

WATCH THE SKIES





This How You Lose the Time War

By Amal El-Mohtar and Max Gladstone

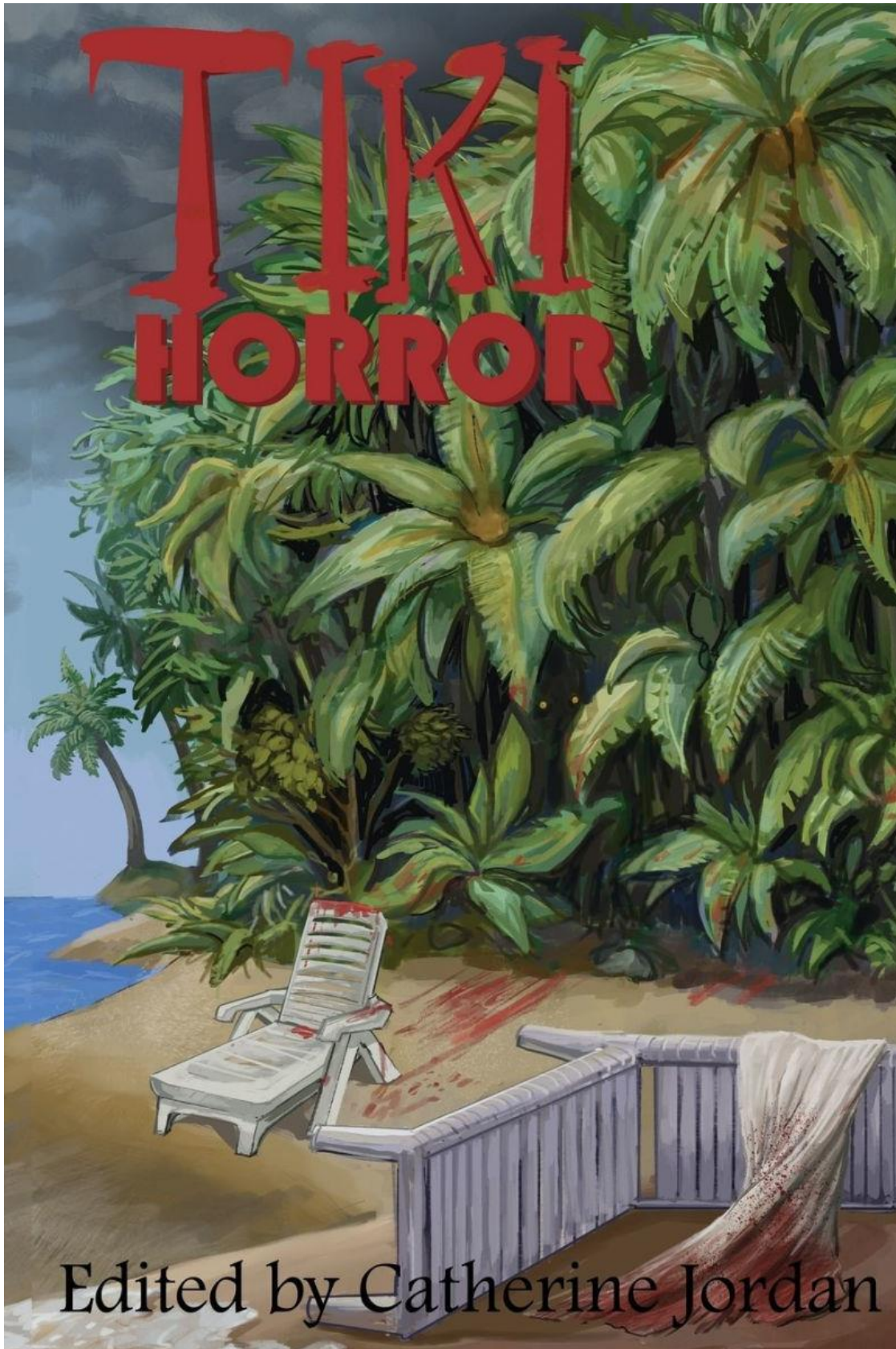
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There is a war that happens in between the moments. A battle between two sides who will never give in. At stake is the future – or rather all futures. Outside of time, two of the best soldiers tweak the strands of possibility to influence the outcomes to lead to victory for their societies. One founded on the complexity of machines and technology and the other grown from the fecundity and resilience of nature. What begins as an admiration for a skilled opponent, morphs into an unexpected connection, as Red and Blue, the two champions, begin to communicate in unique and what they hope are untraceable ways. But their masters will never give in, never stop trying to dominate the worldlines with their ideals. If Red and Blue aren't careful, they will soon be history, just another set of casualties in an unending struggle. They are, however, the best of the best, and neither is going to give up when they are challenged.

-Welcome to the 26th year of Watch the Skies. April's meeting is on the 20th, in person, at the Simpson Library, Mechanicsburg (unless otherwise announced). Next month's book is The Tainted Cup – Robert Jackson Bennett.

-Cover art by Eric V. Hardenbrook

Check out the website at: watchtheskies.org or contact us at: wtsnewsletter@gmail.com



Edited by Catherine Jordan

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NEW RELEASES

APRIL 2026

NEAL ASHER - **Dark Agent**

ANINDITA BANERJEE & SHERRYL VINT, ET AL., EDS. - **Reactionary
Worldbuilding: From Speculative Imagination to Political Practice**

RJ BARKER - **Mortedant's Peril**

S.A. BARNES - **Death's Daughter**

NICHOLAS BINGE - **Abyss**

SARAH REES BRENNAN - **All Hail Chaos**

LOIS MCMASTER BUJOLD - **Penric's Intrigues**

JIM BUTCHER - **Out Law**

SUNYI DEAN - **The Girl with a Thousand Faces**

MATT DINNIMAN - **A Parade of Horribles**

MAHMUD EL SAYED - **The Republic of Memory**

GREGORY FEELEY - **The Weighing of Ayre**

SARAH GAILEY - **Make Me Better**

MATT HAIG - **The Midnight Train**

ANDREA HAIRSTON - **The Redemption Center Is Closed on Sundays**

ADA HOFFMAN - **Ignore All Previous Instructions**

HILDUR KNÚTSDÓTTIR & MARY ROBINETTE KOWAL, TR. - **Dead**

SARAH LANGAN - **Trad Wife**

ANN LECKIE - **Radiant Star**

FONDA LEE - **The Last Contract of Isako**

SEANAN MCGUIRE - **Velveteen vs. The Consequences of Her Actions**

ALAN MOORE - **I Hear a New World**

KIM NEWMAN - **Model Actress Whatever**

JEFF NOON - **Moon Over Brendle**

K.J. PARKER - Sister Svangerd and the Devil You Know

VAISHNAVI PATEL - We Dance Upon Demons

VERONICA ROTH - Seek the Traitor's Son

ROBERT J. SAWYER - The Downloaded 2: Ghosts in the Machine

ADRIAN TCHAIKOVSKY - Terrible Worlds: Destinations

TLOTLO TSAMAASE - House of Margins

NGHI VO - A Long and Speaking Silence

MARTHA WELLS - Platform Decay

On Reading ...

One of the Watchers asked recently, "if you were going to recommend one book to start somebody off who wants to read science fiction, what would that book be?"

I had actually written a piece about this before but this is a topic that deserves an update. The sheer number of books published during any given month, let alone year, is impossible for an individual to keep up with. Having a solid recommendation from a friend goes a long way. I went hunting and found nothing in my own archive, but I did track down the original eventually.

NOT MY SCI FI – UPDATED

When my mother told me that her book of the month club steadfastly refused to read anything from science fiction, my immediate reaction was to become defensive of my favorite genre. How could any book club worthy of the name deny such a massive portion of today's literature? Didn't they realize that science fiction stories are the basis for 4 of the top 5 grossing movies of all time? How could anyone deny such a pervasive part of society, not just literature?

The more I pondered this, the clearer the answer became. Today's society has attached a stigma to the terminology "science fiction". Say those two words and the image conjured is that of an overweight middle aged man

with an ill fitting 60's style space uniform, and badly done prosthetic ears, quoting Gene Rodenberry.

"This is not my science fiction!" the voice inside me hollered.

Then it hit me. This is science fiction from my mother's generation. If it's what my mother identifies with, then it's likely the same image is shared among her contemporaries.

Now is my big chance! After stating my personal disbelief, I have been granted an opportunity to defend the faith! I have been challenged to put forth a list of science fiction novels for the next selection of the book club.

I wrote that some years ago and published it in Watch The Skies. I have actually cut off the recommendations I gave them. In the time since then, my recommendations and my personal tastes have grown and changed. I also want to include works that can serve as an introduction for younger folks who are searching for something to read. Inclusion is an important aspect of many parts of genre fiction these days. This list will encompass fantasy and science fiction. The two parts have been paired for so long they have become inseparable.

I have read all of these books, many of them more than once. OK, most of them... fine. All of them, more than once. I've included a little of my thought process on each of them. These are all great books to get somebody started in science fiction or fantasy. I recommend all of these works – especially if you know somebody looking for an introduction.

The Hobbit – Tolkien, J.R.R.

This is the novel started it all for me. It is masterfully done. The key here is that it is meant to be read out loud to someone else. That method of delivery can make all the difference. Find an unabridged audio book – that IS reading it! This is a classic and deservedly so. I would also recommend staying as far away from the film adaptations as possible. Those simply failed after the first half hour of film.

Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children – Riggs, Ransom

Digging up odd old photos and creating the stories behind them. This is a paranormal / portal fantasy type book with an easy to access story. Following the main character as he navigates the ins and outs of the abandoned orphanage and all the curious, odd and outright scary images that go along with his travels makes for a great story. There are also a

series of wonderful illustrations to supply vivid imagery. This is another work adapted into a film. As with most films, I recommend reading the book first.

The Martian - Weir, Andy

This book is truly science fiction. Take away the science and the story collapses. The parts of this book that ring true are likely because the author studied how the space travel aspects and orbital mechanics of the planets work. Despite having a large amount of that kind of content, it's a fast and engaging read. This is yet another selection that has had a film adaptation made. Definitely read the book before seeing the film.

Steelheart– Sanderson, Brandon

For the comic book fans and the folks that like all the Marvel Cinematic Universe this is a book you should read. What if normal people are given super powers? What if those people are jerks? How do you fight a super human? I love the way Mr. Sanderson's work reads. This is an engaging and believable story all the way. Well worth digging into.

The Red : First Light – Nagata, Linda

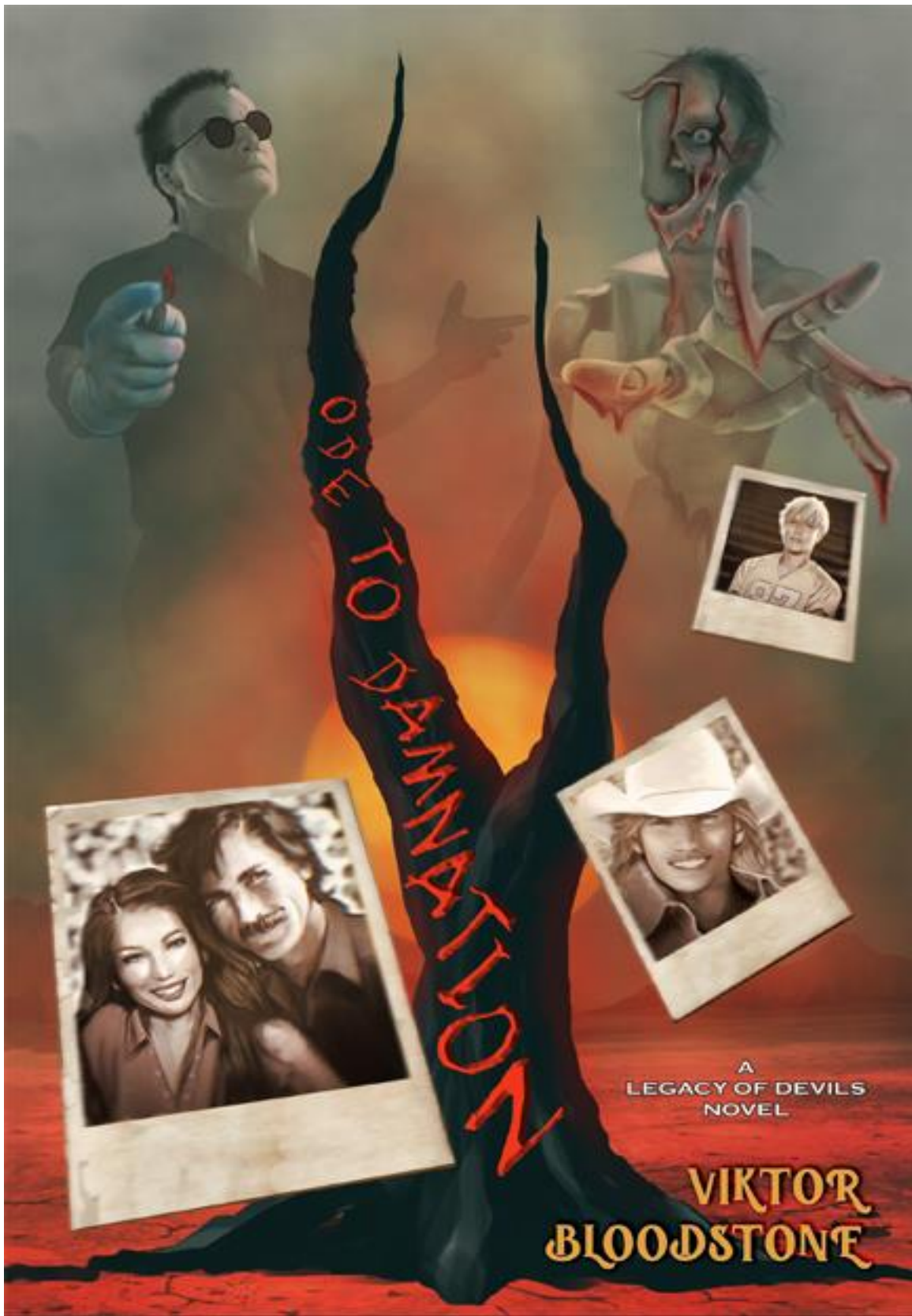
I will not lie, I envy the way Ms. Nagata writes. This is not the only work of hers I have read. She is an excellent author and this is a thought-provoking book. The story is set in the future where for profit wars and defense industry causes are what soldiers are involved in. This contains a lot of military elements along with the future tech for readers out there looking for some action and some excitement. When you read this, be prepared to finish out the series.

Fart Quest – Reynolds, Aaron

This last work is actually a children's book. I felt it was important to have something that could fill that need and this book is both fun and a gateway into role playing games. Is the title childish? Of course it is. Meet them where they are, but allow them to want more. The cover illustration is great and so is all the interior artwork. It's quick, it's easy and is a great way to get a disinterested kid into reading.

Hopefully you'll find something worthy on the list that will allow you to connect with somebody over a good book. Happy reading!

By Eric V. Hardenbrook



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NEWS OF THE REALM

April

Winners of the British Science Fiction Association 2025

Best Novel

When There Are Wolves Again- E.J. Swift

Best Shorter Fiction (for novelettes and novellas)

“The Apologists“- Tade Thompson

Best Short Fiction

“Godzilla as a Young Man Named Mike“- E.M. Faulds

Best Collection (for collections and anthologies)

Blood in the Bricks- Neil Williamson

Best Fiction for Younger Readers

Doctor Who: The Robot Revolution- Una McCormack

Best Non-Fiction (Long)

Colourfields: Writing About Writing About Science Fiction- Fiction Paul Kincaid

Best Non-Fiction (Short)

“Spec Fic and the Politics of Identity: Finding the Self in Other-, Eugen Bacon

Best Translated Short Fiction

“Liecrafft“- Anita Moskat, tr. Austin Wagner

Best Artwork

Nick Wells for the tessellated cover art of The Fractal Series

Best Audio Fiction

The Dex Legacy Series 3- Emily Inkpen

2026 Locus Awards Top 10 Finalists (selected categories)

SCIENCE FICTION NOVELS

The Folded Sky- Elizabeth Bear
Picks & Shovels- Cory Doctorow
Notes from a Regicide- Isaac Fellman
When We Were Real- Daryl Gregory
All That We See or Seem- Ken Liu
Where the Axe Is Buried- Ray Nayler
Slow Gods- Claire North
Death of the Author- Nnedi Okorafor
The Shattering Peace- John Scalzi
Shroud- Adrian Tchaikovsky

FANTASY NOVELS

The Devils- Joe Abercrombie
The Tomb of Dragons- Katherine Addison
Lessons in Magic and Disaster- Charlie Jane Anders
A Drop of Corruption- Robert Jackson Bennett
The Everlasting- Alix E. Harrow
The Raven Scholar- Antonia Hodgson
Hemlock & Silver- T. Kingfisher
Katabasis- R.F. Kuang
The Incandescent- Emily Tesh
Queen Demon- Martha Wells

HORROR NOVELS

The Possession of Alba Díaz- Isabel Cañas
Spread Me- Sarah Gailey
King Sorrow- Joe Hill
The Buffalo Hunter Hunter- Stephen Graham Jones
The Library at Hellebore- Cassandra Khaw
Never Flinch- Stephen King
The Bewitching- Silvia Moreno-Garcia
It Was Her House First- Cherie Priest
The Crimson Road- A.G. Slatter
The Staircase in the Woods- Chuck Wendig

YOUNG ADULT NOVELS

The Singular Life of Aria Patel- Samira Ahmed
Make Me a Monster- Kalynn Bayron
Costumes for Time Travelers- A.R. Capetta
The Executioners Three- Susan Dennard
The Underwood Tapes- Amanda DeWitt
Among Ghosts- Rachel Hartman
Sky on Fire- E.K. Johnston
Starstrike- Yoon Ha Lee
I Am Not Jessica Chen- Ann Liang
They Bloom at Night- Trang Thanh Tran

FIRST NOVELS

A Song of Legends Lost- M.H. Ayinde
Red Rabbit Ghost- Jen Julian
When Devils Sing- Xan Kaur
Awake in the Floating City- Susanna Kwan
Luminous- Silvia Park
Archive of Unknown Universes- Ruben Reyes Jr.
North Sun- Or The Voyage of the Whaleship Esther, Ethan Rutherford
Blob- Maggie Su
Song of Spores- Bogi Takács
Sour Cherry- Natalia Theodoridou

NOVELLAS

The Orb of Cairado- Katherine Addison
The River Has Roots- Amal El-Mohtar
What Stalks the Deep- T. Kingfisher
Cinder House- Freya Marske
Automatic Noodle- Annalee Newitz
Making History- K.J. Parker
Psychopomp & Circumstance- Eden Royce
Lives of Bitter Rain- Adrian Tchaikovsky
A Mouthful of Dust- Nghi Vo
Murder by Memory- Olivia Waite

NOVELETTES

“The Witch and the Wyrn“- Elizabeth Bear
“Barnacle“- Kate Elliott
“Uncertain Sons“- Thomas Ha
“We Begin Where Infinity Ends“- Somto Ihezue
“The Tin Man’s Ghost“- Ray Nayler

“The Millay Illusion”- Sarah Pinsker
“When He Calls Your Name”- Catherynne M. Valente
“The Twenty-One Second God”- Peter Watts
“Wolf Moon, Antler Moon”- A.C. Wise
“Phantom View”- John Wiswell

SHORT STORIES

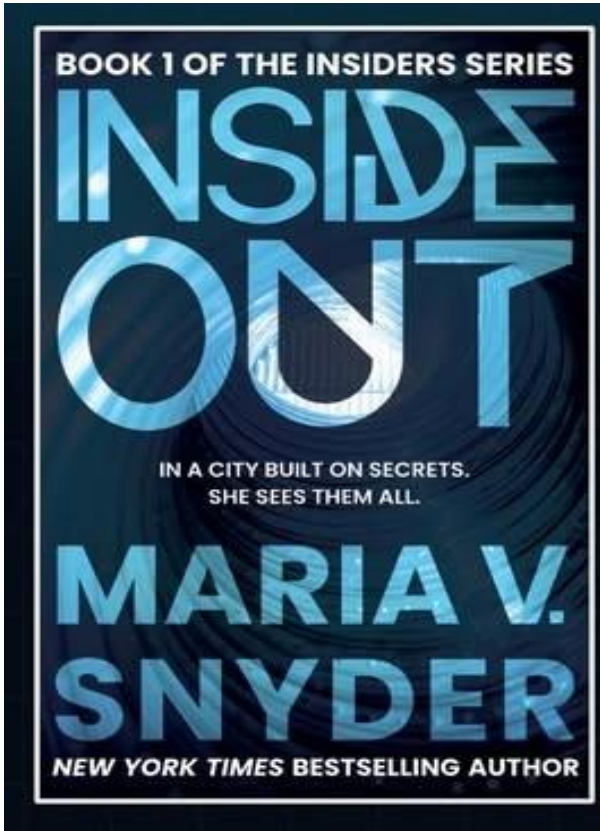
“Secret Night”- Nathan Ballingrud
“In the Halls of the Makeshift King”- Tobias S. Buckell
“In My Country”- Thomas Ha
“Wire Mother”- Isabel J. Kim
“The Shape of Stones”- Hildur Knútsdóttir
“Courtney Lovecraft’s Book of the Dead”- Sam J. Miller
“Because I Held His Name Like a Key”- Aimee Ogden
“Landline”- Kelly Robson
“Missing Helen”- Tia Tashiro
“Woolly”- Carrie Vaughn

ANTHOLOGY

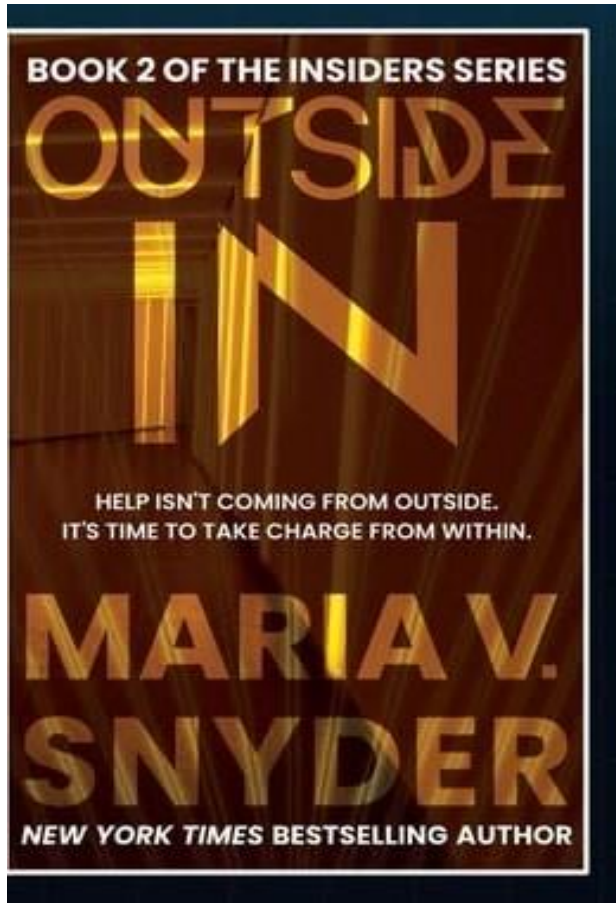
The Black Fantastic- andré m. carrington, ed.
Night & Day- Ellen Datlow, ed.
Storyteller: A Tanith Lee Tribute Anthology- Julie C. Day, Carina Bissett & Craig Laurance Gidney, eds.
The End of the World As We Know It- Christopher Golden & Brian Keene, eds.
We Will Rise Again, Karen Lord- Annalee Newitz & Malka Older, eds.
Amplitudes: Stories of Queer and Trans Futurity- Lee Mandelo, ed.
The Best Weird Fiction of the Year: Volume 1- Michael Kelly, ed.
Year’s Best Canadian Fantasy and Science Fiction: Volume Three- Stephen Kotowych, ed.
The Best American Science Fiction and Fantasy 2025- Nnedi Okorafor & John Joseph Adams, eds.
As the Earth Dreams: Black Canadian Speculative Stories- Terese Mason Pierre, ed.

2026 Philip K. Dick Award

Presented to M.R. Carey for their book, Outlaw Planet, at Norwescon 48.



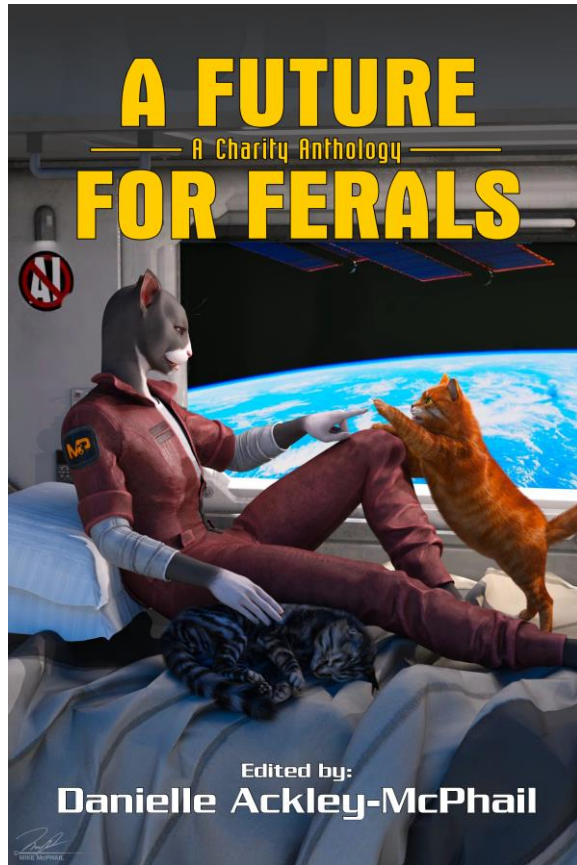
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TILLYER'S NEWS OF THE HIGH FRONTIER

-It may be hard to believe that there was actually other stuff that's happened in the last month beyond the fact the humans went farther than we ever have in space and circled around the Moon. As a matter of fact, a Cygnus XL cargo ship, made by Northrup Grumman, made the second successful journey to the ISS Space Station, docked and then delivered a payload of around 11K pounds. Named in memoriam of an astronaut from the time of the Shuttles, the S.S. Steven R. Nagel was lifted by a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket on 4/11/26. On Monday the 13th, the robotic arm of the ISS caught the capsule and brought it safely to dock. Onboard were a number of experiments including a quantum science module, a gut microbiome experiment, a receiver that could improve our ability to detect space weather as well as protect GPS and radar systems deployed in orbit, as well as materials which could increase stem cell production for therapy to deal with blood diseases and cancer. Unlike crew capsules, the Cygnus XI is a single use vehicle. In other words, after delivering its payload, it becomes a garbage hauler. After being docked at the ISS for seven months, the first mission was slowly filled with trash from the crew and then released to de-orbit and burn up upon re-entry.

-On April 21st, at the Greenbelt, MD facility, NASA will host the media to reveal its newly completed Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope. Designed to look not only deep into the universe, the telescope will also be used to provide direct images of worlds that orbit other stars by blocking the light of the observed stars. Looking at the cosmos, the telescope will use the infrared to conduct what is touted as the ultimate wide-area infrared survey. This program will cover 12% of the sky and will last for 520 days. Designed to look above the plane of the galaxy, the survey will provide astronomers with Hubble quality images which are immensely informationally dense. Not only will the survey reveal many previously unseen galaxies and provide their spectra; it will also be used to look at their motions in order to provide data on gravitational shifts. These shifts will allow scientists to infer information about the nature of the dark matter present affecting the motion of the observed galaxies. One of the parts of the telescope's five-year mission will be the Galactic Bulge Survey which will turn the view inward instead to look at the core of the Milky Way surveying the extremely star dense region and its central supermassive black hole. This will be the final opportunity to view the telescope before it is shipped to the Kennedy Space center in preparation for a launch in the Fall. Attendees will be able to interview the staff of the facility about other upcoming missions such as the Titan Dragonfly mission, the Venus DAVINCI mission, the Lunar Monitoring Station program, and the Habitable Worlds observatory. For more information, click here [Roman - NASA Science](#)



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