquieting first novel about a pair of conjoined twins who are deeply unhappy in each other’s company. Nora, the dominant twin, is strong, funny, and deeply independent, thirsting for love and adventure. Blanche, by contrast, has been sleeping for nearly twenty years. Finally sick of carrying her sister’s dead weight, Nora decides she wants her other half gone for good. She leaves San Francisco for London in search of the mysterious Unity Foundation, which promises to make two one. And that one, of course, will be Nora—Blanche will be mourned, but not missed.

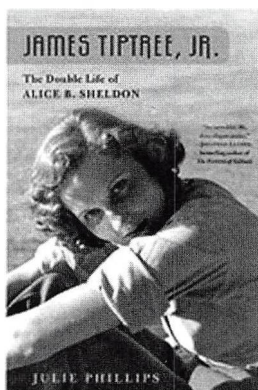
But once Nora arrives in London, her past begins to surface in surprising and disturbing ways, forcing her into a most reluctant voyage into memory. Something seems to be drawing Nora’s thoughts back to the site of her rather unusual conception, birth, and childhood—the reconstructed ghost town of Too Bad, Nevada, where lizards skitter across the playa and “Shootout at Noon” comes every day. Searching for meaning and understanding in both her own and Blanche’s past, Nora pushes herself to the brink of insanity—and begins to question her own, and Blanche’s, grip on the truth. Grotesque, funny, intricately wrought, verbally and conceptually dazzling, Shelley Jackson’s first novel is an imaginative and touching portrait of two lives in a cleft world yearning for wholeness—a world not unlike our own.



*The Orphan’s Tales* is “a literary masterpiece,” says juror Takayuki Tatsumi. “The structure . . . is brilliant,” says juror Joan Gordon, “stories within stories, looping around and following through one another. On the surface it’s a girl telling fairy tales à la 1,001 Nights, but the tales are influenced by worldwide storytelling traditions, and the roles of men, women, heroes, villains, animals, mythic beings, gods, etc., are constantly being subverted, upended, tweaked, so that gender and sexuality are more liquid than solid.”

In this novel, a lonely girl secreted away in a garden spins stories to warm a curious prince, stories where peculiar feats and unspeakable fates loop through each other and back again to meet in the tapestry of her voice. Inked on her eyelids, each twisting, tattooed tale is a piece in the puzzle of the girl’s hidden history. And what tales she tells! Tales of shape-shifting witches and wild horsewomen, heron kings and beast princesses, snake gods, dog monks, and living stars—each story more strange and fantastic than the one that came before. From ill-tempered mermaid to fastidious Beast, nothing is ever quite what it seems in these ever-shifting tales—even, and especially, their teller. Valente’s enchanting lyrical fantasy offers a breathtaking reinvention of the untold myths and dark fairy tales that shape our dreams. And just when you think you’ve come to the end, you realize the adventure has only begun.





The jury's special recognition of Julie Phillips' work of nonfiction, *James Tiptree, Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon*, is unusual for the Tiptree Award, which focuses on fiction. But the jury could not ignore Phillips' fine work and excellent scholarship in detailing the remarkable life of this amazing woman.

James Tiptree, Jr. burst onto the science fiction scene in the late 1960s with a series of hard-edged, provocative stories. He redefined the genre with such classics as "Houston, Houston, Do You Read?" and "The Women Men Don't See." He was hailed as a brilliant writer with a deep sympathy for his female characters.

For nearly ten years, he carried on intimate correspondences with other writers, including Philip K. Dick, Harlan Ellison, and Ursula K. Le Guin. None of them knew his true identity. He was so reclusive that he was widely believed to be a top-secret government agent. Then the cover was blown on his alter ego: a mysterious 61 year-old woman named Alice Bradley Sheldon.

A native of Chicago, Alice traveled the globe with her mother, the writer and hunter Mary Hastings Bradley. At 19, she eloped with the poet who had been seated on her left at her debut. She became an artist, a critic for the *Chicago Sun*, an army officer, a CIA analyst, and an expert on the psychology of perception. Beautiful, theatrical, and sophisticated, she developed close friendships with people she

never met. Devoted to her second husband, she struggled with her feelings for women. An outspoken feminist, she took a male name as a joke—and found the voice to write her stories.

Alice Sheldon's bold appropriation of a "masculine" style and a male identity (she once contributed to a feminist symposium as one of the "sensitive men") not only demolishes assumptions about gendered writing, it speaks, in a way no other writer's life has, to the mystery of the writing persona. Only when she became someone else could she tell the truth about herself. Only in writing about the alien could she speak about her body and her experience.

As new generations of readers are drawn to her prescient work, her passionate life and her suicide in 1987 continue to haunt those who knew and admired her.

With ten years of work, Julie Phillips has written a first-rate biography of Alice Sheldon. Based on extensive research, exclusive interviews, and full access to Alice Sheldon's papers, this is the biography of a profoundly original writer and a woman far ahead of her time. In addition to the Tiptree award, her book has won a National Book Critics Circle Award, and been named a *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of the Year, *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year, and an American Library Association Notable Book of the Year.



# BROAD UNIVERSE GETS BROADER

by Phoebe Wray

**B**road Universe, celebrating its seventh birthday at WisCon 31, continued to grow in size and accomplishments the past year, starting with re-honoring, at the memorable WisCon 30, of six members (Suzy McKee Charnas, Suzette Haden Elgin, Ellen Kushner, Ursula K. Le Guin, Melissa Scott, and Delia Sherman) as former WisCon Guests of Honor. But it doesn't stop there. Kathryn Sullivan was GOH at Egocon; Jody Lynn Nye was GOH at Capricorn, Mobicon 9, Farpoint, and Egocon. Suzette Haden Elgin was Science GOH at Norwescon.

We're very proud that both Laurie J. Marks and Kelly Link—WisCon 31's Guests of Honor—are long-time Broad Universe members.

BU members had 55 short stories and 32 new novel titles published during the year, 7 of these were first novels by Mayra Calvani, Dana Copithorne, Theresa Crater, Justine Saracen, Marlene Satter, JoSelle Vanderhooff, and Jean Marie Ward.

Awards poured in for Broads, too. Ten members accounted for 9 nominations and 6 wins: Laura Baumbach (*Details of the Hunt*) was nominated for an EPPIE; Carol A. Berg

(*Daughter of Ancients*) won the Prism Award for Best Romantic Fantasy from Romance Writers of America, and was named Writer of the Year by the Rocky Mountain Fiction Writer's Association; Mayra Calvani ("The Doll Violinist") won Honorable Mention in the 75th *Writers' Digest* Writing Competition; Jeanne G'Fellers (*No Sister of Mine*) was a Lambda Literary finalist, and won the Golden Crown Literary Society Award for excellence, and was nominated for a Gaylactic Spectrum Award; Anne Harris ("Still Life with Boobs") made the final Nebula ballot, and her first novel, *The Nature of Smoke*, in translation, is on the short list for the Sense of Gender Award in Japan.

Jules Jones (*Spin Drift*) was an EPPIE finalist; Brenna Lyons (*Rites of Mating*) was an EPPIE finalist, and she had a short story in *All I Want for Christmas*, an EPPIE anthology; Marlene Satter writing as Lee Barwood (*A Dream of Drowned Hollow*) won the Andre Norton Gryphon Award; Sherry Thompson (*Seabird*) received Third Prize in the Genesis Awards from American Christian Fiction Writers; and Eileen Watkins (*Black Flowers*) was an EPPIE finalist.

*Broad Universe: The voice for women writing  
science fiction, fantasy, and horror.*

[www.broaduniverse.org](http://www.broaduniverse.org)

All of this done, of course, while wearing, smiling, and selling our popular Mary Shelley “Who’s Your Mama?” T-shirts. They could be seen adorning members watching the exciting and fascinating interview with Joanna Russ at WisCon 30, which BU supported and Samuel R. Delany ably conducted. If you missed that moment, or want to re-live it, there’s a transcript on the Broad Universe website ([www.broaduniverse.org](http://www.broaduniverse.org)) in our online magazine *The Broadsheet*.

Motherboard member Nancy Jane Moore is assembling experts for a podcasting seminar for World Fantasy Con. The seminar is aimed at providing a variety of online marketing skills—including how to podcast—for writers looking to expand their promotional activities in this hot, new area.

The most fun? Maybe our Rapid Fire Readings, which started as a “bring a friend” event and now usually have to order extra chairs! Why? You never know who will read (Suzy Charnas? Jen Pelland? Mary Shelley?) or what interesting story fragment they’ll read. It’s

exciting and a great way to sell books. One author sold four hardcover copies of her novel immediately after reading an excerpt at an RFR. It’s also a great way for new writers to introduce themselves and their work. BU members organized RFRs at these places in 2006 & 2007: WisCon, World Fantasy Con, WorldCon, Boskone, Arisia, Norwescon, CONvergence, Conestoga, LosCon, Lunacon, and Capclave.

BU sponsored, and volunteers ran, book tables, where we sold our members’ books without dreaming of taking a fee, at WorldCon in Los Angeles, as well as WisCon 30. Over \$2,000 worth of members’ books found new readers/fans at those two cons. There are plans to expand this service in the 2007–2008 fiscal year to World Fantasy Con, Readercon, and the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association convention (where librarians hang out).

There are plans for more of everything—book tables, readings, seminars, more public relations and publicity—and lots of ideas and opportunities to keep Broad Universe expanding. Join us!

# THE IMPORTANT CONNECTIONS BETWEEN DISABILITY, FEMINISM, AND SF

by Alicia “Kestrell” Verlager and Jesse the K

Since the Disability and SF panel at WisCon 30, we’ve been conspiring for the integration of both disability inclusion services for con-goers and disability topics in WisCon programming. We see at least three important intersections between disability, feminism, and science fiction:

1. To encourage open discussion of diverse images of female bodies in science fiction and to provide a continuing examination of how such images of the female body intersect with science and technology.

SF narratives, like science and technology innovation itself, reflect the long history of people with disabilities as early adopters and adapters of new mechanical, cyber- and bio-technologies. Many of these science fiction narratives highlight the fact that technology is both personal and political, that science and technology can be used both to enforce conformity and to attain agency and self-determination.

From “No Woman Born” to “The Girl Who Was Plugged In,” from *Hammered* to *The Cyborg Manifesto*, from “Speech Sounds” to *The Speed of Dark*, from Miranda Jones to Miles Vorkosigan, it’s difficult to get away from the ways in which science fiction writers keep creating powerful characters with disabilities.

2. To increase awareness of how feminism challenges the patriarchal concept of the normative body and how feminist theory informs other branches of identity politics.

Disability is rarely *just* about variant bodies and minds. It’s often combined or conflated with other marks of difference: gender, class, race, ethnicity, or sexuality. Carol Emshwiller’s *The Mount* demonstrates the democratic effects of assistive technology by positing a slave system in its absence. Matt Ruff’s Tiptree-winning *Set This House In Order* challenges multiple modes of “passing” or conforming

to cultural norms, its central figures seizing agency from the psychiatric colonists of variant gender and personality styles.

3. To openly welcome, acknowledge, and serve the many disabled members of the WisCon community.

Disability is as common as bread—the 2000 US Census tallies 1 in 5 of us living with some disability that compromises our quality of life. Although disability access is symbolized through the familiar wheelchair stick figure, the vast majority of people with disabilities “look normal.” Too often disabled people are isolated in our community, rendered invisible through silence and shame. We push ourselves into health risks in an attempt to pass, particularly to avoid asking for help or accommodations.

Joanna Russ’s “The Dirty Little Girl” illustrates this high-cost strategy. The narrator converses with a strange little girl who skulks outside her house like a stray cat. The little girl claims no one cares for her, and after the woman has taken her in, she discovers that the little girl is herself, and that the appearance of the little girl demanding to be cared for is a manifestation of her mind and body demanding that the

woman ease their pain and exhaustion. The real “dirty” aspect of the little girl is that she is supposed to remain unseen and unregarded, disregarded even by the body’s owner, who has tried so hard to fulfill her own impossible ideas of what “able” is that she ignores the pains and illness of her own body.

Our society’s big lie about disability is that it’s a “personal problem,” and that those of us who vary from the norm have the responsibility to pretend otherwise or somehow “overcome” ourselves. In the past fifty years, disabled people around the world have challenged the medicalization of our lives, just as feminists have successfully wrested the female away from a “deformed male” medical model. As we’ve learned from addressing other “ism”s at WisCon, change doesn’t happen overnight. Improving access at WisCon 31 is a crucial first step in addressing disability themes: we are literally making it possible for more of us to participate in future cons and infuse disability consciousness into the WisCon conversation. The “Access Gazette” in your registration packet highlights changes we’ve made this year. Together we can demonstrate how to build a con—and a society—where barriers aren’t part of the blueprint.

### **WisCon 32: How Accessible Can We Be?**

We want to reach even wider horizons in 2008.

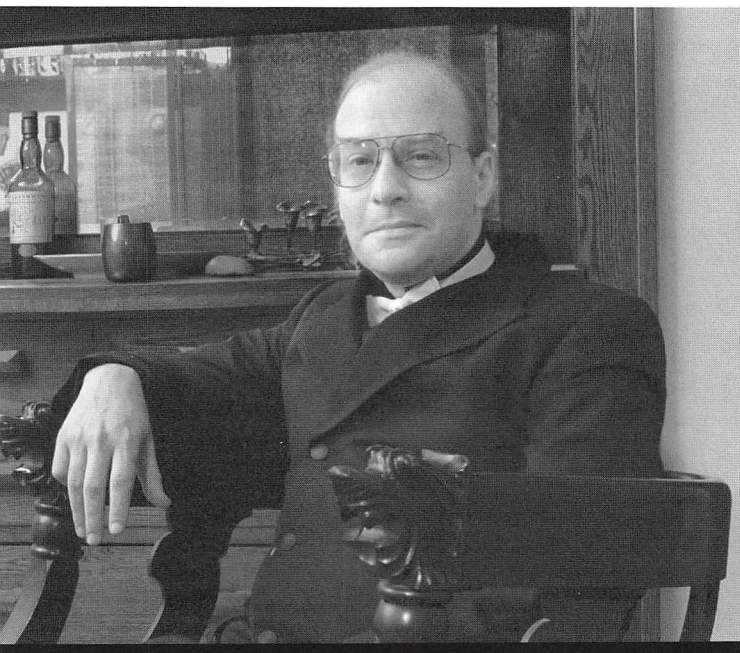
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WisCon c/o SF3

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Madison, WI 53701-1624



David Dyer-Bennet

# REMEMBERING MIKE FORD\*

by *Elise Matthesen*

Interviewing Mike Ford for a convention biography is daunting even if one is his lover. “Is it true that you were born in a small log cabin, and raised by Baptist wolves?”

“Well, I had to help build the log cabin, but . . . And they were really more like very attitudinal sheep.”

“There’s a rumor that you’re actually a character from one of your books, and won’t tell anyone which one.”

“I suppose that explains why everything is out of print. If it were in print, I’d be back there rather than here.” He adds, “Most authors are a disruptive influence on the worlds of their own books. They look at a perfectly happy fantasy kingdom and decide to intrude ultimate evil upon it, or they introduce a murder into a quiet English country town.”

Mike’s not the kind who can visit wholesale destruction, strife, and rampant plot devices on a fictional world without a sense of respon-

sibility. He doesn’t do these things lightly. He also doesn’t receive compliments easily. They make his ears turn pink. The temptation is to run up to him and babble incoherently and sincerely about how much one likes such-and-such a story, or novel, or poem. This generally gets you an expression of stunned politeness, as though he were a hermit and you’d given him free passes to the circus. An alternate strategy: put the appreciation in a note. Hand it to him. Slip away through the crowd. He will have his moment of incredulous pleasure later in some haven of privacy, rather than blinking at you like an owl and uttering a version of “Thank you very much” that sounds something like “Ummmm.” He’ll also probably carry the letter around and check occasionally to see if he dreamt it.

Mike was born in East Chicago, Indiana, on April 10, 1957. He grew up in Robertsdale by the rail yards, and trains have run through many of his stories. And a few poems. He’s

\*Mike, a respected member of the WisCon community, passed away 24 September 2006.

This article was originally published in the program book for ICON 22, October 10-12, 1997; revised 2007.

passionate about trains, but then he's passionate about a number of fine things: well-crafted prose, ingenious gadgets (the Edmund Scientific catalog resembles Mike's living room, or vice-versa), and the writings of Lucius Beebe.

When asked if the fictional world from which he's on the lam is *The Final Reflection*, he explains that the protagonist of that novel was efficient. "I think my own lack of efficiency is evident."

One sometimes does have the urge to lock Mr. Ford in a room on the famous Flat Food Program, where writers who slide two completed manuscript pages out from under the door are rewarded with a slice of pizza, piece of lefse or pancake, but his work always has been worth waiting for. Choose your own favorite. I'm biased: it was three sentences into a reading (by himself, aloud) of "All Our Propagations" that I realized the state of falling-in-love was bearing down on the two of us, trailing clouds of steam like one of Beebe's highballers. (I'm obviously not from one of his worlds, either, or my reaction would have been more elegant. As it was, my internal dialogue went something like, "Oh, dear. Oh, good. Oh, holy shit. Um. Er. Gleep!")

"What is your name?"

He blinks at me. "You *know* that."

"What is your favorite color?"

"Blue," he says, catching on.

"And what is your quest?"

"Oh, probably to go out and report back on everybody else's quests."

Very likely. And when everybody else has read his account of their quests, they'll see them as if for the first time. But then, he's Mike; saying things that strike one with mingled wonder and recognition is his stock in trade.

His name isn't actually Mike, by the way. That would be too easy. The M in John M. Ford stands for Milo. He started college at 16 in 1973 and left in '75, having by then started selling fiction. He has been the quintessential "starving artist," but doesn't complain. He's a fount of quotable comments. (Ford on flirtation, convention relationships, and impulse purchases: "I never trust anything south of my nose.") He's the designated cat-sitter for a number of friends, although he's never owned one himself. (He's had goldfish, which he did not name, "owing to the difficulty in telling them apart.")

The framework of mere facts won't show you the Mike who says, when asked what altered his youthful Republicanism, "Reality." This alteration occurred sometime in high school, he says, "same as with religion. The world did not operate the way this fantasy said it was going to operate. Which is not to say that there are non-religious people or Democrats who don't have equally ridiculous fantasies." *That's* Mike, staunchly maintaining the right to equal opportunity idiocy, regardless of creed, origin, political or affectional orientation.

Mike, who has worked in the slush-mines of several publishers, and has seen more wannabe writers than there are scintillating facets on the great scarlet emerald of the Eye of Argon, has got a mercilessly accurate view of aspiring authors. “Very few people in this country actually understand how publishing works. Most of them don’t even have a cartoon idea of how it works. They think that you get the agent first, and the agent sells the book no matter how bad it really is. Or they think that no books are written by the people whose names are on them, that they all come out of a machine somewhere, or something. They will believe in absolutely anything but producing a piece of quality work though personal effort.”

A convention bio by Diane Duane presents Mike with a range of fictional universes in which to spend his spare time. I ask him how he’d like to spend a week’s vacation, if he could be anything at all.

“A week. I have to go back afterwards?”

I nod.

“Can I be, like, a minor deity?”

I refrain from commenting.

“I think I want to be the minor deity who’s in charge of endocrine diseases. I figure we could raise the global life expectancy about five years. I was thinking about the greatest good for the greatest number. Of course, it should probably be diarrheal disease, then. And you can’t put that in a bio.”

Okay, I won’t then.

If not a minor deity of medicine, Mike says, “it would probably be interesting to be a dolphin, especially if you could keep the language.”

If the weeklong vacation left one in human form, and included time-travel, unlimited mileage, but no intervention—strictly witnessing—what would he want?

“The second Continental Congress would be interesting, except you couldn’t make sense of it in a day or a week, you’d have to be there for a couple of months. The problem with most historical events is that they don’t take place in a single afternoon.” He makes small Fordian nano-noises here; possibly the gears turning. “A day at the 1939 World’s Fair would certainly be interesting. I don’t have the morbid fascination with seeing great disasters. Apart from the sheer historical value of it, going to see the 1906 San Francisco earthquake would be just frustration because you couldn’t do anything about it.”

What is he trying to improve most assiduously in his own work? (Lovers have a certain immunity in asking these things, but I get the Ford Look as often as anyone else.) This time the question earns me a disquisition.

“You need to be honest without being ordinary. A great deal of contemporary fiction is considered to be honest just because it relates details of ordinary life. It seems to me that... It’s saying something that people recognize and are at the same time surprised by. If you only taught people that the things they already

know are true, than you aren't really doing anything for them with a story, and at worst, you're confirming their prejudices."

"You love details," I say. "As above, so below, the big in the small. You wrap the fall of empires in someone buying a newspaper from a street stall."

"The immediately obvious cliché is that an event is not meaningful because of its scope; it is meaningful because of the effect it has on the people around. If a tree falls in the forest then it probably makes a sound, but it probably doesn't make any *difference*, unless somebody is standing under the tree."

Then the human observer is the measure of art?

"Well, I think the events in fiction, although not necessarily those in history or geology . . ." He takes a breath and starts over, having left his first train of thought on a siding for later switching. "In fiction, I think it has to be about what it means to somebody. Or some thing, not necessarily a human . . . but there has to be a sense that this event made some difference and was not just some material being moved around. The moment at which some sea creature decided to go see what was going on on the cold dry stuff is immensely dramatic, but it's hard to do [as a story] without it being bathos, because the thing that's doing this is not in itself having complicated thoughts about what is happening. It's not doing it out of the desire to succeed, or at least not the conscious desire to succeed. The readership

has to put it in context. The readership realizes that something in the genes was forcing this organism to do something that was one of the most important events in the history of the world. Things are often not important for the immediately obvious reason."

Does it take a lag time to recognize an event as historically significant?

"I think it varies profoundly, because after a certain point, the event is either so forgotten by anyone but specialists, or it survives in such a mythified version of itself. We talk about the Athenians inventing democracy as if they had written the American Declaration of Independence, but democracy was invented many times. And the fact that the Athenian democracy worked on the base of someone else doing 90% of the labor is often forgotten."

Does the taste for the forgotten account for his fondness for Marlowe over Shakespeare?

"I don't think there's one reason. I don't want to denigrate Shakespeare either. I think in the long run, Shakespeare's plays are better than Marlowe's, but I think Marlowe was better earlier. And there's also the fact that he's a more neglected figure. You have to do a little digging to find main sources on Marlowe. And he's just a more interesting person. Shakespeare was a nice middle-class person who wound up going off, marrying well, buying land, and however disreputable the theater was, you could make a good living at it. Marlowe spent much more time in the shadows, literally and figuratively. I see no



reason to doubt the historical version of his death, the story that he died in a tavern brawl, but the reason for that is open to speculation.” However, he says, speculation is not the same as “just believing the alternate version because it’s cool to do so.”

Why are so many of his characters so lonely?

“In an awful lot of fiction, especially a lot of fantasy fiction, you start out with a character who is basically settled and has no reason to do anything—no interest in politics, which is seen to be a virtue,” he says with a snort, “and then there is the intrusion of something usually called evil, whether it really is or not. The world is disrupted and the character has to go out and put things back the way they were. This is not unique to fantasy,” he says, referring to the set-up of the hero as preserver or defender of the status quo, and making an untranscribable remark about inherent fascist tendencies that I cannot note down accurately before the next train of thought leaves the vaulted station. “But if you start with people who are on the outside looking in, the people who might well be the villains, who are going to disrupt the world because they can’t fit in it . . . They are simply much more interesting to me than someone who has clearly defined reasons for why they’re doing this, and a much more clearly defined endpoint. If the goal is to eradicate eee-vil, then afterwards the fantasy kingdom not very believably settles back down to status quo. There is no . . . revolution. Change might be a better word; revolution has connotations that maybe are wrong here.”

Is writing worth doing?

“There is the fact that making art is worth doing for its own sake, as well as the fact that people appreciate it. People appreciating it to your face or in letters is obviously nice,” he says, and I think but do not say *Even if compliments makes you tongue-tied*, and he goes on, “but the idea of producing something that has some sort of chance at outliving you . . . Woody Allen says, ‘Some people want to achieve immortality in their work. I prefer to achieve it through not dying.’ But since we’re probably not going to get option two . . .”

I decide to ask him the question I wasn’t sure about. “Mike, a long time ago at Fourth Street when we were putting together programming, there was a panel that we wanted to put you and Gene Wolfe on. Eileen Lufkin summed it up best. She said, ‘I’m going to die. Tell me a story.’ We decided it would be an utterly wonderful panel, but that it just wasn’t fair to put people on the spot like that. But what would be your answer?” I repeat softly, “I’m going to die; tell me a story.”

Something glitters in his eye. “No,” he says. “No. You tell me one, and when you’re gone I’ll tell it to somebody else.”

This is the man I once told, “Everything you write is a love story.” And it is. If you respond by loving him too, I won’t be surprised. And I won’t be surprised either if someday, when Mike is gone (and oh, I hope that day is on a very slow train indeed), we pass around the books he leaves us, telling and re-telling his stories to somebody else for years and years.

Set the 'Wayback Machine' for

# WISCON 30

MAY 26–29, 2006

The high point of WisCon 30 for me was the “Lady Poetesses From Hell” session where Jane Yolen, Terry Garey, John Rezmerski, Rebecca Marjessdatter, Ellen Klages, and Elise Matthesen read poetry—some of it hilarious, some of it intensely sad, all of it excellent—for an entire hour.

This was not your usual SF poetry panel, where the panelists outnumber the audience. It was something I never expected to see in my lifetime—an SF poetry panel in a moderately large conference room where every single chair was filled and people were standing or sitting in every available space on the floor and against the walls. I had to sit on the floor the whole time myself, but I was too pleased to mind that at all, and people very kindly helped me get up again when it was over.

Just imagine . . . a standing-room-only poetry panel! This was one of those “now I can die happy” events; I have perceived it with my very own senses and can now state with confidence that it’s possible for such a thing to happen. I’m grateful.

—Suzette Haden Elgin

I adjusted the microphone for Ursula K. Le Guin during her reading. I was otherwise completely paralyzed and dumbstruck in her august presence.

—Mary Doria Russell

Saturday morning of WisCon 30, I was looking at the Tiptree Auction items displayed on the table at the back of the art room. The attendant had stepped away for a minute. Carol Emshwiller walked up and said hello. She had a manila folder in her hand. “I told them I’d bring this for the auction, but I don’t think anyone will want it,” she said.

“What is it?”

“It’s a letter from Tiptree, a fan letter.”

She let me read it, this wonderful artifact from the mid-1970s that was indeed a fan letter from Tiptree to Emshwiller, one full single-spaced typewritten page, signed “Tip.” Amazing.

The attendant returned and Carol left the folder.

At the auction that night, after a bidding war, it sold for \$700. Which says a lot about WisCon, and the folks who support the Tiptree Award, but says even more about folks like Carol.

—Richard Butner

It was a grand and glorious party. But it won't end. Certainly not for me. It's living still, in the sense of connection I found, the sense of belonging.

The stand-out moment for me, no question, was a point in the Tiptree auction when what was under the hammer was a fan letter from Alice Sheldon (in her Tiptree persona) to Carol Emshwiller. I felt this enormous swelling under my breastbone, a vast bubble of history and connection. I thought: I'm here. I'm part of this continuum, this line of writers whose focus, cares, and struggles are linked to mine. I thought: I understand, I belong.

I've never much felt like part of a community; I've been a stranger in a strange land most of my life. I've moved a lot. I was a dyke in a Catholic girls school. I had a posh accent in a tough northern city when I left home. I was a writer among drug dealers and prostitutes and bikers. I have multiple sclerosis in a mostly able-bodied world. I'm English in America. But right there, right then, I belonged. It wasn't a sweet, misty feeling; it was fierce, hard, brilliant. It will sustain me.

Another stunning, humbling moment was after the reading I did with Kelley [Eskridge], and a woman handed me *Ammonite* to sign, and said, "Has anyone every told you your work saved their life? No? Well, now they have: *Ammonite* saved my life." The rest of that story I will never, ever forget. And it wouldn't have happened without WisCon.

There are other moments, too—having dinner with Kelley and Vonda McIntyre and Ursula Le Guin and Carol Emshwiller one night; Nina Hoffman, Nalo Hopkinson, Ellen Klages, and Sharyn November another; playing on the Make Shit Up panel; a surreal ride at three in the morning from Chicago to Madison, drinking champagne after a day with no food; meeting seven of my Clarion West '97 students (and two of my Clarion '88 teachers). And on and on. Magnificent.

Thank you, again, for hosting the party.

—Nicola Griffith

Some of my favorite memories of WisCon 30 were with my kids (aged 16, 12 and 12)—their excitement about having lunch with a "real live author" (And what am I? Chopped liver? Mom is always just mom, I guess); the looks on their faces when I said we should go to the panel about sex (Oh my God! Mothers are not allowed to mention that word, let alone suggest that they might enjoy it); the fun they had at the dress up party making up a story to go with their costumes and then acting it out; walking through the farmer's market looking for lost treasures on a beautiful sunny morning; but most of all, the discussions we had about feminism, politics, discrimination, tolerance and books as a result of the panels they or I went to. In our everyday Midwestern Muslim lives, Mom—the outspoken, radical feminist sci-fi buff—is on the far-out fringe. To me, there was nothing more valuable than immersing my kids in a milieu where I was normal, or even on the conservative side, where my opinions were run-of-the-mill, where women were celebrated, not for their beauty or the men they chose, but for their talents, their dedication to their craft, their intelligence, and their contributions to society. I'm amazed that more people don't bring their daughters.

—Pamela Taylor

You can't take a step at WisCon without running into an award-winning author. Some cons boast rabid bands of Klingons and others pride themselves on their costume-clad gaming characters. WisCon boasts great writers and lots of them. Nebula winners litter the hallways of the Concourse Hotel in Madison, Wisconsin like fallen leaves on an October day. A con for the literary minded, for the academic, for the socially conscious, this year WisCon set the bar a bit higher.

This year, the convention proved an orgy of the respected and the adored, as every past guest of honor received an invitation to return. Not every one made it, but enough came to make the average fan salivate.

The only bad thing about WisCon remains the choices attendees are forced to make. Panels range from the esoteric to the profoundly political, from the fun and downright silly to the purely academic. Programming begins about 8 AM and ends about 1:30 AM. Sleep is optional. Bleary-eyed partygoers cradle coffee as they move in zombie lines through the halls to attend panels and readings.

Everyone enjoys an individual experience at WisCon. I attended a panel on using speculative literature in the classroom and moderated another entitled "When Women Rule the World." I sat next to Lois McMaster Bujold at a panel on Broads vs. Breeders. One of the panelists was Jane Yolen. Earlier that day, I took my son to hear Ursula K. Le Guin read from one of her children's books. Late that night, I gave a reading with Richard Chwedyk, another Nebula award winner. Needless to say, this is no ordinary convention.

More and more, I find WisCon beyond a convention to celebrate women writers of

spec lit. At WisCon, I find myself reminded of the unlimited possibilities not only for entertainment, but for the opportunities for social commentary and calls for justice spec lit provides. WisCon inspires me, as a reader, as a writer, and as a person. I come away galvanized, my resolve to write not only to entertain but to say something meaningful in this medium renewed. I find myself humbled by the greatness I encounter there, the vast talents and the caliber of people I meet nearly overwhelming.

And yet, these people are also mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, partners and grandparents. They give me confidence in the existence of unlimited possibilities. These amazing writers stand as a living testimony to what can be achieved. They shatter the myth of the angst-ridden artist and trample over notions of the necessity of jettisoning the personal to obtain the professional.

These incredible talents should serve as role models, not only for writers, but for anyone who would overcome the day-to-day to realize a goal or a dream. They show us not only in their literature but in their lives the necessity of perseverance and integrity. These icons of the genre stand as testimony to the infinite possibilities of humanity. And as I pack away this year's programming guide, and put my badge in my keepsake box, I pray that the magic of WisCon will linger on beyond this first glow. I pack these souvenirs away with some regret, but also with knowledge that these mementos will serve as a talisman of sorts should the need arise. And if I truly need inspiration, all I have to do is open one of their books.

—Schelly Steelman

Excerpted with permission from [EpicsFF.com](http://EpicsFF.com), 8.01.06  
Tragically, Schelly passed away a short time after this appeared.

I wasn't sure about coming to WisCon in the first place because my partner of 27 years, Lisa Barnett, had died only a few weeks before. But she had been determined that I was going to get to WisCon 30, adamant that her cancer wasn't going to stop me, so I took a deep breath and went ahead.

It was a truly wonderful experience. First of all, I had good flights—I may be the only person at WisCon 30 who can say that, but I got in and out before the weather got thundery. And then I was surrounded by friends who knew and loved Lisa, too, and strangers who knew our books and who were aware and gentle and kind. I met students from my master class that I'd only known online, and I'm delighted to say they're even more fun in person! And of course it was WisCon: the panels were wonderful, the writers' workshop was exciting, and the bar conversation was fabulous.

And then, in the dealers' room, I was at Elise Mattheson and Katie MacDonald's table, and saw, among all the gorgeous pieces, a saucer full of small—thumbnail size—silver medallions. One showed a running horse, with a star beneath it. Lisa had been very involved with horses, particularly equine rescue and thoroughbred retirement. I turned it over, and the inscription on the back read, "The best hearts are ever the bravest."

I burst into tears, and had to explain and apologize, and (I think it was Katie) simply gave me the medallion. So it was a double gift, a gift from a talented and sensitive artist, and, I believe, a gift from Lisa. And one more reason to love WisCon.

—Melissa Scott

My Clarion West 2005 class joined up again at WisCon that May—an amazing 12 out of the 18 were there, with those who couldn't make it sending fond regrets. We did a reading with the majority of us, self-restricting to a few minutes each, giddy with the delight of each other's presence and hearing all these wonderful new words. Most of us, newly fledged writers, were (and still are) getting used to this newfound world of family we never knew we had, this almost magickal world where Ursula Le Guin reads fairy tales to our kids or where we spontaneously hug Geoff Ryman just because there's plenty of hugs going around and he just seems like such a nice guy. For me, as well as the others, we feel as though we're coming home, and our gratitude to the creators of this world is sincere indeed.

—Cat Rambo

As my longtime college friend and I were pulling out of the driveway in Chicago, my mother called out, "Bring back good stories!" My friend muttered out of the side of her mouth, "Here's to bringing back stories we can't tell your mother." I started laughing so hard we almost didn't make it out of the driveway. A few days later, I met someone who turned out to be a conference hookup in which I sexiled my friend from our room for an afternoon of intimate frivolity. My hookup and I kept in touch and now we are dating. WisCon 30 as a matchmaker and story generator for stories one can not tell one's mother. LOL!

—J.J. Pionke

## THE FRUIT ON THE BED

It wasn't the chocolate on the bed. Well, it was partly, but hotels give you chocolate on the bed out of cold policy. This was a basket of not only of chocolate (love) but fruit (hangover cure and sparkling inexpensive snack) waiting in my hotel room. It gave me the first inkling of just how benign and cunning WisCon really is.

Benign because WisCon is there to do that most off-putting of things: good in the world. Cunning because on the whole, folks don't trust do-gooders. Instead people love princesses whose main aim in life is to shop, do their hair and then do *some* (only some) good. Think Diana and land mines.

The very great wisdom of WisCon is to make sure that everything they do is both FUN and THOUGHTFUL. The fun makes everything delightful, including the politics. Thoughtful makes sure that you only do the good that people want done for them. Your good deed doesn't make any extra work for them, in fact it saves them work. I want a basketful of fruit and don't get one for myself because I've just got off a plane, it's late, I don't know where the shops are, meeting people is more of a priority, and after that I need to prepare my talk or reading. [Mr. Ryman won the Tiptree Award that year.]

Thoughtful means organised. Somebody had to go out and buy the fruit, put it together, and write a lovely note to go with it. It went to the right room. There was a right room, already booked and confirmed, for it to go to. It did not arrive two days late and slightly rotten. Nobody angled for some thanks or praise for doing it.

WisCon is brilliantly organised, as all fun must be if it is not to turn mean or get let lost in sour recrimination.

In part, this is because the con is always in the same place with the same people. Relationships get built; organisational kinks get ironed out. Bookshops and cafes in Madison stage readings.

Because it is clear who does what and how it's done, it is far easier for ideas to bubble up from the membership. The great fun of WisCon comes in part from the freedom

you feel to improvise: dress as a chicken, pretend to flee the ritual putting-on of the brassiere in public, start a sewing circle. The organisation means that the power structure (and there always is one) is secure enough to live up to its principles and be open to change and that most threatening of all things: spontaneity.

This creates a feedback loop. Because everyone can be spontaneous, problems get solved. You have a problem; you see a committee member. They don't roll their eyes and say it's nothing to do with them. They go out and solve it. So WisCon becomes even more organised. If there is no committee member, it still gets solved; everyone feels entitled to help.

This is the antithesis of political correctness. PC comes in when people aren't thoughtful. It comes in when they need a formula to avoid having to feel or think. It comes in as a tool when the chips are down and you need to twist arms to make the right thing happen. PC isn't violent. But like cold formality, it's not the real thing.

This thoughtfulness means that WisCon is extremely good at judging and welcoming allies. The Carl Brandon Awards, for which it provided an early leg-up, are a great example of this. The Brandons have the potential to be the main channel for post-colonial SF to gain readers and recognition.

I learn by example, not because I'm told things. I came back from WisCon pumped full of that way of being and found that I rolled my eyes less too. I went to a party and washed up for 23 people to give the host a break. I know I would not have done that if I hadn't just come back from WisCon. It earned me a new best friend. So the WisCon feedback loop extends much further than WisCon.

The wisdom of WisCon is simply this; it makes theory flesh. It is impossible to attend without asking the question: gosh, if women ran everything would it all go as well as this?

I volunteer to be a poster boy for WisCon. There is an exceptionally long line ahead of me.

—Geoff Ryman

I'm a huge Geoff Ryman fan, and knew Gaylaxicon was shortly to be inviting Geoff as our GON for 2008. I wanted to do something special, so I purchased his latest book at the Tiptree Auction for \$253. Little did I know Geoff would take notice. At the Monday morning Sign Out I approached Geoff to tell him I'd be in touch about Gaylaxicon. He was sitting next to Ursula Le Guin and when I approached, he suddenly announced loudly that he had been looking for me because he wanted to kiss my feet. After a few moments of surprise, I did what any self-respecting WisCon attendee would do when faced with such a moment . . . I removed my sock and shoe and obliged . . . much to the amusement of every around us.

—Rob Gates

For me, the best and coolest thing was all the people—many old friends or acquaintances or former teachers/mentors I had not seen or spoken to in a decade . . . or two. To single out a few of my best memories:

Getting a chance to sit down and talk with Vonda McIntyre again—I think the last time was probably way back in the 1980s. And she gave me one of her beaded sea-creatures! A lovely, tactile thing of red and white which I have beside me on my desk right now, and frequently fondle.

Carol Emshwiller! One of my favorite writers, and such a lovely person; I have fond memories of her visiting us in Scotland in the summer of 1991, and it was wonderful to see her again. Met her daughter, too.

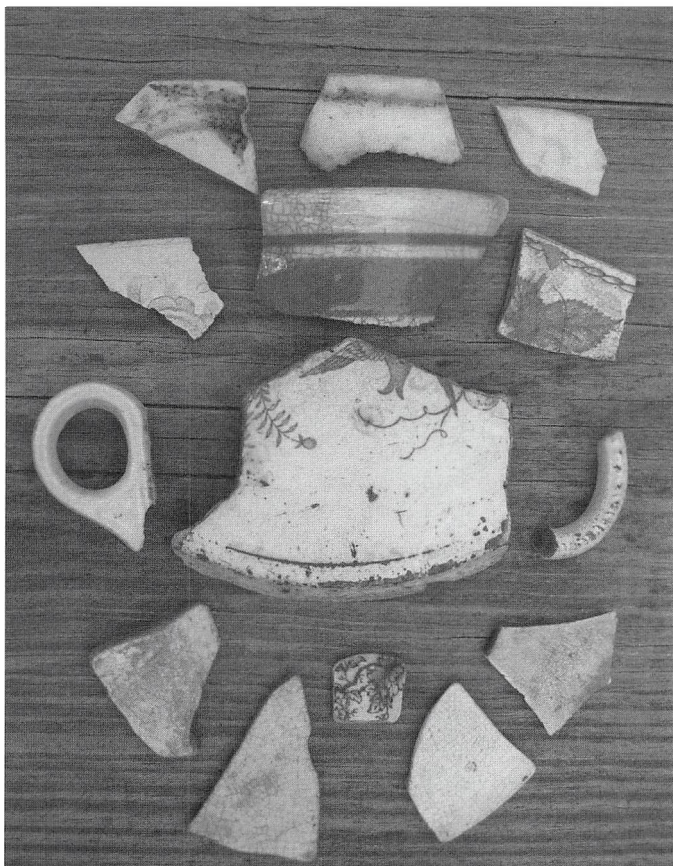
Going out to lunch with Ellen Kushner. Somehow, with her, I always feel like we're taking up a conversation we've just left off, even when our last meeting was years before and in another country.

Meeting Timmi Duchamp for the first time; discovering that she is a publisher as well as a writer, and also makes really beautiful ribbon bookmarks. I have two of them, and a stack of books, and a subscription to her "Conversation Pieces" series—the gift (to myself) that keeps on giving.

Getting to go out to dinner that first evening after the public reading with Kate Wilhelm and Jane Yolen, the two guests of honor—how cool is that? Just goes to show what hanging around and looking friendly and interested (instead of rushing off to find the nearest burrito stand) can achieve.

Being slightly over-awed in the presence of both Ursula Le Guin and Samuel R. Delany—towering figures in the literary firmament, both of whom had been my teachers at Clarion back in the early '70s—but at least eventually managing to speak to them, in a reasonably normal way. And then I introduced my friend Dianne Kraft to Chip—she'd kept saying "I have to touch him; I have to touch him"—so naturally when she met him she told him how much she loved his books and blurted, "I have to touch you," and—no surprise—he said, "All right," and she did. (But not in a way that would cause upset to anyone.) Spending time with Dianne was another of the best things about the convention for me—we were roommates once again after a gap of only 32 years!

—Lisa Tuttle



A. Anderson, 2003

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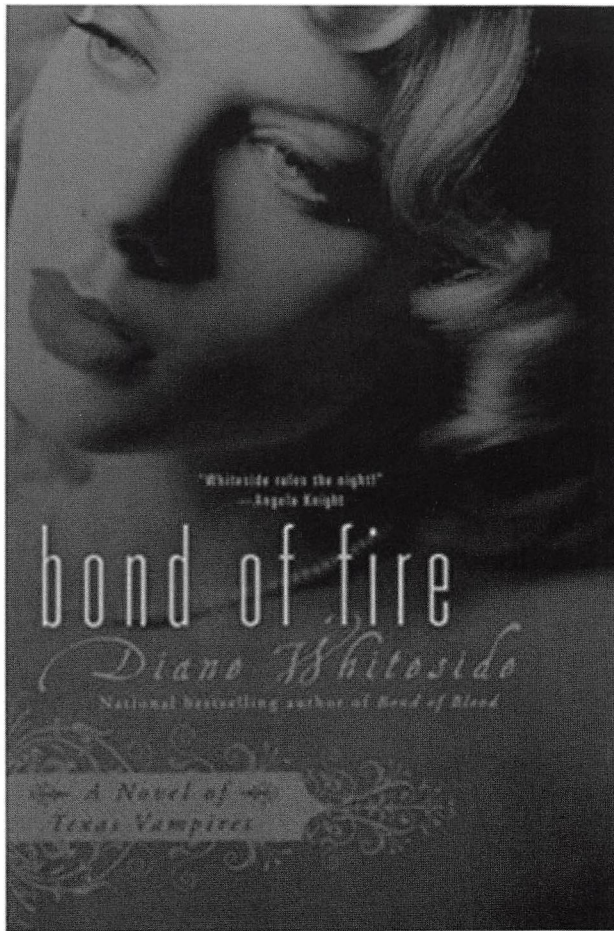
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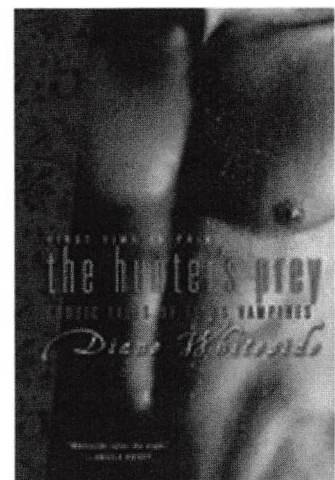
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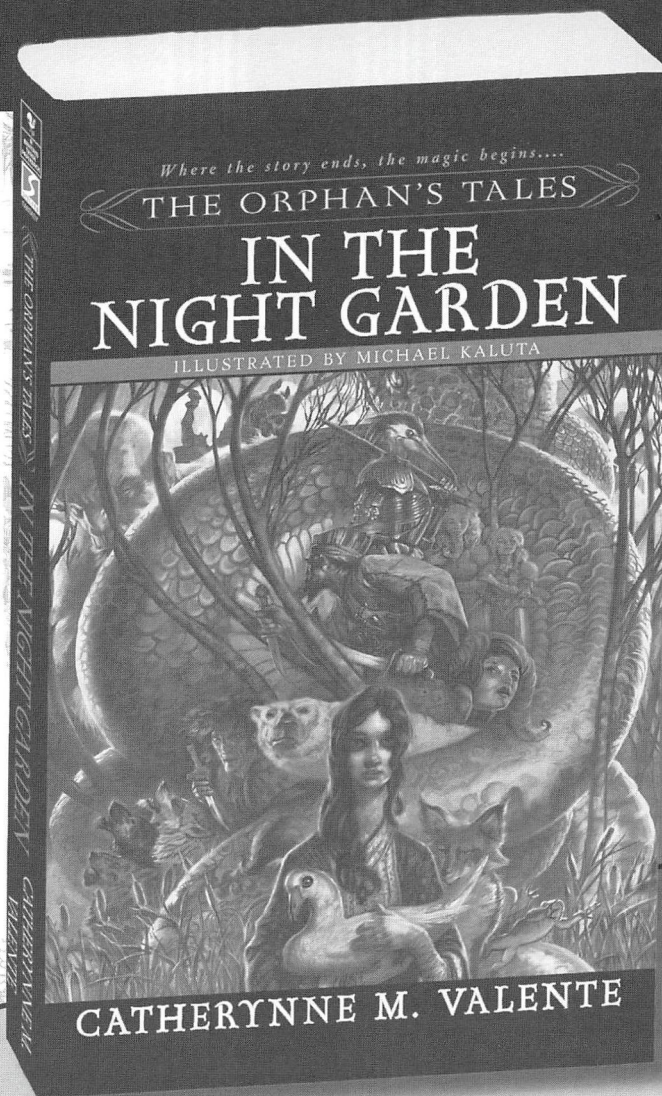
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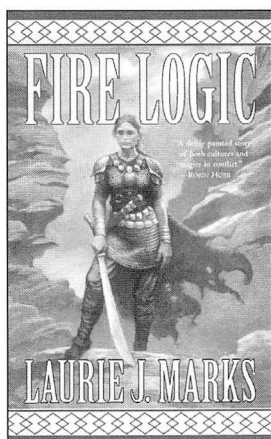
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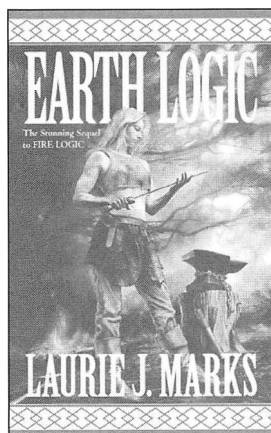
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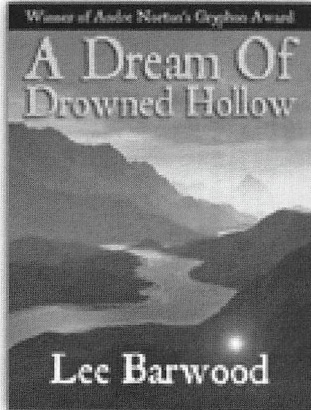


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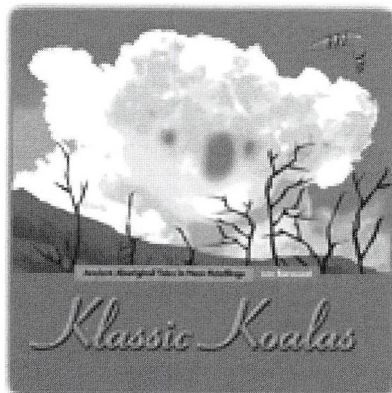
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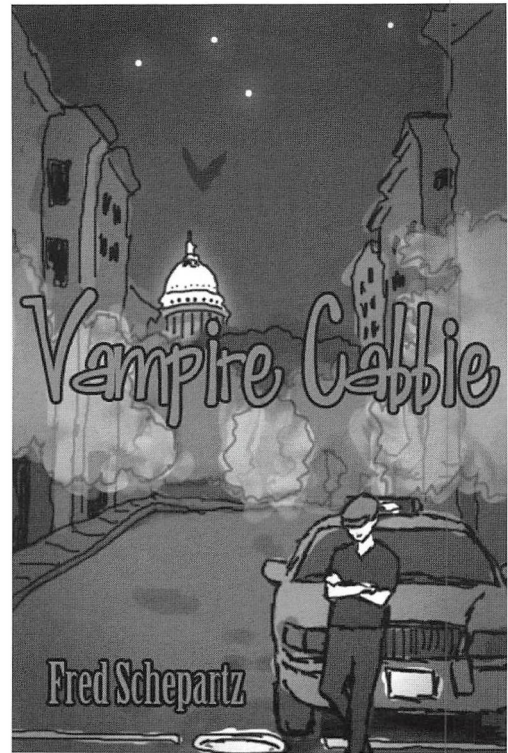
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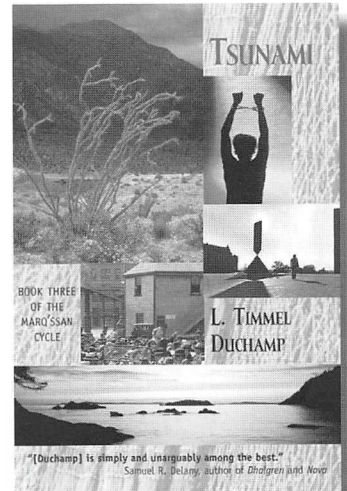
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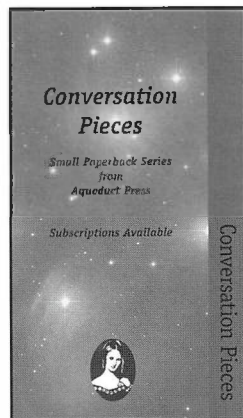
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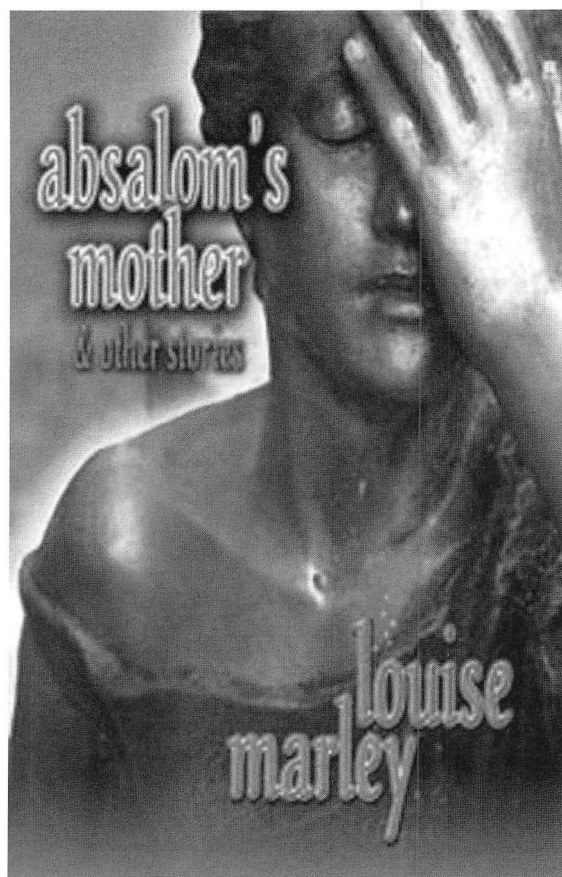
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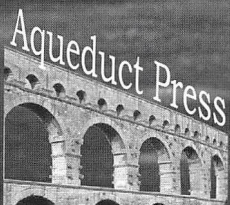
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# Water Logic

Chapter 1

By winter's end, the field of rubble had become famous. The new councilors of Shaftal had begun to arrive in Watfield from far and near, and all came to view the remains of the destroyed wall. Seth went there as soon as she and her Paladin companion entered the city, even before they sought a place to lay down their heavy packs and thaw their frozen fingers.

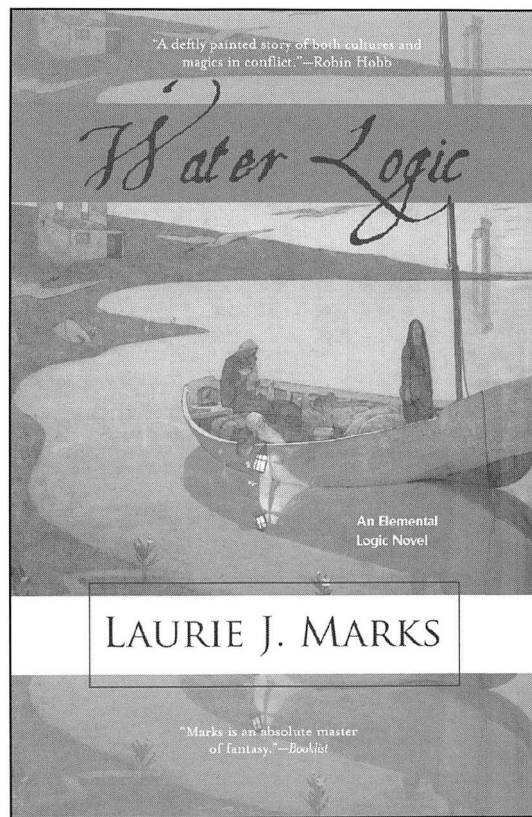
The massive wall had surrounded Watfield Garrison. Now the stones lay in a swath through the city. Seth squatted down, took off her gloves, and with numb fingers broke a small stone loose from its icy mortar. She set it atop a much larger one, the surface of which had been flattened by the stone mason's chisel. The small stone shuddered sideways off its wide base, to impinge upon another, which cracked free from the ice that pinned it down, and rolled away. Now, that stone touched two others, which also pitched themselves sideways. The chain reaction quickly spread, from a few stones to many, until noisy waves of movement rippled ponderously in both directions, between the buildings, out of sight.

Seth had stood up to watch. She felt cold air on her teeth and realized she was gaping. Everyone spoke of this wonder—but she had not truly believed it.

"You'd better put your gloves back on," the Paladin said.



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Marks's characters are real people who breathe and sleep and sweat and love; the food has flavor and the landscape can break your heart. You don't find this often in any contemporary fiction, much less in fantasy: a world you can plunge yourself into utterly and live in with great delight, while the pages turn, and dream of after.

—Ellen Kushner (*The Privilege of the Sword*)

## **Coincidence or Conspiracy?**

Laurie and Kelly both live in Massachusetts.

They both have master's degrees and teach college English.

Both come as a package deal: Gavin is a huge part of Kelly's career just as Deb is a huge part of Laurie's career.

Both were born in the South (Kelly in Florida, Laurie in Southern California) but attended college in the Northeast (Kelly at Columbia, Laurie at Brown)

Both are amazing women who lack any filament of pretension. If you get assigned to either at the WisCon writer's workshop, you're in for a wonderful experience.

Laurie only attends two conventions: WisCon and Readercon. Both are attended by Kelly. *But do you ever see them in the same place at the same time?*