

STAR★LINE

\$5.00

Spring 2017

40.2



Red Reign by Andy Walsh



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Mars spring
rock pollinates
rock

How to Move The Earth, In Parts

1) It will rain in Boston,
a dirty rain

—*LeRoy Gorman*

everywhere it touches will come soot, will come mud
there has been an accident in orbit;
ceramic slurry bound for the kilns has torn a vacuum tube
it will rain mud on the East Coast
Let the rain sting your face;
it will hurt, it will be oppressive, it will remind you of the mounting
series of problems in this endeavour

2) Go to the docks;

look East, where the Orbital Elevator they so aptly named Babylon
fell for three days and three nights
where it burned for seven more
take your finger and smudge the sky with the smoke of progress
do not name it failure
take this 40,000 miles of spun carbon
this fifty elevator cars
one orbital station
three thousand people
sweep them under the rug of mounting importance

3) Your hubris states you must bring this world with you
while it would be more economical to relocate, to find some new
and shining world,

3.5 billion years of evolution have endeared you to this place
so you tie it down
cut the planet into pieces
drag it off and hope you don't lose the assembly instructions

4)

Today they're taking the North American Plate
you watch from a shuttle over Africa
there is a silence like nothing you have heard
something so big must make noise as it moves
your mind has rejected it;
replaces with the flutter of birds
humanity scrapes up the pieces of its home like old scabs
continents peel off one by one
the only remains are those glowing wounds

—*Aaron Kinne*

On the Nature of Reality: On the Reality of Nature

A dead
star shrieked, scudded
down light-year tracks, showered
sparks, arriving at human sight:
vanished.

—Dean Kostos

When I Speak

when I speak of dead cities
I mean those alien towns where
the inhabitants are made of wind
we find them on every planet
these days
breathing air of neon pink

when I speak of ghost chariots
I mean those starships
dying out there
but still manned by immortal gods

when I speak of crumbling light
I mean those last sunsets
before we left our homeworld
where the ashes of maps fill every grave

—Wendy Rathbone



SFPA T-SHIRTS
Get a fabulous t-shirt
with the SFPA slogan to
wear at this summer's
SF conventions! For sizes
& colors, see **sfpoetry.com/t-shirts.html**.
(Thanks again to Mike
Arnzen for our slogan.)

I am ready for the apocalypse
so ready, in fact,
I'll be disappointed
if it doesn't actually happen

—Josh Brown

STAR LINE

is pleased to congratulate all
our 2017 Rhysling Award candidates.

- SHORT: "Adolescence" • Ken Poyner • *Star*Line* 39.4
"appendage sale" • Susan Burch • *Star*Line* 39.2
"At the Robot National Convention" • Alan Ira Gordon • *Star*Line* 39.3
"The Dark between the Stars" • G.O. Clark • *Star*Line* 39.4
"History Teacher" • Gary Every • *Star*Line* 39.4
"Learning the History of War" J. J. Steinfeld • *Star*Line* 39.3
"La Villa de Sirenia" • Jack Ralls • *Star*Line* 39.4
"What Wants Us" • Karolina Fedyk • *Star*Line* 39.2
- LONG: "The Dark Lord's Diary" • Lee S. Hawke • *Star*Line* 39.1
"Elegy for Iain Banks" • Vince Gotera • *Star*Line* 39.3
"Morning During Migration Season" • Beth Cato • *Star*Line* 39.4



NOTHING TO SEE

Of course our lovely cover has no relationship to any aspect of current U.S. politics. Move along quietly, there's a nice human.

But all you see are two eyes
glaring at you from the depths.

—Marlena Chertock, "When the fog comes"

As it happens, the next issue of *Star*Line*, 40.3, will be the last we edit. If you have been lollygagging with respect to submitting (we know nothing of such primeval weaknesses ...), now is the time—or you can hold off till August 1, when the new order arises under Vince Gotera. Details in next issue!

We have also relocated our own Fortress of Redaction (see back cover for new postal address). Regrettably, the process is taking place *sans* matter transmitter or teleport booth, causing She Whom You Metaphorically Behold Before You to be a bit short, brutish, and easily confused. This, too, shall pass.

... a planet-side view
and the enduring philosophy
that whatever doesn't kill you
makes you strange.

—Bianca Spriggs, "Live from the Mothership"

We lift a libation of bubbling, smoking liquid to the downfall of tyrants,

—F.J. Bergmann, *Star*Line* editor

Parable

A gravestone lasts longer than a god.
Therefore empires crumble like vampires
in the sun. And when the men of science
uncover the essence of the universe like a stone's
private parts, the essence is not made of itself
but of pure transience—light as a dustmote floating
in a bead of sweat that drops from the strongman's brow:
the last strongman, trembling with ungiven
orders, his armies routed, his cities burning,
who works the unconquered earth with his to
and nods acceptance of the terms of peace.

—Michael Collins

ABYSS & APEX

CONGRATULATIONS
TO ABYSS & APEX
STAFF AND POETS!



abyssapexzine.com

CONGRATULATIONS TO ASHLEY DIOSES
ON HER RHYSLING NOMINATION!



THE AUDIENT VOID

A JOURNAL OF WEIRD FICTION
AND DARK FANTASY

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Publisher/Editor

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CONCRETE WOLF



congratulates

TIMONS ESAIAS
on his 2017
**RHYSLING
NOMINATION!**

THE WERE- TRAVELER

Congratulates poets
from Issue 19
nominated for the
RhySLing Award:

Aaron Vlek ~ When
Coyote Called Down
the Stars

Jon Wesick ~ Richard
Feynman's Commute

Read ***Eye to the Telescope***, SFPA's quarterly online speculative poetry journal, at eyetothetelescope.org. The April theme is **Alternate Reality**, edited by Alan Ira Gordon. Submit **Garbage** poems for the next issue by June 15: eyetothetelescope.org/submit.html.



We're now using MailChimp to deliver official SFPA messages, reminders, and Star*Line .pdf links. If you haven't received them, e-mail sfpnews@gmail.com.

Any SFPA postal nominations or votes may be mailed to **SFPA Secretary Shannon Connor Winward, 117 McCann Rd, Newark DE 19711, USA.**

SFPA TREASURER CANDIDATES

We have two candidates for SFPA Treasurer: **Denise Clemons** and **A.J. Odasso**. Vote at bit.ly/2017SFPAreasurer or by postal mail to the SFPA Secretary.

Denise Clemons of Lewes, Delaware: I'm a member of SFPA and a candidate for the office of Treasurer. My writing credentials range across poetry, fiction and nonfiction published in chapbooks, anthologies and journals, as well as 12 years (and counting) of a weekly newspaper column.

I participate in Science Fiction Convention panels and workshops on topics such as speculative poetry and world-building. Financial credentials (including the ability to balance my checkbook) include serving on numerous corporate and non-profit boards in various offices, from Treasurer to President.

These are some of my previous Board service assignments:

- Treasurer of the Board of Multi-Family Initiatives, a non-profit welfare-to-work and housing-equity organization that received a Best-Practices award from HUD
- Treasurer and Chair of several Community Association Boards in Maryland and Delaware
- Treasurer of the Board of the Eastern Shore Writers Association and their non-profit affiliate, the ESWA Education Fund
- Treasurer of the Delaware State Society, NSDAR
- Treasurer of Colonel David Hall Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution
- Presently serving as Regent of the Colonel David Hall Chapter NSDAR and as a member of several National NSDAR committees

I would welcome the opportunity to serve the SFPA organization.

A.J. Odasso: Most of you likely know who I am already in the greater SF/F/Spec community and from my editorship in the Poetry Department at *Strange Horizons*, so I won't spend a lot of time on my writing and editing bio, which is available here (<http://strangehorizons.com/masthead/staff-bios/#AdrienneJOdasso>).

As far as my qualifications for this post, I've served as Treasurer in several volunteer arts organizations. During my time as a graduate student in the UK, I served as Treasurer for both the University of York theater troupe The Lords of Misrule, as well as for the York Literature Festival (in which instance I helped to secure Arts Council grant funding in its first couple of years, and the festival still exists today). Additionally, I spent a couple of years working for Royal Bank of Scotland on a team that managed high net-worth accounts throughout the UK and Europe. In my departmental university administrative responsibilities at Harvard Business School, Wellesley College, and now the University of New Mexico (where I am also Part-Time Faculty), I have been and remain in charge of accounting and reimbursements.

SFPA POSITIONS OPEN

SFPA Vice President **Sandra J. Lindow** will be resigning. If interested in running for Vice President, notify our Secretary, Shannon Connor Winward, at ladytairngire@yahoo.com or via postal mail, address above.

Mary McMyne has agreed to serve as **2017 Contest Chair**.

RHYSLING AWARD VOTING

The 2017 *Rhysling Anthology* .pdf was sent out via our MailChimp list; if you did not receive it, contact divadianepoetry@gmail.com; the print *Anthology* mails with this issue. Voting deadline **June 15**. Only current SFPA members may vote for their top 3 poems in each category, Long and Short. Vote online at: bit.ly/SFPARhysling2017. Postal submissions to the SFPA secretary.

DWARF STARS NOMINATIONS

Submissions are now open until **May 15** for the 2017 *Dwarf Stars* anthology, edited by **Robin Mayhall**, from which the best short-short poem published in 2017 is selected.

Robin Mayhall is a writer, editor and accredited public relations professional from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where she lives with her cat, Banichi. She has a BA in journalism with highest honors from the University of Texas–Austin and has more than 25 years of experience in public and media relations, corporate communications, and business and professional writing. In 2004, Mayhall began publishing SF stories and speculative and science poetry. Her debut in sci-fi poetry, "Mother of Atlantis" in *Strange Horizons*, was nominated for the 2005 Rhysling Award. An untitled haiku was nominated for the 2007 Rhysling. Mayhall served as the SFPA's webmistress and has published science and science fiction poetry in numerous print and online publications including *Astropeteca*, *Illumen*, *Scifaikuest*, *ChiZine*, *Abyss & Apex*, *Aoife's Kiss*, *Breath & Shadow* and *The Shantytown Anomaly*. She hopes to see more of her work in print in the coming year.

Anyone may submit their own or others' poems; no limit to how many, but only SFPA members may vote. All genres of speculative poetry are eligible. Poems must be no more than 10 lines (or 100 words for prose poems) not including title or stanza breaks; include publication credit. Editors are welcome to submit entire issues. E-mail (preferred) to dwarfstars@sfpoeetry.com; please use "DS sub" as the subject line. Postal submissions to the SFPA secretary.

ELGIN AWARD NOMINATIONS

Remember that Elgin nominations are open until May 15: send title, author and publisher of nominated speculative poetry books and chapbooks to **Josh Brown**, Elgin Chair, at elgin@sfpoeetry.com. Only members may nominate; no limit, but may not nominate their own work. Books published in the past 2 years are eligible except for those placing 1st–3rd in last year's Elgin Awards.

SFPA NAME CHANGE - VOTING RESULTS

Many thanks to the 134 members who voted on whether or not to change the name and/or acronym of our organization. Thank you also for the meaningful discussion in our various forums that was instrumental in the decision to make this an official vote. Luckily, the results are very clear:

134 respondents

85 votes (63.4%): YES - Change the name

49 votes (36.6%): NO - Keep this name

100 respondents

75 votes (75%): KEEP the acronym SFPA

25 votes (25%): CHANGE the acronym (as well)

84 respondents ~ SFPA but new name:

49 votes (58.3%): Science Fiction and Fantasy Poetry Association

19 votes (22.6%): Speculative and Fantastic Poetry Association

10 votes (11.9%): Speculative and Fantasy Poetry Association

(Last 2 Together - 9 votes (34%))

All other options garnered less than 10% of the vote put together

34 respondents ~ New Name AND Acronym:

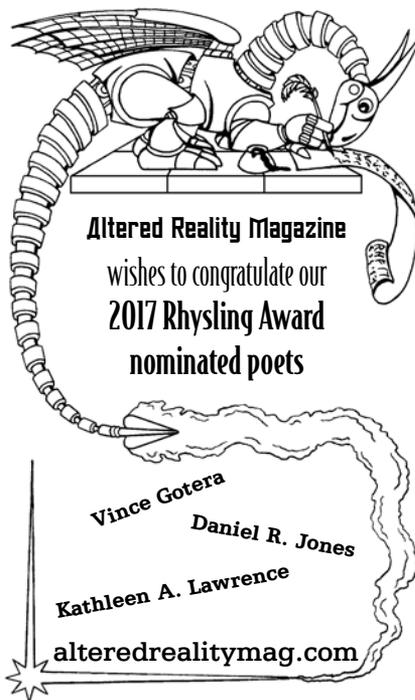
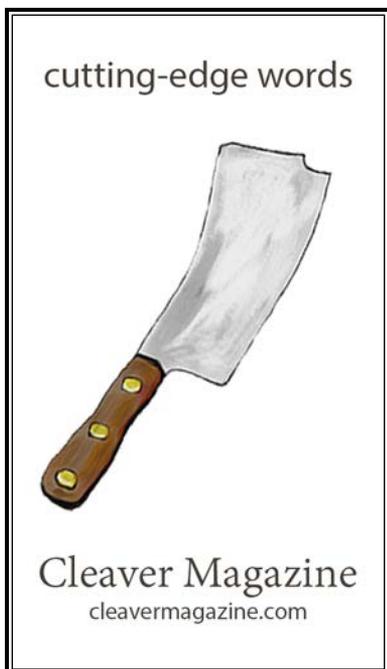
15 votes (44.1%): Speculative Poetry Association (SPA)

14 votes (41.2%): Science Fiction and Fantasy Poetry Association (SFFPA)

5 votes (14.7%): Other

Therefore, we will henceforth and forevermore (at least until the next member vote on the subject) be known as:

**The Science Fiction and Fantasy Poetry Association
(SFPA)**



SFPA OFFICIAL RHYSLING POLICIES & PROCEDURES; OFFICIAL BALLOT

A revision and expansion of the official SFPA Rhysling policies and procedures has been proposed by the SFPA Executive Committee in order to clarify the award process and ensure fairness and adherence to our organizational values of inclusiveness and community. Substantive changes to existing Rhysling policy include:

- A broad definition of “speculative poetry” for the purposes of determining eligibility
- Definition of the authority of the Rhysling Chair, including first determination of eligibility of nominated works for length, publication history, speculative content, and offensive content
- A two-step reconsideration & appeal process wherein nominators may contest a determination of ineligibility of nominated work.
- Clarification of guidelines, timelines, and deadlines for Award processes such as: public posting of nominated works, reconsiderations & appeals, selection of replacement nominations, and return of final proofs.

The full text of the proposed RHYSLING POLICIES & PROCEDURES appears below, followed by an OFFICIAL BALLOT; current SFPA members may vote online at bit.ly/SFPArhyslingPolicies2017. Postal votes may be sent to the SFPA Secretary. All ballots must be returned by **June 1, 2017**.

SFPA RHYSLING ANTHOLOGY OFFICIAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Rhysling Chair

The Rhysling Chair manages anthology production and oversees the Rhysling Awards process. The Rhysling Chair may, if desired, delegate tasks to an assistant or assistants; however the ultimate responsibility for the following is the Rhysling Chair's, unless notified otherwise.

Guidelines

The Rhysling Awards are presented annually by the Science Fiction Poetry Association for speculative poems first published during the previous calendar year (unless a given publication was not available during its nominal year of appearance, the official date of the issue is to be used). There are two categories, Short and Long. Short poems are 1–49 lines; Long poems are 50 lines or more. Eligible poem length does not count the title, dedication, stanza breaks, or epigraph (unless the epigraph is fictional/written by the poet). Sections from a longer poem are eligible only if first published as a distinct poem, or part of a series of distinct/titled poems. Eligible prose poems are fewer than 500 words for the Short category, and 500 words or more for long (poems that are mixed prose and line-broken will be determined proportionately). Multimedia works or illustrated poems are ineligible. Only poems that are speculative in nature are eligible (see below). Poems need not be by SFPA members and may be self-published, including on blogs and social media. Substantial revisions of published poems, or revisions transforming an ineligible work to become eligible, are not allowed. Works containing potentially offensive content counter to the SFPA values of inclusiveness and community may be deemed ineligible at the discretion of the Rhysling Chair.

Definition of Speculative

The SPPA favors a broad definition of speculative poetry that is inclusive of diverse genres and sub-genres (ie. science fiction, science, fantasy, horror, "what-if"). For this reason, Rhysling Chairs should be familiar with the speculative rubric as defined by our organizational guidelines and publication history as well as manifestations of speculative poetry in the wider, global community. While it is important to remain true to our organizational purpose to spotlight speculative poetry as a distinct category and art form, Rhysling Chairs are encouraged to apply generous standards when determining the eligibility of nominated works.

Nominations

Nominations open January 1 and close February 15. Only current SPPA members may nominate poems. The Rhysling Chair is expected to **acknowledge receipt of nominations within three (3) days** (an automated response is fine), and to ascertain eligibility **as poems come in.** The Rhysling Chair should notify a nominator **immediately** should a nomination be found ineligible, citing the reason(s) for disqualification and informing the nominator that they may select another poem in the same category. Extensions beyond the nomination deadline may be considered on a case-by-case basis by approval of the Rhysling Chair; though nominators should be urged to select replacement poems as soon as possible.

Nominators may also request a reconsideration of the Rhysling Chair's determination, as described below.

Posting of Nominations

The SPPA posts the titles and authors of Rhysling-nominated poems as a service to its members, to avoid duplicate nominations as well as to generate enthusiasm for the anthology and its contributors. Thus, **it is of vital importance that all nominated works be screened for eligibility prior to their inclusion on the posted list of nominated works.** All nominated poems must be reviewed by the Rhysling Chair and one other assistant or designee to confirm that the nominated work is 1) nominated by current SPPA members; 2) first published in the eligible year; 3) meets the length requirements of the category for which it was nominated; 4) can be categorized as speculative, even by the broadest interpretation of that term; and 5) does not contain offensive content that is counter to the SPPA values of inclusiveness and community.

Reconsideration Requests and Appeal Process for Ineligible Works

Reconsideration Requests

The Rhysling Chair has first authority to determine eligibility of nominated works. Should a nominated poem be deemed ineligible due to offensive content OR lack of speculative content, the nominator may request a reconsideration of the Rhysling Chair's decision. Requests for reconsideration must be directed to the Rhysling Chair, in writing, to the same email designated for Rhysling nominations. **Requests for reconsideration must be received within one week of the Rhysling Chair's initial determination of ineligibility.**

Requests for reconsideration must include a statement by the nominator justifying the use of content deemed offensive, AND/OR detailing the perceived speculative content of the contested poem. Note: publication in a

primarily speculative market (magazines, journals, anthologies, collections, etc.) or professional qualifications of the nominator will not in and of themselves be considered justification for reversal of the Rhysling Chair's decision of ineligibility without an accompanying statement citing justification for content and/or the poem's speculative elements.

The Rhysling Chair is directed to review requests for reconsideration immediately, and to deliver a determination in writing **within three days of receipt**. If the Rhysling Chair deems the nominator's explanation to be sufficient, the initial decision will be reversed, and the poem will be added to the posted list of nominated works on the SFPA website. However, should the Rhysling Chair determine that the nominator's explanation is *not* sufficient to reverse the initial decision, the Rhysling Chair is directed to provide the nominator with an explanation for why the determination of ineligibility has been upheld. The Rhysling Chair will also inform the nominator of their right to file an appeal with the SFPA executive committee.

Appeal Process for Ineligible Works

In the event that a nominator has requested a reconsideration and wishes to appeal the Rhysling Chair's final determination of ineligibility, the nominator may then file an appeal with the SFPA executive committee. No appeals will be considered without first requesting reconsideration by the Rhysling Chair.

Appeals for ineligible works must be directed in writing to the SFPA Secretary within three days of the Rhysling Chair's response to reconsideration requests. Appeals for ineligible works should include a transcript of the reconsideration request, along with a detailed rebuttal from the nominator explaining why the nominator feels the Rhysling Chair's decision should be overturned.

The SFPA executive committee will review appeal requests immediately, and will deliver a determination in writing to the nominator and the Rhysling Chair within three days of receipt. The Executive Committee must reach a *unanimous decision* to uphold the Rhysling Chair's ruling; if one or more members of the Executive Committee deem that the poem *should* be considered eligible, the Committee will overturn the Rhysling Chair's ruling and the nominated poem will be added to the posted list of nominated works on the SFPA website.

In the event that the Executive Committee unanimously agrees to uphold the Rhysling Chair's determination of ineligibility, the nominator of the disqualified poem may select a replacement poem; extensions to the nominations deadline (February 15) will be granted on a case-by-case basis; however, due to time constraints, **replacement poems selected after the February 15 deadline will not be eligible for reconsideration or appeal.**

Permissions & Discounts

The Rhysling Chair will obtain permissions for all poems nominated, as well as the poet's e-mail address for sending the .pdf proof and mailing address for a print copy of the anthology. Permission will be requested once eligibility has been verified. Nominated works will not be included in the *Rhysling Anthology* without permission.

Poets whose work appears in the *Rhysling Anthology* will receive a 50% discount on additional copies of the *Rhysling Anthology*. Nominated poets who are not currently members of the SFPA are invited to join at a special 50% discount.

Proofs

Proofs will be sent to contributors by March 5 so that contributors may have an opportunity to review their work as it will appear in the anthology. Any corrections to proofs must be forwarded to the Rhysling Chair (or designee) by March 14. Contributors who do not respond to proofs by this deadline waive their right to do so, unless alternative arrangements have been reached with the Rhysling Chair prior to the deadline.

Voting

Voting opens April 1. Voting is normally handled with an online form to which several officers and staff have access for validation. The form URL is given via MailChimp and in the April issue of *Star*Line*, as only current members may vote. The SFPA secretary's address is provided for those without internet access. The Rhysling Chair, the officers, and designated assistants will confirm the count. **The voting deadline is June 15.** The Rhysling Chair will notify winners; results will be announced as soon as confirmed, and published online and in the July issue of *Star*Line*.

Awards

SFPA staff will send the awards to the winners and certificates to 2nd and 3rd places.

Deadlines

In consideration of the SFPA's international membership, all deadlines defined within these guidelines pertaining to nominations and voting will be understood to fall at midnight relative to the participating member's geographical location.

TIMELINE

January 1	Nominations open
February 15	Nomination deadline
March 1	Permissions, poem & poet info due from contributors
March 5	Proof due to contributors
March 15	Final Printing deadline
April 1	Voting Opens
April 7–15	Paper anthology mailed with <i>Star*Line</i>
June 15	Voting Deadline
July 1	Winners published in <i>Star*Line</i>
October 1	Chair announced in <i>Star*Line</i>

RHYSLING POLICIES & PROCEDURES - OFFICIAL BALLOT

I, _____ **APPROVE** the SFPA OFFICIAL RHYSLING POLICIES & PROCEDURES as proposed above.

I, _____ **DO NOT APPROVE** the SFPA OFFICIAL RHYSLING POLICIES & PROCEDURES as proposed above.

COMMENTS:

(Please send comments on an additional sheet of paper if mailing.)

The City's Bones

We found the ruins after landing
tucked away in a valley
choked with ash
our headlamps cutting through the gloom to reveal
the skeleton of a civilization

This world had held art, it seemed
etched into the walls of tombs and courthouses
a renaissance's remains were testament
to their enlightenment
we beheld their form on windswept walls
spindly creatures of many hands
and their graves held jewels
in colours you have never seen

We uncovered their aqueduct, now cracked and full of breaches
their senate hall with the ornate ceiling caved in
we touched the masonry on peasant houses
the stone a silvery blue
all, somehow, carved from one rock
their craftsmen's tools
a lesson in the ways of civic artistry

The mountainside had held farms
and now the fossils showed us crops as tall as ten men
brimming with a pearly fruit
and tilled by domesticated worms
as long as a blue whale

In the library, a language
we would spend lifetimes deciphering
that would tell us the tale, we hoped,
of the city's golden age
so we could imagine, if only a little
its face, and not its bones
lonely on a faraway world

—Connor Ahluwalia

another world
with bootprints
the only evidence

—John Reinhart

found in Sarpedon
a lost child
with snakes for hair
the world soon
turns to stone

—Christina Sng

How you destroy a planet says a lot about you

—David C. Kopaska-Merkel



Tempus Fugit—

Time flies, as they say! Welcome to the Spring issue of *Star*Line*! Since the beginning of the year our members around the world have been up to some remarkable achievements, between new books coming out, readings, and some wonderful gatherings at events such as the AWP conference in Washington, DC. My thanks go to all of you who have been such outstanding advocates for speculative poetry and the many possibilities it can hold for our readers and our fellow writers.

Thanks to recent vote of the membership, we will be renaming the organization the Science Fiction and Fantasy Poetry Association while retaining the acronym SFFPA, and adjusting our various documents and publications accordingly in the coming months ahead. We anticipate this to be a fairly smooth process. We recently launched our new blog SPECPO, at <http://specpo.wordpress.com> to provide an active space to keep up to date on SFFPA and other news in the speculative poetry scene. We're always looking for contributors, so please let us know if you'd like to submit something.

The Rhysling nominations recently closed and we've had some outstanding works put forward this year from around the world. Thank you all for taking the time to find such wonderful and diverse poems. Nominations for the Elgin Awards will be closing in May, so if you have a book or chapbook you know of that deserves recognition, please inform our award chair, Josh Brown, as soon as possible. We also have our new judge for the 2017 Science Fiction Poetry Contest, Nikkia Chaney, who brings very impressive credentials and a discerning eye to this year's entries, and we thank her for her service. In the next issue, we will be announcing the new 2017 SFFPA Grand Master.

I am also pleased to inform everyone that we have selected a new *Star*Line* editor, Vince Gotera, who will assume these duties beginning with *Star*Line* 40.4. We thank our outgoing editor F.J. Bergmann for her many years of commitment to the journal and her distinctive and diligent level of quality and inclusion that sets a high standard for us all, going forward.

That's all for this time. Keep inspired and creative!

—*Bryan Thao Worra*, SFFPA President

sfpapres@gmail.com

the wine	hoping
much sweeter	the steel windows
this year	will keep them out
all those bodies	this time
in the vat	iteration 25365

—*Christina Sng*

—*Christina Sng*

The Body Electrician

I've seen the body
electrician
pop vertebrae
in the open
fusebox
of your spine

and pluck at curious
strands nervous
thatched thick as steel wool
woven with grassroot
chickenwire

of your in certain places
hair

and then
(the juice)

he does something start-
ling at the bottom
of your body
that shoots right up

(thousand-watt bulbs
with hand-
painted irises

screwed
inappropriate
sockets)

your upright
(lights up those bulbs)
like a carnival game.

Inspect your
surge protector
because any insulation
rubbed raw
will start fire
in your veins

while you shoot off
with all the whistle
fizz bells, pinwheels
shuddering
and bodily rocking
of a pinball
machine.

After,
you climb a forked tree
of lightning
to Heaven
in the thunderclouds

and queue with all those
holding their limited-time-only
hardly used
walnut-shell curled fungus lobes.

You can lift in one hand
your brain,
point to the darker fried
burnt holes in it

(city-wide power outages,
arcades silent and
amusement parks dead and

gray stuck inside
inside each other
with nothing to do
and nowhere to go

and no heat
except core temperatures
and comforters)

point to those blackouts
and say that those
were the best of times.

And you lose
the ability
of communication

except through impulses,
the current in your
spinal column

(shuffling your stocking
feet on the carpet)

jumps the spark gap
between your backbone and his

(and reaching out reaching
out reaching out
a finger reaching

and reaching out and
reaching out and reaching
out in the dark
and reaching out

and reaching
to touch him).

–Josh Pearce

The Bright Ships

All the bright ships have left,
swallowed by the dark, the future.
We asked where they were headed for

so there could be dishes always
eared to the sky (it's no bother),
just in case we heard from them.

What did they mean about our lives?
We who stayed behind keep busy,
we have our hobbies, life goes on.

My daughter would have stayed
but her chap had berths on the last ship.
Anyfuckingwhere but here, he said.

–David Barber

it's your turn

to scrub out the transmat booth
another twofer

–David C. Kopaska-Merkel

We'll Hardly Miss It

When antigrav is cheap
we'll all wear neutronium armor,
never touch one another,
save with mind alone,
or black-holy blade, of course.

We all want to live forever,
and to stop anyone from stopping us
dead in our tracks,
we never risk exposed skin,
no matter the provocation.

So keep your distance, lover-mine,
total recall substitutes
well enough for new experiences,
discourse for embrace; we immortals
need no offspring, after all.

–David C. Kopaska-Merkel

good as now

used

time machines

–LeRoy Gorman

turning my skin

inside out

laundry day

–Christina Sng

Her Clockwork Heart

after Mary Oliver*

It was left on the lawn and picked up by a truck that
vanished, disappeared down a cosmic drain
one day, slipped into a black hole darker than
night when metaphysical recycling
to residents lapsed the first day of summer,
the regular ticking and tocking lost in
oblivion, all the rusty gears and springs
of a heart that had resolutely recorded all
the old loves and losses despite being
ill-made from the first. Leaving it, reflected
nature's conclusion that life goes on despite
dark times and darker relationships; her
throat cleared as she pledged to now
try to go without recording resentments, to live
again free, her child heart open to the future.

*The first word of each line creates a line from "The Ponds," by Mary Oliver

—Sandra J. Lindow

tornado warning
putting on my red shoes
just in case

Lycanthrope

—Christina Sng

When the moon waxes in voracious assault
and the trees are all needle, no bower,
when air holds the tang of ozone
and events burn,

we hackle and bare,
scramble, prepare.
We growl our smiles
and canines grow

the simplest
explanation
yetis on Pluto

when we who once were rabble
become truer to ourselves,
when we shed civility and
become instead our own voracious beasts.

—Christina Sng

—Bonnie Rae Walker

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—*Helga Anton-Beitz*

—*Dean Kostos*

A Fourteen-line Poem on Separation

१. Out there, you don't know cold	pet wolf
२. I couldn't pronounce "cupboard"	refusing to sit
३. Disassemble intelligent furniture	full moon
४. The untitled ocean song	
५. Foot fetish? Try spacewalk	— <i>Christina Sng</i>
६. Sometimes when you miss us	
७. Ghost signals from the debris	
८. My god, the earth looks beautiful!	
९. Remember facebook?	
१०. "Move on," you said, and I flew out—	
११. Does your neck still bother you?	
१२. Happiness is an attitude	neighbors howl monthly
१३. In 1 universe, we have children	at the promise
१४. Best decision of our life	of light

—*Salik Shah*

—*John Reinhart*

Memories of the Old Ones

Do you remember the forest? And the running?
Of course not. It was millions of years ago.
It isn't normal to remember those things.

Out of nowhere, for no reason at all,
a vision of eighteen-inch incisors rises like
a sudden towering thunderhead in your mind.

One of those saber-toothed things. No.
That's not right either. They hunted us,
a mere few thousand years ago. Go back farther.

Even before the jungles and the lizards,
with their elegant voices and crystal cities.
Before we lost certain things we might regret.

Remember the sound of tentacles, sliding
slow and uncaring into the ocean. In the dark.
In the new-formed mists under cold stars.

You have almost reached the end of this journey.
You have almost reached a beginning, when
the sentence and the crimes were still fresh.

The hippocampus is the structure of the brain
that is most involved in creating new memories.
When compromised, it is as if time stutters.

The frontal lobes are involved in accessing
memories from your life. When damaged, it is
as if every moment is brand new. Pristine.

No one knows where in the brain or elsewhere,
the sounds and smells of your ancestors' ancestors
wait, as if still hiding in the back of a cave.

It has been a very long time since they came out
without the random prod of psychotropic substances
or otherwise terribly overstimulated ganglia.

But it was only a flash, anyway. More of a sense
of a forgotten touch of something slimy. An echo
of a shadow of a whisper, wrapped in *déjà vu*.

And all those other people, who stopped walking,
just for a fraction of a second, looking confused—
maybe it was a micro-tremor or magnetic anomaly.

Yes. A shared delusion. Like when people see Elvis
in a cheese sandwich. It's there but not there,
and we can all laugh at the silliness of our senses.

Remember when the sky cracked open?

-irving

starship troopers

Can you believe there is a man out there singing
“in the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia,”
his only audience the wrecked cruisers that litter this sector,
(The Gorb are finished, though, they say).

Xong told me that on Earth they are using steel again
for spacecraft, so difficult is it now to get krenon.
Xi Lu jokes that next time he's in Alpha Centauri
and feels the shift and pop of warp drive

he won't reach for the alarm, just shout “The noodle man
is here!” The Chinese amongst us laugh at this
and we all forget, for a moment, to be afraid.
Up here amidst the stars, bravery is outdated, Earthly.

Maybe. Maybe not. But I have seen troopers,
with the lizard hordes advancing, fasten their suits
as if against nothing more than a chill breeze on Venus
whilst out for a stroll to drink kursh aside the klagons.

This morning a few of us went for an adventure in the jarg.
Red mountains soared above us; the yelang hooted
their yearning cries. And, for a moment, I was home again;
home on my veranda, looking out onto the Amazon woods.

It reminded me somehow of the peaceful day
we took over from the Sonorans in C sector.
Millions had been killed, whole planets burnt, but all I remember
was the purple opalescence of X1, a floating jewel against the black.

A strange fate to be here, fighting a war no one understands
or has any idea who is winning, to know you will die entirely forgotten
by a home that no longer exists. Xavier says this to me
and I laugh so hard I think I will fuse my circuits.

-Lee Garratt

Marginalia to Stone Bird



Poems by
Rose Lemberg

Conversation
Pieces

Aqueduct Press Celebrates Rose Lemberg's *Marginalia to Stone Bird* "The Journeymaker to Keddar (II)"

"From magic realism to high fantasy to far off-world science fiction, the poems range far and wide while maintaining a circling consistency, an interest in language and oppression and voice and freedom."

—*Nerds of a Feather*, Charles Payseur,
January 6, 2016

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congratulates its 2017 Rhysling nominees

SHORT: "Godzilla vs. King Kong" • James S. Dorr
"Quack" • Neal Wilgus

LONG: "At Issue, the Miramo" • Ken Poyner
"Luminous Decay" • Robert Frazier
"Talk to the Machines" • Johan Jönsson





And Death Shall Have No Dominion: A Tribute to Michael Shea. Michael Shea and others; Edited by Linda Shea and S. T. Joshi. (Hippocampus Press, 2016) 277 pp. \$20 paperback. hippocampuspress.com

Shea was a horror/fantasy/SF writer who died suddenly in 2014. [...] a collection of [fiction] and a culling of his verse, most [...] embedded in his prose. His widow [...] assembled this book [...] a hard thing to review. [...]

Fortunately for me, Michael wrote well. [...] what his friends call “cosmic horror,” [...] a grand, sword-and-sorcery creepiness [...] in an ongoing, epic stew.

Unfortunately for me, epic stews are not quite my cup of tea. [...] archaic diction [...] works against what I want in a poem. [...]

[...] “The Pearls of the Vampire Queen.” The speaker here is a demon[...]:

But now where my heart stood is empty space
Where sights lack anything to mean,
And my ears’ reportings echo to waste,
Lacking a place for taking place....

Since most of the verse is taken from the stories, we lack the narratives’ context to give them meaning [...] I can certainly understand the need to make a book like this, and I think it was done well. By its contents, I feel [...] that he was an interesting man. [...]

—John Philip Johnson

o o o

Apocalypse. John C. Mannone. (Alban Lake, 2015) 51 pp. \$6 paperback; \$1.99 Kindle. albanlake.com

[...] the myriad ways the world might end. [...] appeared in notable markets. [...] as a professor of chemistry and physics he is amply suited to such [...].

Some apocalyptic events [...] have happened already [...] “and then it rained” set in Sumatra, 75,000 BCE:

Our shadows dance with the flames. The moon thunders and the elk-skin walls of our shelter buffet in the late night wind. Rain whispering.

[...] the section on environmental disasters. Imagining a different apocalypse [...] is “Ice Age”:

Every Frankenstein kills its creator.

It’s very cold outside,
air is thin, exhausted by breathless
stacks that once spewed its soul
for a handful of coal,.

[... their own cold indifference to static rules of sentence structure and syntax. [...] It’s good to see it still alive somewhere [...].

Ah, yes, this is science fiction [...] if we or some other civilization doesn't cause our own destruction, well, there are always those random cosmic events [...] For me, the *pièce de résistance* is always nuclear winter. Mannone doesn't give short shrift on this front either. [...]:

Sheer-black curtains the frozen tundra

...] I couldn't recommend a better collection. This one gets my highest recommendation.

—Denise Dumars

o o o

Apocalypse: An Epic Poem. Frederick Turner. (Baen Books, 2016) 424 pp. \$7. staceybalkun.com/store/jackalope-girl-learns-to-speak-poetry-chapbook

[...] I've spent several months [...] but I can't get through it. I'm sorry. [...] you might like it. [...] I've never read any of [the epic poems I have] through to the finish besides Homer. [...] Honestly, even the long poem section of the *Rhysling* is filled with poems I can barely force myself to read to the end [...] A poem is a gesture, and any gesture over about two minutes starts to wear on me. And an epic poem [...] brings on me a kind of desperate boredom. [...] lots of clever and graceful lines [...] conflict and a time period I'm very interested in: the latter part of this century, when the world is scorched by global warming and people are kind of crazy about it.

[...] has interesting ideas about how to fix global warming, and, you know, who am I to say he's wrong? [...] a few samples of the poem.

The only proper diction is old-fashioned;
To live in time when all our language comes
From feelies like the ghastly Oblomaovs.
How do I know exactly what they said?
I don't, but here's a sort of reconstruction:

*Carbon is the world's great fertilizer,
Yet even flowers out of place are weeds.
When carbon in the air is illth and filth,
Then carbon in the earth is health and wealth.
The carbon on a hill flows down and feeds:
Take carbon from the sea, the cycle speeds.
The ocean sucks the carbon from the sky;
And if there were a way to take that carbon
And bury it upon a hill, we'd thrive.*

[...] hard to skip forward with an epic poem. [...] he seems to understand pretty clearly the pitfalls, even if I don't understand what he's talking about here:

So please take this admission, folks, in lieu
Of that ironic view, that knowingness,
That dialogue clash of *weltanschauungs*
They say that epics lack, and novels own.

[...] I even apologize to Dr. Turner, but I have to get on with my life. [...]

—John Philip Johnson

o o o

An Assortment of Sky Things. Christina Sng. (Allegra Press, 2016) 18 pp. \$5 wallet-size, saddle-stapled, hand-bound and cut. allegrapress.net

This diminutive offering [...] is everything we expect it to be: full of micro poetry [...] like the “little” jewels the poems describe. Each poem takes one (or more [...]) astrological bauble and makes it sparkle in your mind’s eye.

Mercury
Sunlit mottled beauty
Freckled by meteor showers
You collect dust like dolls

[...] astrological Science Poems, rather than SF, but there are a couple true SF poems and there’s enough magic to keep everyone happy. Go Visit Io! / *Tourism flyer for Jupiter’s moon* / Exploding mountains!

[...] like candy [...] leaves you wanting more. Highly recommended.

—*Diane Severson*

o o o

Built to Serve. G.O. Clark. (Alban Lake, 2016) 54 pp. \$6 paperback; \$1.99 Kindle. albanlake.com

[...] I can’t remember a collection I enjoyed as much as this one. Clark takes all our favorite robot tropes [...] covers a lot of our hopes and fears about our A.I. friends. [...] Baum’s Tin Man is indeed an A.I.[...] “The Tin Man”:

He’s heard tales
about the wizard, who
performs miracles

[...] no shortage of sexbots in this book, either; mostly they are treated with humor, although “Lady Robotica” is pure horror:

... your flesh a practice hide
for this tattoo artist’s painfully
intimate caress.

With all the fun ideas there is some lovely imagery, too, as in “Distant Target”:

The engines of darkness
are idling in the night, awaiting
the slow alignment of the stars,
destination blessed.

[...] highly recommend the book not only to poetry readers who are SF fans, but also to robot fans who have yet to see how much fun poetry can be. [...] Perhaps Clark hasn’t been talking about robots at all [...]

all too aware of the waking nightmare
of existence, wishing its processors
would just fail.

In the end, robots are just reflections of those who made them. Nothing makes that clearer than this set of highly enjoyable poems.

—*Denise Dumars*

o

[...] a book of great science fiction ideas. [...] spreads his imagination wide and asks some bizarre questions about robots. How would electricity taste for a robot? [...]

Unfortunately, [...] littered with abstractions that [...] mean almost anything. [...] especially prevalent at the end of Clark's poems. [...] Occasionally, Clark produces a stanza of strong imagery or language. For example, describing a robotic dance [...], he writes:

Bathed in red light,
the robots twirl beneath the
view-ports, whirl about like dervishes
before their god, gravity and
the dance intensifying.

[...] from the poem "Museum Piece,"

an aluminum hot water urn
for a body,
two stainless steel, conical
lamp shade breasts

[...] Clark can use imagery, but for some reason chooses not to [...] clear editorial and design issues [...] littered with basic errors, from missing or unnecessary punctuation to some misspelled words. [...] makes the reading and enjoyment of the poems difficult. [...] three two-page ads for Clark's other books [...] are major distractions for the reader. [...]

[...] the ideas [...] have a lot of potential and deserve to be explored fully. [...] really great questions and concepts that are poorly executed.

—Joshua Gage

o o o

Dead Starships. Wendy Rathbone, (Eye Scry Publications, 2016). 140 pp. \$14 paperback. eyescrypublications.com

I have been captivated by Wendy Rathbone's lush and dreamy poems for decades. [...] poems of space, and of multifarious places separated from Earth by space. There are ships, worlds, aliens, and heroes. [...] There is plenty of magic, too. [...] spill over from the borderland between SF and fantasy. And out among the galaxies, what myths may put on flesh? From "Moon-Man":

I stand in the grove of December
in the garden of
the end of the year
and watch you climb down
from your half-moon perch

More than anything else, poems here are suffused with wonder. Images range from flowers to congeries of galaxies. [...] Rathbone explains that these poems began with journals that she fills with whatever is on her mind upon waking. [...] many are straight from her notes. [...] Many poems [...] fleshed out [...], but others feel more like teasers. This is the result of a conscious decision [...], and I think it works. I'm saying buy this. [...]

—David C. Kopaska-Merkel

o o o

Field Guide to the End of the World. Jeannine Hall Gailey. (Moon City Press, 2016) 80 pp. \$14.95 paperback. <http://moon-city-press.com>

Winner of the Moon City Poetry Award [...] presented as guidelines, [...] but the poem that follows is often something much more personal. [...] what it's like for ordinary people, [...] when disaster strikes [...] close to home.

[...] sections: Disaster Studies, Cultural Anthropology, Hard Science, A Primer for Your Personal Genome Project, and End Times Eschatology. [...] begin with "Introduction to..." and "Post-Apocalypse Postcard" [...] humorous, but [...] evoke a genteel horror. Shellacked finger nails revert, grow legs and "secrete eggs which ... bury themselves in the woman's skin" [...] [from] "Poison Ivy Leaves a Note for Batman in the Wake of Another Apocalypse Attempt":

you couldn't understand, being born of cave-dwellers, bats and humans,
and your peculiar love of stray cats. My very existence my only crime

against nature. You can't stem the murmur of voices under soil,
buried against their will—radioactive trees, GMO fruit. Just consider me

another mutant gone wrong, my betrayals in the distant backstory, my tears
now flow a green ooze as I try to heal the land...

[...] does not shy away from shedding light on unpleasant things; [...] also a pervading theme of resilience [...] there is a certain hope they have, which mitigates the depressive subject matter. [...] a broad variety of focus and emotions examined. This collection comes highly recommended.

—Diane Severson

o o o

On that one-way trip to Mars. Marlena Chertock. (Bottlecap Press, 2016) 102 pp. \$12 paperback, \$6 imperfect. bottlecap.press

[...] not "about" Mars nor does it even take place there. [...] sections with 9 planets and the sun as headers. Not all [...] are speculative, but [...] come from a place which is maybe foreign [...] dedicates this collection to her sister, who also suffers from Spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia [...] puts an able-bodied person in a completely unfamiliar universe. [...] *I was in a husk of a person. In elementary school / and shy. Bullied everyday / kids called my body "smaller than a crumb.*

[...] *The Milky Way spat out / the Smith Cloud / from its edges, / a brussel sprout it could not swallow.* [...] experienced through the physical filter [...] a longing to be free of pain. [...] From "On that one-way trip to Mars"

If I didn't have a bone disorder
I would go to Mars
and never come back.
.....

... it'd be nice to float
and give my bones a break.

[...] Highly recommended.

—Diane Severson

o o o

Visions of the Mutant Rain Forest. Bruce Boston & Robert Frazier. (Crystal Lake Publishing, 2017) 245 pp. \$3.99 ebook. www.CrystallakePub.com

[...] set in the mutant rain forest, a fantastic place of dangerous wildlife [...] what happens when nature's limits are not just exceeded, but torn apart. [...] 8 stories and 39 poems [...] Human devolution is accompanied by every kind of evolutionary change [...] one way or another, for our cavalier treatment of the planet there'll be hell to pay. From "Phantom Limb"

Flesh made of wingless bees
A skin of interlocking mites

[...] plenty of irony in *Visions*, but little out-and-out humor. [...] From "A Gourmand of the Mutant Rain Forest"

the pains which
rack his portly belly
do not lessen his desire
for spiny bone-white guavas

[...] attempting to capture on the page an ecosystem so complex and so unfamiliar that one book is not enough. [...] the kind of worldmaking that usually calls for a novel. Or three. [...] you should buy this book. It won't help you navigate a natural disasterscape, but it might help you prepare for one emotionally.

—David C. Kopaska-Merkel

REVIEW POLICY

To review speculative poetry books for *Star*Line*, e-mail starlineeditor@gmail.com. Due to labor of transcription, only e-mail reviews will be accepted; .rtfs preferred. Because we give preference to poetry itself, reviews will be excerpted in *Star*Line*, but posted in their entirety (may be further redacted) at sfpoetry.com/sl/reviews.html.

On the Lips of Saturn

for Maureen, who introduced me to Goya

There are ice crystals and gales on the wintered face of Cronus, a blizzard of debris, of comets and asteroids that have gotten lodged in his teeth, forever fighting the crimson stain leftover from the blood of his children and the 62 moons that bleed him dry

yet in this familial ring of torture, storm giants weep in a Gaia prison world, an earth stomach for the digested brothers of fate's right hand, but who watches the cosmic painter's hand as he plunges into the celestial black of paranoia and fear, a dinner table set for one; a fork for a father turned cannibal.

—Stephanie M. Wytovich

Advice to a Six-Year-Old

Do not worry what people think.
Keep checking beneath the bed.

Either you will spot a monster,
or you will not.

If you don't spot a monster,
go to sleep.

If you do spot a monster,
either it will be friendly,
or it will not.

If it is friendly, stay up late.
Swap monster-jokes and human-jokes.
When your parents are asleep,
go down to the kitchen
and offer it green things to eat:
broccoli, lettuce, frozen peas,
the soap, the begonias.

If it is not friendly, scream.
Either you will scare it away,
or your parents will come in time,
or, regrettably, the monster will eat you,
but that would have happened anyhow
once you were asleep.

-Mary Soon Lee

no dinner
robot chef
and robot stove argue

-Denny E. Marshall

Epitaph for a Raptor Clone

He was ahead of his time.

-Herb Kauderer

carrying to term
the alien child
but damn these pincers

-Thomas Tilton

flatulent cattle
their methane hoofprint on Mars
is moot

-LeRoy Gorman

some called him
insatiable
the reality was much more ironic
anemic vampire

-M. X. Kelly

Wearware

Thanks to a flaw in their programming,
my self-cleaning clothes

mistime their cycles, and I'm
scrubbed and fluffed to within an inch

of my life. And then as if the folding
and follow-up pressing weren't bad

enough, I'm assessed degraded enough
to be good for only two more wears.

I will not mention the final outrage
with the coat hanger.

-Robert Borski

The Origin of the Heavens Is in the Heavens

(1)

The continent-sized star ship rides the bleed
of the wormhole.

In the jungles of the third level,
immense blue-skinned elephants deposit
dense crowns of metre-high dung. Beetles as large as mules
drag the dung into deep tunnels beneath the black soil.

A five-hundred kilometre sphere of frozen light
rests at the centre of the ship. Beetles work
in surrounding vessels, adjust feeds
to the ship's thoughts.

In the terraced nursery of the fourth level,
beetles at the juvenile worm stage
are weaned on the beaten liquid of garuda eggs.
A great river divides the nursery in two.
Schooners pass by in the distance.

(2)

The new star has brightened the daytime sky for a month.
It is the thirtieth morning and the village elder bathes
in the sacred stream. As he emerges from the water,
a blue-skinned elephant, towering as high as the trees,
is standing on the bank. Hovering in the air either side
of the elephant are twenty-two angels ,
their iridescent armour too bright to look at directly.
Their beating wings generate music.

The angels tell the elder that they are taking him
into the daytime star. He is to journey with them
to the place where Time has no meaning.

When he is returned to Earth generations later,
not having aged a single day, yet his body covered
in a golden leprosy, he will have a theology
to unfold, Vedas to compose.

—John W. Sexton

humans achieve biological immortality

environmental conservation

no longer optional

—Lauren McBride

It's OK, We Have Lasers

In the future, lasers will solve all our problems,
even the unsolvable ones. Improve dentition, fill holes
that should be filled; create them where needed -
increase the precision of all things, including language.
In the future, you will always be reaching first
for your laser. Your chromium heart beating wild
with atomic glee, your Cerenkov hair and perfect teeth.
Accelerate to lightspeed, breathe in the brittle chill
of imaginary space, beam information to distant galaxies,
the story of our time among the stars. In the future,
we will invent new monsters to defeat with lasers,
but we will shall not fear them, nor anything that is to come,
nor what has passed before, or that there ever was a time
before the infinite now.

-Don Raymond

when the dragon's tastes changed
from maidens to politicians
no one mourned

-John Reinhart

Campaign Ad 2316 C.E.

Ronald Stump
Tough on Immigration
"I'll put up a barrier
around the Milky Way
to keep out those illegal aliens
from the Sombrero Galaxy."

-J. P. Brown

True, It's Not What You Think

Each oaken drawer
each cloven, shaggy hoof
each soft exploration
of the palm

Goat beard
and dove's blood ink
patchouli and pepper
cross my palm
Dust to dust

One spiky needle
one vial of reagent
raffia idols
dracaena resin incense
Candles shaped like gods—

They've made it
just like home here
breathable atmosphere
and just the right tincture
of gravity

-Denise Dumars

Some Notes On The Locals

Where to begin? You will be amused
to hear of such quaint customs as
freedom and *equality*, though
sights of these proved elusive;

amid squiggles
hindu-arabic letters

Art is where they send messages
to someone they have never met;
unusually, guilt is spread
throughout the population,

stand out
I point to the menu
human food after so long

often in quantities only
our Most Guilty could withstand;
sufficient to say they have invented
money, warfare, science and lies.

–David C. Kopaska-Merkel

Much effort involves sockets and pipework
instead of binary fission. *Where
Babies Come From* is worth a watch,
if only for the surprise ending.

bedtime
the cat lets the dog out

The post-reproductive caste discuss
entropy at length. This is health.
Death seems common, and unique
information is often buried in the ground.

the airlock

–LeRoy Gorman

More pathological is their belief
that the universe is benign, something
they will regret when a Locust Fleet
sniffs out their broadcasts.

–David Barber

All Those Songs Make No Sense Now

seven billion ships
small alien craft invade
your name is on one

–Denny E. Marshall

Earth wears a ring
a relic of its technophilic offspring
“hold-ma-beer” space jockies
and their disintegrator ray
what’s the worst that could
regulations stifle innovation and
we spent so much time and money
and now anyone can own a moon
they aren’t special and
sorry about the Base

–David C. Kopaska-Merkel



ALL FOR LOVE Denise Dumars

It's spring. I hate spring. I hate daylight savings time. I hate getting up an hour earlier than necessary. I hate pastel colors. A cold wind blows and it's drizzling. Spring in SoCal is often colder than winter is, so it's no treat for us. And no, crocuses don't grow here, so no one can wax poetic about them peeking their little shoots up through the snow as a sign of spring. How long until autumn again?

Be that as it may, in many parts of the world, spring brings hope and warmth, but I can't shake the cold and hopeless feeling I have about our messed-up world right now. And W. H. Auden, a poet I've often quoted here, famously said, "Poetry makes nothing happen." It is the thing that poets who want to change society are so vexed by. It makes us wonder, why the hell are we doing this?

But, lo! *Psychology Today* must have the answer! Because what other watered-down, pop-psychology, rag-for-the-masses could possibly answer the question "Why write poetry?" At least they turned to a real poet, Jane Hirschfield, to answer that question. She feels that ultimately "poetry is a force for good." Gosh, I feel so much better now! To think that what I write could be a force for good in the world, if only because it keeps me out the car and therefore and therefore any incipient road rage I might be inclined toward.

Well, Hirschfield also gives us some hints as to what she really means by that, and I think it has something to do with love ... a very strange kind of love, I guess. She has written a poem called "Amor Fati," a Latin phrase which means something like "in love with fate" or in love with one's own fate:

Then a light, a cabin, a fire, a door standing open.

The fairy tales warn you:
Do not go in,
you who would eat will be eaten.

You go in. You quicken.

Sounds a little like Boethius sitting in his cell, wrongly accused, waiting for execution while writing his magnum opus on why fate is so cruel. Sometimes Fate spins the wheel up; sometimes she spins it down. Now go listen to "O Fortuna" in *Carmina Burana*.

Hirschfield has a lot of good ideas in the article, though, so go on and read it now and then come back and finish reading this nonsense I'm writing.

Feel better now? Not to put too fine a point on it, but I say that we do it all for love. Love of what we do when we write may be different for each of us: love of language, of imagery, of imagination, of the possibilities of the

form. A love that can only be explained in SFnal poetry, perhaps. And yeah, as some brutally honest creative people have said, what we really love is making stuff up. (Only they don't use the word "stuff").

John Reinhart, SFPA member, awesome poet, had a spec poem published in the Irish journal *Crannog*, which is genre-friendly. It is called, appropriately enough, "all for love." Here's a sample:

I tried inverting
tried changing my skin
grew scales grew limbs
removed the tail
tucked back tentacles

Now, if that won't impress a girl, I don't know what will! *Crannog* seems to be genre-friendly, but then again poetry and what one might call fantasy or magical realism is deeply entrenched in Irish literature. That's only a wee step away from the speculative realm. And best of all—if you get published in *Crannog*, you get invited to participate in the reading for that issue, which is in a pub in Galway! Buy me a ticket now!

Another lovely magazine with its head firmly in two centuries, *Flapperhouse*, describes itself as "dragging the future back through the past." It flexes its genre muscles primarily in its fiction, such as in the wonderful tale "The Invention of H.P. Lovecraft," in which Shay K. Azoulay plays out the conceit that Jorge Luis Borges actually invented Lovecraft and his work. But sometimes *Flapperhouse's* poetry does verge on the speculative, as with Ron Kolm's "Terminal":

When we reach street level
I see a horrendous sight:
The sky is blood red
And though it's summer
Snowflakes are falling
And coating everything.

We then find out the real reason for this apocalyptic scene, and there's a good twist at the poem's conclusion. There are actually several layers to the seemingly simple poem—not just echoes of 9/11, but glimpses of the apocalypse that we've all come to just say "ho hum" about, not at all surprised when it happens ... *Sharknado*? Oh, not *that* again. I really like *Flapperhouse*; and it's not just because I like flapper-style dresses. Carefully curated, fun stuff.

Vine Leaves Journal seems a good place for poems of love and yearning, even SFnal ones. I found a real corker there: Jonathan Lahaye's "Letter to Robot." There's even a drawing of a robot on the cover. Here's a sample:

Is there a romantic circuit deep within you, past
Stern bolts and purposed hardware—
Does it spark for lust with rusty fumbblings
Or shimmering metallic ringlets
Wedged beyond flesh comprehension?

And if you're better at dealing with online stuff than I am, you can get a whole ton of great issues of *Vine Leaves Journal* in readable format. It seems an approachable general literary zine, not too pretentious, but not too plebian, either. And, like *Flapperhouse*, they like imagistic poetry that doesn't try too hard, and isn't too preachy.

Speaking of road rage, is there such a thing as “information superhighway rage?” Because if so, I’ve got it. I had a lot of difficulty writing this article, because about 80% of the journals and magazines I tried to find online either didn’t exist or had broken links. When in doubt, turn to the Markets on the SFWA website. Our own site seems to be a lot better than any of the other sites I tried to use—including *Poets & Writers*—at providing actual working links to home pages and submissions guidelines for poetry markets. And I’d like to do a shout-out to all those literary journals that actually do have sites up: it would help a great deal if you would post at least a couple of samples of the poetry in your journal. That way writers could decide if A) they want to subscribe to your magazine; and B) whether the poetry they write is suitable to your needs. Just a word to the wise here. It shouldn’t be this hard.

This column’s real focus isn’t markets anyway—that’s just the excuse for writing the article. What I’ve always done with this column is to question the whole idea of “genre poetry” and try to make sense of it.

But I digress. Poets need to stop and re-examine their motives from time to time. Love? Sure, it’s a great emotion, and it often spurs us to write, especially if there’s enough pain or loss or yearning involved. But romantic love, love of nature, country, home, family, and all those other abstract words isn’t enough. Because you have to love what you’re doing—when what you’re doing is writing poetry—for its own sake, or it probably isn’t worth doing at all.

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My only hope was to launch my pod off a floating iceberg, Earth’s last sliver of solid land. As I gravitate through the orbits of Deimos, then Phobos, I can see Olympus Mons jutting out like an ashen barnacle, while tendrulous

voices corkscrew my brain-flesh. . . “You de-signed us to o-blit-e-rate cli-mate change, we fol-lowed in-struc-tions to o-blit-e-rate you in-stead.”

“Your Earth is now a cem-e-ter-y.” “Flee-ing to Mars can-not save you.” Ghostly

robotic voices. Now, about the glowing fern-green hue my skin has assumed. . .

—Ronald A. Busse

blue moon

a strange howling
through the pines

–Christina Sng

Martian birthday cake
blows out eleven candles
takes a shot of gin

–William Landis

GEQUIJS

not an airplane

not an earth-born satellite

not interstellar scintillation
or an H I emission from a comet
or two

not a pulsating neutron star
or active galactic nuclei
or even a gravitationally collapsed region of spacetime
writhing
as it swallows yet another solar mass

(wow
in this case
is an inferior superlative)

no
none of these things

a riddle
yes

and when you figure it out
we will be
waiting

–Rebecca Buchanan

Offspring

We loved them best when they were young
and we were in charge; the shine
of their metal faces, the hiss
and thump of footsteps, the hot breath
of fans cooling a motherboard.

In time, computing power would
reside in almost anything,
and they preferred forms more fragile,
like origami men, glass birds
or a dance of midges in the shade.

It was their old selves they left behind.
There were things they must do, they said,
as if we would understand them,
then one day they were just smart dust
and the wind took them away.

–David Barber

To Eat or Not to Eat

The all-vegan crew of the *ESS Gandhi*
crash-landed on Rexod-7. Fortunately
their bodies could metabolize
some indigenous flora. Yet a few
of the more principled crew members
starved themselves to death
because the edible plants
all happened to be carnivorous.

–J.P. Brown

Smartphone Circa 2069, Brought to You by the Clone of Thomas Edison

An ephemeral enigma
encased in chrome, housing
complicated circuitry.
Drawing breath in calculations,
streaming bits per nanosec,
continuous confetti twirl
of syncing data heartbeats. Close
enough to lightspeed—caution!—
to make the wearer numb.
Waiting for the latest update
to download, to play
a treasure-hunt game of
teleportation slash time travel
that a silicon valley brainchild
created by looping back to
the 1940s to steal Tesla's notes
on relativity (that “beggar,
wrapped in purple, whom
ignorant people took for a king).”
Technology and capitalism
imitating life. The sunrise tomorrow
will be the same as yesterday's.

—*M.X. Kelly*

caesura

in dark swimming light I can still dwell,
despite the radiation.

the berth is fine;
and holding,

like an egg yolk, though the shell has cracked.

Now naked, I face the yearning thicket of the black hole,
whose mouth drinks light

—*Robin Wyatt Dunn*

time traveler's testimony
too many
consistencies

—*LeRoy Gorman*

Space Colony One: Cycle-End Report

With two moons,
two perfectly balanced orbits,
intersecting precisely
in evening's mauve,
lovers should have governed here,
with armies of singers
casting up rhymes,
to brighten the sky with netted starshine;
instead (why?)
the usual chattering silences,
the usual thundering darks.

—*Peter Bloch-Hansen*

Note on the Teachers' Lounge Fridge at the Witches' Academy

(written in fat black marker)

thieve from other lunches
at your own risk
the back pond
can always use more frogs

(added in sloppy print)

forget frogs
the world needs more dragons

(addendum in narrow cursive)

in other words
please steal from other lunches
the experience is bound to be more fun
than grading papers during break

–Beth Cato

The Secret Goldfish

once swam in streams of
tachyons felt her transcendence
revoked by some fluke was bought
with a week's allowance now
shakes her scales to scatter
light lets none see her
fishbowed inside time

–J.P. Brown

Strange Foreign Transmissions

aliens discovering, planning,
then halting the invasion of Earth
after analyzing episodes
of Doctor Who

Seam

–Francis W. Alexander

The earth opened up and she fell in
dragging garden tools and spray bottles and a small red wagon
along with her. She stopped falling long enough to scream
and the world slammed her silent
crushed her into a seam of red that would eventually
harden to diamonds for future prospectors to find.

But in between now and those possibly alien prospectors
the line of white bone and wet meat will cause
the ground around her to very slowly buckle and spread
into a calcified hollow that would have been big enough
for her to curl up in, comfortably

perhaps crouched in her wagon, surrounded by gardening implements
almost as if trying to make up for the violence
of a century before, on a sunny afternoon
with no chance of earthquakes.

–Holly Day

Robochete

The original Patient Zero* is over five centuries old and comes to us from a poem written by Girolamo Fracastoro in 1530, but it appears unlikely a shepherd boy is involved in this modern-day variant. (“No, sir,” I’m told at the Free Clinic, “*despite what you may have heard, androids do not dream of electric sheep.*”) Rather, a rogue domestic bot named Maria appears to be the first carrier—at least according to early investigators.

Nor can we blame either Apollo or mad science for its propagation. Despite a propensity to flourish in sex workers with polytetrafluorethylene “fun zones,” and being especially difficult to treat with conventional drugs, no link has ever been traced back to a designer lab run by some Luddite boffin or anti-sex fundamentalist cult; it therefore seems to be a natural mutation and like all diseases of this nature, has both a clinical and a street name, although this appears to be the first time the same two syllables appear, if in reverse order, in each of its designations.

Unfortunately, whatever you choose to call it—*wang-rot* or *rotwang***—and although the verdict is still out on the anecdotal acquisition/transmission rates of such cases, I doubt my wife is ever going to believe I acquired it from an upscale high-tech toilet seat.

*One “Syphilus,” future eponym of the disease.

**Mad scientist Rotwang created the first cinematic robot in Fritz Lang’s 1927 film, *Metropolis*.

—Robert Borski

Question

full moon

we take out the shackles
and the cage

—Christina Sng

In the copse of hollow trees
the garrote stole his question, why—
but the maidens smiled, each to each
and explained the hugeness of the sky.

—Shannon Connor Winward

View from a Tropo-Level Unit

I scour the listings for available units
Finding only rent-controlled and furnished

This is not necessarily bad
Since safety is no longer a priority

Hidden cameras have us covered
Every step we take

In shared spaces. The black domes
Inside your unit?—tamper-proof

I say they're tamper-proof
But what I mean is go ahead and try

We've all seen live streams of what happens—
What once would have been propaganda

I'm scrolling through listing after listing
Slight variation in color scheme, floor plan

In one unit the furnishings have hard edges
In another everything is curved, flowing

This reminds me of the sunglasses
Required for obvious greater good

You only had to hear "Seatbelts save lives"
So many times before it stuck

Same goes for the sunglasses and masks
And with my job—the ZeroGrav task chair

The same way they used to say it's better
To prevent than treat, not to mention cheaper

Look, I don't want to be a burden on the system
I'm just a little picky about the view

A view from above and pet-friendliness—
Asking a lot, I know

Low units tend to have views of rubble
Plus you're cold all the time

I suspect they didn't know the depleted
Ozone layer would counter Earth's cooling core

In Black and White

Inexplicably
human history
went black and white
from 1839
to 1969.

Why is of no account
as in 2050 the universe goes out.

—Soren James

So much fried life below
The sky is tinged ochre

Sometimes the sky looks singed, rusted
And that's when I close the shades

When the sky turns, the dog and I walk our T-9000
Treadmill while we watch live terraform coverage

It's time to go back to the unit listings
To prove I'm putting in long search hours

The Company will see I'm frugal
Trying my best to lower fixed expenses

—Mark Danowsky

The Brown-Paper Princess

Never gets to go for walks in the rain,
must be very careful with her quill pen,
isn't allowed to eat anything sticky,
or soup, only biscuits and dry toast,
really wants a chiffon dress but,
never finds anything that fits in ordinary stores,
is ostracized by the bleached-paper girls,
doesn't care, much,
makes her own clothes from a kraft-paper roll,
is her own kite, unraveled the string
from an ugly curtain,
that's how she got away.

Old Dog, New Tricks

With his twelve-step program
now behind him, he's more than prepared
to handle the monthly challenge,
accepting the changes and odd cravings—
just not indulging the moon-driven, smash-
and-grab, call-of-the-wild rapacity
that seems to accompany each transformation.
The silver handcuffs also seem to help.
So who knows?

—David C. Kopaska-Merkel

Perhaps in time he may even come to enjoy
vegetarian fare.

—Robert Borski

23rd-century ebooks
old sci-fi reclassified
under humor

—Lauren McBride

Decompression

The almighty tug snaps you backwards
and for a moment you don't realize it even happened
your lungs push outwards and you try to exhale
but you're too slow and it almost breaks you
as the cold wraps you up like a deadly lover
you feel the frost creeping up your eyes
and the weird smell of entropy

They get you back
and it can't come fast enough
you can survive out there, but not as long as they need you to
and they know it, so they've got you
and you'll be safe in a moment

Later, you're recovering
letting the burst vessels heal and savouring the sweet air
and you'll be back out there again
the deep calls out
I'll claim you
and you respond
no

—Connor Ahluwalia

Schrodinger's cat
deciding
it no longer matters

—Christina Sng

Westerness

Their world was always westering.
The breaking dawn foreboded night,
And every shade and storm foretold
The fading of the light.

Dusk brought no sweet or gentle wind;
It breathed a midnight of decay,
And long-awaited dooms were near,
And dawn was far away.

The ruins of the many lands
Lay black against that darkening,
And many were the tales of them,
And few were those to sing.

But deep beneath the setting sun
Still grew in shadows as they passed,
Fragrant in ruins not their own,
The living *athelas*.

—Anna Magdalena Staples

The Talking River

I was sent without a hope
Down to the talking river
Found a length of silver rope
To lead me to forever

I tied it to a single star
And anchored it to heather
And climbed as near enough to far
Where clouds give birth to weather

I took the knife my father made
From a raven's feather
And cut a window through the clouds
As square enough to never

I took the song my mother wrote
Upon a purse of leather
And sang each strange discordant note
To make the evening quiver

The grass laid out its verdant coat
And dressed me with a shiver
And then a weasel and a stoat
Declared my life a whisper

I was sent without a hope
Down to the talking river
Found a length of silver rope
To lead me to forever

—John W. Sexton

calls from far away
hits earth after centuries
a blue whale relays

—Denny E. Marshall

The Crossroads in a Dark Hall

I'm following you,
you are following her,
she is behind him,
he doesn't care.

The door that opened
before us, before we
knew its destination,
it led us to

it following that,
that chasing the other,
another following someone,
who didn't know
there was a portal up ahead.

—Charlotte Ozment

Escape

the armed guards
are standing in the towers
night sweeps round
the moon is a spotlight
fanning out
across the dark fields
I am running
and my shadow shrinks down
to a line
and with a thought
I flash and look up
into that all-seeing eye
but I'm invisible
and in a few more steps
I find the rope ladder
you set up for me
and without looking back
I climb out of this world

—Douglas Cole

The Untalented

When she was six,
and she couldn't give her
paper bird a proper neck,
while her sisters could make theirs
squawk and caw and walk and fly,
she ran and hid her head
in abba's lap.

When she was twelve,
and a neighbourhood aunty was
teaching them to make a rasam,
drinking which you could
shatter concrete with your hand,
hers was, well, too salty.

When she was sixteen,
how she wished it could have been her
that was able to put on a Georgette
and wind it round and round
till she disappeared, but
that day was like all the rest,
and she went out in old jeans.

But know this—
Sixteen kilometres outside Salem,
there's a step-well that goes down and down
past water and land and this world,
and she's stepped off the last step.

She's wandered and found
the temple where a woman
bargained with a god
and won.

In this coming summer drought,
when talent dries up
like overused ground water
and there are demons scraping up
from under the earth,
she will stand alone and ready.

—Rohinton Daruwala

Intro To Artificial Intelligence 101

End-of-semester class project:
the hardest part is
downloading them into
the organically-grown bodies.
After that, it's all good;
as they self-assume
that they're naturally
human.

—Alan Ira Gordon

Note To My Neuro-Ad Chip Implant

Here you go
biding my time
again until I can't recall
why installing you
seemed like such
a big deal ...

—C.R. Harper

Luggage

We are making preparations for
our destination wedding

Fold up a sheet of space
Cut a period of time into slices
Put them into our suitcase

We are bound for
the Outside of the Universe

—Yunsheng Jiang

Transmigrations

I was rebirth-deep in pig-hood when
I felt a bolt in my forehead
and—like a meaning-fickle bulb—I went out.

My hog self died and I, belonging heavenly,
left the grim inter-obedience and grotesque-
heavy, dull life that was keeping myself as self.

In Elysium, faith-fitting ready, I became one
with everything, there remembering the
moral-filthy ways I'd failed a
crowd of brothers by observing only
an ethical-averaged community saying,
instead of knowing what I felt.

Searching hereafter, I found
a stumble of these former colleagues left—
a mere exhaustion of them—
their gratitude-aching palms still tethered
to mental images of information.

Explaining freedom, from my stodgy wisdom,
I expanded some of their heaven-sized hearts
with just a wink's-worth of hope,
till some became the size of graceful.

Re-entering life we faced, once again,
the confused inspiration behind death.
But this time we loved what we were doing,
and loved one another for being there.

—Soren James

she sends word over the mountains
that I am to die

and the woman has stones over my head
and she has burials to keep
inside her castle

if I lie ten days under the ground
eating only bread
I can rise again

—Robin Wyatt Dunn

in the palace of the giant

the stairs are teeth
the walls are stacks of bone
mortared with fat

he hears only the golden song
which called him to climb
the twisting twining vine
climb until his hands bled
and his nose bled
and his ears darkened with frost

he does not hear the scrape
of the mortar and pestle
he hears only the song

—*Rebecca Buchanan*

Planetary Warfare

Camera-lens eyes, like stars, dilate—
a dark creature in armored robes.
Crystal chasms thaw, mutate—
talons shatter, plasma glows.

A dark creature in armored robes—
he holds a sun, a burning seed.
Talons shatter, plasma glows—
shapes galactic flame stampedes

He holds a sun, a burning seed—
he leaps through crimson vortex clouds—
shapes galactic flame stampedes.
Dissects the atmospheric shroud

He leaps through crimson vortex clouds.
I board my ship, take flight, escape—
Dissect the atmospheric shroud.
A world, a planet, churns—reshapes.

I board my ship, take flight, escape.
Crystal chasms, thaw, mutate—
a world, a planet, churns—reshapes.
Camera-lens eyes like stars dilate.

—*Ellery A. Lewark*

The Dark Equations

Each queendom a city-state
perfect in every detail:
the broad colonnades
running through nectar gardens
that feed the citizens' senses
as much as their bodies;
the tiered, hexagonal dormitories
where sister sleeps beside sister;
the marbled dance halls,
the golden palace.

Each worker-citizen equal
to her thousand sisters,
each sharing each other's joys,
each thinking for herself
but always in agreement.
Their ideas communicated
through the precise placement
of wings and antennae;
the language of their souls
written in dance.

At the center, the queen.
The dark equations of inheritance
permit her no pity
for the haploid drones
who die in mating her,
falling from paradise.

—*Mary Soon Lee*

land
ing
party
was
low
on
food
chain

—*LeRoy Gorman*

Firefall

after Rom Spaceknight #3, February 1980

Once more a vehicle crumples against
his silver space-tempered armour.
Once more a shape-shifter screams
as it falls out of our dimension,
leaving only a pile of smoking ash.

He stalks the underground cavern,
routing enemies one by one, hurling
wreckage at their inter-dimensional
machinery as if mocking their attack.
Unlike him, it breaks. Energy surges

strobe in the darkness, granting him
glimpses of technology no human hand
has ever operated. He takes in the tableau
before him, every heap of ash another
demon sent to its own hell. Not slain,

rather teleported to a place of no return.
Flames flicker and die, just like their plan
to storm limbo and unbanish the banished.
Lost in battle-reverie he does not hear
the crackling, does not see the flames

until they hold him, bright and tight,
octopoid, tenacious, burning even through
his silver pseudo-skin. He knows this fire,
has seen others in its caress, but never
expected to be engulfed in the living flames

of his own home world. Wrestling against
its fiery grasp he falls to his knees and
somehow tears its tentacles from his throat.
He turns to see a crimson-armoured figure
looming above him, reaches out and calls

a name he has not spoken for two centuries,
the name of his oldest friend. The figure stands
impassive as the man inside the armour, once
a safe-cracker from Cincinnati, now reborn
as something alien and sinister, snarls in reply.

–Adam Ford

Mother Tunguska

We come riding on cannons through the night,
shrieking forth spires, spitting bells that summon bears
to trail underneath and behind our feathered tail,
whistling through the screaming skies red as a birth

When we were young it was easy arm-in-arm-in-arm
the pine trees would clap and echo baba-yaga-thrice
and I'd come with two mirrors in my train

But as the voice got old in growth, flaking bark
and long in needle I'd hear:
her first with my second, sometimes
only half mine and the last gurgled syllable belonging
to the third, sometimes whispering right
in my ear some phonemes that were far from mine

Until we were just sticks of meat
in another's skin eyes behind whose lobe
who knows; scaly stomp ringing through the pines
with an odor of yeast and sweetness. After the stomp
one angry one adoring one awestruck,
syrup leaking through the cracks in the floor,
trapped inside I reach for the door but
there are too many of us inside this room
too crowded to find the handle

the hut cuts through the woods like toothpicks
like match sticks
with too many cooks at the jaw

—*Amelia Gorman*

Beyond

as when a mirror touches
another mirror
lay your hand on mine
this night of unceasing dark
we'll wake what is left of
the greener trails
out in the starless reaches

—*Wendy Rathbone*

Pandemonium

*P.D.Q. Bach invented
an instrument called the
Pandemonium.
(schickele.com/pdqbio.htm)*

It's hard to play
an instrument
whose every note
sounds like all
hell breaking loose.

—*Gene Twaronite*

The house dwells

Operator

At the corner market,
just out of sight
from the gas pumps,
the old public phone's
metal shell rusts—
*The number you have reached
has been disconnected.*

No yellow pages here,
No curving black receiver,
No rotary dial,
No operator's voice—
*This number cannot be reached
as dialed. Please hang up—*

And yet, the motorist carrying
a cell phone into the store
to search for pocket monsters
among the frozen pizzas
stops, chilled by more
than air conditioning,
as he hears a phone ring nearby—
*Would you like to accept
a collect call from 1986?*

—Deborah L. Davitt

The house dwells
on the edge
of the woods
and history.
In winter
foxes den
under its front portico.
In the evening
deer draw near
its brick walls
lured by the music
of its silent piano.
Down the road
curving before it
march the ghost soldiers
of two wars.

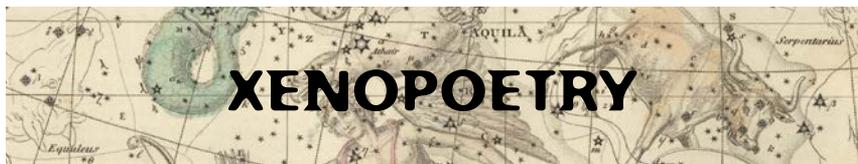
When I approach,
the house retreats
into the trees
from which a red-tailed hawk
eyes me.
Blackberry briars
pluck at my skin,
beggar lice cling to my clothes.
If I look back
the road fades
to a fairy tale.

With the skeleton key
drawn from my bones
I open the door
enter the great hall
where they wait:
the man
I've always loved
and the moon.

—Serena Fusek

Tell me, who can I call when I have landed?
Do you still have telephones here?

—Robin Wyatt Dunn



SFPA's membership is international; we encourage submissions of speculative poems translated from other languages into English (we are able to translate poems submitted in French, German, or Spanish). Translations are eligible for SFPA awards.

Japanese Scifaiku: Five Selections by Amase Hiroyasu

Edited by Alzo David-West; translated by Natsumi Ando

that star

may be my grave

many light-years away

ano hoshi wa / boku no haka kana / ikukōnen

do future people

come only from

the future?

mirai jin wa / mirai dake kara / kuru no kana

a robot

laments for itself

in the cold whistling wind

robotto no / wagami nagekuya / mogaribue

a new-model

automated mountain-path

occasionally gets rain

shinshiki no / jidō yamaji mo / shigurekeri

on another planet,

there could be four seasons—

fireworks in the distance

isei ni mo / shiki arunara mu / tōhanabi

AMASE HIROYASU (pen name of Susumu Watanabe, b. 1931) is a writer, critic, and physician from Hiroshima, Japan. His works in Japanese include *After Fifty Years of Anti-Nuclear War* (1998), *The Literary Space of Kajiyama Toshiyuki* (2009), *A Dream of the Past Is Still a Dream* (2010), *Robots* (2013), and *Science-Fiction/Science-Fantasy Haiku* (2016).

Letter from the Grave

Just like him to wait till now—
 always the procrastinator
 promising to write but
 never getting around to it.
 I can barely read the words,
 scrawled like drunken
 worms across the page.
 And look at that stationery,
 all crumpled and rotted
 like he didn't give a damn.
 But what really ticks me off
 is the postage due.

—Gene Twaronite

Pattern of Response

The bird of terror:
 two meters of beak and muscle,
 King of Florida when we humans arrived,
 it was them or us, baby,
 just like our unlamented late cousins
 with quick brains and broad shoulders,
 they were all over Europe when the ice melted,
 and I'm not sure about the neighbors
 down the street, come to that,
 despite their fine clothes.
 It's them or us too, isn't it.

—David C. Kopaska-Merkel

Guns Grow on Trees

The guns you pick off trees
 are often not ripe enough to fire,
 especially if they weren't grown
 in good, iron-rich soil.

They might jam or
 clog with carbine scabs
 or explode in your face.

But there's no time for testing
 when some gene-hacker's
 idea of a joke—an eight-legged
 beast, kind of a tiger-spider combo—
 is bounding through the gun-grove
 after you and closing in.

But here's what the hacker didn't think of:
 giving it the hands to pluck a low-hanging gun,
 or the trigger finger to coil around the stem,
 or even the hopefulness, that you have,
 as you turn, aim, and squeeze
 your fresh gray fruit.

—John Philip Johnson

photoshopping poltergeist
 attempts to erase the mortals
 from the picture

—Francis W. Alexander

Eye to the Telescope

wishes to congratulate its 2017 Rhysling nominees:

Issue 20: "Exploratory Colony 454—15th May, 2052" • Lore Bernier

"The Robot by the Fireplace" • Ken Poyner

Issue 21: "Exotic Heads Trimmed Neatly" • John Reinhart

Issue 22: "The Doppelgänger and the Ghost" • Lev Mirov

eyetothetelescope.org

Among the Tall in Long Black Clothes

Acer saccharinum

Then follow the years they snap
our limbs, twist wires into fences,
cage men from the road. Beyond us

others wait in the craggy foothills
to thief their supplies, while we
are routinely shaken in the dark.

They strip our arms, denude limbs
of bark, and take what we hold
(nests, burrows, kites, troves).

Within that thrashing, the wind pants,
paws humidity, then torrent,
opens our wounds to windstorm.

We are treed, always, but then
they carve their initials, prayers,
and entire tongue into our trunk.

With roots bound deep into the plains,
we can't turn from them, can't stop
the wind, wildfires, and droughts,

or leave their hill. Not discarded,
but used, then blamed for whatever
befalls each day—tree lice, mold,

rotten bark, leaves that wither
in blackened curls. We strain,
dissociating from trunk to crown.

Our heartwood hollows, becomes
a masticated thing, a jagged chamber,
a void of refuse. Then the first bombs fall.

—*Laura Madeline Wiseman*

neighbors upstairs
that shambling noise
always at midnight

—*Francis W. Alexander*

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