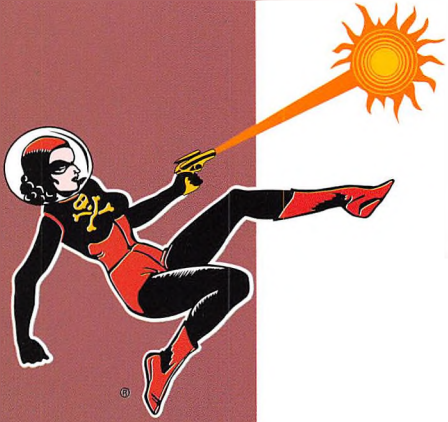




WisCon³⁶
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The James Tiptree, Jr. Award
Celebrates WisCon 36 Guest of Honor

Debbie Notkin

The
James
Tiptree,
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Andrea Hairston

Redwood and Wildfire
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WISCON 36 SOUVENIR BOOK

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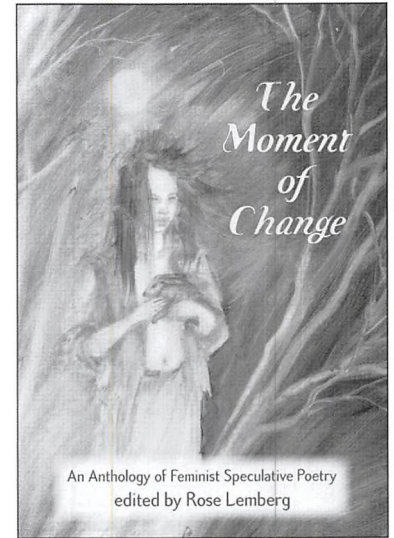
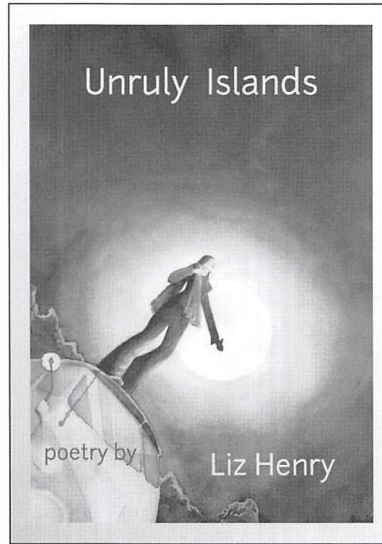
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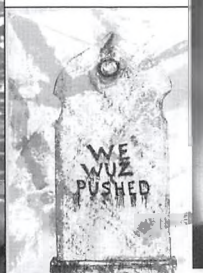
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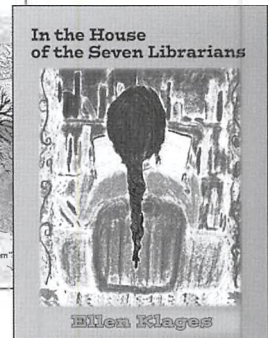
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The WisCon Chronicles, Vol. 6
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**In the House of the
Seven Librarians**
by Ellen Klages

WORK TO STRETCH THE IMAGINATION AND STIMULATE THOUGHT
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photo: Micala Sidore

ANDREA HAIRSTON

GRIOT, VISIONARY, FELLOW TRAVELER

by the *Beyon'Dusa*
*Artists' Collective**

Imagine griots who journey across galaxies and minds, two-headed women who see past the veil of family secrets and time, “expendable folk” facing the impossible, rewriting their own remarkable histories, ethnic throwback diplomats navigating their way through dangerous personal, physical, and professional barriers, and aliens contemplating what it means to be human while trapped in a local video store. These fiercely unique and diverse stories, documented on the stage and the page, could only have emerged from the brilliant mind of playwright, director, performance artist, actor, educator, and novelist Andrea Hairston.

In her own words, Andrea “calls on any language to express what is necessary. Griots are poets, musicians, oral historians, praise singers, and diplomats negotiating community, conjuring identity.” For Andrea, “griots shake time loose, allowing us to feel beyond our brief moments, beyond our skin. They dance down ego-trips, pour libation to the ancestors, and welcome the unborn. Illuminating the past, invigorating the future, these time-traveling wordsmiths stand between us and cultural amnesia.” Her writing urges us to “dance life.” She crafts amazing, memorable characters who “imagine the impossible and rehearse the future in the face of adversity.”

Born in Homewood, the historic black Pittsburgh community written about by author John Edgar Wideman, Andrea and her brother, James “Hap” Hairston, grew up with parents who encouraged their children to let their immense imagination and intelligence soar. As a child, Andrea read five or six books weekly, including works by James Baldwin, Harper Lee, Margaret Walker, Robert Heinlein, and later Ursula Le Guin, Alice Walker, and Toni Cade Bambara. Her mother allowed the kids one television show a week, and Andrea’s choice was the original *Star Trek* series. (Her brother compulsively read the dictionary, and later became a journalist.) Andrea and Hap, best pals in childhood, went to the picture shows often, searching for science fiction especially. The two had a little scam going. They asked every available adult for a quarter for movie tickets, or carfare, thereby acquiring extra funds for popcorn and candy. With the change left over from not taking the train after all, the two splurged on comic books.

“Growing up in the 50s,” says Andrea, “I intended to be a theoretical physicist or a mathematician. But I come from a family of storytellers, big talkers, and tall-tale tellers. No one in my family knew when to shut up. This got me into hot water when I started school. I always finished my work fast, and then wanted to talk about it. My mother

*Sheree Renée Thomas, Pan Morigan, Ama Patterson, and Liz Roberts, and including edits and suggestions from fellow traveler James Emery.



Andrea and Tony Vacca in *Incantations* at the Boston Women's Theater Festival. Set paintings by Pan Morigan. Theater photos courtesy of Pan Morigan.

started me writing stories for her so I wouldn't disturb the other kids trying to learn, or get myself in trouble with the teacher. I wrote epic adventures and sagas for her and drew illustrations of exciting scenes. She was trying to keep me out of the principal's office. I've been writing ever since."

No one who knows Andrea Hairston—or who has spoken with her for even a few moments—would be surprised to learn that she began her career as a Math/Physics major in college and once edited math textbooks for Houghton Mifflin in Boston. Her love for science, art, and the human spirit comes across in all of her writing. Andrea says she was prepared for a life in the sciences until she "did special effects for a show," an experience that changed her whole perspective. Bitten, she then "ran off to the theater and became an artist." In hindsight, Andrea feels that the seeds of her love for theater were planted long before college.

In 1969, at seventeen, Andrea watched a PBS production of Alice Childress's *Wine in the Wilderness*. The play about a "lower-class black woman struggling with an elitist, middle-class, black male artist to define beauty, love, power, etc." where there were "no evil white people to be found, and all the characters had to work hard to transform themselves," changed her life and what she thought she could do and what could be written. Says Andrea, "African-American theater opened up the world for me. And then I read everything: Wole Soyinka, Tess Onwueme, Derek Walcott,



Andrea and Chrysalis Theatre. Paintings and masks by Pan Morigan.

Bertolt Brecht, Jean Anouilh, Caryl Churchill, Ibsen, Femi Osofisan, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Micere Githae Mugo, Shakespeare, Aimé Césaire, and more names than I can call out."

Andrea successfully made the shift from physics to theater during her junior year at Smith College: from contemplating the mysteries of science and life to dramatizing them by directing and writing plays, Andrea became enthralled by "theater and the possibilities of live performance." She graduated from Smith as a theater major, got an MA in playwriting from Brown University, and explored filmmaking at NYU's Sight and Sound intensive. In 1978, she and lifelong best friend, actor James Emery, co-founded Chrysalis Theatre in Northampton, Massachusetts, with "a staunch group of activist/artists who believed people should go out and make the world they wanted to see." Believing that "theater is a rehearsal of the possible," Chrysalis made local history by bringing theater and performing arts to the lives of young people society had written off, or labeled "at risk." Chrysalis artists worked with parenting teens, gang members, shelter children, and with immigrant women and social workers as well. Rather than performing for them and returning home, Chrysalis put theater in their neighbors' hands, guiding and mentoring these newly born theater folk as they wrote, directed, produced, and starred in their own plays and stories.



Andrea and Pan Morigan. Photo: Bruce Berkow.

As the Artistic Director of Chrysalis Theatre and the Louise Wolff Kahn 1931 Professor of Theater and African-American Studies at Smith College (teaching Playwriting and African, African American, German, and Caribbean theater literature), Andrea has been an active innovator and leader in the dramatic arts for over thirty years. Her innovative use of dance, masks, and multi-media in her productions challenges audiences to think above and beyond convention. Andrea has directed well over thirty of her original plays, and her work has been seen at such venues as Smith College, New Hampshire Art Institute, Kennedy Center, Yale Rep, Rites and Reason, Stage West, and on public radio and television. Additionally, Andrea directed the American premiere of playwright Caryl Churchill's acclaimed work, *Vinegar Tom*, and early works by Pearl Cleage at Smith College.

Andrea was interested in the films of Margaretha von Trotta, the plays of Bertolt Brecht, and other German authors and film-makers who resisted the illusions of realism. She thought such works would be better appreciated in German, so she studied the German language at length, becoming deeply fluent. (Ask her about one of her German novels!) Andrea has since translated plays by Michael Ende and Kaca Celan from German to English. This extended cross-cultural encounter brought

Andrea and family to Germany many times over the course of twenty-five years, where she met and befriended a diversity of German citizens, Bavarian farmers, teachers, and bankers; African, South American, and Turkish immigrants; and urban artists. This experience altered Andrea's life-view fundamentally, providing her with insights into her own culture and country—the insights that distance brings. Such a multifaceted perspective has had a great influence on Andrea's vision.

Influenced by surrealism, expressionism, and Caribbean and West African festival drama, Andrea's plays have always offered more than a hint of the fantastical, and could rightly be called speculative. Recent works such as *Soul Repairs*, *Lonely Stardust*, and *Hummingbird Flying Backward* are straight-up science fiction plays. Andrea directed staged readings of both *Hummingbird Flying Backward* and *Mindscape* at the New York Review of Science Fiction reading series at Dixon Place. The latter occurred the day before the September 11, 2001, attacks and the passing of her dear father James Hairston. In the chaos that ensued, Andrea's art was a healing force: an inspiration to think clearly and to keep creating. A subsequent play, *Archangels of Funk: A Sci-fi Theatre Jam*, garnered her a Massachusetts Cultural Council Playwriting Fellowship for 2003.

Learn more about Andrea's doings at
www.andreahairston.com

Any cursory research on Andrea Hairston would reveal that she has gathered an impressive portfolio of accolades for her many years of theater work, including grants from the NEA, the Ford Foundation, and a Shubert Playwriting Fellowship. While Andrea immersed herself in theater, she says she was always conscious that there were other stories she wanted to tell, stories that called out for a different form. This awareness inspired her to attend Clarion West, 1999, and to co-found Beyon'Dusa Artists' Collective, a five-woman artist collective which has stayed strong for thirteen years, together workshopping stories, novels, songs, and life itself. Andrea pursued the magic and power of narrative with a passion. This exploration inspired some of her most evocative poetry, short fiction, literary criticism, and her first published novels.

Recent years have seen Andrea's innovative writings read and recognized more widely, to the great joy of those of us who've witnessed her epic journey. Her first speculative novel, *Mindscape*, was on the 2006 Tiptree Honor List, named a 2006 Finalist for the Philip K. Dick Award, and won the 2006 Carl Brandon Parallax Award. She was Guest of Honor at Diversicon 15 in 2007. In 2011, Andrea was Guest Scholar at the International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts, and winner of the IAFA Distinguished Scholarship Award.

James Emery, partner Pan Morigan, and the rest of the Beyon'Dusa crew were happily anticipating Andrea's turn as Guest of Honor at WisCon 2012 when it was announced that her second novel, *Redwood and Wildfire*, had won the 2011 James Tiptree, Jr. Award. With great excitement we looked on as Andrea spoke by phone with a Tiptree committee member. She became not a little weepy and notably was rendered nearly speechless with happiness. (Andrea is rarely rendered speechless!) She finally stammered something on the order of "Wow-oh-wow-oh-wow... I feel like I won the Academy Award."

Of her many honors, Andrea is humble and when asked, she speaks only of her current projects and passions. For her, it is the excitement of the creative process, of bringing new worlds, new visions, and new stories to the surface that is most exhilarating.

Yet we who love her know that she hopes (as do we) to have her works read, understood, and appreciated. Awards such as the Tiptree bear witness to the fact that, after many years of persistence, this dream is unfolding, bringing Andrea full circle to her childhood roots in Homewood where she first dazzled her mother with epic stories and adventures. Andrea's mother, Ruth T. Hairston, and her beloved great aunt, Estelle Hicks, would be especially proud of Andrea if they were with us today. Those two strong women saw Andrea through a 1950s/60s childhood, dreaming dreams for her that they could hardly imagine themselves. Thus, Andrea's life has been a speculative work of art from the very beginning.

In 2011, full of celebration, Andrea and Pan traversed the U.S. on a road trip, doing dramatic readings (with music) from *Redwood and Wildfire*. They traveled from North Carolina to Chicago, from San Francisco to Portland to Seattle and beyond. Performing for diverse audiences at colleges, universities, bookstores, cafes, and theaters, they met amazing, unforgettable people. Between gigs, Andrea and Pan hiked in mountains, in redwood forests, along the Oregon coast, and through wild, Nebraska prairie-lands. They hope to do such a tour again, with even more time for hikes and mountain climbing in between.

Truth be told, Andrea is one hard core athlete whose daily regimen of weight-lifting, bicycling, running, yoga, and stair stepping would make folk half her age fall down in a sweat. (Pan keeps up okay, though.) If you've had the pleasure of meeting Andrea at one of the cons, you may have seen her getting down in the gym!

Andrea says, “I believe in embodied wisdom.” She employs that premise to support her life and creativity on every level. Such excellent, philosophical underpinnings also provide her the perfect excuse to buy many items of colorful, dramatic, gorgeous clothing in which to adorn her spirit-body-mind. We, her peoples, who affectionately call her “La Hairston,” are dazzled by Andrea’s fly, fantastical outfits. Such raiment is only fitting for a griot: a praise-singer and preserver of culture, one whose words bridge the distance between history, the self, and the future.

Andrea is a 21st century griot whose words and visions inspire us, challenge us to know ourselves so we can become catalysts for positive change. An artist as well as a community activist, she believes that “artists, like sociologists, should offer us the ability to imagine ourselves.” Indeed, Andrea’s work invites us to reimagine ourselves in ways that subvert our expectations. She challenges us to move beyond what we think we know about ourselves and our world, to question race, class, gender, identity politics, family dynamics, and community responsibility from a perspective that is at once global and personal.

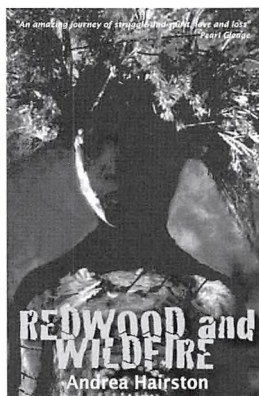
Andrea often quotes a Yoruba proverb, “if no one tells your story, you die twice.” As a playwright, poet, screenplay writer, literary critic, academic, community activist, and novelist, Andrea has spent her life writing the stories of voices that would otherwise be silenced. At the same time, she creates beautiful and surprising worlds and characters that move us, offering joy, passion, and wonder. Because she generously shares with us the incredible gifts of these creative efforts, her art in all its masterful forms, Andrea Hairston’s own brilliant story will live on and on. Andrea is now hard at work on a companion to *Redwood and Wildfire*, entitled *Will Do Magic for Small Change!*



Andrea and Ama Patterson (friend and fellow member of Beyon'Dusa Artists' Collective).
Photo: Pan Morigan.

“I believe in
embodied wisdom.”

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DEBBIE NOTKIN

MY KIND OF TROUBLEMAKER

by *Pat Murphy*



photo: Joanne Clapp Fullagar

Let me get the most important point out of the way right up front: Debbie Notkin is amazing.

To start with, Debbie knows how to get things done and make things run—whether the thing in question is a bookstore (she co-founded *The Other Change of Hobbit* in Berkeley), a meeting of disconsolate writers (she facilitates the Mid-Career Writer's Group at WisCon), a nonprofit group (she chairs the Tiptree Award motherboard), or a convention (she's been involved in making WisCon happen for about 15 years).

Debbie can wrangle the most cantankerous of writers, fans, and editors. She's a reviewer, an essayist, and an editor, and somehow she manages to make it all look easy. When you start poking about in what goes on behind the scenes in science fiction circles (at least the sort of science fiction circles that interest me), Debbie's name always comes up.

All of that is good, but the part I truly treasure is this: even while Debbie is at the reins of some incredibly complex organization, she remains one of those rare folks who isn't particularly interested in power. She is interested in getting things done. And of course, that makes her quite powerful. (Life is funny like that.)

Personally, I rely on Debbie for wise counsel and common sense. She has never let me down. Take, for example, the situation I found myself in back in 1990. Karen Joy Fowler and I had come up with the notion of an award named after James Tiptree, Jr. Since I was lucky enough to be a Guest of Honor at WisCon that year, I announced the award's creation in my guest of honor speech. At the end of the speech I looked around at all the applauding crowd and realized I had gotten myself into trouble again. Karen and I didn't have any idea of how to make an award run.

But fortunately, we knew Debbie. She not only chaired the very first Tiptree Award jury, but she went on to incorporate the award as a nonprofit organization. Today, she runs the meetings of the Tiptree Award's motherboard with the same calm deliberation she brings to every task.

With the assistance of the Secret Feminist Cabal, Debbie edited the very first Tiptree Award anthology, *Flying Cups and Saucers*. In her introduction to that book, Debbie mentions that Karen Fowler and I are card-carrying troublemakers. She's right about that—as she is right about so many things. But in honesty, I must note: it takes one to know one.

*Debbie' is an Agent of Change,
a person who fosters the paradigm shift.*

You see, I have noticed that Debbie brings her good sense, wise counsel, and calm deliberation to endeavors that are essentially chaotic. Truth be told, she likes to shake things up. Over the years, I have come to recognize that Debbie is an Agent of Change, a person who fosters the paradigm shift.

I'm sure people who are much more learned than I am will have deeply thought-out definitions of paradigm shift. I am an intellectual magpie and the notion of a paradigm shift is one of those shiny bits I picked up in college when I was reading Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. The gist of it is this: changes don't happen in an orderly, even, evolutionary sort of way. Nope. Things go along peacefully for a long time—lots of little changes, but no big deal. Then all of a sudden—look out!—someone has a new idea that knocks our view of the world ass over teakettle. A new conceptual worldview comes rampaging in, upsetting everyone and making a whole lot of trouble.

That's my idea of fun.

Now take a look at some of the projects/entities/organizations Debbie has run/created/collaborated on/inspired/written/cultivated and otherwise supported. While an editor at Tor Books, Debbie edited *The Furies*

and *The Conquerer's Child*, books three and four of Suzy McKee Charnas's revolutionary feminist work. With photographer Laurie Edison, she wrote and co-wrote *Women En Large: Images of Fat Nudes* and *Familiar Men: A Book of Nudes*, works that deeply examine issues of body image and visibility. Of course, I've already mentioned WisCon and the Tiptree Award—'nuff said there. Debbie thinks outside the box even when it comes to having fun: she celebrated her 50th birthday with three other women of a certain age at a memorable event called Cronecon, the crone being the symbolic wise woman, maybe a witch, but always a person of power.

It's quite clear that Debbie is dangerously subversive, a lovely attribute in my book. Debbie is at the heart of the Secret Feminist Cabal, sitting in the eye of the storm, smiling calmly and enjoying the madness.

Some might say that Debbie is working to change the world—but that sounds so grim and serious and kind of misses the point. I would say the more accurate description is this: Debbie is playing to change the world (and isn't that the very best way to change it?) She is inviting others to play as well—and what could be better than that?

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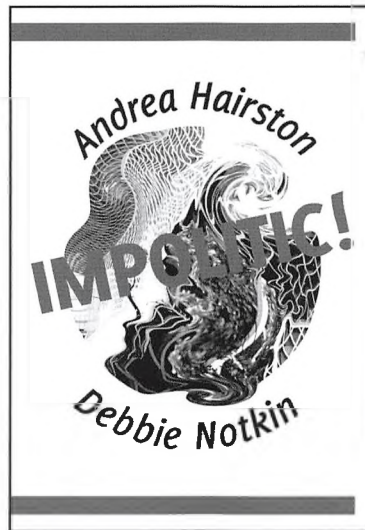
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**Andrea Hairston
&
Debbie Notkin**
WisCon 36
Guests of Honor



**Limited edition
2012 GoH Volume
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WisCon is my/our home planet
A moment in great time
A celebration
A revel
Where we dream and scheme,
sing and shout
Unravel our torment
Renew our sense of wonder
Burst into the future

—Andrea Hairston

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photo: Luke McGuff

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC INTRODUCTION TO WISCON

by *Gail Leinweber*

Madison, Wisconsin, hosts a science fiction convention that many people in the city have no idea exists, much less how unique it is. The con pulls people from all over the world to Madison every Memorial Day weekend and promotes discussions of gender and other political issues within the genre in ways I have encountered nowhere else. It would like to be a feminist utopia, it definitely is a three-day, intellectually themed party. My goal for this paper was to begin exploring what characteristics define the group of people that make up WisCon and what function this particular science fiction convention has in their lives.

A (very) brief introductory history of WisCon

Thirty-five years ago a science fiction convention was founded in Madison, Wisconsin, that expressly focused on feminism and other political issues within the science fiction genre. When Jeanne Gomoll, one of the founding member/organizers, talks about why WisCon was founded, she tells the story of attending an early WorldCon where exactly one panel was set to discuss women in science fiction. This panel was in a small, hard

to find room that quickly overflowed with people. After that panel was finished its attendees spilled out into the lobby to continue their conversations and debates. That was Ms. Gomoll's first science fiction convention ever, and she along with the other members of the Madison group that had traveled there wanted more. So they tried putting on their own convention back in Madison, at first using facilities within the University of Wisconsin-Madison before moving the event to local hotels. WisCon 1 in 1977 had about two hundred attendees, no sure future, and what was a fairly radical political orientation for its day in 1977. It was also heavily modeled on the wealth of parallel programming tracks scheduled at the WorldCon many of the WisCon organizers had just attended; not many of the early WisCon organizers realized that WorldCons offer vastly more programming tracks than an average convention. The programming tracks contain all the panels, official parties, special events, and workshops. This model has left WisCon with a legacy of more than 10 programming tracks instead of the more common 4-6 among similarly sized conventions. The emphasis on multiple programming tracks contributes to the pronounced intellectual atmosphere found at WisCons.

Who are these people and why are they here?

WisCon is what is known in fandom as a SerCon, “Ser” as in serious. Its programming tracks for any given year will contain discussions of race, class, gender, religion, current politics, history, and science—both real and theoretical. The con also offers more panels on the business aspects of writing than are usually found at other conventions. The resulting mixes of people attracted to this convention have a few obvious similarities. First, most of them read for fun and many write for both fun and (hopefully) profit. Books and the experiences of reading them, writing them, and analyzing them feature prominently both in typical conversations heard in the hallways and the scheduled panel topics. The Gathering, one of the opening events of the con, always has a table full of ARCs (advanced reader copies) being sold at \$1 each for charity, and that table is always crowded.

Second, most of WisCon’s attendees identify as intellectuals, though hopefully not pretentious ones. People who read a lot of books, science fiction or otherwise, come to WisCon because they know there will be a plethora of people to engage in discussion and debate with. I listened as one of the former chairs of the convention talked animatedly about a panel where the topic was what the next major plague might look like and how it might be responded to. The seriousness of the topic is not what Karen Moore remembers most. She talks instead about how wonderful it felt to her to be in room full of people who were enjoying discussing serious topics, and the high level of scientific literacy in the room. She also talked about trying to explain to a co-worker why she enjoys her weekends at WisCon so much, but when she mentioned this particular panel her coworker clearly could not imagine any circumstance where a talk that involved the potential for future plagues would be “fun.” Ms. Moore, though, fits in with the large percentage of

WisCon attendees who think learning in general is fun and wish more Americans agreed with them. For Ms. Moore and others like her, WisCon has become an intellectually themed holiday, all the more precious for its rarity when compared to daily experiences.

The third component binding together the 800 to 1,000 attendees at recent WisCons is politics. There is no universal agreement about what defines feminism or what constitutes progressive politics, but there is enough common ground that people at WisCon consider the other attendees as fellow travelers and welcome them accordingly.

Politics and WisCon

1977 was during the second wave of the feminist movement and WisCon marked its own activist orientation right from the beginning. Some early WisCons had a designated space called A Room of One’s Own where women could go to vent or commiserate about their concerns (Gomoll 2011). It is not a coincidence that today WisCon maintains strong ties with the feminist-focused Madison bookstore of the same name, which usually hosts a reading and an opening reception the Thursday before the convention. WisCon’s academic programming track was developed, in part, to provide female academics who were struggling to be published under their own names a place to both present and publish. This is a convention where work by Joanna Russ is as much a part of the collective knowledge base as Durkheim and Weber’s theoretical stances are in anthropology.

The second-wave feminist movement has long fallen out of favor for failing to represent women who were not white and middle or upper class. The ideology of the third wave movement, which places racial equality and diversity of experience at the forefront, infuses current programming and guest of honor choices. The convention organizing committee (ConCom) takes as much delight today in promoting up-and-coming authors of color as

they previously promoted early trailblazers in the field of feminist science fiction. The current WisCons, rather than having a “A Room of One’s Own” for women to vent about discrimination, have a place called “Safer Space” designated for people of color. This is one indication of the convention’s increasing shift towards a broader focus on social justice, rather than solely on feminism.

The message printed on the WisCon 35 program books, the printed guides to the convention, really encapsulates that balance between the convention’s feminist roots and current interests: “Tell me what feminist science fiction looks like! This is what feminist science fiction looks like!” The program book had a footnote that explains the reference for anyone not familiar with the most well-known chant of the protesters at the Wisconsin state capitol during 2011. This reference was particularly unsurprising given that WisCon’s permanent physical location for the past 16 years has been at the Concourse Hotel. The Concourse is located less than a block from the capitol building where those protests were taking place. Even without the sympathetic political position of the convention, the number of WisCon attendees and organizers who are teachers, work for government agencies, or are otherwise affected by the political battles of the day is high.

This message is just another facet of the unabashedly progressive political identity of the convention. Politics are always at the forefront, but the exact topics and level of controversy surrounding them vary. For instance, when WisCon 2 first put homosexuality in science fiction on its programming track, some other portions of fandom started calling WisCon “pervert con.” I had never heard that insult before the interview, but more than 30 years after it was first lobbed, I can picture the members and sympathizers of the Westboro Baptist Church, known for its virulent opposition to all things homosexual, taking a look at any WisCon program book and taking up that chant. Inside

WisCon, identification as an individual anywhere on the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered) spectrum is extremely uncontroversial. In addition to a higher number of LGBT attendees than is average at science fiction conventions, there are some who cross-dress openly. Cross-dressing elicits little comment outside of larger discussions on rejection of gender binaries. Instead of finding those topics controversial, WisCon 35 saw the first, and from all accounts wildly successful, GenderFloop dance party where participants were cheerfully encouraged (though in no way required) to cross-dress for the party.

Race, though, does spark some controversies within the WisCon community. Safer Space for instance, which one ConCom member referred to as “segregationist,” is one of the more controversial changes made by the ConCom as it has moved to make the con more accessible and welcoming to underrepresented groups within fandom. WisCon, like the rest of America, is still struggling with how to address racial inequality both in literary circles and society at large. Just as the Affirmative Action program is controversial, so is Safer Space. If I possessed easy answers to racial inequality at home and abroad I would be off enjoying my Nobel prize money instead of going to college. Sadly that is not the case, so I will instead continue to support Safer Space and hope that over time we can change the world enough that it no longer feels necessary to its users.

WisCon caps attendance at 1,000 people and the total number of attendees for WisCon 35 was 973. WisCon did publish a formal Statement of Principles as the ConCom attempted to clarify what WisCon stands for. This statement reads, in part:

Our focus includes science fiction, fantasy, and speculative literature of all sorts. Science fiction itself has been critiqued as a colonialist and imperialist genre, and in many ways this is true. But many of those influenced by it are dedicated to changing the genre to more accurately reflect the field’s vital

role in our society: envisioning positive futures for all people. WisCon's focus on science fiction has played an important role in the exploration of feminist futures: futures where people of all colors and backgrounds flourish, where women's rights and women's contributions are valued, where gender is not limited to one of two options, where no one is erased out of convenience, hidden discrimination, or outright bigotry.

Feminism, at its root, is the belief that women and men are equal, and the rejection of sexist beliefs and practices. We, as feminists, have come to realize that all forms of oppression are interrelated. Our practice of feminism is based on a belief in the social, political, and economic equality of all. Feminism is part of a larger constellation of movements seeking social, political, and economic equality for all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, class, sex, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, creed, ability, status, or belief.

Feminism is vital to WisCon's identity. Feminism itself has grown and changed over the decades, and WisCon has worked to reflect those changes. Since its inception, WisCon has worked to create a space for feminism and its consideration within the science fiction community.

(A Momentary Taste of WisCon, 2011)

This is the feminist utopia concept that you will hear people talk about at WisCon. Though Kafryn W. Lieder noted about the ideals “we can pull it off for the weekend, after two weeks the cracks would start to show.” Whether theory and ideals become practice and reality is something that many organizations struggle with, and WisCon is no exception.

The less controversial political aspect of WisCon is linked to its stance on improving accessibility for those who need it. Current WisCons have an increasing amount of blue tape on floors to designate areas for wheelchairs and blue tape on chairs to designate seats for those who need to sit closer to speakers. The WisCon 35 speeches were live-captioned for the first time this year; the ConCom

intends to repeat that service. Likewise the Gathering had a craft station for making wands designed to be waved if an audience member at a panel wanted a panelist to speak up (or to start using an available microphone). The soap in the common bathrooms is as allergen-free as the ConCom can find and any request made by an attendee for assistance in dealing with serious allergies or other issues at the convention is accommodated to the greatest extent the ConCom can manage. This has involved the ConCom members, who are all volunteers, stockpiling fragrance-free soap earmarked for the convention, loaning personal HEPA air cleaners for the duration of the convention, and in general attempting to make their actions match the rhetoric of making WisCon as accessible as possible.

Group identity manifested

As an anthropologist I am interested in seeing the physical manifestations of WisCon's politics on display during the convention. There is a huge component of self-identification that goes into associating with organized groups, no matter what they are. Churches, schools, armies, charities: the list goes on and on because human history is saturated with examples of people making themselves visually identifiable as part of a group. Whether it is religious attire, a uniform, or a T-shirt that proclaims a political or humorous slogan, how we present ourselves is both a statement at a personal level and a way to make ourselves recognizable to other members of that group. At WisCon this manifests itself with many wardrobes that identify both with science fiction fandom and the politics of the convention. Costuming is not a major component of this convention but you will see some people in steampunk outfits walking the halls. You are more likely to see clusters of people wearing political statements like “This is what a feminist looks like,” “Tough guys wear pink”, or “Straight but not narrow”. Science jokes and humor in general are on display. Many attendees wear T-shirts from previous conventions and the shirts produced in association with

Naked in the Garden of the Serpent

Carey RavenStar Robin

In this urban comic fantasy novel, Eve and the serpent finally get to tell their side of the story. When a humble attorney accidentally summons the energy of goddesses to win the love of a co-worker, he has no idea that he will be drawn into the ancient war between Adam and Eve. Eve and her lover Bart, the serpent, have been on the run for eons, while Dr. Adam has been

taking over modern civilization. With the help of a troupe of goddesses, they seek to defeat Dr. Adam, bring the power of the forbidden fruit to humans and find Lilith, Adam's first wife.

Naked in the Garden of the Serpent by Carey RavenStar Robin is available on Amazon.com in paperback and e-book formats. Visit the author's website at www.carobin.com.

ZERO TIME

by T.W. Fendley

As the end of the Maya calendar nears, an expedition to Earth has zero time to save its race from extinction.

See why readers say this historical fantasy's fresh take on "2012ism" has "Breathtaking Scope, Thrilling Action."

**Voted Best Sci Fi/
Fantasy Novel in 2011
P&E Readers Poll**

Available in print & ebook at
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www.twfendley.com

the James Tiptree, Jr. Award, which is given out for works that promote interesting ideas about gender in science fiction, fantasy, and speculative fiction.

What really interests me about the idea of a "WisCon style", or any other, is the paradox of welcome and exclusion that such overt statements make. Anyone who would identify as a fellow traveler on WisCon's path should be able to tell by reading those T-shirts that they have found their fellow travelers. Anyone who does not "get" the science jokes, the literary references, or the political statements would feel excluded and possibly uneducated. This is because science fiction fandom in general is designed to be accessible mostly to those who do not feel that they completely fit in with mainstream America—and do not necessarily want to. WisCon is as extreme an example of this as any within the larger science fiction community. It reverses, for the course of a weekend, who constitutes the insider and the outsider, as the convention attendees glory in being the dominant group rather than the minority, and the hotel staff and the few guests at the hotel not there for the convention try to figure out what is going on. I remember vividly having a meal at the Concourse one WisCon and talking to the server about how the convention was going. She was comparing the WisCon weekend very favorably to the previous weekend, where the hotel had been full of people in town for the University of Wisconsin-Madison's commencement celebrations. She said, with amused befuddlement, "It's great, everyone's so *happy* here" (emphasis in the original).

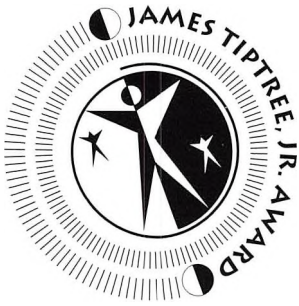
Conclusions

This sense of pervasive happiness is, I think, the primary function of WisCon in its attendees' lives. Finding a large group dominated by people who genuinely believe that learning is fun and, as a matter of course, should be pursued with that mindset, is hard. For all the politics and occasional Internet kerfuffle, the recurring theme when I interviewed people about the convention always circled back to how much fun they have with it or they would not keep coming back. That included two ConCom members who feel burned out enough after dealing with a recent conflict that they will not be on the organizational team for WisCon 36. WisCon promotes itself as possessing and exhibiting high ideals and interesting ideas, but without a group of attendees and organizers who think those things are an important and good component of a four-day party every spring, I doubt WisCon would have lasted for more than thirty years. The rarity of the blend of serious topics and the desire to have as much fun as possible while discussing them is what draws people to WisCon again and again. People do leave a WisCon vowing never to return, some find the convention too changed to be their favorite anymore and have gone elsewhere. WisCon is no longer the only feminist science convention in the world, to the great delight of its founders. Others come expecting some of the more standard science fiction convention tropes like a gaming programming track, a masquerade, or a more pronounced emphasis on comics/anime, television, and movies, rather than books. Madison, and the greater Midwest, have conventions that do have those things. Odyssey Con, Gen Con, and others all have very different niches in fandom than WisCon does.

Personally, I find that the older I become, the more the ideas and ideals that WisCon promotes overtly influence my thinking. I was raised to read as many female authors as male, and to treat works of genre fiction as seriously in analysis and impact as more traditionally identified literary classics. Being taught to respect genres that are easily derided by both mainstream media culture and academia has had consequences in the way I view material presented to me both on the news and in the classroom. While I may laugh every time I see a New Guinea tribesman wearing a headdress that incorporates a Campbell's Soup logo (*First Contact* 1982), I do not actually find it strange and certainly not incomprehensible. All the rhetoric I have been steeped in, about feminism and equality within the context of a group that is used to being laughed at or disrespected, means that I pay more attention to how minorities of any kind are being presented, or ignored entirely, by media sources and within academia than I would otherwise. It also affects the level of critical analysis I apply to their claims. I may not be perfect enough not to laugh at an image that I do not expect at first, but I try very hard not to disrespect what differs from my own experience even, or perhaps especially if, I disagree with it. That is WisCon's function in my life at the moment. That pervasive happiness in the air is good too.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all those who contributed interviews and support for this paper, Kafryn Lieder, Jeanne Gomoll, Karen Moore, Richard S. Russell, Jim Hudson, Sandy Olson, Piglet Evans, and Hannah Kazmerak. I would also like to thank my father, James Leinweber, for making WisCon our Memorial Day weekend tradition for over half of my life so far.



THE TIPTREE AWARD

by Debbie Notkin

“If you can’t change the world with chocolate chip cookies, how can you change the world?”

— Pat Murphy

Karen Joy Fowler was annoyed. In case you don’t recognize her name, Karen is the author of *The Jane Austen Book Club*—though she hadn’t written it then—and *Sarah Canary*—which she had written then. She was annoyed because no science fiction awards were named after women. Richard Kadrey (author of *Metrophage* and *Sandman Slim*) suggested to Pat Murphy (author of *The Falling Woman* and *Wild Girls*) that a women’s science fiction award “would really piss people off.” Pat liked the idea.

The year was 1991. Pat was scheduled to be a Guest of Honor at WisCon. She and Karen discussed frustration and the delights of pissing people off. By the time she was ready to give her

GoH speech, the award had coalesced into a coherent idea and been named—for a woman, but only if you know your science fiction history.

Naming the award for James Tiptree, Jr., foreshadowed the award’s contrarian nature. “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 Helen Merrick says in *The Secret Feminist Cabal: A Cultural History of Science Fiction Feminisms* (Aqueduct Press, 2010):

“The response [to Pat Murphy’s announcement of the award] was immediate and the resulting ‘juggernaut’ more than the founders could have dreamed.”

Pat suggested funding the award with bake sales.

Although WisCon is an expressly feminist event, the secret feminist cabal that drives WisCon embraced the award’s focus on conceptions of gender (rather than either women or feminism) 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. One day after the speech, convention members began planning not only bake sales, but also publications.



WisCon's commitment and energy are the reasons that, more than twenty years later, the award is going strong. Winners receive \$1,000, a piece of original art work, some chocolate, and a certificate. Winners who can accept an expense-paid invitation to attend WisCon have the opportunity to wear a hand-made tiara crafted by Elise Matthesen. (When there are two attending winners, the award borrows a second tiara so that no award winner goes undecorated.) A special feature of the award ceremony is a silly song sung to each winner by "the Tips," an impromptu group of amateur singers. (While the occasional award winner does not seem excited by wearing a tiara and having thirty people serenade their book, most revel in it. British author M. John Harrison looked particularly dashing the year he won; there was much discussion of replacing baseball caps with tiaras as a men's fashion statement.) The award ceremony was held at various conventions for some years, and it is currently an annual WisCon event, after the guest of honor speeches on Sunday night.

The first awards, to Eleanor Arnason for *A Woman of the Iron People* and to Gwyneth Jones for *The White Queen*, were given at WisCon 16 in 1992. The Tiptree Award committee

(then mostly Karen, Pat, and Debbie Notkin, chair of the first jury) brought both Arnason and Jones to the convention to pick up their awards in person.

The Saturday night Tiptree auction has been a WisCon highlight for well over a decade. Ellen Klages (the Nebula-award winning author of "Basement Magic," as well as middle-grade novels *White Sands*, *Red Menace* and *The Green Glass Sea*, and a long-time member of the Tiptree motherboard) is the auctioneer par excellence. Under her never predictable but always entertaining guidance, the auction 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.

But what about great works expanding gender that were written before 1992? In 1996, the motherboard created a one-time set of Retrospective Tiptree Awards as a five-year anniversary event. Nominations were solicited from all present and past jurors, and that same group then voted on the winners. Twenty separate works were nominated and five works by

three authors (*Walk to the End of the World* and *Motherlines* by Suzy McKee Charnas, *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula K. Le Guin, and *The Female Man* and "When It Changed" by Joanna Russ) received retrospective awards.

In 1997, Angela Carter (1940–1992) was given a special lifetime achievement award. Carter, author of many works including *The Bloody Chamber* and *Black Venus*, was a gender-exploration pioneer. So far, this is the only lifetime achievement Tiptree Award, a token of our indebtedness to Carter's trailblazing. That same year, the motherboard created "The Fairy Godmother Award," contrarily enough named after a concept created by Robert A. Heinlein, the male writer feminists love to hate. People who contribute to our genre and are known to be in need of both cash and encouragement open their mail one day to find a check with a note saying, "The Fairy Godmother strikes without warning." 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. Names of recipients are not made public—except for Freddie Baer (the artist who defines the Tiptree look

by creating t-shirts, posters, and even an apron), who was gifted with a trip 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*. In 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*).

In 2011, the Tiptree motherboard, founded to give awards, also received one. The Science Fiction Research Association honored the Tiptree Award motherboard with the Thomas D. Clareson Award for Distinguished Service. Karen Fowler and Pat Murphy traveled to Lublin, Poland, to accept the award at the SFRA's annual convention. An account of their misadventures on that trip is forthcoming.

WisCon, the Tiptree Award, and the international feminist science fiction community are inextricably linked,

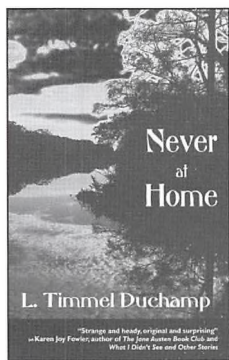
but they are not the same thing. This year, we're unbelievably delighted to be honoring WisCon 36 Guest of Honor Andrea Hairston with a Tiptree Award for her novel *Redwood and Wildfire*. The panel of judges who grant the award did not overlap at all with this year's WisCon committee.

Without WisCon, without the Secret Feminist Cabal, without you, the Tiptree Award could not exist. For a list of all winners, honor list titles, long list titles, and retrospective nominees, and to nominate for the next award, please go to www.tiptree.org.

2011 🌀 A James Tiptree Jr. Year at Aqueduct

CELEBRATE

Honor List



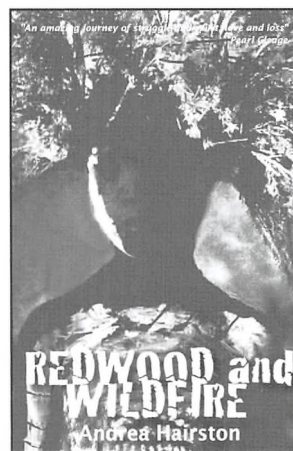
"The Nones of Quintilis" in *Never at Home* by L. Timmel Duchamp

Honor List



The Universe of Things Collection by Gwyneth Jones

And the Winner is...



Redwood and Wildfire Novel by Andrea Hairston

PAST WINNERS OF THE TIPTREE AWARD

2010 Winner

Dubravka Ugresic
Baba Yaga Laid an Egg

2009 Winners

Greer Gilman
Cloud & Ashes:
*Three Winter's Tales***Fumi Yoshinaga***Ōoku: The Inner Chambers,*
Volumes 1 & 2 (originally
published in Japanese)

Special Award:

L. Timmel Duchamp
The Marq'ssan Cycle

2008 Winners

Patrick Ness
*The Knife of Never Letting Go***Nisi Shawl***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
James Tiptree, Jr.: The Double Life
of Alice B. Sheldon (nonfiction)

2005 Winner

Geoff Ryman
Air: Or, Have, Not Have

2004 Winners

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

Hiromi 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***Theodore Roszak***The Memoirs of Elizabeth*
Frankenstein

1994 Winners

Ursula K. Le Guin
"The Matter of Seggri"**Nancy Springer***Larque on the Wing*

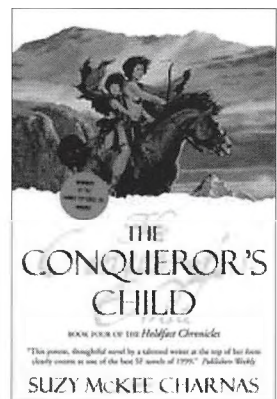
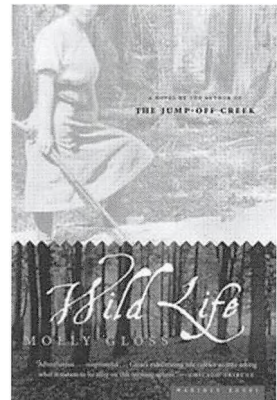
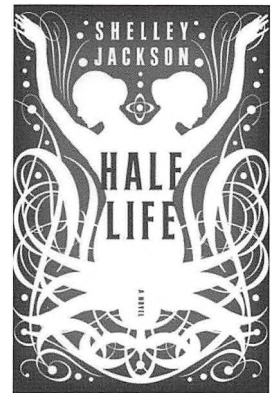
1993 Winner

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 AWARDS

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)

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

AWARD

Angela Carter

2011

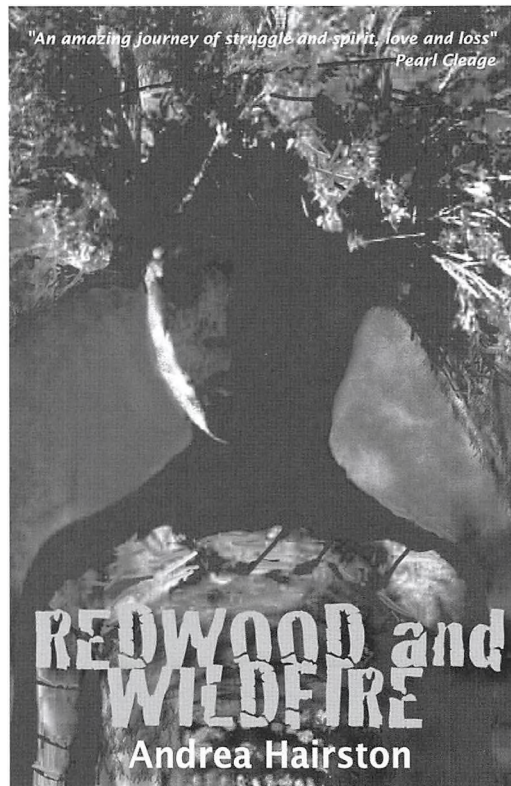
TIPTREE AWARD

The James Tiptree, Jr. Literary Award Council is pleased to announce that the winner of the 2011 Tiptree Award is *Redwood and Wildfire* by **Andrea Hairston** (Aqueduct Press, 2011). Hairston had already agreed to serve as a juror for the 2012 award. By a first-ever coincidence, she is also one of the Guests of Honor at this year's WisCon, where the Tiptree Award is traditionally celebrated.

The James Tiptree, Jr. Award is presented annually to a work of science fiction or fantasy that explores and expands gender roles. The award seeks out work that is thought-provoking, imaginative, and perhaps even infuriating. It is intended to reward those writers who are bold enough to contemplate shifts and changes in gender roles, a fundamental aspect of any society.

Each year, a panel of five jurors selects the Tiptree Award winner. The 2011 jurors were Lynne Thomas (chair), Karen Meisner, James Nicoll, Nisi Shawl, and Tansy Raynor Roberts.

Redwood and Wildfire was a favorite of the jurors from the moment they read it. They reported: "This vivid and emotionally satisfying novel encompasses the life of Redwood, a hoodoo woman, as she migrates from rural Georgia to Chicago at the turn of the 20th century. While



Redwood's romance with Aidan Wildfire is central to the novel, female friendship is also a major theme, without deferring to the romance. Hairston incorporates romantic love into a constellation, rather than portraying it as a solo shining star. Her characters invoke a sky where it can shine; they live and love without losing themselves in cultural expectations, prejudices, and stereotypes, all within a lovingly sketched historical frame.

"Intersections of race, class, and gender encompass these characters' entire lives. They struggle with external and internal forces around questions of gender roles, love, identity, and sexuality. This challenge drives how they move through the world and how it sees them. The characters in *Redwood and Wildfire* deftly negotiate freedom and integrity in a society where it's difficult to hold true to these things."

Honor List

Libba Bray, *Beauty Queens* (Scholastic Press 2011)—In this atypically comedic Tiptree candidate, a cast of iconic characters trapped on a hostile island (populated by the capitalist analog of Doctor No) illuminates the limited palette of roles for women and offers the hope of more rewarding and rounded lives.

L. Timmel Duchamp, “The Nones of Quintilus” (in her collection *Never at Home*, Aqueduct Press 2011)—This standout story addresses the relationships between mothers and daughters and how the world looks different when you become (or intend to become) pregnant.

Kameron Hurley, *God’s War* (Night Shade Books 2011)—Set on a marginally habitable world divided by a common religion with diverse interpretations, this engaging work explores a militaristic matriarchal society.

Gwyneth Jones, *The Universe of Things* (Aqueduct Press 2011)—Running through these gorgeous stories is a fierce awareness of how gender roles and other social power imbalances are always factors in how we think, how we approach one another, how we see the world. The author questions the status quo, and then questions the questioning, so what emerges is a mature, honest, thoughtful complexity.

Alice Sola Kim, “The Other Graces” (*Asimov’s Science Fiction*, July 2010)—This elegantly written short story revisits the role of mirroring in

self-actualization and casts that path in a new and skiffy light as its heroine, Grace, is mentored by her older alternate selves. It also depicts racial/cultural intersections with gender roles.

Sandra McDonald, “Seven Sexy Cowboy Robots” (*Strange Horizons*, 2010.10.04)—A surreal and subversive take on human-AI relations. An older female character exploring her sexuality is a rare thing in science fiction, and it is refreshing to see it handled here with such a deft hand.

Maureen F. McHugh, “After the Apocalypse” (in her collection *After the Apocalypse*, Small Beer Press 2011)—This title story of an impressive collection brings to the foreground gender expectations concerning the practice of motherhood in extreme situations and then completely and matter-of-factly upends them.

Delia Sherman, *The Freedom Maze* (Big Mouth House 2011)—A clear-hearted, magically immersive time travel story that explores powerful ideas. Thrown back through time to an antebellum plantation, a thirteen-year-old comes to understand how women’s experience is shaped by cultural expectations as they interweave with social, economic, and racial truths.

Kim Westwood, *The Courier’s New Bicycle* (Harper Voyager Australia 2011)—This compelling novel depicts a variety of sexually transgressive characters and looks at themes of fertility and alternate family structures through a dystopic lens.

Long List

Lauren Beukes, *Zoo City* (Angry Robot 2011)

Sigrid Ellis, “No Return Address” (*Strange Horizons*, 2010.11.29)

Karen Healey, *The Shattering* (Allen & Unwin (Aus/NZ) 2011; Little, Brown (US) 2011)

Sue Isle, “Nation of the Night” (in her collection *Nightsiders*, Twelfth Planet Press 2011)

Alaya Dawn Johnson, “Their Changing Bodies” (*Subterranean*, Summer 2011)

Malinda Lo, *Huntress* (Little, Brown 2011)

Meghan McCarron, “We Heart Vampires!!!!!!” (*Strange Horizons*, 2010.05.03-10)

Teresa Milbrodt, *Bearded Women Stories* (ChiZine Publications 2011)

Nnedi Okorafor, *Akata Witch* (Viking 2011)

An Owomoyela, “Of Men and Wolves” (*Fantasy Magazine*, February 2011)

Helen Oyeyemi, *Mr. Fox* (Riverhead 2011)

J. R. Pournelle, *Outies* (New Brookland Press 2011)

Lev A. C. Rosen, *All Men of Genius* (Tor 2011)

Catherynne M. Valente, *Deathless* (Tor 2011)

BROAD UNIVERSE

CONTINUING PROGRESS FOR WOMEN

by Tricia Wooldridge

Like a young woman returning home to her mother between university semesters, every May members of Broad Universe migrate to Madison, Wisconsin, to visit the mother of our efforts: WisCon.

In 2000, the founding mothers of Broad Universe attended World Domination 101 and discussed how women writing science fiction, fantasy, and horror were not getting the pay, recognition, or distribution they deserved—so they decided to do something about it. They continued the discussion and made a plan of action in a room after the panel. “It’s a broad universe,” one declared. “There’s room for all of us.” And thus, the organization was named and women started stepping up to put things together formally.

At the time, there was a focus on building the visibility of women at conventions by putting together readings and having book tables to

create a space and opportunity for women to sell their books—because many women were already exploring small presses and independent publishing and those routes still were extremely stigmatized. The organization was also developed to be an educational entity: We collected statistics to mark the inequality in the industry, and hopefully document positive changes due to our efforts. We also created the *Broadsheet* publication, which published articles to increase awareness of issues in publishing, to teach tricks of the craft and business of writing, and to promote and discuss women’s contributions to speculative literature.

Twelve years later, we continue all of these things and more. We’ve spread our wings internationally, with members in Europe, South America, Asia, and North America, and—as our “central office” is online—our voices can be heard anywhere there is an Internet connection. Not only

have we continued the *Broadsheet*, but now we have two podcasts. The *Broad Pod* showcases tidbits of writing from members, while *Broadly Speaking* educates listeners about the business and craft of writing by interviewing women on monthly topics.

The organization has also grown from having our Rapid Fire Readings—which also debuted at WisCon—to running multiple events within and beyond SF/F/H conventions. In 2011, Broad Universe had a presence in over thirty conventions from our signature Rapid Fire Readings, to moderating panels on writing craft and the publishing industry, to hosting parties, and to continuing to offer table space for members to sell their books. Outside of conventions, we’ve had a presence at academic writing conferences, independent bookstores, wine festivals, libraries, and even the Library of Congress. This means more women are getting their work out there, listened to, seen, and appreciated.

Broad Universe

The voice for women writing science fiction, fantasy, and horror
www.broaduniverse.org

We have continued educating people and promoting members with our online presence, too. The Broad Universe catalogue, a longstanding project, is available for people to browse and raises visibility in search engines. In August, Broad Universe also held its first open meeting online that let members interact and give suggestions and plans to the Motherboard, and for 2012, we'll publish our first e-sampler of members' fiction.

Also coming in 2012 are Broad Universe-sponsored webinars and online panels on publishing as well as how-to informationals. We're even working on a scholarship fund!

The statistics pages are also in the process of being updated, so visitors to the Broad Universe website can see how far women have come—and have yet to go. Peruse the authors included in the *Best of* anthologies or look at who is winning what awards to get an idea of how women's recognition has changed over the years—and what more still needs to be done.

Some of the tactics we've used to address "what needs to be done" are to use our resources—mailing lists,

social media—to inform and remind members what women are eligible to be nominated for awards, who needs reviews to rise in Amazon ranking, how to tag each other so that books are more readily found in search engines, and that we all need to continue submitting if we want to sell our work. We post open calls to give members more opportunities. We congratulate each others' sales to boost morale and commiserate rejections. We ask and answer questions about independent publishing, small presses, large presses, and agents—helping newer writers know what to expect and how to increase their chances of success. We tip each other off if we see work pirated or experience/hear of scams. We use the natural tendency towards community that women have to build *this* community of successful, informed, recognized women authors of science fiction, fantasy, horror—and everything in between.

Thanks to our ties to WisCon, Broad Universe is refreshed every May with more information, face time between members and mentors, and a spiritual nurturing of our feminist spirit. But, like any person growing

up, the organization is moving beyond our mother's influence. The Motherboard used to be required to meet annually at WisCon, but as the board has also grown and spread internationally, it's not feasible to make that a requirement. Additionally, our membership year is moving to a January–December schedule as the majority of our members prefer that for record keeping. But, we still hold our point of creation dear, and we still break into an excited buzz when WisCon programming opens.

Broad Universe may be growing up more every year, offering more opportunities to members, and making more of a difference through educational programs, but we'll always have our mother convention: WisCon.

Join Broad Universe at WisCon 36 for special membership rates as we change our membership year. Join or renew through December 2012 for \$15, or join/renew through 2013 for \$40. Regular annual membership dues are \$30. Help spread the voice of women writing science fiction, fantasy, and horror through Broad Universe's efforts to promote, celebrate, and honor. Together, we can change things for the better.

CARL BRANDON SOCIETY

THE GIRL WHO
DIDN'T SEE RACE

by Mary Anne Mohanraj

I first came to WisCon through Debbie Notkin (one of our Guests of Honor this year). She was on the convention committee, which was making an effort to bring in more people of color. I was an MFA student at the time, living on student loans and credit cards, and there was no way I could have afforded to fly from Oakland to Madison for a science fiction convention. I was, of course, delighted when the con offered me funding to attend, but I was also confused. I didn't understand why they would make the effort to bring in people like me, why it would matter to them that there be people of color at WisCon.

When I arrived, I was one brown woman in a sea of white. I did meet Nalo Hopkinson, and I'm sure now that on some level I was relieved to see someone else with a similar skin tone. But I didn't consciously realize that then. I was so used to living in a

white world that I took it for granted. I'd grown up in white neighborhoods in Connecticut, went to high school and college and grad school at overwhelmingly white institutions; I'd read books primarily by white authors. It made sense to me, on a deep level, that this convention would be almost entirely composed of white people. That's what the literary world was. And if I were there too—well, I had swallowed the dominant culture so deeply that I often forgot I wasn't white. As an Asian I was culturally rewarded for pretending to be as white as I could be; my parents' lessons of assimilation had sunk in deep.

The first year I wrote fiction I drafted more than twenty stories; in those stories, almost all of the characters were white. It didn't occur to me to even try to write them differently.

Coming to WisCon changed me profoundly. A few brief conversations with Nalo and Debbie gave me a

condensed and intense introduction to race/ethnicity politics and social justice concerns, ideas that I had mostly managed to miss despite my thirty years on the planet and myriad degrees. Their perspectives opened my eyes to the need for actively encouraging people of color in the genre I loved. It was as a direct result of those conversations that I joined with others to form the Carl Brandon Society, an organization that works to build awareness of race and ethnicity in speculative literature and related fields.

It's tempting to say, "I don't really notice race—of people, of authors, of characters in books." That sounds fair, to focus on the people inside the skin. But our outside skins, our racial and ethnic histories, shape our interior lives. We are not uploaded consciousnesses living in the interstices of an electronic world. We are embodied, and those bodies carry consequences. I'm not sure I would



We're embodied, and those bodies carry consequences.

want to escape them. My parents' history, the tropical sun on their faces, the island dirt under their feet, made them who they were, and they made me. I wouldn't want to lose that.

Before those conversations with Nalo and Debbie, before coming to WisCon, I paid little attention to questions of racial and ethnic representation in literature. I imagine if I'd been born with white skin, I might have paid even less attention. Not that I didn't want people of color in the field, but I didn't actively worry about it either. Many of you might wish the Carl Brandon Society well, but since you may not be people of color yourselves, or not writers, your focus could well be on something you find more relevant to your life.

I'd like to make an argument that if you love books, you should also care about the CBS; you should be deeply invested in ethnic literature and support its existence. In fact, you

should want more for ethnic literature than mere existence—you should want it to grow and flourish and send a thousand literary tendrils out into the world, including into the books you read. It will make those books better. Richer, more complex, more reflective of the lives of the people you meet, the people you love, and the people you can't stand. Ethnic literature, if done well, makes art, and life, better.

This applies to more than ethnic literature, of course—you can apply this argument to literature by women, by queers, by the poor, by the disabled—apply it to any literature by people who have been systematically excluded from publishing for a very long time. When those people write, when you get to read what they write, it makes for better literature.

I would even argue that a consciousness of race and ethnicity improves white literature as well.

Because of course there's no such thing as generic whiteness. If your skin is white, you actually have a complex, particular heritage—you are the great-granddaughter of a Polish immigrant doctor who came to the New World and found himself working in a factory, because that was the only job available. Or your mother's Jewish mother married a Ukrainian Christian, entirely against her family's wishes, and together they fled Europe, just before things got really bad. It's in the specific details of our lives, the places where we are rooted, the histories that shape who we are, that characters bloom and stories come to life. Thinking deeply, consciously, and carefully about race and ethnicity helps the process.

In the first years of the CBS, much of what we did was building a mailing list, advocating for more panels on race and ethnicity at WisCon, and creating a safe space there where

Donate.
Volunteer.
Read.
Engage.

The Carl Brandon Society website is at carlbrandon.org. There are links on the site to our Wiki, Twitter feed, and our Yahoo! Group discussion list. If you have a Facebook account, please like the Carl Brandon Society Facebook page.

people of color could come together to discuss their concerns. All of those activities worked to build community and foster conversations around race and ethnicity; I think those discussions were crucial first steps in the process of discovering what writers and readers of color need in order to survive and thrive in the speculative literature world.

Some of what we wanted proved unexpectedly contentious; there were definitely a few roadblocks in the early days. But we persevered and prospered. Our little organization grew; in just a few years, we were seeing more nonwhite faces at the convention. Finally, after my belated education, I could actually see them and appreciate the ideas, history, and viewpoints they brought to the conversation.

In 2005, I became pregnant with my first child and decided I needed to step off the CBS Steering Committee for a time. I felt guilty about walking away, since I knew I was leaving a small group of stalwart volunteers with more burdensome labor than ever, but I also knew that I couldn't contribute right then. New motherhood was utterly exhausting, and it took all my resources just to hold myself together without bursting

into tears. Some days, I didn't manage it. But though I couldn't actively serve, I watched from the sidelines, raising my glass and cheering the Carl Brandon Society on.

Since that time, the CBS has grown tremendously. Perhaps the most visible additions are the awards—the Parallax Award, given to the best speculative fiction by a self-identified person of color, and the Kindred Award, to the best speculative fiction dealing with issues of race and ethnicity, both carrying a \$1,000 cash prize. They went most recently to Hiromi Goto's *Half World* (a fabulous YA novel that my students love), and Justine Larbalestier's *Liar* (of the famous cover that sparked a thousand Internet protests). Awards are important because they draw attention to work that might otherwise fall under the radar. Anyone may nominate works by filling out the nomination form on our website; I encourage you to do so!

Another major accomplishment is the administration of the Octavia E. Butler Memorial Scholarship. It enables writers of color to attend one of the Clarion writing workshops where Octavia got her start. The CBS has awarded Butler Scholarships annually since 2007, and continues to

raise money towards their goal of a fully endowed \$100,000 scholarship fund. Previous scholarship winners are Shweta Narayan, Christopher Caldwell, Rochita Loenen-Ruiz, Caren Gussoff, Mary Burroughs, Kai Ashante Wilson, and Erik Owomoyela. They're already talented writers, and I can't wait to see what they bring to the field in the coming years. I heard Shweta recently received a Nebula nomination for her short fiction—I'm not surprised.

It's easy to see the value of awards and scholarships, but in some ways, I'm more excited about the possibilities for collaborative knowledge gathering and production. The Carl Brandon Wiki is a space where you can join us in collecting and sharing information about speculative fiction authors of color and stories about characters of color.

And beyond the official organization activities, there are the activities that have grown out of our existence. Conversations that have happened, online or in person. Panels we develop at WisCon, and then take elsewhere—to FOGcon, and Readercon, and other, sometimes less hospitable, places. The growth of exciting projects like Kate Nepveu's Con or Bust, which holds an annual auction to raise money to

bring fans of color to conventions—initially just to WisCon, but now elsewhere as well. CBS is partnering with Kate on that project now, I just learned. There is more happening than I can even keep track of, and it's wonderful.

It's also overwhelming. I can see, when I sit in on CBS meetings at WisCon, that the valiant core of Carl Brandon Steering Committee members have an immense task in front of them. I'm hoping to rejoin them soon; my children are now two and four, and I can just barely see the light at the end of the small-child tunnel. But we need more help. If I've convinced you that this work is worthwhile—if you were already convinced—here is what you can do to help:

1. Donate money. Funds are needed for the awards, for the scholarships, for future activities. The more time the organizers spend fundraising, the less time they have for planning fabulous projects. The Carl Brandon Society is a 501(c)3 organization—your donation is tax-deductible. Any donation is welcome, large or small. You can donate on our website, or talk to one of the Steering Committee members at WisCon. Feel free to talk to me too—I'll point you in the right direction!
2. Volunteer your time. Seriously. We could use some help, no experience needed. In particular, we need a volunteer coordinator, someone who is good with people, who can take all the people of good will who come up to us and want to help, and put them to work in a productive manner. Again, if you're interested in actively volunteering, for anything, come talk to us.
3. Read. Read everything you can get your hands on by writers of color. Don't know how to find them? Conveniently, we have fabulous lists for you on our website and wiki! Read the books, tell your friends about them, talk up the ones you love, and talk critically but constructively about the ones you don't. Together, we can make our stories better.
4. Finally, engage in the conversation. Try to see race and ethnicity, to see the way these elements affect you and the people you meet. If there are negatives to seeing people this way, and of course there are, struggle with them consciously. Struggle with us, together, to shape a stronger, better, richer world.

Maybe a day will come when we look at race and ethnicity and only see beauty, instead of beauty mixed with pain.

INTERSTITIAL ARTS FOUNDATION

by Felice Kuan and Larissa N. Niec

First, a big thank you to WisCon for years of support for the Interstitial Arts Foundation. Our very first public appearance was a panel right here, and WisCon has continued to nourish the IAF through panels, publicity, and this space in the program booklet.

For those who haven't met us, the Interstitial Arts Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study, support, and promotion of interstitial art: literature, music, and visual and performance art found in between categories and genres—art that crosses borders. 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.

We are devoted to fostering an artistic climate and marketplace in which interstitial art can flourish. We do so

through a variety of venues, including our blog and Facebook page, our virtual and print anthologies, art auctions, salons, readings, multimedia events, and, of course, panels. This year, our blog continued to post submissions opportunities, calls for papers, and upcoming festival and workshop information. We also highlighted the work of current interstitial artists, including paper and book artist Erzebet YellowBoy, sound sculptor Liz Phillips, *Interfictions 2* author Will Ludwigsen, tableaux artist Lin Esser, and author/painter/musician Kris Saknussemm. IAF co-founders Ellen Kushner and Delia Sherman were interviewed by Mary Robinette Kowal and Dan Wells on the podcast *Writing Excuses*, spawning a lively debate and discussion.

Local branches of the IAF held several Interstitial Art Salons this year. An interstitial art salon is a throwback to

the literary salons of the 17th century, now modernized to include artists of all mediums. Devoted to portfolio-sharing, conversation, collaboration, and community warmth, the idea is easily transportable to bars, cafes, bookstores, and private homes. If you are interested in hosting an IAF salon, especially if you come from a town or city where interstitial artists may be feeling isolated or eager for community, we encourage you to visit the “How to Host an IAF Salon” section of our webpage. (www.interstitialarts.org/events/how_to_host.php)

Launched just before WisCon last year, *Interfictions Zero* has become a beautifully varied collection of critical essays that are themselves interstitial. Edited by Delia Sherman and Helen Pilinovsky and illustrated by the legendary Michael Kaluta, *Interfictions Zero* is an online anthology of literary criticism on interstitial texts. It is

In contrast to hard-category publications with a persistent face and character, our publications are constantly shifting with the artistic landscape and the people involved.

intended to create an historical context for how interstitial writing affects the growth and development of various literary genres. Currently, it features essays on Oscar Wao, mosaic novels, Rebecca West, T. H. White, Ibrahim al-Koni, Roberto Bolaño, and Neil Gaiman. Guidelines for our rolling submissions can be found at www.interstitialarts.org/projects/

Interfictions Zero is a companion project to our pioneer print anthologies, *Interfictions* and *Interfictions 2*, which gave a home to unusual fiction that defied categorization. With similar spirit, our newest project is an annual multimedia journal to embrace and promote interstitial music, theater, visual art, academic criticism, and other art forms perhaps yet to be invented. In contrast to hard-category publications with a persistent face and character, our publications are constantly shifting with the artistic landscape and the people involved. If you are eager to shape this new journal, have web design or other skills that may be useful, or just want to be involved in some way, we encourage you to get in touch with us.

The IAF is on Twitter and Facebook, and our open Flickr pool continues to be featured on our web page. We are always on the hunt for new ways to assist and inspire interstitial artists. If you have ideas or know of a current need, please share them. Those interested in using the reach of the IAF to expand opportunities in their field are also welcome to contact us. Share your thoughts, volunteer your expertise, or let us find a place for you in the fold by writing to info@interstitialarts.org

The administrative work of the Foundation along with planning and leadership for our projects is done by the Executive Board: Larissa N. Niec, Felice Kuan, Katherine Pendill, Deborah Atherton, Wendy Ellertson, and Geoffrey Long. 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 would not be possible.



Interstitial art is made in the interstices between genres and categories.

www.interstitialarts.org

Angie



Windows to Adventure

science-learning 3rd-4th grade

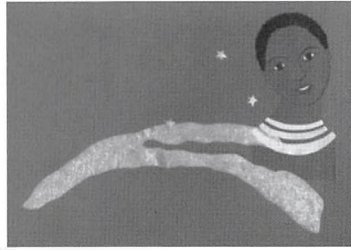
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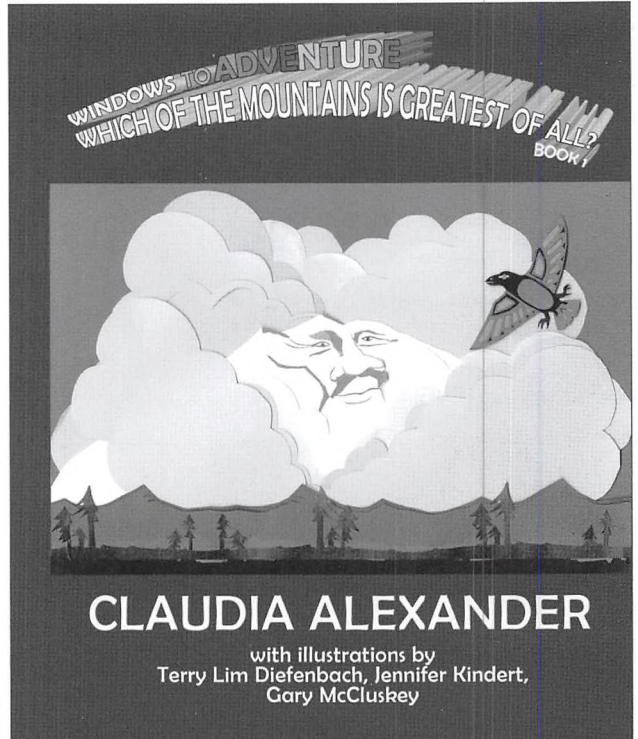
a 'cog stone' gives Dessa magic, love, and cognitive dreams about the wetlands

Steampunk

Cotton-gin Punk – people of color
Haiti and New Orleans in 1891 without the Louisiana Purchase



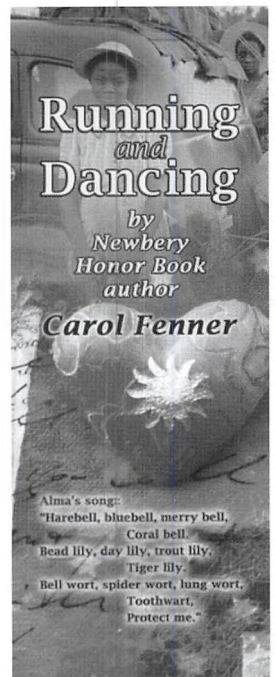
Cotton-gin punk



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Independent Reviewers on *Running and Dancing*



Running and Dancing

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Newbery
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Alma's song:
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Coral bell,
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Tiger lily,
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Protect me."

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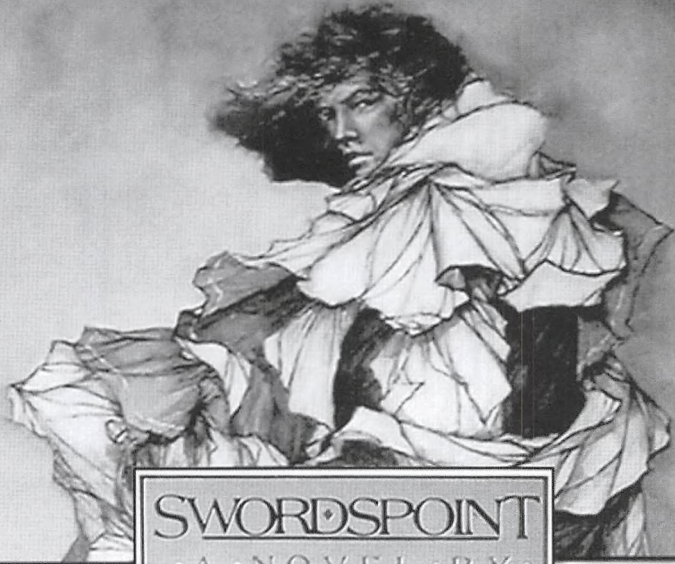
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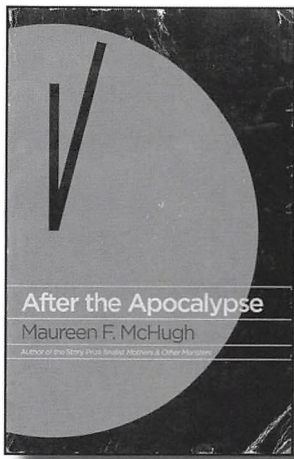
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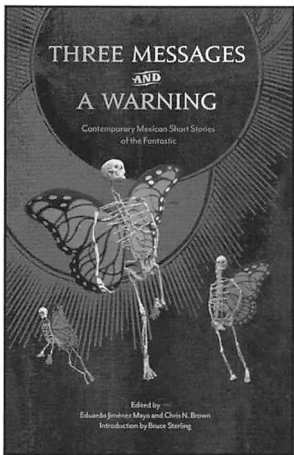
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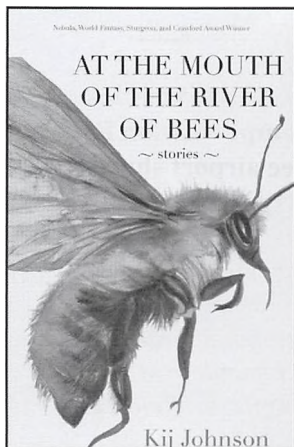
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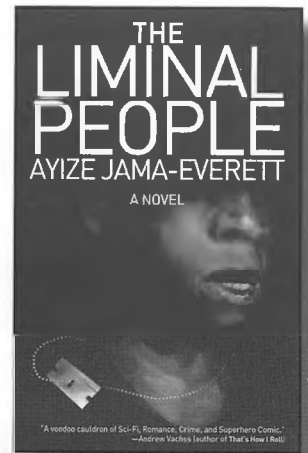
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—Greer Gilman

Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet

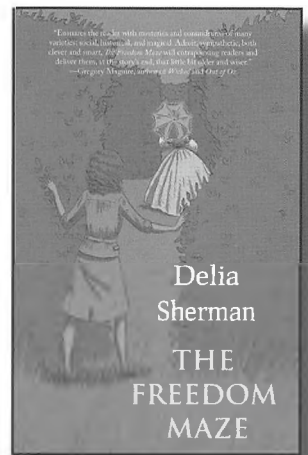
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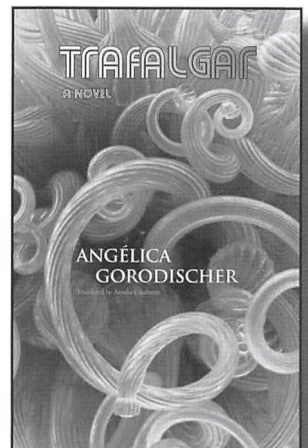
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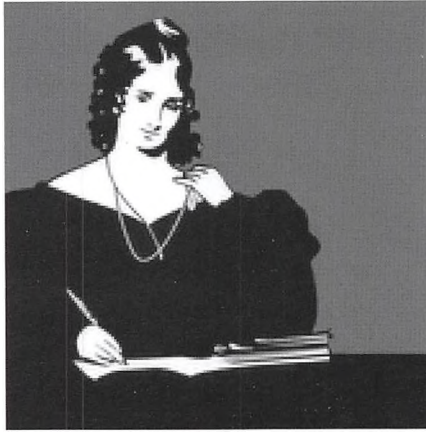
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Broad Universe



Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

An international organization of writers, editors, librarians, readers, and reviewers whose mission is to celebrate and help promote the work and careers of women who are writing and marketing their science fiction, fantasy, and horror works. After all, the first science fiction novel was written by a woman.

Join Us!

Become a vital part of the organization as we continue to research the state of the genre, promote Broad Universe authors, and develop resources to help woman writers succeed.

Learn more about becoming a member at www.broaduniverse.org.

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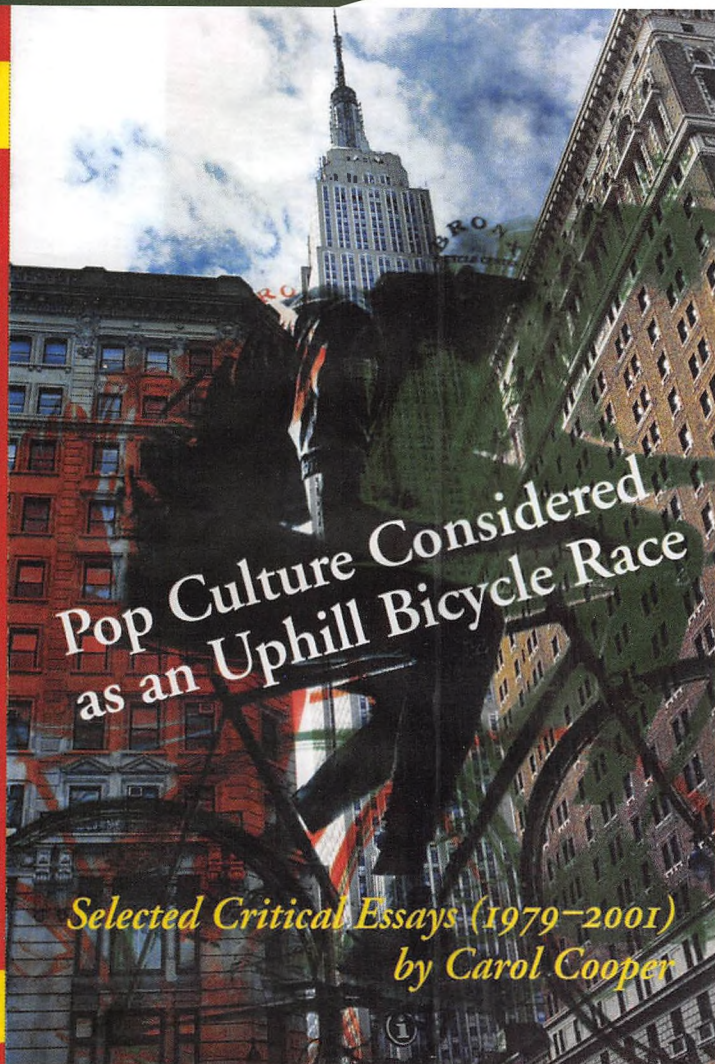
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