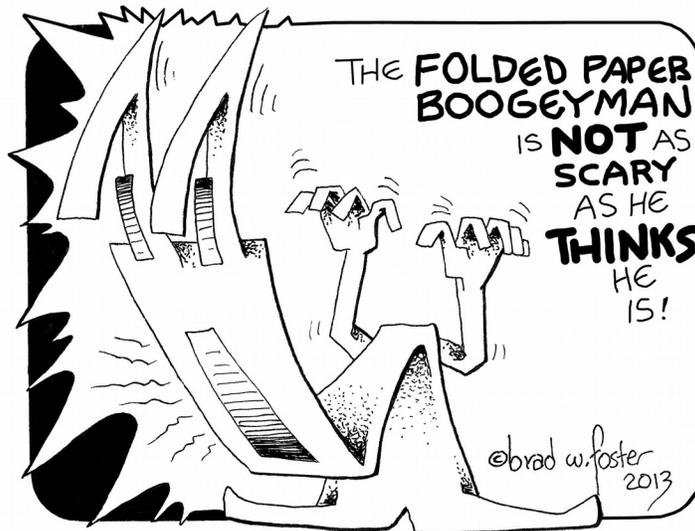


# IT



# GOES ON THE SHELF

# 36

## It Goes On The Shelf

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*'And departing, leave behind us  
Toothprints in the hands of Time.'*

Cover by Brad Foster, John Brunner bookplate by Jim Barker, p.12 by Tom Lea, back cover by Steve Stiles

**The Parrot's Theorem** by Denis Guedj (translated by Frank Wynne), St.Martin's 2001, 344pp, \$24.95

But I got it at the thrift store. The translation was from French. A novel with mathematics and a "cast of characters" list several pages long giving the names and dates of noted mathematicians. I will enjoy reading it, I think! A history of mathematics, with diagrams, as a fantasy about a bookstore and a parrot.

**Everything and More** by David Foster Wallace, Norton 2003, 319pp, bibliography, \$23.95

Another mathematical tome, subtitled "A Compact History of  $\infty$ ". I never got anywhere with Wallace's fiction, but he seems to do very well here, unlikely as it seems that a modern novelist would even attempt such a thing. I have no idea what professional mathematicians thought of it - but he was not writing for them. I can almost understand most of it.

**Writers for Relief** (vol.3) edited by Davey Beauchamp and Stuart Jaffe, Sapphire City Press 2013, 386pp

Janet Alvarez sent this anthology. The first two volumes were for the benefit of the victims of Hurricane Katrina, while this one raised funds that were given to the Red Cross for the victims of the Oklahoma tornadoes. There is no price or explanation of how these were sold - Janet says through Amazon. Of the 16 authors, only two names ring a bell in my aging brain-pan, Ben Bova and Mike Resnick.

**Backwaters** edited by John Gawsworth, Denis Archer 1932, 111pp

A curious collection of memoirs and commentary. The first section is about the death of William Holcroft, a teenager who ran away from home and when his father caught up with him, committed suicide - much of what is known about this is in a letter by William Godwin (father of Mary Shelley). The second section is about Poet Laureate (1770-1800), Henry James Pye, and the commentary on his poetic efforts at the time - there are extensive samples, and I must say that I agree with the critics. He was better than MacGonagall. The third section is about the death of Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope in Syria where she lived for 20 years as a horse-breeder with a commune of other eccentrics, including a retired French general who had been given a fortune in jewels by an Indian maharajah and became a mad prophet. The letter that she wrote to the French consul in Rhodes in 1820 is rather mysterious, and was translated into English by Gawsworth's friend Arthur Machen. The fourth section is an extremely tedious collection of letters between Leigh Hunt and Charles Ollier, who lived a few miles apart and wrote mostly about how they were too ill for a visit.

*The University of Virginia Magazine* (Vol.CII, No.4, Winter 2013) edited by Robert Viccellio

I get this as an alumnus – it is published by the alumni association rather than by the school or the students. I usually glance through the issues and then consign them to recycle, but this one is worth keeping, at least as a bad example, for the long article (by Sean Lyons) about Associate Professor of Psychiatry Jim B. Tucker, whose field of research is memories of past lives in children 2-6, and his theory of reincarnation. Apparently these children tend to remember past lives of young adults that ended violently – I wonder if any such phenomenon was noticed before the use of the TV set as babysitter! There is, of course, a website: [www.jimbtucker.com](http://www.jimbtucker.com) and a book, **Return to Life..**

**H. P. Lovecraft in the Merrimack Valley** by David Goudsward, Hippocampus Press 2013, 192 pages, photos, wraps, \$15.00

There is also an introduction by Ken Faig. This is an Advance Uncorrected Proof that was sent to me unsolicited when I bought another book from Hippocampus, so I don't know when the final version appeared.

An excellent detailed account of Lovecraft's amateur journalism friends in the Haverhill Massachusetts area 1921-1936, and the influence of the area on his writing. There are many excellent photos on how the place looked at the time. The second half of the book, from p.111 on, is appendices – Lovecraft's own account of the 1921 Haverhill Convention and his impressions of Newburyport. Appendix D is a bibliography of the works of Myrta Alice Little Davies, one of Lovecraft's amateur journalism friends. She is said to have written more than Lovecraft, and made more money at it – but I never heard of her before! She seems to have written mostly for regional magazines from 1920 to 1961. There are in all 8 appendices – and then Notes, a bibliography, and an index. Crammed between the Notes and the Bibliography there is a 5-page article by Chris Perrida on Lovecraft's interest in ancient stone relics - “A Sense of Place and High Strangeness”.

**The Wanderer's Necklace** by H Rider Haggard, Aeon 1999, 355 pages

This is one of what the Aeon Publishing Company of White Plains called their “Reincarnation Library”. Very nicely done in Baskerville and Bulmer on archival paper and bound in silver-stamped green cloth. Neither an address nor what state White Plains is in are revealed, and the anonymous editor claims to remember his past life in the ninth-century setting of the novel, originally published in 1913.

The Wanderer of the title is Olaf, a Conan-esque Norseman in Byzantium who can remove an opponent's head with one sweep of his sword.

**100% / The Story of a Patriot** by Upton Sinclair, self-published 1920, 329 pages

The same week I bought this, I was told that Heinlein helped Upton Sinclair with his unsuccessful campaign to be governor of California a few weeks later.

There seems to be little agreement on the value of this odd book – it is not rare, but the \$125 copy offered at AddAll.com is in much worse condition than this one that I bought at a thrift store. The author attributes to his wife the character “Mrs Godd”, and says that this is to be interpreted as a Grecian god, not the Hebrew God. The story is said to be based on actual scandals of the time, but written as fantasy – or was there a “Temple of Jimjambo, conducted by Pashtian el Kalandra, Chief Magistrian of Eleutherinian Exoticism”? Did Pericles Priam purvey a Pain Paralyzer? I see that the word *thoroughly* is spelled *thoroly* but the other spelling is conventional – I don't know if this is the author's notion or a spelling reform of the time that didn't catch on.

Apparently the book is “taught” in some colleges – you can buy a Study Guide online! In an afterword, the

author explains that the story, set in the “Red” panic of WWI and the Russian Revolution, is in general factual. The business-men organizations of the time did collude with the police and prosecutors to harass and bring trumped-up charges against socialists, unions, and the I.W.W. I suggested to Steve Stiles that it would be a great public-domain text for him to illustrate as a reprint.

**Heck** by Dale E. Basye, Random House 2008, 292pp, illustrated by Bob Dob, \$16.99

Heck is where the bad kids go.... Nice dust-jacket art, but the interiors are merely decorative. The text is extremely gross, in the “Greasy Grimy Gopher Guts” manner. Apparently this was successful enough that a sequel called **Rapacia** is predicted for 2009 – and I see that it did appear, followed by **Blimpo** in 2010 and **Fibble** in 2011 (acquired since), followed by **Snivel** and **Precocia**, and then last year, **Wise Acres!**

**The Seems** by John Hulme & Michael Wexler, Bloomsbury 2007, 277pp, illustrated by Gideon Kendall, \$16.95

A comical plot based on an original theory of how the world really works. The artwork is competent but not great. There are two pages of ever finer print that the reader is supposed to sign.

**The Birds** by Frank Baker, Valancourt Books 2013, 186pp, wraps

No price is given on the book. This fantasy originally appeared in 1936, and the author thought that it inspired the Daphne DeMaurier story (1952) and the Hitchcock movie (1963) of the same title. The basic idea is the same – that the birds turn against mankind – but Baker is far more mystical and personal. And more dire – civilization collapses.

**What If - ?** by Kurt Tucholsky (1890-1935, trans. Zohn & Ross), Funk & Wagnalls 1967, 217pp, \$6.95

This is subtitled “Satirical Writings” and were first collected here from other sources. Some are in verse – a tricky thing to translate – and both German and English are given. Not all of the entries are “what iffy” but there is one on “what if Germany had won WWI”. Another, on street-lamp lighters, seems merely foolish. A strange look at the forgotten world of the Weimar Republic – which gave birth to the Nazis.

**What If?** (vols.1 & 2) ed. by Robert Cowley, Putnam's 1999 & 2001, 395 & 427pp, \$27.95 & 28.95

Illustrated with small reproductions and numerous maps. The entries here are by “foremost military historians” and “eminent historians” - Lewis Lapham used to edit *Harper's*, Cecilia Holland was also a novelist, the rest I never heard of. The entries in each volume are arranged chronologically, and run from 701 B.C. (what if Sennacherib, king of Assyria had conquered Jerusalem instead of going home when his whole army got sick?) to assorted variations on the history of the 1940s. The last entry seems to be out of sequence – what if Pizarro had not found potatoes in Peru in the 16<sup>th</sup> century?

**What If?** (vol.3) ed. by Richard Lupoff, Surinam Turtle Press 2013, 308pp, PoD

This was the third of a series of SF anthologies – the first two appeared in the 1980s, and this one was compiled then but just now published. Somehow I never had the first two volumes. Here the Hugo Best Short Story awards of 1966 through 1973 are discussed in detail, and for each year the story that Lupoff thought *should* have won is reprinted. I myself am doubtful that there is really a “best” story in any year – oranges are always being compared to apples or alligators – but the discussion of how fiction is judged is interesting.

**The Crooked Hinge** by John Dickson Carr, The Mystery Library, 283pp, illustrated by Karl Nicholason. An attractive hardcover in dust jacket, produced by a project at the University of California, San Diego. On the editorial board is fan Robert E. Briney, who supplies the extensive notes and bibliography. The illustrations are in a style that would have been well suited to reproduction in a pulp magazine. No price is given. The dust jacket art by Ruben De Anda is horrific.

This is one of Carr's "Gideon Fell" mysteries - I had heard of them but had never read one. The plot is complex and deliberately churned right to the end. The title totally irrelevant. But the scene and back-story and characters are well done and the style is easy, so the book is pleasant to read.

**John Brunner** by Jad Smith, University of Illinois Press 2013, 184pp, bibliography, index

This is part of a series called "Modern Masters of Science Fiction". I received this complimentary copy because I scanned fanzine pages about Brunner for the author. There are numerous photos. I have quite a few of John Brunner's books in my collection, and remember him mostly for the novel **Stand on Zanzibar** and its sequels - often when reading of a disaster or event in the daily paper, I think that it sounds like something from those novels of the late 1960s.



**Small Town Murder** by Beatrice Jefferson, Dutton 1941, 280pp

A worn copy with the remains of the dust jacket pasted to the endpapers - but signed by the author. Three people have tried to buy it from me, but aside from the regret I always feel in selling a book that isn't a duplicate, I have no idea what to ask for it. Usually I can get an estimate by seeing what professional dealers think a book is worth, but I find no offers of this. A few years ago a correspondent said that only 300 were made (which seems unlikely with what looks like a common crime novel from a major publisher) and that many were bought to burn by the family involved in the crime that the novel is based on.

**The Hollow City** by Ransom Riggs, Quirk 2014, 400pp, photographs, \$17.99

Since I read the first book in this series of fantasies illustrated with found snapshot photographs, **Miss Peregrine's School for Peculiar Children** (see IGOTS 35), the author seems to have become an industry - Amazon offers that book in translation into languages I don't even recognize, and he has a large trade pb out of photos from his collection that are annotated on the back. He finds these photos at flea markets and thrift stores.

**The Gods Have Landed** edited by James R. Lewis, SUNY 1995, 343pp, index, bibliographies

An anthology published by the State University of New York and subtitled *New Religions from Other Worlds*. Very stuffy and academic - with no mention of *Other Worlds*, **The Gods of Mars**, or H. P. Lovecraft. And yet I suspect that all such modern religions were inspired by science-fiction.

**The United States vs. Pvt. Chelsea Manning** by Clark Stoeckley, OR Books 2014, wraps, 200 pp.

No price is given, and there is also an e-book. This is an account of the trial, done in graphic-novel style. It opens with a preface by Julian Assange and a 1913 quote from Louis Brandeis, shortly before he was appointed to the Supreme Court - "Sunlight is said to be the best disinfectant". Too bad the current Supreme Court justices seem to be in the pocket of the spooks!

In my opinion Pvt. Manning should have been given an honorable discharge and the Medal of Freedom and never gone to trial at all. Alas, Clark Stoeckley is not much of an artist.

**Washed Up** by Skye Moody, MJF Books 2006, 182pp., illustrated by the author, \$7.98

Odd - the front flap of the dust jacket says "originally published in paperback at \$16.95" but the barcode block on the back of the dust jacket indeed says "50798". I got it at the thrift store because the cover photo reminded me of the old Phil Harris comedy song "The Thing" that was popular when I was in high school -

*While I was walkin' down the beach  
One bright and sunny day  
I saw a great big wooden box  
A-floatin' in the bay  
I pulled it in and opened it up  
And much to my surprise  
Oh, I discovered a # # #  
Right before my eyes  
Oh, I discovered a # # #  
Right before my eyes*

The remaining 5 verses can be found online. The # represents the drummer bashing the big bass drum. The tale does not end happily.... Skye Moody apparently is willing to take the risk, as this book is about what he has found washed up on various beaches. He explains the technical distinction among *flotsam* (floating wreckage), *jetsam* (jettisoned cargo or parts), and *lagan* (goods or wreckage on the bottom of the sea); and provides Dr. Michael Pidwirny's map of the major ocean currents.

Moody notes that ambergris is mentioned by Sinbad the Sailor in the **1000 & 1 Nights**, and that in 1883, a ship came across a 938-lb lump and in 1908 another ship found the 1,003-lb record lump. An interesting account of a life of beach-combing.

**Peeping Tom** by Howard Jacobson, Ticknor & Fields 1985, 266pp, \$15.95

The protagonist is very witty, continually showing off his knowledge of literature, in both the dialog and the interior dialog. He loathes Thomas Hardy (**Jude the Obscure**, etc) and then his wife talks him into age-regression hypnotism at a cocktail party. It turns out that he *was* Thomas Hardy in a previous life, and as he recovers Thomas Hardy's memories, that Hardy had been a "peeping tom". After that it gets silly....

*Faunus* 29, edited by James Machin for The Friends of Arthur Machen, Spring 2014

This is #146/240 copies, published in hardcover twice a year for the membership. And very nicely too, with excellent articles by and about Arthur Machen. I have, in one form or another, almost everything Arthur Machen wrote in his long life - he died in 1947 at the age of 84. A little googling will reveal the website of the FoAM if you are interested. This issue also has a James Branch Cabell story "Concerning Corinna" that is very much in the Machen style - I see that it was taken from Cabell's **The Certain Hour** (McBride 1923). This was one of the books with a Will Jenkins (Murray Leinster) homemade bookplate that I found in a thrift store in Virginia after he passed away.

*Machenalia*, edited by Gwilym Games for The Friends of Arthur Machen, is much less formal. It is mailed with

the *Faunus* and seems to lack either date or issue number though I seem to have 28 previous issues of the same title. An excellent short essay by Machen about Brighton, the resort town on the English Channel that hosted the 1979 worldcon, and other pieces about writers contemporary to Machen or places he knew. There is a fascinating speculation by the late Roger Dobson that in **The Secret Glory** (1922), one of his most famous books, Machen predicted his own future cult status in his description of a fictional writer named Carrol.

**Helen's Story** by Rosanne Rabinowitz, PS Publishing, 2013, 164pp

The "Helen" here is Arthur Machen's Helen Vaughn, a character in **The Great God Pan** (1894). I learned of this book from a post by the author on the Caermaen Yahoo-list, and bought it through Amazon. It's an autographed hardcover in dust jacket, very nicely done, limited to 100 copies - though I see that no one wrote in which of the 100 this is. In the Machen novel Helen dies, but here she is our contemporary and apparently immortal. She is a talented artist - the dust jacket is a failed attempt to reproduce a detail from one of her large canvases - and the story is well-written. The publisher can be found at -  
[www.pspublishing.co.uk](http://www.pspublishing.co.uk)

**Shady Characters** by Keith Houston, Norton 2013, 219pp, photos, diagrams, notes, index.

This "advanced uncorrected proofs" trade pb turned up in some local shop. The hardcover was to cost \$25.95. A fascinating explanation of the origin of the punctuation and other typographical marks that aid in reading modern English. It's hard to imagine that originally, text was just a string of alphabet letters! When there was a post on the "typewriters" Yahoo-list about the "interrobang" (a symbol combining the "!" and the "?") I was reminded of Houston's chapter on it, and of another hybrid symbol that used to appear in fanzines, back when they used to be produced on a typewriter so that (like the interrobang) such symbols were easily made with a backspace and overstrike. This was the "quasiquote", which combined the " " and the " \_ " and meant that a quotation was not exact but only gave the sense of what was quoted. As this is not mentioned in Houston's book, I looked him up on the Net easily enough (*Shady Characters* is also a blog), and posted an account of the quasiquote. Houston was interested enough to ask for examples, which I was able to find (with the help of other fans) and scan from 1944 fan items in my collection. The quasiquote might have been forgotten but for Sandra Bond, who published a fanzine with the title **QuasiQuote** - long after it was very easy to make one!

For the quasiquote to be explained in the 1944 references that I found, it must have been in use much earlier. If anyone has examples of earlier fanzines with this symbol, or other hybrid punctuation marks, I would be interested to see them.

**The Monkey's Other Paw** edited by Luis Ortiz, Nonstop Press 2014, 207pp, \$24.99

This anthology of 13 original stories plus the famous one by W. W. Jacobs has color photographs on the cover of an actual severed monkey's paw - the left one. The photographer is not credited, but Ortiz did the interior art himself. This copy is signed by the editor and I am credited in the acknowledgments - I wish I could remember why! Some excellent stories - only the title story and the old one by Jacobs feature monkeys, though one is about Tricky Dick Nixon.

**Walter Fuller** (1881-1927) by G. Peter Winnington, Letterworth Press 2014, 410pp, photos, sources, references, index

This biography is subtitled "The Man Who Had Ideas". I must admit that I never heard of Walter Fuller, and

know Peter Winnington only as a Mervyn Peake fan. But he kindly had a copy sent to me - from Belgium, even though the publisher is in Switzerland.

Walter Fuller turns out to have left a remarkable legacy in our culture. In 1911 he brought three of his sisters (Rosalind was to become the original advocate of Free Love!) to New York to sing folk songs. When WWI broke out there was considerable opposition in the US to involvement, and Walter was appalled at the abuse of conscientious objectors - see E. E. Cummings' poem "i sing of olaf" - and introduced the concept of "civil rights"\* - his wife, Crystal Eastman, and Roger Baldwin founded the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) at that time. Most of Walter Fuller's working life was as an editor in many fields, from the BBC's *Radio Times* to the *University Review*. No price noted, but the publisher's website is -

<http://www.TheLetterworthPress.org> and the author found out so much about Walter Fuller that it would not fit into the book, so more can be found at - <http://www.TheLetterworthPress.org/WalterFuller/index.html>

\*In the paper version - the author actually said "civil liberties":

"Civil rights are granted by the federal government to ensure equal treatment of citizens. Civil liberties, on the other hand, are claimed by the citizens to protect them from the government; they set limits on its power to interfere with their lives."

*Futures Past* - A Visual Guide to Science Fiction was published back in the previous millennium by Jim Emerson, one year per volume, starting in 1926. He got through four volumes and then quit to wait for the Net to grow up.... Now these volumes are available as excellent searchable PDF files - see:

<http://sfhistory.net/>

I have the old paper volumes, but of course they are not searchable and the art is only b&w. Jim kindly sent me the PDF file for 1926.

**The World's Greatest Sex and Scandals** - ed.anon - Alva Press 2002, 567 pages.

A compendium selected from four other such collections of sensationalist trash of the 1990s. Apparently they started out to call it "Greatest Sex Scandals", but realized that many scandals have no sexual aspect and so inserted the "and" without realizing that this turned the title into semantic rubbish. Except for some rehashes of "royal" scandals going back to the mythical King Arthur, these are all 20<sup>th</sup> century tales.

**Low Notes on a High Level** by J. B. Priestley, Harper 1956, 160pp

A funny fantasy satire set in the world of the BBC of the 1950s - here called the EBC (English Broadcasting Company) - that also gets in some digs at the British government and society. The "low notes" are in a symphony by a Scandanavian (Norrolandish) composer that he insists must be played on the "Dobbophone", of which there is only one, and the inventor not cooperative. The inventor also has strong opinions and a pirate radio station and does not care for Politicians:

"The older I get," said Dobb, "the less I like 'em. They're miles out of their place now. Once they did a job and didn't pretend to be better than the rest of us—or if they did, nobody believed 'em. Now we take 'em at their own valuation. All-round wise men, who know how we ought to lead our own lives better than we do. How they learnt so much, making speeches and plotting in smoke rooms, beats me. I can't for the life of me see how a man who's spent most of his time jockeying for power is supposed to have acquired so much wisdom. Part of the trick of course is for them to make us feel helpless, then to promise to get us out of the mess that they in fact got

us into. Unfortunately too many people play up to this, ask for it. They've stopped thinking for themselves, stopped taking any action for themselves. Without a murmur they allow politicians and their officials to do things to them that our grandfathers would never have tolerated for a moment. Governments have been pulled down, ministers chased out of their offices, for doing things that are accepted now without a protest. You want an example? Here's one. When I was young the only countries in Europe that had the passport system were Russia and Turkey, both considered out of date and tyrannical. Now we all have it clamped on us. Have we asked for it? No. Do we like it? No. But we still have it. Do passports trap international crooks? No—they have dozens of passports; there's a trade in 'em in places like Tangier. Governments like passports because they give them a complete stranglehold on their citizens. Take away a man's passport and, unless he's a crook and knows all the dodges, he's helpless. And politicians like to see people helpless. It increases their sense of power. And don't be taken in by the sham fights they have among themselves. They all want to behave in much the same way. They're against you, not against each other, except when they're jockeying round for places. The ones who are out say they're going to be better next time, when they're in again; but they never are, they're always worse. We live in a world where thousands of millions of pounds are being spent on destructive machinery and idiotic explosions, and yet it's harder and harder to get a mutton chop. Is this the world ordinary people want? Not on your life. It's been created by the ambition, vanity and stupidity of political leaders. What about some meetings on a high level? We've had them, and much good they've done us. What we need are plenty of meetings on a low level, between sensible people who aren't eaten up by a love of power, the very people who now can't cross a frontier, spend their own money as they please, go and do what they like where they like, the people who foot the bill but aren't even allowed to look at the menu."

Not a lot of progress on that front in the last 60 years....

**Holy Fools & Mad Hatters** by Edward Hays, Forest of Peace 1996, 166pp, ills. divers wraps \$10.95

This trade pb has the subtitle "A Handbook for Hobbyhorse Holiness". The author is credited for the color cover, while the decorative interior art is probably lifted from here and there. This seems to be a self-help book with silliness - in the middle is a 2-page ad for a \$1000 hermitage shed for the back yard.

**And on the Eighth Day** by Ellery Queen, Random House 1964, 191pp, \$3.95

The dust-jacket (and the last page) explains that "Ellery Queen" is a penname for the team of Manfred B. Lee and Frederic Dannay; and their photos are on the back of the dust-jacket. But I am reliably informed that this book was actually ghost-written by Avram Davidson. There is a murder mystery that Ellery Queen is required to solve, but the setting is fantastical, and the account is full of the obscure esoteric references that Avram loved.

**Wintersol** by Eric Thacker and Anthony Earnshaw, Jonathan Cape 1971, 103pp

The sequel to their **Musrum**, and just as bizarre. I like the artwork, and the text seems always to be almost on the edge of actually meaning something.

**Songs Without Rhyme**, edited by Rosanne Cash, Hyperion 2001, 186pp, \$19.95

An anthology of short stories by songwriters - with a photo of each. The first one - they are in alphabetical order

by author - is by David Byrne and very skiffy, about a genetically modified future in which a man might have a geranium growing out of his head or even odder things. This story was originally published in 1994 and set in 2020 - a bit too soon I think! The second story, written by Johnny Cash in 1953, is also SF, set in a future where the USSR takes over the US for a while and changes the spelling to what a Russian thinks an English word sounds like - fortunately only the first two paragraphs are in this hideous drivel. The rest of the entries are by songwriters I never heard of - it's not a genre I am much up on - and some seem to be poetry, which in spite of the title does indeed rhyme.

*Peake Studies* (v.14, no.1, October 2014), edited by G. Peter Winnington, 117pp, photos, PDF

This journal about the works of Mervyn Peake is now only online rather than on paper -

<http://peakestudies.com/E-issues/Peake%20Studies%2014-1.pdf>

and a good thing too. Mr. Winnington notes that he could never have published and distributed anything so large. The bulk of this issue is a previously unpublished play, *Mr. Loftus or And a Horse of Air*. I don't think I could have gotten much of it as a stage play, but it is wonderful to read! And I think it could be done as a video - if there were a director of the caliber of John Huston or Charles Laughton to take it on.

There is also a review of the new book **Peake in China** - with the conclusion that it is worse than useless.

**Damosel** by Stephanie Spinner, Knopf 2008, 198pp, \$16.99

A very silly juvenile by a profession spinner of such bad webs. The protagonist's name is "Damosel" - but *damosel* is a generic noun. She is a water nymph who on orders from Merlin makes the "sword in the stone" and becomes the "lady of the lake". After that it gets silly.

**Laughter on the Stairs** by Beverley Nichols, Timber Press 1998, 257pp, illustrated by William McLaren

Beverley Nichols was a very busy fellow - the introduction here by Roy C. Dicks notes that he wrote 60 books. I have only a few of them, but Roy was so impressed that he has gotten Timber Press to create these facsimile hardcover editions. I have no idea whether there was a dust-jacket, as this was found in a thrift store. Nichols was sort of the Dave Barry of British gardening and old-house-restoration literature. I enjoy his writing even though I know nothing about either subject. This book was originally published in 1953.

*Further investigations* into the mundane fiction shelves in the basement turned up -

**Apollo Sleeps** by Daphne Greenwood (Messner 1937), apparently quite valuable in the striking dust jacket.

**When the Red Gods Call** by Beatrice Grimshaw (Moffat Yard 1911), which would be valuable if it wasn't wrecked.

**Night Journey** by Albert J. Guerard (Knopf 1950), which was moved to the SF shelves as being about an apocalyptic future war.

**Paradise I** by Alan Harrington (Little Brown 1977), which has immortality discovered in 2007.

**The Giant of the Sierras** by Emerson Hartman (Chapman & Grimes 1945), a curious fantasy illustrated with

photos. One of the photos is of the knee bones of a man said to be about 20 feet tall.

**It Wasn't a Nightmare** by L. F. Hay (Macmillan 1937), a novel about the prevention of a world war. There is a secret formula for a liquid that will destroy steel. And footnotes explaining non-English words!

**Witness** by Karen Hesse (Scholastic 2001), a sort of play, in verse, with two pages of small photos of the characters, citizens of a small Vermont town in 1924 in conflict with the KKK. Apparently YA – someone made it as far as p.116, or at least left a pencil mark there.

**As the Earth Turns** by Gladys Hasty Carroll (1904-1999) (Blackberry 1995), not the sort of mundane novel that I would usually buy even at thrift-store prices. It originally appeared in 1933 and has to do the affairs of the Shaw family in Maine in 1920s. It's reprinted by facsimile and bound as a trade pb. The curious thing is that it is signed by the author on the pre-title, and the inscription dated 1995 – Ms Carroll survived to sign a reprint 62 years after the novel was published!

**Notre Dame de Paris** by Victor Hugo (Crowell 1888) – translated by Isabel Hapgood and illustrated with both photos and uncredited wash paintings. This is the book later reprinted (and filmed) as “The Hunchback of Notre Dame”. A beautiful binding, gold on black cloth.

**Candyland** by Evan Hunter and “Ed McBain” (Simon & Schuster 2001) – the author, born Salvatore A Lombino, changed his name to Evan Hunter in 1952 and here collaborates with his pseudonym. The back-cover photo is cleverly processed to show him standing next to himself in different clothes. Maybe it should go in the Silly Book shelves....

**Paul Adams** by S. J. Horn (Benedict Publishers 1929) – this is subtitled “a novel of an American dentist” and for some reason is thought to be worth \$50-100. Maybe I can sell this one, which is near-mint. It does not seem to be a horror story.

**Escape to Persia**, by Katherine Hull & Pamela Whitlock (Macmillan 1939) – a juvenile about children pretending that Exmoor is Persia. On looking in AddAll to see what it might be worth, I find that just one dealer – in Galway Ireland – offers one copy through five different services, at over \$200. A search for their previous book, **The Far-Distant Oxus** (Jonathan Cape, 1937), reveals that they wrote that as schoolgirls and Arthur Ransome got it published.

**The Slaughter-House Informer** by Edward Hyams (Lippincott 1955) – a curious what-if novel. What if a group of literary critics took over a trade paper of the abattoir industry?

**Tristessa** by Jack Kerouac (Avon T429 1960) – Mike Ward remembered that I had sent him this book some 40 years ago – and just sent it back! I had read it at the time, but remember nothing of it. If I tried to reread it now it would probably fall apart. But of course it is online. As a physical object, dealers think it is worth about \$30 to \$1250, depending on condition and the dealer. The cover, an excellent painting, is attributed to Elliott.



**The Hands of Cantú** by Tom Lea (Little Brown 1924) – a library discard with no dust jacket, but the artwork by the author, some double-page scenes, some character portraits, is quite remarkable (facing page).

**Bug Eye** by Alan LeMay (Farrar & Rinehart 1931) – bookplates for both “Reams Rental Library” and Mrs Grace Lockard in Columbia PA. An account of unlikely adventures told as letters to “Bug Eye”. The deliberate bad spelling would annoy me too much. Apparently rare.

**The Travels of Jamie McPheeters** by Robert Lewis Taylor (Madison Park Press 2007) – I recognized the author's name because I had enjoyed his 1947 **Adrift in a Boneyard**, a post-apocalyptic novel. This 1958 effort set in Gold Rush days is much fatter and won the 1959 Pulitzer Prize. Fifty-five years later, here it is again as a Book Club volume, part of “The John Jakes Library of Historical Fiction” - and Jakes, who I remember only as the author of **Brak the Barbarian**, supplies an introduction, which reads rather like a high-school book report. There is a map.

**The Carissima** by Lucas Malet (Duffield 1906) – The online version is from the Stone edition of 1896 or 1902, where it is subtitled “A Modern Grotesque”. It is apparently skiffy in its way – Borgo reprinted it in paperback in 2002. No one else online seems to mention having the Duffield edition – my copy is near mint in a very attractive binding. The idea seems to involve a man haunted by an invisible demon dog. So I will add it to the collection.

**Harlot's Ghost** by Norman Mailer (Random House 1991) – This thing weighs 4 lbs and I will never read it – I like to read in bed and it would leave a bruise on my breast-bone.

**Priest or Pagan** by John Rathbone Oliver (Knopf 1933) – I have put this with my other book by the same author. It is about an evil man who acquires supernatural power – starting with his childhood. Perhaps it inspired *The Omen* movies. Or predicts Dick Cheney.

**A Spinner in the Sun** and **At the Sign of the Jack o'Lantern** by Myrtle Reed (Putnam 1907/1910) – Fancy bindings and text headers in red – and she wrote a lot more such, and they were printed and reprinted so that they are still not rare.

**Confessions of a Future Scotsman** by Paul Reb (Braziller 1973) – An overblown account by a US citizen who was raised in the belief that he was of Irish ancestry but came to discover that he was in fact of Scots ancestry. I will put it with the Silly Books.

**The House on Tollard Ridge** by John Rhode (Dodd Mead 1929) – I have had this for decades – I see that I got it at a thrift store that put the price in by stapling a little paper square to the front endpaper. Seems to be rare now, one of a series of murder mysteries starring a Dr. Priestley. Odd design – the binding is a forest green cloth, with the printing in red-orange, rather hard on the eyes.

**Windyridge** by W. Riley (Herbert Jenkins nd) – But the 35th printing, with a note that this got the total print run to almost 275,000. A note on the front of the dust jacket directs the reader to a summary of the story on the back! Few copies offered online have the dust jacket, I will see if I can sell it. It was touted as “a new **Cranford**” and this copy originally sold for 3 shillings.

**Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters / Seymour** by J. D. Salinger - Dated 1963 like the British and US 1<sup>st</sup> editions, but with no publisher or copyright notice. Probably a Taiwanese pirate edition, but the others I have (my parents were in Taiwan for a while) do have a block of Chinese characters in the back.

**Hussein, An Entertainment** by R. P. Russ (Oxford 1938) - R. P. Russ was the birth name of the author noted later for the Aubrey-Maturin series of sea novels under the name Patrick O'Brian. Dealers online seem to think it is quite valuable - we will see. It's a coming-of-age story of an Indian *mahout* (elephant handler). This copy seems unread and unmarked, but has lost the dust jacket.

**Lunacy and Caprice** by Henry van Dyke (Available Press / Ballantine 1987)

Not the famous writer of that name (1852-1933, middle name Jackson) but a modern novelist (1928-2011, middle initial L). The description of the plot seems to fit the title. Opposite the title page I find "paper created and designed by Ashley Miller" - it looks like common trade PB paper to me.

**The Mammon of Righteousness: The Story of Coxe and the Box** by Percival Christopher Wren (Burt 1930) - the Burt edition has the same plain title **Mammon** (and the same binding) as the Frederick Stokes edition of 1930, but has no date of its own. One of the characters is named Coxe, and the "box" is a mysterious steel trunk. But Wren must have known that there had been two disparate farces popular in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century - *Box and Cox* by John Maddison Morton, and the better-known *Cox and Box* by F. C. Burnand with music by Arthur Sullivan. And yet his novel is deadly serious melodrama. A theological website reveals that this title must be based on words of Jesus in the Book of Luke (16:9) where He refers to the "mammon of unrighteousness" in a manner that the theologian says is meant to be taken as *sarcastic*.

Having reached the end of the Basement Fiction, I have started on a much smaller sorting of miscellaneous tomes....

**Criswell's Predictions** by J. K. Criswell (Droke 1972) - These are "forbidden predictions" for 1975-2000 based on a face-to-face interview with Nostradamus and on Tarot cards. Utter swill, of course. It opens with a "prediction" that the widow of an assassinated US president would remarry and die young - but Jackie Kennedy married Onassis in 1968 and outlived him by many years with a career in editing. The Tarot card images are full-page but badly printed. Nostradamus' "final words" have it that Portugal will be a central power at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century because it controls the Papacy....

**Beyond Tomorrow** by Raymond F. Cottrell (Southern Publishing Assoc. 1963) - A pretty little book with color plates by divers hands and endpaper photos of rocket launches. The future here is "predicted" (without any of those embarrassing specific dates) on the basis of the Book of Revelations.

**Last Letters** by Olivier Blanc (Farrar Straus Giroux 1987) - Blanc discovered an archive of letters dated 1793-94 - the last letters of prisoners guillotined in the Terror following the French Revolution. His book about them appeared in French in 1984. This translation is by Alan Sheridan. The man who oversaw the prisons and archived the letters (unseen by the intended recipients), Antoine-Quentin Fouquier-Tinville, himself was

beheaded with the fall of Robespierre. We do these things so much more neatly today – executions are in secret, with secret drugs; or out of sight in remote deserts by drones.

**The Galactic Club / Intelligent Life in Outer Space** by Ronald N. Bracewell (Freeman/Scribners 1974) – an illustrated historical survey of the idea of extraterrestrial intelligent life – 40 years later we are no closer to finding out if there ever was any (other than ourselves on the Moon). The b&w art runs from the medieval notion of the crystalline spheres through Grandville and on to Joan Miró. Professor Bracewell (Electrical Engineering, Stanford, originally from Australia) was a busy fellow – besides designing radio telescopes, he collected trees and published a guide to all the trees on the Stanford campus.

**The Coming of the Flowers** by A. W. Anderson (Farrar Straus & Young nd) – not, alas, a fantasy but an explanation of why there are flowers everywhere – *achoo!* Printed in the UK even though the publisher was in New York. The author was curator of the botanical gardens in Timaru, New Zealand. The rather nice chapter-heading art is not credited. The back of the dust-jacket offers an even more specialized book – **A Fuchsia Survey**, by the president of the British Fuchsia Society. I wouldn't know a fuchsia if it bit me, but I remember that Fuchsia was the name of the tragic Gormenghastly sister of Titus Groan.

**Handwriting Analysis** by M. N. Bunker (Nelson-Hall 1971) – the author's name is oddly appropriate for this tome that claims to explain how to determine personality from cursive handwriting. Illustrated with samples and photos of famous people, and even the Covarrubias caricature of W. C. Handy. Apparently meant as a textbook, as each chapter has questions, and the answers are in the back.

**Soothsayers of the Second Advent** by William A. Alnor (Revell 1989) – A sonorous title by a writer with an odd surname. It's a detailed study of the notion that the Second Coming could be predicted. The author gives a POBox in Philadelphia for anyone who wanted to comment or send further news about biblical prophecy!

*It Comes in the Mail* from -

*Janet Alvarez*, who sent a new fantasy anthology, **Writers for Relief** – see above.

*Mike Ashley*, who also knew Tom Cockcroft. And had sent me the 1932 issue of *The Sketch* with the photos of Lord Dunsany and his figurines.

*Susannah Bates* & Family, who send a Christmas card.

*Dee Beetem* of Slanapa, who sends a Christmas card.

*Ruth Berman*, who knew where Brad Foster got the cover text on the IGOTS 35 cover! And sends her annual *Dunkiton Press*, about the “Perhappsy Chaps”, who starred in a 1915 poem that opens with:

**“Moon-up!” cried Jerry – “the old world naps  
Moon-up and time for Perhappsy Chaps  
To play a Perhapsical trick or two....**

*Sheryl Birkhead*, who sends a Christmas card with cats and poinsettias and says she is still trying to catch up!

*Dainis Bisenieks*, who writes often about books.

*Alan Brignull*, who also notes that the “a homage” that I found so odd in the subtitle to **Sorcery & Sanctity** is acceptable in the UK, and that the 'h' in “homage” would not be silent. Alan also asked if the photo of Chief Snoop James Clapper was “real” - well, I did not take it myself, but it has appeared in websites and in the press often enough. Alan's handrot can only be called calligraphy! He also sends the illustrated article on SF art that Brian Aldiss wrote for the 1964 **Saturday Book** - I can put this with the Aldiss books or pass it on, as I have that **Saturday Book**. And beautiful printed cards quoting Lord Dunsany (“The Exiles Club”) and Robert W. Service (a poem about his typewriter). Later Alan sent a card that he had printed using ink he made with the dust from the Sahara that was blown into England and drifted thick enough for him to collect some. Sounds like the spring pine-pollen accumulation here.

*Lee Carson*, who emails about Ganesha from near Tipperary and sent me two rare fanzines - the cookbook *Fanfare* and the mystically titled *HWA!*

*Melissa Conway* at the UCR Special Collections in Riverside CA (the Bruce Pelz fanzine archive), who sends a Christmas card with a photo from the Phoenix Water Works showing women c.1900 carrying water jugs on their heads - oddly enough, the envelope and card show a water stain on one corner....

*Margaret & Norman Cubberly*, who send a Penguin card, with eclectic wishes for happy holidays, Wiccan blessings, merry Christmas, jolly Kwanza - and “May the Pope shine his gaze on you”! Reminds me of the *Eye of Sauron*.... Odd to think that the Pope might google himself and see anyone's online comments - good thing the Spanish Inquisition is long in the dustbin of history. Later Margaret sent a clipping about the 6 remaining official typewriters in the small city of Poquoson - they budgeted \$1,920 for typewriter maintenance but only spent \$200. I think \$200 is about what I have spent *total* in 60 years of typewriter use. My first typewriter, a portable bought new in 1955, never required any service.

*Al Durie*, who even liked my political ramblings!

*Phillip Ellis*, who is working on a Lovecraft Concordance.

*Al Fitzpatrick*, who sends a photo Christmas card of himself and family.

*Brad Foster*, who really liked IGOTS 35, and sent a great cover for IGOTS 36. He had read one of the books mentioned, and wanted another, and likes Ian Miller's pictures of Gormenghast.

*John and Diane Fox*, who send a Christmas cart from the Antipodes.

*Alexis and Lee Gilliland*, who send their Christmas Letter - with a personalized cartoon indicating that their cats liked this year's IGOTS. I shudder to think what a cat does with paper....

*Binker Glock*, who sends a Christmas card.

*Jim Goldfrank*, who did not respond to IGOTS 35 because, alas, he passed away about the time he would have received it, on November 3.

*Bee Greshak*, who says she saw this zine mentioned in *Node Pajomo*, and incloses the remains of the dust jacket to *Galaxies* by Harlow Shapley (Blakiston 1940s) – with a Jimi Hendrix “Forever” stamp.

*John Haines* sends his *Handshake* 88 and encloses a clipping from the Daily Telegraph (3/9/12) about research on the emotional effect of typing certain words or even which hand you type the word with. The researchers blame this on the QWERTY keyboard layout. Perhaps I remain on an even keel because my typing, though I learned “touch” typing as a teenager, has long since deteriorated into the use of the left and right index fingers, so that I almost never type any word with either hand.... John also enclosed a clipping about the French movie *Populaire*, which features the speed-typing contests of yore.

*Linton Herbert*, who sends a PDF of his novel **The Newton Enigma**, which includes a crossword puzzle.

*Don Herron*, another Arthur Machen fan, who sent me a sample of professional book reviewing.

*John Hertz*, who says that my RexRotary mimeo did reach the worldcon, but the planned demo did not come off, because of typewriter trouble!

*Núria Hortonedá*, who e-mails from Spain about an old Rex-Rotary M2 mimeograph – and has found a source of what appears to be new mimeograph consumables:

<http://www.kores-india.com/international/categorylist.aspx?parentid=C123&catid=C131>

*Steve & Suzanne Hughes*, who send a Christmas card from their Fortress of Solitude in Ellijay.

*Jerry Kaufman*, who sends a long loc on IGOTS 35, saying that the “Craven A” cigarettes advertised in the 1932 issue of *The Sketch* are still sold, and that there were apartments in NY in the 70s with the bathtub in the kitchen.

*Herman Stowell King* (now 85), who has lost his PC link but sends a Christmas card.

*Colin Langeveld*, who sends a photo of the title page of an 1802 book, **Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred** – oddly enough, though it promises a biography of the author, the page does not include his name. I see that Wikipedia knows – it was translated from the French of Louis-Sébastien Mercier's 1772 original edition. It's also on Google Books.

*Tim Marion*, who sends a long e-mail LoC – on IGOTS 31 (2009). A slow reader, perhaps....

*Kris Mininger*, who sends strange art-post stamps and mini-zines from Spain.

*Frederick Moe*, who sent a number of well-done mini-zines from the PaperNet.

*Larry Montgomery*, now back in SFPA, who sends a Christmas card.

*Murray Moore*, who sends a long e-loc!

*Harry O. Morris*, who says Tom Cockcroft was a contributor to his fanzine *Nyctalops*, and sent him many UK horror anthologies.

*Gavin O'Keefe*, who also haunts thrift stores, and looks for Mahlon Blaine books.

*KRin Pender-Gunn*, who sends a Christmas card with a sandman from the Antipodes, where they get no snow at Christmas.

*Lloyd Penney*, who liked the weird book entries, and says the oddly-named "Craven A" cigarette was sold in Canada as well.

*Fred Phillips*, who laments that I did not review his **From the Cauldron** - but it is poetry and I never saw it. Here is a sample of what he is including in **Winds from Sheol**:

#### LEGACY

On that dread day when the Earth dies,  
As the red-eyed sorcerers tell,  
When black fire falls from purpling skies,  
And red rain falls up from Hell,

I will quaff a last draught with the Reaper,  
And the day that Death dies, I will slay,  
For the price of my life is steeper  
Than the Dark One is able to pay.

*PJM*, the mysterious Mail Art maven of Bellingham, who sends *Node Pajomo XV*, and asks me what the children in a postage-stamp-size photo print are wearing on their heads. Whoever took the photo and made the print knew what he was doing - I scanned it at 600 dpi and printed it page size, and there is a lot more detail visible. But what the party favor headgear is I can't make out. Apparently if you tilt your head it expands down the side of your face.

*John Purcell*, who liked the cover and book comments.

*Andy Robson*, who liked the entry about The Sketch and sent a tiny poetry booklet. If I live long enough I will inventory the poetry shelves.

*David Shea*, who sends a Christmas card and says his mail two years ago to Peter Winnington was returned as “undeliverable” - odd, as IGOTS seems to get through OK. David also queries whether *typerrhetic* is a word - obviously it is, but whether it appears in any dictionary I don't know. It is formed by analogy:  
*diarrhetic* → *logorrhetic* → *typerrhetic*

*Jad Smith*, who sent a long e-mail of comment

*Milt Stevens*, who says I have too many books (bound to be some in there that would get me investigated by the spooks); and that Florence Nightingale would be even *more* unlikely as Jack the Ripper than Lewis Carroll.

*Erwin “Filthy Pierre” Strauss*, who kindly played the Joseph Kaye tune for the old filk song “Green Hills of Earth” onto a cassette for me. As far as I know this music has only appeared in the book I published about the song, but I cannot read music and had never heard it. Joseph Kaye was a “busker” in England that Steve Sneyd got the tune from.

*Dave Szurek*, who sends a Christmas card and handrot letters.



*Mike & Rita Tortorello*, who send an elegant Pegana Press Christmas Card. Mike also sent an image file from the Dec. 1910 issue of *The Sketch* where Sidney Sime illustrated the Lord Dunsany story “The Injudicious Prayers of Pombo the Idolator”. This story was reprinted in *The Book of Wonder* (William Heineman, 1912), but without the artwork. I suspect this may be because the piece is so dark. But even more surprising is that none of the books about Sime (Skeeters' **Sidney Sime, Master of Fantasy**, Ward Ritchie 1978; Heneage & Ford's **Sidney Sime, Master of the Mysterious**, Thames & Hudson 1980; or the George Locke paperbacks of the early 1970s, **The Land of Dreams, From an Ultimate Dim Thule, Beasts that Might Have Been**, Ferret Fantasy) have this illustration either. Here it is, lightened a bit by cyber-voodoo.

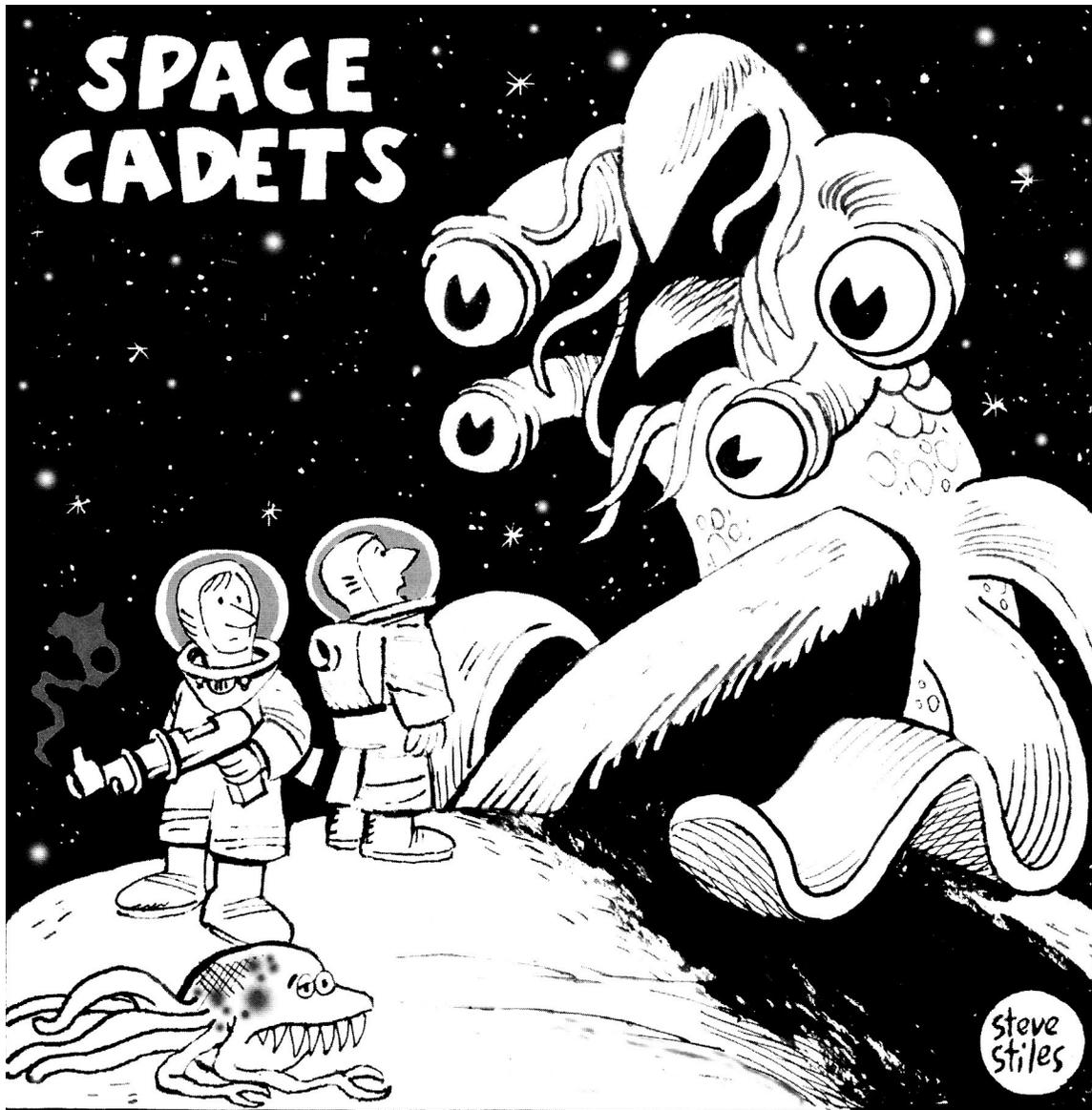
If anyone wants the full-size image, just let me know.

*Roland Trenary*, who has moved again and still can't find Robert Arrington.





**Merry Christmas to All  
and a Happy New Year!**



**Typical: one crisis fixed, another raises its ugly head.**