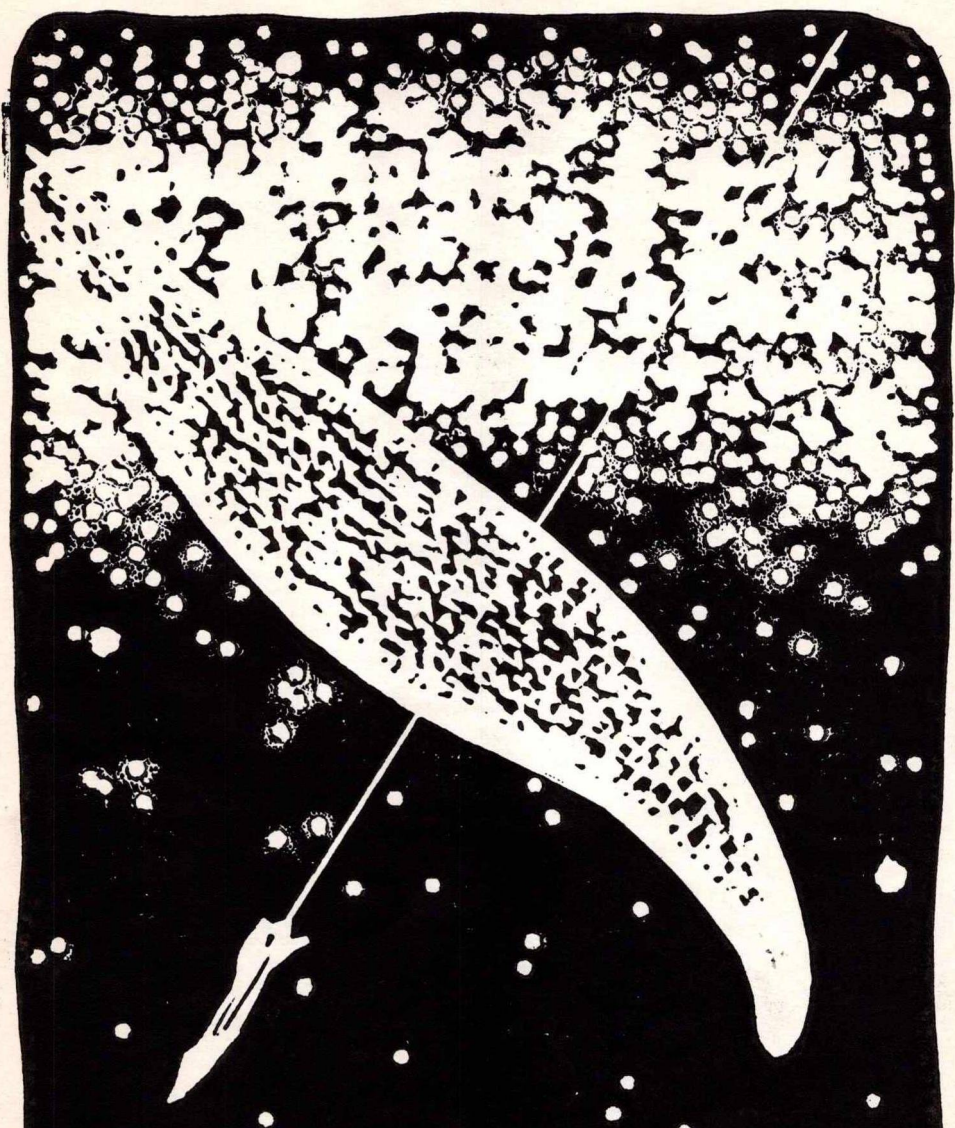




GIRN

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GIRN-I-FROM-  
ROBERTE. GILBERT  
509 W. MAIN ST.  
JONESBORO, TENN.

## THAT OLD TECHNICAL FEELING

Are you technically-minded? Are you different? Are you human?

These questions are suggested by the introduction to The Best from Fantasy and Science Fiction Sixth Series edited by Anthony Boucher (Doubleday & Company, Inc., New York, 1957). Quoting John W. Campbell, Jr., Mr. Boucher says:

"Mr. Campbell wrote, in The Saturday Review (May 12):

" 'Science fiction is written by technically-minded people, about technically-minded people, for the satisfaction of technically-minded people. And these are different human people...' "

Taking an opposite view, Mr. Boucher says, among other things, "...science fiction in general, and particularly as exemplified in this collection, is written simply by people, about people, and (one hopes) for the satisfaction of people."

A contribution to this controversy can be made by Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, which says, "tech'ni-cal, adj. ...

1. Of or pertaining to the useful or mechanic arts, or to practice, method, procedure, etc., in any science, business, profession, sport, or the like... 2. Peculiar to or used only in a particular trade, profession, science, art, etc., highly specialized...--tech'ni-cal-ly, adv." If this definition is to be credited, almost everyone is technically-minded to some extent, so that there is still hope for science fiction for all. Probably it should also be noted that science and technology are not necessarily the same thing.

Science fiction may have been more fun when it was written, apparently, by boys,



about boys, for boys, with suitable girls included.

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The October 13, 1957, edition of The New York Times Magazine features "Now the Space Age Opens" by I. M. Levitt, who, after a rehash of space travel plans and theories, explains, "Now the scientist begins a bizarre speculation that puts even the science-fiction writer behind the times. Eventually...he will try to leave the solar system for some other star." The author then devotes three columns to the slow starship in which generations live before reaching a destination, and to the theoretical contraction of time when the speed of light is approached. Since both these ideas have been well used in science fiction, and since hundreds of stories with interstellar themes have been published, perhaps it is actually the anti-science-fiction writer who is behind the times.

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Anyone intrigued by the inexplicable should read "The Mysterious Money Pit" by Norman Schwarz in the September, 1957, issue of True, The Man's Magazine. The story related by Mr. Schwarz is that on Oak Island in Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia, someone with uncanny engineering skill lowered something into a pit more than 150 feet deep, dug tunnels entirely through the island so that sea water would thwart searchers, and filled the pit with layers of earth and planks. Since 1795, treasure seekers have made vain efforts to recover whatever is encased in concrete at the bottom of the hole. Speculation about the contents varies from Captain Kidd's gold,

to Francis Bacon's manuscripts, to the Crown Jewels of France.

Explanations more ethereal than those given in the article may be devised. Is the pit the work of Flying Saucerians? Does the concrete vault hold a Little Green Man in suspended animation? Is it a time capsule? Does the pit have a connection with Lost Atlantis? Is it the launching tube for an extragalactic spaceship? Is it the world's greatest practical joke?

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Possibly, almost no one has read Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus by Mary W. Shelley. There seems to be an extended belief that the recent film, The Curse of Frankenstein, is an accurate version of the novel. Even Forrest J. Ackerman subscribes to this view in the Sixteenth Anniversary Issue of Science Fiction Times.

In 17\_\_\_, Victor Frankenstein, a student at the University of Ingolstadt, built a man from organic parts and gave him life. His creation so horrified Frankenstein that he allowed it to wander away. The monster learned to use his senses, to speak, and to read. When men beat and shot him in return for good deeds, he vowed revenge and murdered Frankenstein's brother. A maid was executed for the crime. The monster demanded that Frankenstein fabricate a wife for him. Frankenstein agreed, but when he had almost completed the new creature, he changed his mind and dismantled her. The monster, who had planned to live as a vegetarian in South America with his wife, was so peeved that he murdered Frankenstein's friend, Henry. Frankenstein married his cousin, but the

monster killed the bride. Frankenstein's father died of shock. Frankenstein pursued the monster all the way to the arctic. Weak from cold and privation, Frankenstein died aboard a passing ship. The monster viewed the corpse and then drifted away on the ice, intending to cremate himself.

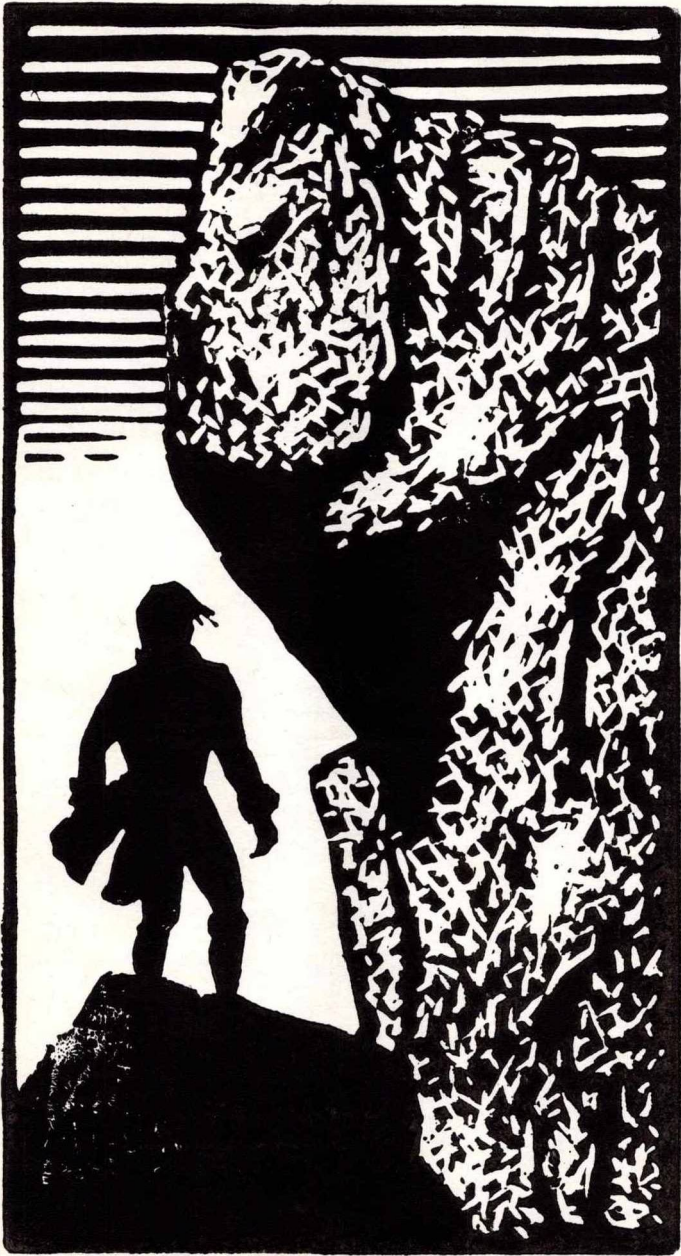
With all its harrowing events and sudden frights, Frankenstein seems to be the stuff from which horror movies are made. Why the industry has always given it the Gothic castle treatment, instead of filming the novel as it was written, can only be explained by the supposition that movie producers are incomprehensible. The novel even contains enough elaborate scenes of glaciers, Alps, lonely islands, and pack ice for a popular wide-screen-travelogue w/ on-plot epic, and it could be a picture with a message, "He who creates a monster will be destroyed by it."

Make-up artists have also ignored the book. Frankenstein described his creation as "...about eight feet in height, and proportionately large...I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful!...His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness...watery eyes...shrivelled complexion, and straight black lips...a mummy...could not be so hideous...it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived."

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A man, passing the Majestic Theater in Johnson City, said, "Old Frankincense is on. The Curse of Frankincense."

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The artist's signature on the cover of 21st Century Sub by Frank Herbert (Avon Publications Inc., New York) is, apparently, Hat Snosman. The differences between the cover of this paperback edition of The Dragon in the Sea or Under Pressure and the usual pocket edition cover should distinguish it on any newsstand.

Before a triangular underwater scene containing a submarine, a man resembling a scuba diver stands peering into a periscope. At least ten colors streak the man's fins and diving suit. The colors are repeated in the scene behind him. The other areas of the cover are white with the book title in read. The total effect is that of a striking and original design, rather than a picture. Being symbolic instead of illustrative, the cover expresses to some degree the theme and action of the story; although the depths and pressures, both mental and physical, permeating the novel are lacking. Traces of various schools of modern art may be found in the painting, but it probably does not deliberately follow any of them.

One hazard of copying current art fads to illustrate stories of the future is that what may seem ultramodern today will be old-fashioned tomorrow. This cover, however, has enough originality to produce a sensation of things which have not yet happened.

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On Main Street in Jonesboro, two ladies exchanged the following words: "I have phlebitis." "You mean the fleas have been biting you?"

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The tale of the prehistoric creature



which is discovered, hatched, or thawed from a glacier in modern times is such an old and familiar part of science fiction that The Search Beneath the Sea; the Story of the Coelacanth by J.L.B. Smith (Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1956), a true narrative, in many ways resembles a science fiction novel. The author, a chemist who became an ichthyologist, emerges from the pages as a sort of self-assured, relentless, and often frustrated science fiction hero; and there are also two heroines, his wife and a museum curator.

The book describes the discovery, off the coast of South Africa in 1938, of a Coelacanth, an ancient type of fish which scientists believed had become extinct fifty million years before. After a fourteen-year search, another specimen was at last caught in the Comores Islands near Madagascar in 1952. The story contains unexpected mystery and suspense, disappointments and triumphs, plots and counterplots, and even politics and international intrigue. At the time the book was completed, eight Coelacanths had been taken; and France had apparently gained a monopoly over the prehistoric fish market, wresting some of the glory from South Africa.

Since it records unique events, The Search Beneath the Sea is a unique book. When the reader considers that this much excitement and adventure developed because of a fish, he may wonder what will happen if, someday, someone actually stumbles over a dinosaur, even a small one.

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---Robert E. Gilbert

## IF YOU ONLY NEWT

A Footnote to the History of  
the Battle of Britain  
from Letters by

ALAN DODD

Did I ever tell you about the time I had a fishpond in the garden? Well, anyway, it was more of a newt pond. I don't even recall just what they are myself but they look like a small water lizard and they're harmless.

We used to have an air-raid shelter in the back garden in those days because it was during the war. They bombed Hoddesdon with everything from buzz-bombs and V's to mere bombs and aerial land-mines which came floating down lazily on a parachute and blew up whole rows of houses when they eventually landed. Hoddesdon isn't a big place like London or the cities of the north and since we are north of London German bombers didn't have to come over us to hit London. There were no direct attacking raids on Hoddesdon because it was too small a target to be worth bothering about. What we got here were the odds and ends of bombs dropping down.

Crippled bombers from the northern industrial cities who couldn't reach their target just jettisoned their bombs anywhere to lighten the load and some of them landed here. Some fields still have bomb craters in them even to this day. Most of them still have the concrete pillboxes in them that were for use against parachutists. Guided missiles in the form of buzz bombs and rockets that arrived here were "offshoots." Shot at London but they overran. Pilots used to tip over

flying bombs when they were over country fields or the sea. Anti-aircraft fire and cannon shells from fighters got rid of most of them.

Then the V1 rockets came--and no shell could hit them because they were too fast. You didn't even see them--with the buzz bomb you could at least hear them coming and shoot at them. There was practically no defence against a then rocket slipping through the air at incredible speeds.

Our air-raid shelter was a fairly big hole in the ground shored up with wood and sheets of metal etc. with loads and loads of earth on top to take any bomb blast. It wouldn't have stood up to a direct hit from a doodle bug but nevertheless we were happy enough with it, damp and chilly though it was.

Well, I hollowed out a hole in the top of it--the top of the earth that is and lined it with cement. Then I studded the cement with pieces of broken coloured china and pottery and decorations and put a drain away pipe in it and filled it with water.

I put the newts in one day. Next day they were gone. I guess they must have crawled away somewhere.

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If you have decided to cover that unsightly smear on the wall with a picture, or if you want an unusual gift for your best friend or your worst enemy, or if you have some other weird reason for wanting to own an original drawing, tell me your troubles. I'll do rough sketches of the scene you describe. When you have approved a sketch, you'll return it with \$5. I'll make the finished drawing and mail it to you in a few days. If you aren't satisfied with the result, you may return the picture and demand your money back. I'll refund it, too.

Selling illustrations of copyrighted works or characters may possibly involve us in legal technicalities, but there are many other types of drawings that may be done. General science fiction scenes of space, time travel, planets, rockets, and stars; prehistoric scenes of dinosaurs or cavemen; views of witches, werewolves, and vampires; storytelling illustrations of your own original situations; and fantastic portraits of yourself, based on a large, clear photograph, are a few of the numerous subjects.

If you must have book illustrations, classics in the public domain, such as Poe's works, are filled with possibilities. If you still can't think of anything, I'll be glad to offer suggestions. In case you're interested in figures, I'll mention that I've sold 98 pictures and have won 4 prizes in exhibits.

Robert E. Gilbert  
509 West Main Street  
Jonesboro, Tennessee

## KILL-JOY

The suns are up ten billion times,  
But space is black as night.  
The baking rocks upon the Moon  
Reflect a blinding light.

You pass by molten Mercury,  
Soar over arid Mars  
And the dark ice sheet of Pluto  
To new worlds of the stars.

You drift across the Asteroids,  
Through the clouds of Saturn,  
And blaze the unknown starpaths where  
Great constellations burn;

But I, friend, will not be with you,  
For I am staying here  
With oxygen, and chlorophyll,  
And quenching waters clear.

Forget about me, bold spaceman,  
On this small globe of blue.  
Keep your eyes upon Polaris,  
You and your spaceship crew,

And when you reach far Benetnasch,  
Or streak beyond Altair,  
I will wish you luck and pleasure,  
But will not meet you there.

