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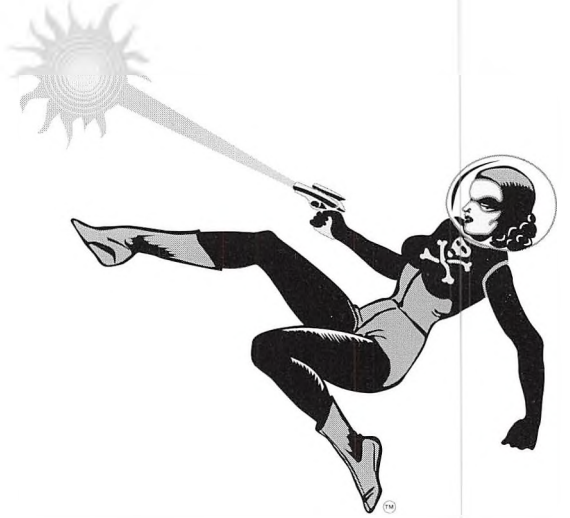
Greer Gilman

Cloud & Ashes: Three Winter's Tales,
Small Beer Press



Fumi Yoshinaga

Ōoku: The Inner Chambers (volumes 1 & 2),
VIZ Media



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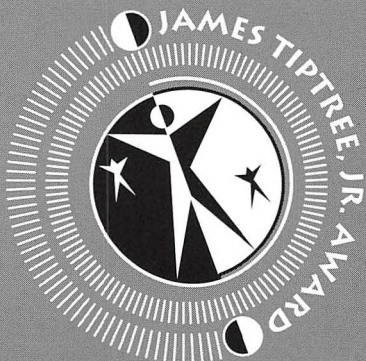
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WISCON 34 SOUVENIR BOOK

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photo: Beth Gwinn

THIRTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT MARY ANNE MOHANRAJ

*a multi-voiced paean by diverse hands,
edited and assembled by Jed Hartman*

1
Dr. Mohanraj is, of course,
our King.

The story of how she rose from
humble beginnings (like all great
American icons, she was born to
immigrant parents in a log cabin,
although in her case the cabin was
in Sri Lanka and the logs were made
of carbon nanotubes) to her current
leadership of the known world is too
well-known to recount here.

She bestrides the earth like a colossus.
Her red pencil, hight Excalibur, which
she wields firmly yet fairly, sends er-
rant students fleeing in terror, scram-
bling to build ramparts of theses fully
supported by strong textual evidence
and postcolonial theory; her hordes
of minions implement her beneficent
will throughout her dominions; her
works of fiction and nonfiction top
every bestseller list and dominate
every literary award; everywhere
in the land, there is peace, built on

a foundation of benevolent justice
knitted from an array of multicolored
and multifaceted yarns.

Her brilliant mathematician consort
and her brace of remarkably erudite,
attractive, and accomplished children
can ever be found at her side.

Her hobbies include online journaling,
crocheting, and founding organizations.

2
I remember going into my older
sister's room at night when I was
scared, and her letting me sleep there.
I remember the hot summer night
she sleepwalked and was found lying
in the bathtub because, she claimed,
it was cooler. I remember visiting
the fort she had built with other
neighborhood kids in the woods and
thinking it was so cool.

I remember more vividly the years
of fighting she had with our parents
during college and after, over her
career and lifestyle choices. But I also

remember the clear conviction she
had in making choices that were right
for her. And that's the best kind of
role model a sister could hope for.

3
From the first time I met Mary Anne,
I was amazed at how prolific she was,
how many activities she was engaged
in, how many interests she had, and
how many people came to her parties.

During my last visit to Chicago, she
was nursing her one-month-old son
while overseeing the remodeling of
a newly purchased home. Somehow,
while saying goodbye to her partner's
parents as they finished their visit, she
managed to squeeze in a board game
with me.

While I never can aspire to have her
energy or to be engaged in as many
creative endeavors as she is (in addi-
tion to taking care of two children, a
house, a dog, and a man), there are
still things I can learn from her:

Mary Anne gave me hope that it is possible to be responsible without being boring; to be in a serious relationship without being constricted; to be ambitious and driven without ever failing to be warm and caring towards your friends.

4

Mary Anne is known for throwing great parties with wonderful food and for falling asleep in the middle of them. We housemates happily stayed up while the parties wound down.

In the mornings, she'd wake hours before the rest of us, making good use of the quiet time before work, school, or socializing. That's when she'd write. She brought to that task the same calm dedication that she brought to cooking, where traditional Sri Lankan recipes call for steps like "Stir until you start coughing." Joyful but focused, she's never shied from the hard road. The results have been extraordinary.

5

Mary Anne and I were returning home from an interstate trip. My flight left half an hour earlier than hers, but it was due to arrive a good five hours earlier, since her cheap flight zig-zagged the country, while mine—on a different airline—was direct. Seeing me off, she sweetly, and at least plausibly jokingly, asked the staff member at the gate, "I don't

suppose I can get on her flight, can I?" She could; all she had to do was ask.

6

"So how do you know Mary Anne?"

I can't count the number of times I've said this. That's because Mary Anne is a connector. Connectors are usually business people—not just the woman with a weighty Rolodex, but the woman who knows how all her acquaintances could help or befriend each other. Chances are, every one of you has met, spoken with, or emailed Mary Anne. Chances are, you've met other friends or colleagues because of her. Writers are usually best at sitting alone in a room. Mary Anne, how on earth do you find the time and energy to do both?

7

Mary Anne's transparency is refreshing. She is honest about her life and interests and shares her truth without airs and without concern for appearances.

8

"You must remember," said Rajkumari Yogini Dotoressa Kaviarasi al-Baida, peering over her ruby-rimmed spectacles, "that it was a very different world, when my mother was summoned so abruptly from Gabon to assume the throne of the Ravanic Empire. It was a *monarchy*, then. Coronation was the

election of a single individual to rule by force over a multitude—quite unlike the coronation every child looks forward to today.

"The republics—Timbuktu, Akaland, Ibo—had inspired my mother, but troubled her too: collections of competing, self-centered individuals! She agreed with the monarchists that the land needed a just King, who owned nothing, who belonged to the people. But (and this was very like her) she wondered why, if such a person was needed, there should be only *one* of them..."

9

My boyfriend and I were visiting Chicago. She'd invited us, strangers apart from some sporadic Internet contact—it was still new enough to warrant the initial capital letter—to dinner. She greeted us at the door and showed us up the stairs, her long dark hair trailing almost to the hem of her green silk shirt. She fed us fiery curries; other guests brought ice cream, ready to soothe the instant we finished. I told my boyfriend I thought she was gorgeous; he reported she'd said something similar about me. But nothing happened—not *that* night.

10

One of the stories in *Centerburg Tales*, by Robert McCloskey, is about a jar of "Eversomuch More-So," a remarkable,

THIRTEEN WAYS

invisible, odorless, textureless, absolutely soundless substance that makes everything ever so much more so like itself. It makes donuts ever so much more so delicious, and water ever so much more so wet. Whenever I meet Mary Anne, I get the feeling that she was raised on the stuff; she seems to experience everything ever so much more so deeply than I do, appreciating details I'd never even notice.

11

In her own words:

"You don't see that girl when you look at me up on this stage. That girl was twenty years and forty pounds ago. I have a partner now, and even though we've chosen not to marry, he happens to be a guy, and so people assume we're married and call him my husband, and sometimes if I'm feeling political I correct them and sometimes I don't bother. We're still not monogamous, but most people don't know that, because my other sweetie lives in California and I hardly ever see him, and we don't have time or energy to start up anything new with anyone local. From the outside, we look awfully straight.

"So remember, the next time you meet an almost-40 soccer mom in the suburbs, that somewhere under the white T-shirt and mom jeans there is a sexual being. That even if she looks

happily married, she might have a boyfriend in California. That last year, she might have hooked up with a hot girl at a conference, just for a night. That her love life, her sex life, might be a little more complex than it appears. That she might have a history. Or that if she doesn't, she might at least wish that she had."

12

Mary Anne embodies generosity. You can't leave her home without having been fed a meal, having been given a toy for your child, having been given a book or ball of yarn for yourself, or having learned something fun and new and thought-provoking. I've tried. It simply can't be done.

13

The gemstone flashed and spun in the air; in each facet I glimpsed a different face, a different aspect, but all recognizably one person. Novelist, leader, parent, cook, poet, lover, teacher, Sri Lankan, daughter, essayist, community-builder, knitter, sex activist, blogger, role model, American, artist, sister, game-player, reader, organizer; and dozens more, each in a different glint of light.

"But I don't understand—which one is her?" I asked.

The mysterious figure chuckled. "Both/and," it said. "Reject dichotomies."

Authors Key

1. Jed Hartman
2. Sharmila Mohanraj
3. Alex Gurevich
4. Cliff Winnig
5. Karina Roberts
6. Susan Lee
7. Simone Widney
8. Ben Rosenbaum
9. Karina Roberts
10. Shmuel Ross
11. Mary Anne Mohanraj
12. Simone Widney
13. Jed Hartman

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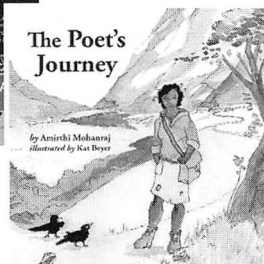
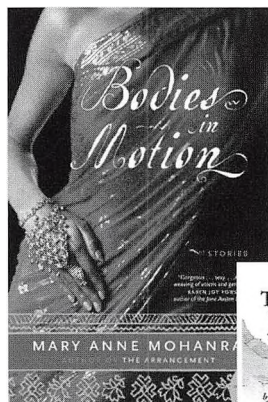
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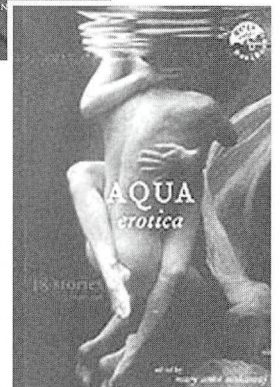
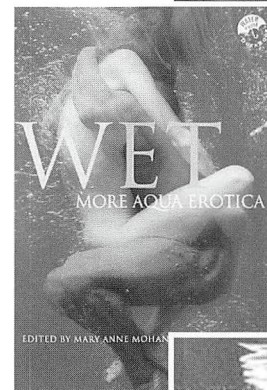
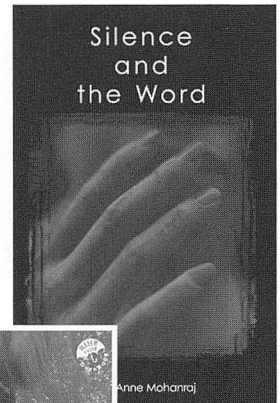
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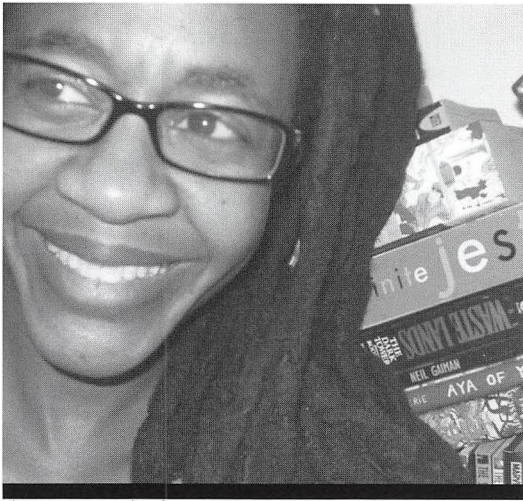


Photo: Anyaugo Okorafor

NNEDI OKORAFOR

by Mikki “Karnythia” Kendall

When WisCon asked me to write Nnedi Okorafor’s bio, I spent a good five minutes contemplating all the ways I could make her sound like a super serious author. Then I realized that she couldn’t manage to pretend to be serious for that long, so I might as well tell the truth. Ten minutes into my first in depth conversation with Nnedi, I realized that she is clearly a Trickster God’s child. It’s the only explanation for the way she’ll completely turn your world view upside down and then giggle while you sit there looking perplexed. I got a sneak peek at her latest novel, *Who Fears Death*, and I found myself turning into a fan girl. I am not a fan girl. At all. But Nnedi worked her magic, and now like so many other readers I find myself preaching the Gospel of Okorafor.

I suspect her ability to turn a one hour interview into a five hour slumber party with no pajamas or sleeping has something to do with it. I found myself discussing every single topic under the sun with her, even though I was supposed to be the one asking her questions about her work. Along the way, I found out that she manages to include a forest in every story; that she’s devoted to telling tales from an African perspective; and that she’s plotting ways to use her “celebrity” status to be allowed to pet various wild animals that would otherwise be big enough to tell her no. A motley collection of facts to be sure, but what else can you expect from someone with an impish grin made of actual imps?

Happily a genre unto herself, Nnedi has no current plans for world domination, but she holds that possibility in reserve on the off chance that it might become attractive one day. For now she’s content to keep writing, flustering interviewers, and plotting new ways to unleash amazing African-centered fiction upon unsuspecting readers. She takes no responsibility for any sudden urges you might feel to proselytize and grants no miracles with purchase. But she will smile at you when your world view shifts, and she’ll happily hand you something else so you can hear a new, amazing story. All in all as tricksters go, I suppose we could do worse than Nnedi’s mixture of sweet, stunning, and completely enthralling.

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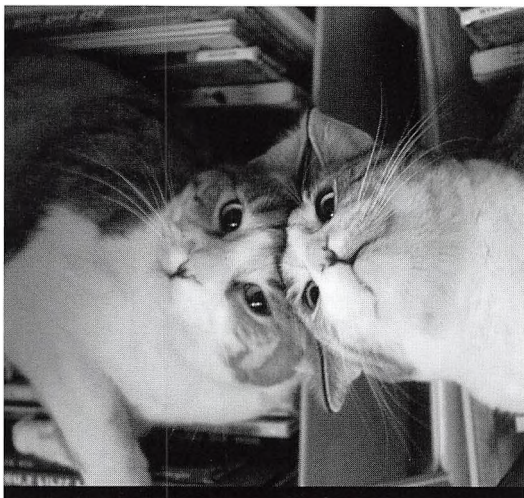


photo: A. Anderson

THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY, & THE BEAUTIFUL

by Naamen Gobert Tilahun

I thought and thought about what to say in this essay: what could I say as a beginning writer, a writer of Color, a fan of Color, and many other identities that don't have easy catch words? I tried to write this multiple times and finally decided to tell the truth of my experience and life at WisCon so far. I have to tell the good and the bad because both have shaped me as a writer and especially as a writer of Color.

The Good

Ellen Kushner gave me a talking to at last year's WisCon in the middle of the dealers' room. It wasn't a bad talking to—far from it—it was exactly what I needed. Somehow Ellen and I got into a conversation on submitting, and I made the usual fear-motivated speech about not feeling my stuff was ready, a speech most new writers repeat in our heads constantly. But in the middle of it, Ellen said one word, "No." She then proceeded to tell me

how I should submit: prep a second envelope even before the first one goes out, so that when that rejection came, I could just stick the story in the second envelope and send it off. This advice might not work for everyone, and I'm ashamed to admit that this last year of grad school so ate my life that I haven't submitted anything in months, but it is because of WisCon that I got advice I will use when I've finished my thesis. That's just the most recent one; I've gotten to meet so many amazing writers—of every career level—some of whom I'm now honored to count among my friends.

The Bad

I have been in panels where the privilege and comfort of those belonging to a dominant group have been placed above the needs or opinions of marginalized peoples. In a conference of one thousand people, I've non-scientifically counted approximately fifty People of Color. So it can feel

isolating, terrifying, and silencing to be the lone Person of Color in or on a panel when something problematic is said. Even when you get the courage to stand up, sometimes an apologist will step in and devalue the point. If anything, this has made me more confident that my writing needs to be out there, that I have a viewpoint about the way race exists in science fiction today that needs to be voiced.

The Ugly

There's no easy way to say this. At my very first WisCon, my friend Jackie and I had the N-word yelled at us on the street from a passing car before the convention even began. What was even more shocking was the lack of reaction from anyone else on the street, because, had that happened at home in the Bay Area, people would at least have checked in and asked if we were okay. There was none of that: people

continued on page 10



photo: A. Anderson

JOINING THE CONVERSATION

by Claire Light

Until my thirties, I numbered myself among the people who say “Oh, I don’t read science fiction,” although if you questioned me closely, you’d find I had read quite a bit of it. My lifelong writing project centered around conveying a sense of my own and others’ experience of transnationality and multi-raciality, but I began to feel strongly that this experience had become buried by the conventions of fictional “realism.” After being turned on to Octavia Butler, and writing my first SF story, I realized that my project would be best realized with at least one foot in the world of SF.

Genre epiphany in hand, I began the process of seeking out a community of the like-minded. I flung myself recklessly at Clarion West, not really knowing what I was getting myself into. The workshop was my first encounter with fandom, and the first time that I understood that fandom

was a vast and variable subculture that existed not merely to consume and support SF, but for its own sake. The sudden, up-close view surprised, intimidated, and inspired me, and I wanted more of the same smarts, argument, imagination... and geekiness around creatures and spaceships.

Everyone at Clarion West talked casually about the cons they had been to; I wanted to go, too, but was warned away from cons “where people dress like Klingons” by classmates who had copped to my n00bosity. A canvass of my associates turned up WisCon as *the con* to beat for sheer smart-headed, literary, womynizing, liberaliciousness.

A year and a half later, I finally made it to Madison and have been hooked ever since. It wasn’t just the overwhelming friendliness; it was how small and cozy *and incredibly high-powered and talented* the friendly community was. My first year at WisCon I met a whole passel of excited

(and exciting) emerging writers. Over the course of the next five years I got to watch these writers find publishers for their books, leap into fame and awards and cookies, and become a part of the great conversation. Becoming a part of a productive literary community is essential to new writers. You must be able to envision your own role and potential as a writer, and finding immediate role models among your peers is of the greatest importance.

It was also at my first WisCon that I met Timmi Duchamp of Aqueduct Press. Having heard from my friend Ego-Google that she’d read a story I published the previous fall, I set out to coolly ‘n’ casually introduce myself, although I was sure she wouldn’t remember my name. She did remember, as it happens, and was so nice to me that—all at once—the process of approaching and trying to interest publishers in my work went from

impossible to just possible. Four years later I sent her a manuscript, and just this past December had the immense thrill of seeing my first publication with Aqueduct Press' Conversation Pieces series.

Through Clarion West, I also connected with the Carl Brandon Society, the organization that promotes writers of color in the speculative genres. Arriving in Madison, I found out that CBS had originated there several years before and possessed its own real estate in WisConLandia. I had been involved at that point for several years in my local communities of color, so finding a familiar corner

in the world of WisCon was icing on the cake. I connected with CBS through their panel discussion, and the liveliness and asperity I met with among CBS folks was a real turn-on. In the following years, I got heavily involved in the debates both online and off, and after my second WisCon, I joined the steering committee of the Carl Brandon Society.

Being involved directly in this part of fandom—and in emotionally fraught debates on race, ethnicity, cultural appropriation, and the like—has been difficult at times. But this is the lifeblood of my writing. The ongoing intellectual discovery—as well as the

fight and unpleasantness that attend discovery—given space and room at WisCon and among the extended WisCon community online, is absolutely vital to shaping my understanding of literature, and especially of the kind of literature I wish to make.

At WisCon I found the intersection of a number of streams and themes in my writing and working life, and attending the con every year has helped me knit them together. More pointedly, WisCon is a conversation in which my writing is just one form of participation.

continued from page 8

GOOD, BAD, UGLY, BEAUTIFUL

simply went about their business as if it were nothing, and that was most worrying of all. We both almost made the decision to go home before the convention began, because relaxing at a convention taking place in a city that feels hostile towards who you are is a task of monumental proportions. What decided me against leaving was the way that nearly everyone we told about the incident was amazing. People I had only met a few hours before were there to support us in whatever way needed. It was the first inkling that something beautiful might come out of something so ugly.

The Beautiful

Why as a writer have I returned to WisCon every year since that first incident? Simple: community. At WisCon I have found a community of writers of all ethnicities where I feel nurtured and supported and where the atmosphere is collaborative as opposed to competitive. Why, specifically as a writer of Color, do I return to WisCon year after year? The same answer: community—an admittedly small but growing community of writers/readers/fans of Color. We have heard so much of the same things in terms of being fans of speculative

literature and People of Color. These are people with whom I can discuss the confluences of race, gender, sexuality, class, and more within the realm of science fiction without having to watch my “tone,” where I can get angry, where I can talk about the authors who’ve upset me without being called a “horde,” where I can be me—a queer, black, pro-feminist man, writer, reader, student, teacher, fan, and whatever else I choose.

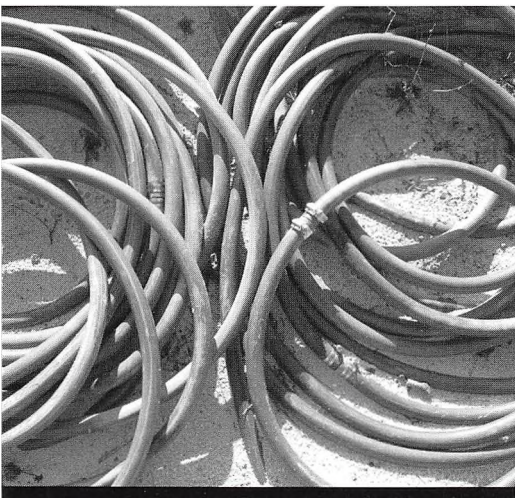


photo: A. Anderson

HOW WISCON HAS INFLUENCED MY WRITING CAREER

by Nisi Shawl

Speaking in general terms, WisCon has exerted a strong cumulo-magnetic force on my warm, moist, poetic exhalations, drawing them heavenwards so that they might later descend on all our heads in a cool and refreshing rain.

Specific examples appear below.

The strongest correlative between WisCon and my writing manifests when we reflect on my short non-fiction, after excluding from consideration over ten years of book reviews. For the most part, this massaged data set comprises essays published in various volumes of the *WisCon Chronicles* such as “With Dry Eyes,” describing my reaction to Susan Vaught’s incredible speech as recipient of the first Carl Brandon Society Parallax Award at WisCon 29; “Because We Are All So Royal,” analyzing crown-making activities at the Carl Brandon Society party at WisCon 32; and “Glosso-

philia,” revisiting and extending the Racism 101 workshop I co-presented at WisCon 33.

But it is by writing books rather than essays that one establishes what is called in the literary world “a career.”

My first book, *Writing the Other: A Practical Approach*, which I co-wrote with Cynthia Ward, grew out of a workshop we debuted at WisCon. My second book, *Filter House*, won a James Tiptree, Jr. Award, which was presented to me at WisCon. (The latter case is a fine example of ineffable retroaction: causality is a much overrated quality when it comes to literary influences.)

My third book has yet to be published. A bit of a scrum on the field of potentiation here: the favored contenders include three novels and two nonfiction anthologies. Of the novels one, *Verde*, is in its second reading by

an editor. I call it “a tender, touching, mother-daughter tale of body image, racial identity, and soul-maggots.”

Nothing WisConese there—except that my first encounter with the editor now considering it occurred on a WisCon panel. Then there’s *The Blazing World*, scheduled for its third rewrite (the one I’m doing in reverse) April 12 through 19. That’s more than a month before the convention. No connection. None. Other than the fact the very same editor wants to see that one, too. The third novel, *Speculation*, is still in its first draft, and as of this writing I’ve only got an outline plus ten of sixteen projected chapters. A slim chance, you might think, of early publication—but as it’s progressing at the rate of a chapter a week, it could easily be finished by the time this essay appears. And it has already drawn the interest of an editor—no, not *that* one. Another editor. But, well, I did meet this other editor at WisCon also....

WisCon has exerted a strong cumulo-magnetic force on my warm, moist, poetic exhalations, drawing them heavenwards so that they might later descend on all our heads in a cool and refreshing rain.

The two nonfiction anthology candidates are yet more closely connected to WisCon. I co-edited *Strange Matings: Science Fiction, Feminism, African American Voices, and Octavia E. Butler* with Dr. Rebecca Holden. Wesleyan ought to be coming out with it any year now. Dr. Holden has attended many a WisCon, and at one time oversaw and organized its academic track. I met and roomed with my esteemed colleague two years ago, at WisCon 32. At this point our work on *Strange Matings* was largely finished; thus, this initial encounter provides additional proof of ineffable retro-action—as if proof were needed.

Then there's the *WisCon Chronicles*. I've been asked to edit Volume Five.

I'm going to do it. Aqueduct Press plans to publish it by May of 2011. If none of the other four come out prior to that date, WisCon will have had an undeniable influence on my third book, an influence even deeper and more intrinsic than on the first two—because my third book will be all about WisCon 34.

Until one or more of these five books is published, it's anyone's guess as to the future extent of WisCon's influence on my writing career, at least when the question is posed with the expectation of a certain granularity of response. I suggest that for the moment we let go of the granular and grasp the liquid, joyfully anticipating the prospect of further verbal precipitation.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

BROAD UNIVERSE

by Phoebe Wray

Broad Universe celebrates its 10th anniversary at WisCon this year! What began with a kvetchy, exciting panel—World Domination 101—is now a thriving, vibrant support and service group for women writers, and readers, of science fiction, fantasy, and horror. BU now boasts members all over the planet—from Wisconsin to Azerbaijan, and from Israel to Singapore.

Broad Universe is now officially a not-for-profit charitable organization. Our Treasurer, Grace O'Malley, with some helpful expertise from members, prepared all the paperwork for the IRS. This means that contributions to BU are tax-deductible in the U.S.

Our BroadPod is up and running at broadpod.podbean.com. The podcasts feature 4–5 members reading from their works in response to a monthly theme. We kicked off in February in time for Valentine's Day, with "Romance," and readings from Rae Lori, Kim Vandervort, Tracy Godsey,

Pauline Jones, and Carol Berg. The March theme, "Feminism," honored Women's History Month, with readings by Phoebe Wray, Jean Marie Ward, Elissa Malcohn, and Karen Romanko. In April, our theme was "Birth/Rebirth," with Danielle Ackley-McPhail, Marlene Satter, Carol Berg, and Sarah Micklem. Another theme was Mothers, and was graced by Kathryn Hinds, Karen Romanko, Sue Burke, Theresa Crater and Roberta Gregory. We promise more and bigger podding in future! Upcoming themes include humor, military specific, alien contact, and death & loss. Tune in and enjoy!

BU book tables sold members' books and talked up women in genre publishing at many conventions in 2009. As of this WisCon, our book tables have sold nearly \$9,000 of all that good women's writing! BU arranges for tables, runs them, takes care of taxes and accounting, and takes no commission. It's a popular and useful service.

Our members once again had impressive publishing success. In 2009, members added 63 new books and 67 new stories to the bookshelves of the world. We want to see more stories!

In what we hope will only grow as we do, in 2009 a regional cluster of BU (the NewEnglandBroads) was formed by members who live in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire. They kicked off the group with a "Mary Shelley Birthday Party" the last weekend of August. The group did Rapid Fire Readings of their work, and some from Shelley herself, over two days in four bookstores, and served up Frankenstein cookies along the way. They plan to repeat the fun this year. This group also did four readings at bookstores and libraries in March to celebrate Women's History Month, reading from their own work and presenting a short talk and readings of the SF/FH women writers who inspired them. The talks were

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

on Octavia Butler, James Tiptree, Jr., Marge Piercy, Connie Willis, and Madeline L'Engle.

For our anniversary year, members will receive a new spiffy lapel pin to wear proudly. Mary Hobson designed it, as she also designed the ads we're running in souvenir booklets to celebrate members who are Special Guests or Guests of Honor at conventions. Part of our mission is to make sure women are not ignored. We celebrate our members and all women writers.

Our general online list encourages members to submit their work with periodical "Mailing Parties," first established by our founding President, Amy Hanson. We encourage writers to dust off those stories, shine them up and

send them out. Motherboard member Trisha Wooldridge keeps track of who's submitting what and where. Last year, Trish reports, about half of the stories submitted were accepted.

What's next? Well, it's a broad universe out there. We will be seeking grant money for member services, such as writers' retreats, publication of an anthology or articles culled from our thrice-yearly magazine *The Broadsheet* (edited by Motherboard member Lettie Prell), on marketing, promotion, and the business of writing. You can see those articles by going to our website (address below).

We're on Facebook, of course. Come visit us there, and at our book table at WisCon.


Broad Universe
www.broaduniverse.org

THE CARL BRANDON SOCIETY IN 2009



by Victor Raymond

“Because we still live in a racist society, the only way to combat it in any systematic way is to establish—and repeatedly revamp—anti-racist institutions and traditions. That means actively encouraging the attendance of nonwhite readers and writers at conventions. It means actively presenting nonwhite writers with a forum to discuss precisely these problems in the con programming. (It seems absurd to have to point out that racism is by no means exhausted simply by black/white differences: indeed, one might argue that it is only touched on here.) And it means encouraging dialogue among, and encouraging intermixing with, the many sorts of writers who make up the sf community.

“It means supporting those traditions.”

—Samuel R. Delany, “Racism and Science Fiction”
The New York Review of Science Fiction, Issue 120, August 1998

Over the past year, the Carl Brandon Society has significantly changed and evolved, but our focus has remained the same: *to increase racial and ethnic diversity in the production of, and audience for speculative fiction.*

The larger social context for our work has also evolved, with some telling markers of race and ethnicity: the first

African American president of the United States, the escalation of global conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, and the Middle East, the arrest of Henry Louis “Skip” Gates in his own home, and the discussion of a possible “post-racial” America. What remains the same, however, is that racism as a system persists here and elsewhere. While it is possible to debate how

much progress has been made, no one would argue that racism has been ended.

Nor can we as readers and writers of speculative fiction and media believe that we somehow exist outside of society and its tensions. Within the speculative literature and media communities, racism has been a major issue over the past year, particularly on blogs and in online discussions. Topics such as “RaceFail” and the persistence of white depictions of people of color on bookcovers—as well as movies such as *Avatar* and *District 9*—show that race and racial discrimination are alive and well as issues of immediate concern, not just to people of color but to everyone interested in speculative literature and media. In other words, it matters to YOU.

Over the past year, the Carl Brandon Society has reached a number of important accomplishments:

The mission of the Carl Brandon Society is to increase racial and ethnic diversity in the production of, and audience for speculative fiction.

- 👉 Winners of the Carl Brandon Parallax Award:
 - 2006 *Mindscape* by Andrea Hairston
 - 2007 *The Shadow Speaker* by Nnedi Okorafor
- 👉 Winners of the Carl Brandon Kindred Award:
 - 2007 *From the Notebooks of Doctor Brain* by Minister Faust
- 👉 The continuation of the Octavia E. Butler Scholarships for the Clarion and Clarion West Writers Workshops. There are currently five Butler Scholars:
 - Shweta Narayan
 - Christopher Caldwell
 - Rochita Loenen-Ruiz
 - Caren Gussoff
 - Mary Burroughs
- 👉 The adoption of the highly successful Con_Or_Bust travel fund program, which assists fans of color who want to attend SFF conventions, principally WisCon.

👉 The presence of the Carl Brandon Society at not only WisCon, but also Arisia and other conventions. ...and all of this has been made possible by volunteer effort and donations made by people just like you.

The intersection of race, class, and gender has always been a powerful place for discussion and understanding. It's not enough to treat issues feminism and ending racism as separate—there is so much more we can do when we recognize and value our diversity in all forms. Because of that, we have always been proud of the connection between the Carl Brandon Society and WisCon. After all, WisCon provided the original opportunity for the Carl Brandon Society to form and grow.

The best part of all of this is simple: the advice that Chip Delany provided 12 years ago remains true today. If we want to envision a truly amazing future for everybody, we need to build it here and now, in the world today. And we want to do that with you. Are you ready? Come and join us.

www.carlbrandon.org

A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR FOR THE IAF

by Felice Kuan, Erin Underwood, and Ellen Kushner

What a wonderful, record-breaking year for the Interstitial Arts Foundation! Thanks to a terrific Executive Board and our Working Group of vibrant, dedicated volunteers, the IAF achieved more than ever.

For those of you who haven't yet met the IAF, we are a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the study, support, and promotion of interstitial art: the literature, music, visual, and performance art found in between categories and genres. We are devoted to fostering an artistic climate and marketplace in which interstitial art can flourish.

In 2009, we introduced the Interstitial Art Salon, a throwback to the literary salons of the 17th century, modernized to bring together border-crossing artists, writers, musicians, and creators of all types. Devoted to portfolio-sharing, conversation, collaboration, and community warmth,

our first salon happened in New York City, swiftly followed by salons in bars, cafes, bookstores, and private homes in New Brunswick (Maine), Los Angeles, and Indianapolis. Larissa Niec is our national salon coordinator, and anyone interested in hosting a salon can visit "How to Host an IAF Salon" on our website (address on next page).

In November, we published *Interfictions 2*, our second anthology of genre-defying fiction, edited by Delia Sherman and Christopher Barzak. *Interfictions 2* showcases twenty-one writers from six countries and was selected as one of the Best Books of 2009 by Amazon.com. Alex Myers's cover painting for *Interfictions 2* was selected from an open Flickr pool of interstitial visual art, and publication and promotional costs were supported by a successful experiment in crowdfunding. Our website features a companion *Interfictions 2 Annex* of eight new short stories.

K. Tempest Bradford helmed our second Interfictions Auction, with work by 28 talented and innovative artists. Prompted by the *Interfictions 2* story of their choice, artists created jewelry, hats, prints, fiber arts, statues, books, and several wonderfully indefinable art pieces. Thanks to Deborah Brannon, Alaya Johnson, Cris Fisher, Shira Lipkin, and Mary Kay Kare, these 32 one-of-kind creations were auctioned off online to benefit and promote interstitial arts.

Interfictions 2 authors & editors organized readings in San Jose, San Francisco, and Minneapolis. Brian Slattery pioneered a series of readings set to live improvised music, which toured packed houses in New York and Boston. Cecil Castellucci threw a story reading and performance arts bash in Los Angeles. Ray Vukceвич organized a groundbreaking virtual *Interfictions 2* reading on Second Life at Tammy Domike's Jackson Street Books.

What is
interstitial art?
*It is art made in the
interstices between
genres and categories.*

In September, Geoffrey Long unveiled our new website, which features write-ups of interstitial events; recommendations of interstitial work, websites, and organizations; and a blog that discusses interstitial happenings of all types.

Erin Underwood expertly wove us into the social media grid. We now have over 1,300 Facebook members and hundreds of Twitter followers. Our open Flickr pool of art continues to flourish.

Deborah Atherton and Wendy Ellertson helped us acquire a grant from Arisia, Inc., which will help to support the publication of *Interfictions 2* and the IAF's online and face-to-face community activities. We welcomed new Friends this year, especially from our *Interfictions 2* crowdfund, and now have 163 Friends of the IAF.

Looking ahead to 2010, we will be holding salons in more towns across the U.S., as well as in Europe. We'll be creating an academic section of our website, and will feature some notable guest bloggers. Future projects include an online art gallery, a forum where artists can network and collaborate, and the next anthology,

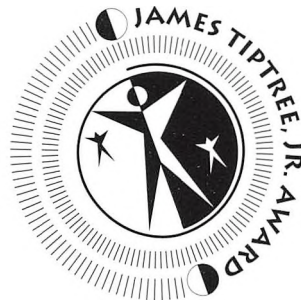
Interfictions 3. We will continue to seek new ways to support interstitial artists and are always eager to work with other organizations to co-sponsor events and initiatives. Please write to us at info@interstitialarts.org with your ideas and suggestions, or comment directly on our blog at www.interstitialarts.org

The IAF supports an ongoing conversation among artists, academics, critics, and the general public in which art can be spoken of as a continuum rather than as a series of hermetically sealed genres. WisCon has nourished the IAF from the beginning. Our very first tottering steps in public came when WisCon gave us panel space to test our theories in an open, intellectually curious environment.

The administrative work of the Foundation is done by the Executive Board, along with planning and leadership for our projects. The Working Group provides input, guidance, and the backbone of the volunteer force that keeps these projects going. We are deeply grateful to the Friends of the IAF for financial support and volunteered time, without which the work of the IAF wouldn't be possible.



www.interstitialarts.org



THE JAMES TIPTREE, JR. AWARD

by *Debbie Notkin*

In 2010, Aqueduct Press published *The Secret Feminist Cabal: A Cultural History of Science Fiction Feminisms* by Helen Merrick. While the book is not about the Tiptree Award, the title has been associated with the award since before the publication of the first award anthology: *Flying Cups and Saucers: Gender Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy*, edited by “Debbie Notkin and the Secret Feminist Cabal.” The Tiptree Award motherboard gave Merrick permission to use the phrase as her title, and the award (like WisCon) features prominently in the latter part of the book. We feel very established to be examined in an academic text which takes its name from one of our jokes. But then, the Tiptree Award has always been about the jokes, while also trying to also include the academics.

The James Tiptree Jr. Award grew out of Karen Joy Fowler’s (author of

The Jane Austen Book Club and *Sarah Canary*) annoyance that no science fiction awards were named after women, and Richard Kadrey’s (author of *Metrophage* and *Sandman Slim*) suggestion to Pat Murphy (author of *The Falling Woman* and *Wild Girls*) that a women’s science fiction award “would really piss people off.” Pat and Karen discussed these related ideas in 1991, before Pat was WisCon Guest of Honor. By the time Pat was ready to give her GoH speech, the award had coalesced into a coherent idea, and had been named.

The choice of James Tiptree, Jr. as the person to name the award for is a perfect example of the award’s contrarian nature. As many WisCon attendees know, “James Tiptree Jr.,” was actually a woman (Alice Sheldon) writing under a male pseudonym for a variety of reasons. For a fascinating exploration of the entangled lives of Alice Sheldon and James Tiptree, Jr.,

read *James Tiptree, Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon*, by Julie Phillips (which received a special nonfiction Tiptree award in 2006). As Merrick says when she describes the WisCon audience’s reception of Pat’s speech, “The response was immediate and the resulting juggernaut more than the founders could have dreamed.”

Not a “women’s science fiction award” despite its genesis, the Tiptree award focuses on gender, rather than feminism. Jurors are instructed to choose the works that best “explore and expand gender roles.” Although WisCon is an expressly feminist event, the WisCon attendees embraced the award’s gender centrality instantly. The community that gathers around WisCon makes the Tiptree Award possible, both financially and by the time, energy, and enthusiasm they put into it. Originally, Pat suggested funding the award with bake sales (“If you can’t change the world with



chocolate chip cookies, how can you change the world?"). One day after the speech, convention members began planning not only bake sales, but also publications.

If the convention's excitement had not been so swift and committed, the award might have never gotten off the ground, or might have run a year or two and then fizzled out. Instead, almost twenty years later, the award is thriving, giving substantial and silly awards to its recipients. Award winners receive \$1,000, along with a piece of original art work, some chocolate, and a certificate. Winners who can attend the award ceremony have the opportunity to wear a handmade tiara crafted by author and artist Elise Matthesen. (When there are two attending winners, the award borrows a second tiara so that no award winner goes undecorated.)

The first awards went to Eleanor Arnason for *A Woman of the Iron People* and Gwyneth Jones for *The White Queen*. The award ceremony was at WisCon 16 in 1992, and both Arnason and Jones attended the convention.

Over the years, the Saturday night WisCon auction, featuring Ellen Klages as the auctioneer *par excellence*, has become more visible (and more lucrative) than the bake sales. Nonetheless, Tiptree bake sales are a feature at many science fiction conventions: if you want to run one at your local convention, please let the

motherboard know. The auction is an inimitable evening of entertainment. Ellen is the Nebula-award winning author of "Basement Magic," as well as the middle-grade novels *White Sands*, *Red Menace* and *The Green Glass Sea*, and a long-time member of the Tiptree motherboard.

The award ceremony traveled around various conventions for a while and is currently an annual WisCon event, held after the guest of honor ceremonies on Sunday night. A special feature of the award ceremony is a silly song sung to each winner by "the Tips," an impromptu group of amateur singers. (Oddly enough, some award winners are not excited by wearing a tiara and having thirty people serenade their book, but most seem to enjoy it.)

The Tiptree Award also has a publishing presence. In 1998, the award published its first anthology, *Flying Cups and Saucers: Gender Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy*, edited by "Debbie Notkin and the Secret Feminist Cabal" and published by Edgewood Press. In 2005, Tachyon Publications began the first of three annual anthologies, *The James Tiptree, Jr. Award Anthology*. These three annual volumes (edited by Karen Joy Fowler, Pat Murphy, Debbie Notkin, and Jeffrey D. Smith) include excerpts from the winning novels for the previous year, recent honor-listed short stories, short stories which were

honor-listed from earlier years, and nonfiction which is either related to the award's gender focus or which conforms to themes that arise as the anthology is put together.

The anthologies are on hold for the moment, but watch for more Tiptree publishing ventures, either in print or online. For information on what's new with the award, you can always go to www.tiptree.org (where you can also nominate books you would like the current jury to consider, volunteer for Tiptree tasks, and donate to the award).

In 1996, the motherboard responded to frequent comments that some of the great works expanding gender had been written before the award began by offering a one-time set of Retrospective Tiptree Awards as a five-year anniversary event. Everyone who had been a juror up to that point was asked for nominations, and that same group then voted on the winners. Twenty separate works were nominated and three authors (Suzy McKee Charnas, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Joanna Russ) received retrospective awards.

Angela Carter (1940–1992) was given a special lifetime achievement award of appreciation in 1997. Carter, author of many works, including *The Bloody Chamber* and *Black Venus*, was a gender-exploration pioneer and the lifetime achievement award is a token of our genre's indebtedness to her originality.

In 1997, the motherboard also created “The Fairy Godmother Award,” contrarily enough named after a concept in *Glory Road*, by that nemesis of so many feminists, Robert A. Heinlein. The award goes to people who contribute to our genre and are known to be in need of both cash and encouragement. A special jury reviewed candidates for the first Fairy Godmother Award, but since then the founding mothers, and later the motherboard, have taken that task on themselves. Recipients receive an

unheralded check, and a note saying, “The Fairy Godmother strikes without warning.” Names of recipients are not made public: the one exception was a grant to send Freddie Baer (the artist who defines the Tiptree look by creating t-shirts, posters, and even an apron) to Australia for the World Science Fiction convention.

In 2006, a special award went to Julie Phillips for her biography of Tiptree, *James Tiptree, Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon*.

For 2009, the jury extended a special honor to L. Timmel Duchamp for The Marq’ssan Cycle, a five-novel series published by Aqueduct Press (*Alanya to Alanya*, *Renegade*, *Tsunami*, *Blood in the Fruit*, and *Stretto*).

WisCon, the Tiptree Award, and the international feminist science fiction community are inextricably linked. Without you, the Tiptree Award could not exist. For a list of all winners, honor list titles, long list titles, and retrospective nominees, go to www.tiptree.org.

PAST WINNERS OF THE TIPTREE AWARD

2008 Winners

Patrick Ness

The Knife of Never Letting Go

Nisi Shaw

Filter House

2007 Winner

Sarah Hall

The Carhullan Army
(published in the U.S. as
Daughters of the North)

2006 Winners

Shelley Jackson

Half-Life

Catherynne M. Valente

The Orphan’s Tales:
In the Night Garden

Special Award:

Julie Phillips

Alice Sheldon: The Double Life
of James Tiptree, Jr. (nonfiction)

2005 Winner

Geoff Ryman

Air

2004 Winner

Joe Haldeman

Camouflage

Joanna Sinisalo

Troll: A Love Story (originally
published in Finnish; published in
U.K. as *Not Before Sundown*)

2003 Winner

Matt Ruff

Set This House in Order:
A Romance of Souls

2002 Winners

M. John Harrison

Light

John Kessel

“Stories for Men”

2001 Winner

Hiroimi Goto

The Kappa Child

2000 Winner

Molly Gloss

Wild Life

1999 Winner

Suzy McKee Charnas,

The Conqueror’s Child

1998 Winner

Raphael Carter

“Congenital Agenesis of
Gender Ideation”

1997 Winners

Candas Jane Dorsey

Black Wine

Kelly Link

“Travels with the Snow Queen”

1996 Winners

Ursula K. Le Guin

“Mountain Ways”

Mary Doria Russell

The Sparrow

1995 Winners

Elizabeth Hand

Waking the Moon

1994 Winners

Ursula K. Le Guin

“The Matter of Seggri”

Nancy Springer

Larque on the Wing

1993 Winner

Nicola Griffith

Ammonite

1992 Winner

Maureen McHugh

China Mountain Zhang

1991 Winners

Eleanor Arnason

A Woman of the Iron People

Gwyneth Jones

The White Queen

RETROSPECTIVE AWARD WINNERS

Suzy McKee Charnas, *Walk to the End of the World* (1974),
Motherlines (1978) (two sequential novels treated as one work)

Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969)

Joanna Russ, “When It Changed” (1972), *The Female Man* (1975)
(two works in the same universe treated as one work)

2009 TIPTREE AWARD

by Debbie Notkin

THE WINNERS OF THE 2009 TIPTREE AWARD ARE:

Greer Gilman

Cloud & Ashes: Three Winter's Tales
(Small Beer Press, 2009)

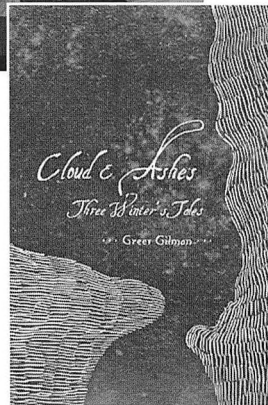
Greer Gilman's book, *Cloud & Ashes: Three Winter Tales*, prompted much jury discussion on its way to winning the Tiptree. It is a slow read—a dense, poetic, impressionistic book, heavy with myth. Many of its images and elements are drawn from folk tales and ballads of the British Isles; patterns repeat, but also mutate in kaleidoscopic fashion and then mutate again. The language was especially difficult. Sometimes we felt we were floating through it; sometimes drowning.

It is a paradoxical work. To enter the novel you must give up on understanding every word. You have to read the book on an instinctual level, yet the effect of the book is almost entirely intellectual. Power shifts about, much of it gender-based; time eats itself like a Möbius strip. These are stories about Story in a world in which power seems to belong to the male but reality to the female.

We on the jury admired *Cloud and Ashes* for its originality and found it a beautiful and highly memorable work.



photo: Liza Groen Trombi



Fumi Yoshinaga

Ōoku: The Inner Chambers, Volumes 1 & 2
(VIZ Media 2009)

We chose Fumi Yoshinaga's *Ōoku, Volumes 1 & 2* as our Tiptree winner with some trepidation. No one on the jury has read much manga, no one is an expert in Japanese history. What we fell in love with was the detailed exploration of the world of these books—an alternate feudal Japan in which a plague has killed three-quarters of Japan's young men. In *Ōoku*, the shogun and daimyo are women, and much of the story takes place among the men in the Shogun's harem.

The first volume (set in a later time period than the second) shows us a world in which men are assumed to be weak and sickly, yet women still use symbolic masculinity to maintain power. The second volume focuses on the period of transition. Throughout the two books, Yoshinaga explores the way the deep gendering of this society is both maintained and challenged by the alteration in ratios.

The result is a fascinating, subtle, and nuanced speculation with gender at its center.



Honor List

Paul Haines, “Wives” (in *X6* edited by Keith Stevenson, *coeur de lion* 2009)

An interesting counterpoint to *Ōoku* regarding projected effects of gender imbalance, Haines’ “Wives” is a sharp, deeply ugly look at white working class Australian masculinity in a world where women are scarce. The dystopian Australian outback where the story mostly occurs is a place of intense misogyny, racism, and transphobia. Horrible and chillingly believable, “Wives” didn’t do anything terribly original, but it did something familiar in a quite new, very visceral, very powerful way.

Caitlin R. Kiernan, “Galapagos” (in *Eclipse 3*, edited by Jonathan Strahan, Night Shade Books 2009)

Although we immediately loved this story, our initial reaction was that the centrality of a same-sex relationship in the place we might expect a heterosexual one wasn’t enough to persuade us that our understanding of gender was being explored and expanded. But the more we thought and talked about it, the more things we felt the story accomplished. Because a queer relationship does have a different connection to the reproduction of the species, to have a disturbing alien reproductivity routed through queer female bodies

did feel radical and new. “Galapagos” made us think of the work of Octavia Butler. There can be no higher praise.

Alice Sola Kim, “Beautiful White Bodies” *Strange Horizons* (www.strangehorizons.com) 2009.12.07-14

A dangerous plague is turning high school girls into ravishing beauties. We found this story’s illumination of teenage girlhood and its passionate desires to be a quite heartbreaking meditation on the meaning of beauty and femininity in the media and popular culture. Especially lovable—the main character. Especially pertinent to us—our protagonist’s hopeless assurances that really, girl geeks can grow up okay. Especially fabulous—the marvelous voice of the piece and the amazing ending.

Maureen F. McHugh, “Useless Things” in *Eclipse 3*, edited by Jonathan Strahan (Night Shade Books 2009)

A non-reproductive woman makes idealized child-objects in an uncertain world. McHugh’s story takes place only a tick away from where we now find ourselves, in a pressured environment of economic collapse where any act of generosity and open-heartedness is risky and a good person is a dangerous thing to be. This is not fundamentally a gendered issue, but

it often expresses itself in gendered ways. An incredibly evocative, sparsely written, powerful story.

Vandana Singh, *Distances* (Aqueduct Press 2008)

Singh has packed this novella-length work with an amazing complexity. *Distances* is: the story of a woman’s development as an artist in a context where science, art and religion are indistinguishable; a meditation on the uses of knowledge and the power structures they engender; and a nuanced depiction of cultural difference, loss and exile. While not as directly focused on gender as some other works on our list, we saw *Distances* as a work that expanded and challenged a number of inherently gendered cultural categories. Also, almost incidentally, there are some very interesting depictions of alternative sex and gender arrangements.

Jo Walton, *Lifelode* (NESFA Press 2009)

We are all familiar with books in which the setting is some sort of fantasy/feudal blend and the gender roles appear unexamined and uninteresting. So one thing we loved about *Lifelode* was the way the society’s hierarchical, feudal social structure included both a traditional view of marriage, through

which hereditary power is passed on, and an established tradition of polyamorous relationships. Life here is comfortable and relatively egalitarian; through Walton's characters, we see the power inherent in traditionally feminine social roles. But *Lifelode* takes place at just that moment when the cozy village of Applekirk finds itself threatened by an alien and terrifying new monogamous order...

Special Honor

L. Timmel Duchamp, *The Marq'ssan Cycle* (*Alanya to Alanya, Renegade, Tsunami, Blood in the Fruit, and Stretto*) (Aqueduct Press 2005–8)

After reading the thousands of pages in L. Timmel Duchamp's five-volume Marq'ssan cycle, following decades of changes across the world in both large-scale politics and the everyday interpersonal beauties and violences of individual lives, you don't emerge quite the same as you were when you went in.

Gender is a central focus, as we experience a very gender-segregated society largely from a female point of view, and occasionally from that of a post-gender alien species. But any separation of one of the cycle's themes must necessarily be a shallow depiction of what it is like to read these novels.

Some readers will focus most on the story of human engagement with an utterly different alien race, determined to alter the course of human politics yet determined to be something other than colonizers. Some will be most fascinated by the tale of the Free Zones, anarchist enclaves where cooperative, anti-authoritarian politics develop over decades in the US and elsewhere. These communities are not utopian but are filled with conflict and occasionally violent, yet they remain optimistic nevertheless. For other readers, the most memorable aspects of the cycle will be the near-future dystopian image of an intensely class-divided United States, with its startlingly prescient depictions of torture, imprisonment, and political violence, told with an unsettling understanding of the oppressors' perspective, and yet never without losing sympathy for the victims. For some, they will be inspired by Duchamp's point of view characters—almost all women—whose personal and political transformations, power-laden interpersonal, frequently sexual relationships, and critical analyses of the world, drive the many intersecting narratives.

Also Recommended

Xiaolu Guo, *UFO in Her Eyes* (Chatto & Windus 2009)

Alaya Dawn Johnson, "A Song to Greet the Sun" (online at *Fantasy Magazine*, 2009.10.26)

Helen Keeble, "A Journal of Certain Events of Scientific Interest from the First Survey Voyage of the Southern Waters by HMS *Ocelot*, as Observed by Professor Thaddeus Boswell, DPhil, MSc" (online at *Strange Horizons*, 2009.06.01-08)

Sylvia Kelso, *Riversend* (Juno 2009)

Claire Light, *Slightly Behind and to the Left* (Aqueduct Press 2009)

Shweta Narayan, "Nira and I" (online at *Strange Horizons*, 2009.03.16)

Cat Rambo, "Ms. Liberty Gets a Haircut" (online at *Strange Horizons*, 2009.10.26)

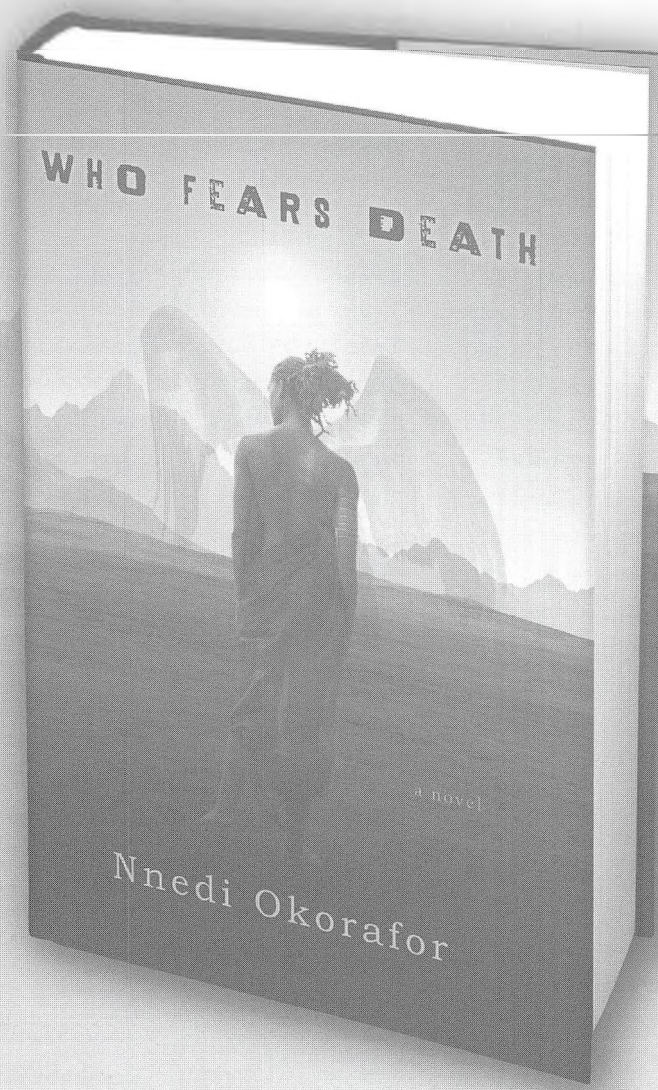
Sarah Schulman, *The Mere Future* (Arsenal Pulp Press 2009)

Stephanie Shaw, "Afterbirth" (in *Interfictions 2*, edited by Delia Sherman and Christopher Barzak, Small Beer Press 2009)

Jeremiah Tolbert, "The Godfall's Chemsong" (*Interzone* 224, 2009.09-10)

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—Luís Alberto Urrea, Pulitzer Prize-nominated author of *The Devil’s Highway*

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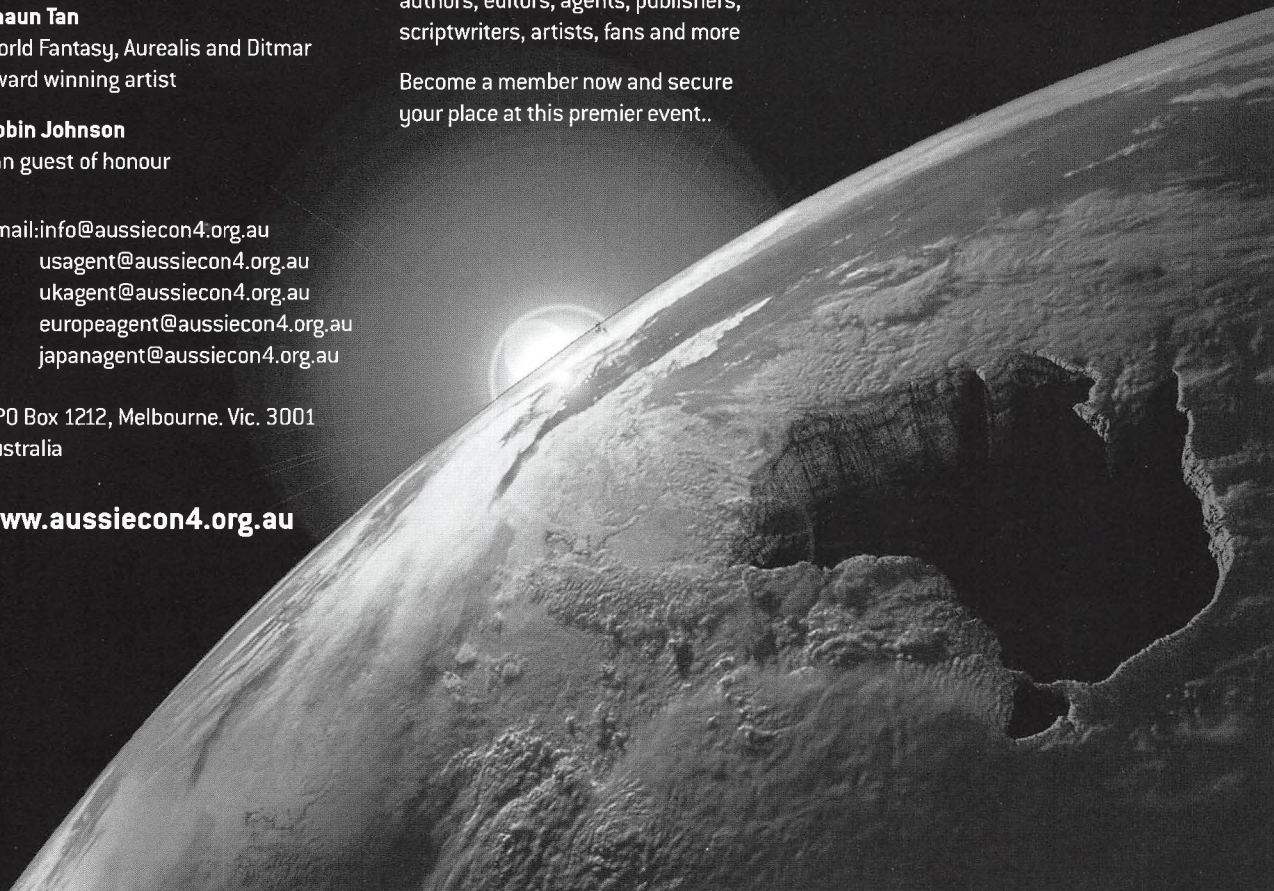
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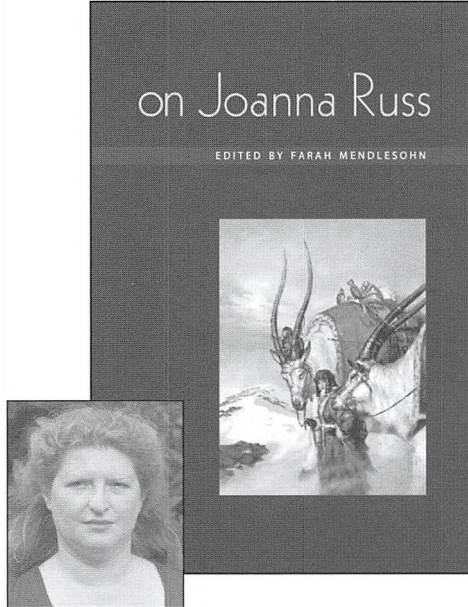
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"This beautifully produced collection of essays is a fitting tribute to her, and even those who know Russ's work well will learn from many of these essays. Even so, this is still only telling part of the story about an elusive and complex writer. We'd be better off if all her work were back in print, but until that happens this is a superb reminder of what a valuable and important writer she is."— Paul Kincaid, www.SFSite

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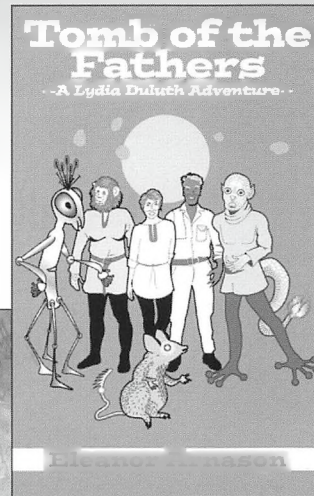
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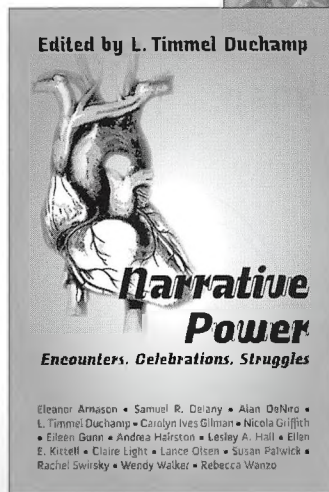
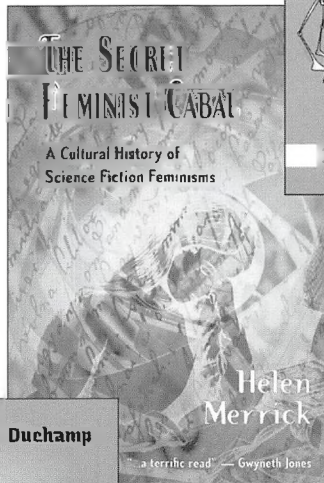
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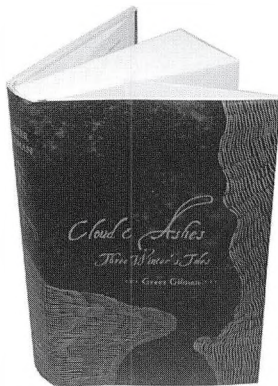


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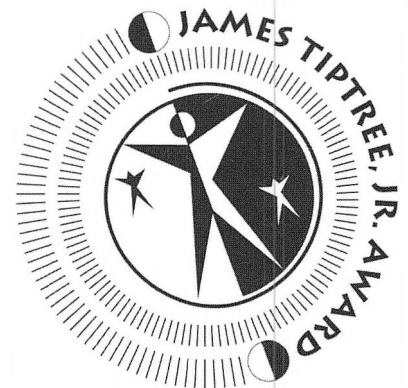
Small Beer Press would like to congratulate

Greer Gilman

and her superb achievement



Cloud & Ashes
Three Winter's Tales



and celebrate her receiving the Tiptree Award:

"*Cloud and Ashes: Three Winter Tales*, prompted much jury discussion on its way to winning the Tiptree. It is a slow read—a dense, poetic, impressionistic book, heavy with myth. Many of its images and elements are drawn from folk tales and ballads of the British Isles; patterns repeat, but also mutate in kaleidoscopic fashion and then mutate again. The language was especially difficult. Sometimes we felt we were floating through it; sometimes drowning. It is a paradoxical work. To enter the novel you must give up on understanding every word. You have to read the book on an instinctual level, yet the effect of the book is almost entirely intellectual. Power shifts about, much of it gender-based; time eats itself like a mobius strip. These are stories about Story in a world in which power seems to belong to the male but reality to the female. We on the jury admired *Cloud and Ashes* for its originality and found it a beautiful and highly memorable work."

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