



**WATCH**

**THE  
SKIES**



# The Tainted Cup

By Robert Jackson Bennett

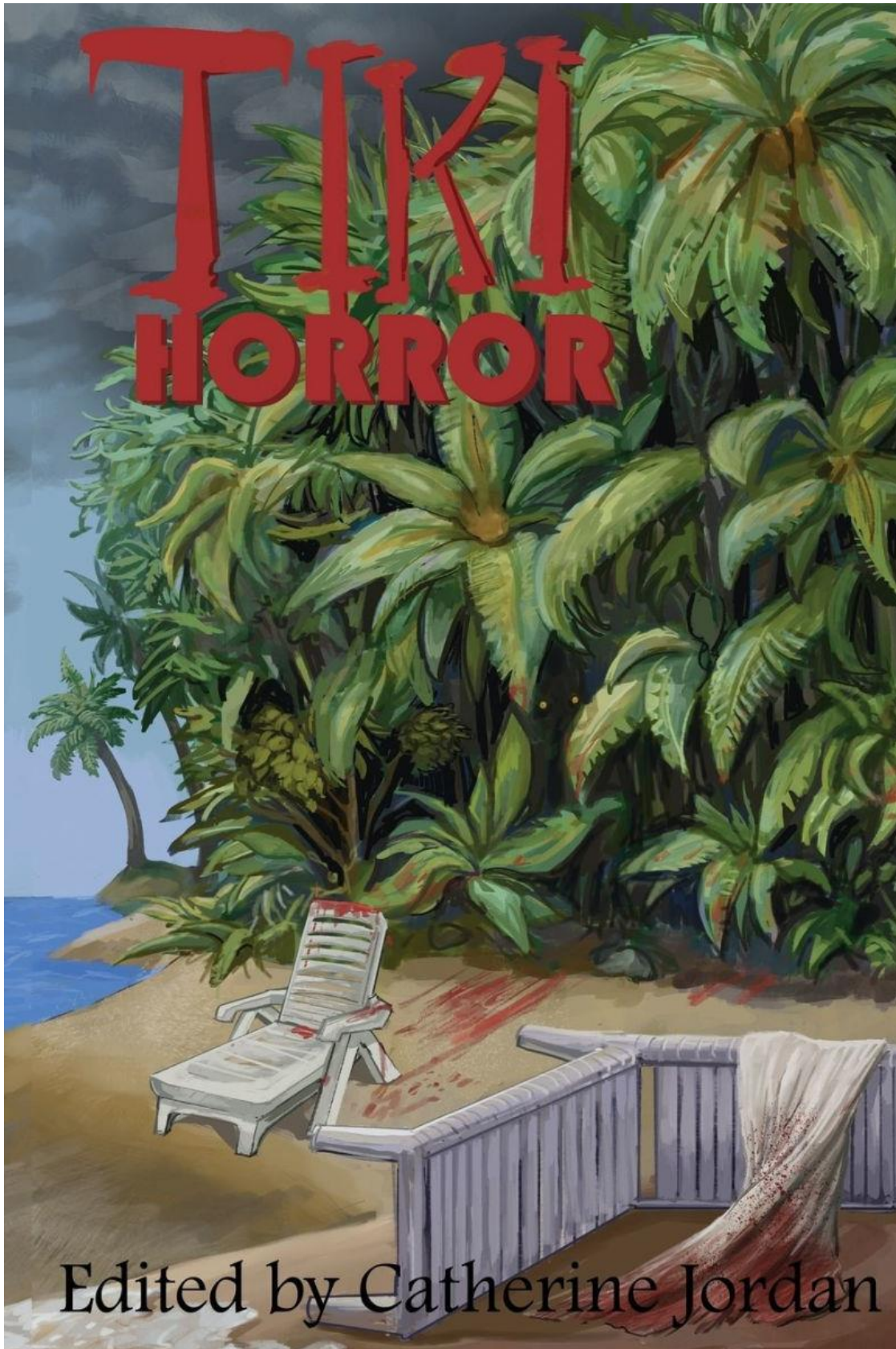
## 26-5

The secrets of the Empire are blooming like the sickly blossoms of the plant that is killing its defenders and in the distance another monster waits to tread its path of destruction. Gifted with the ability to recall everything he sees, Din is apprenticed to the Iudex Ana, a savant discoverer of other's wrongs. Together they will seek out the hands responsible for an ever-growing series of deaths that range from the engineers responsible for the protective walls to those in the upper reaches of society. These two will match their wits against their unusual antagonists while the leviathans emerge from the depths of the sea and hurl themselves against the massive protective walls of the Empire under the fire of the legionnaires. Will they solve the murders before the leviathans end the empire?

-Welcome to the 26<sup>th</sup> 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 King Sorrow – Joe Hill.

-Cover art by Eric V. Hardenbrook

Check out the website at: [watchtheskies.org](http://watchtheskies.org) or  
contact us at: [wtsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:wtsnewsletter@gmail.com)



Edited by Catherine Jordan

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# NEW RELEASES

**June 2026**

KATHERINE ARDEN - **The Unicorn Hunters**

EDWARD ASHTON - **After the Fall**

JEDEDIAH BERRY - **Kill All Wizards**

MAURICE BROADDUS - **A City Dreaming**

M.R. CAREY - **The Tinder Box**

SHANNON CHAKRABORTY - **The Tapestry of Fate**

MEG ELISON - **Foundling Fathers**

PETER F. HAMILTON - **Exodus: The Helium Sea**

ALLAN KASTER, ED. - **The Year's Top Hard Science Fiction Stories 10**

ISABEL J. KIM - **Sublimation**

T. KINGFISHER - **The Sworn Soldier**

NAOMI KRITZER - **Obstetrix**

MERCEDES LACKEY - **Vanyel and Vixen**

SEANAN MCGUIRE - **Inkpot Gods**

VONDA N. MCINTYRE - **The Curve of the World**

L.E. MODESITT, JR. - **Last of the First**

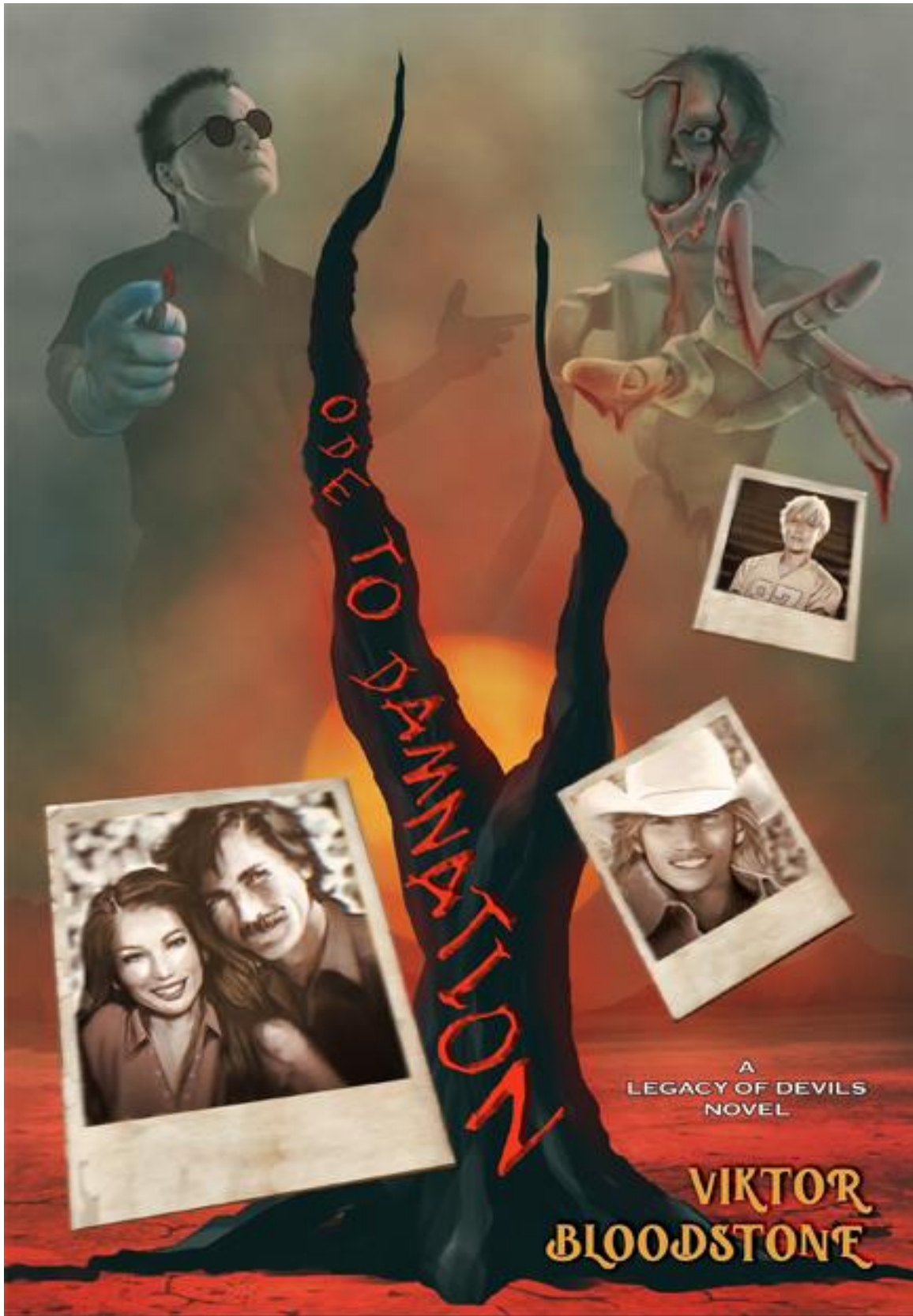
MARK MORRIS, ED. - **Bad Things Happen Here**

A.G. SLATTER - **The Sourdough Compendium**

ADRIAN TCHAIKOVSKY - **Green City Wars**

PAUL TREMBLAY - **Dead but Dreaming of Electric Sheep**

JO WALTON - **Everybody's Perfect**



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# NEWS OF THE REALM

## May

### **BSFS Poetry Contest Winners**

Recently announced for 2026, Steve Miller Baltimore Science Fiction Society Annual Poetry Contest:

1st Place "Terracotta Warrior" - Y.M. Pang

2nd Place "Starlight Bathing" - Vivian McInerny

3rd Place "The Planet that Learned our Fear" - Ayesha Mansoor

Youth Award "Faster Than Light" - Madame Reeds-A-Lot

Honorable Mention "The Witch of Dark Matter" - Kristin5689

Honorable Mention "The River Remembers" - Hashim Quraishi

### **Online Voting for the Hugos 2026:**

Voting is currently open for this year's awards to WSFS members until August 8<sup>th</sup>.

This year's Hugos will be presented at the Awards Ceremony on 8-30-26 in

Anaheim, CA. Visit here for more information - [LAcon V – The 2026 World Science Fiction Convention](#)

### **The Locus Awards**

The Locus Awards will be held on 5-30-26 in partnership with the Bat Area Book Festival in Berkley, CA. Guests of Honor are Tananarive Due, Stephen Graham Jones and Nnedi Okorafor. Emcees for the program will be Sarah Gailey and Maggie Tokuda-Hall.

### **The Tolkien Society Awards**

For 2026:

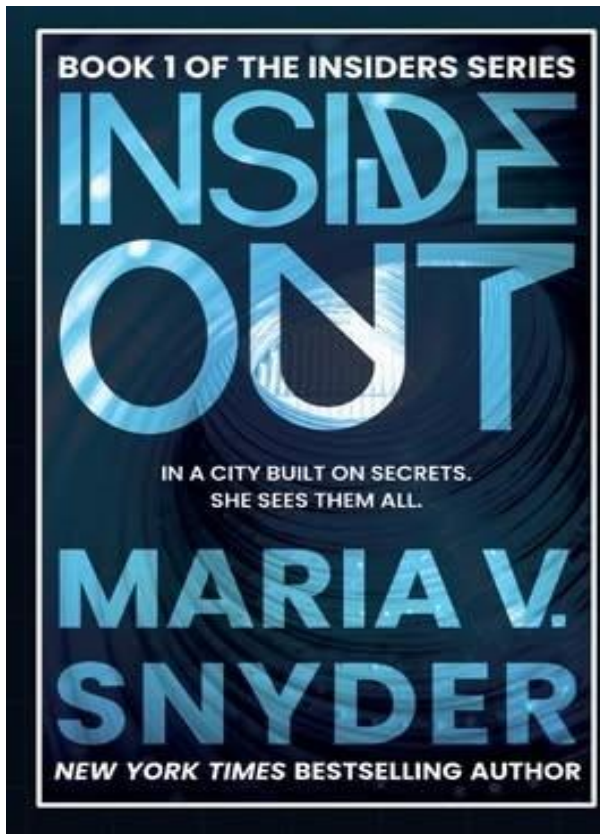
Best Book - The Tower and the Ruin: J.R.R. Tolkien's Creation,  
Michael D.C. Drout

Best Article - "The Tides Of Time, The Tides Of Fate, And The Power Of Song",  
Tom Hillman

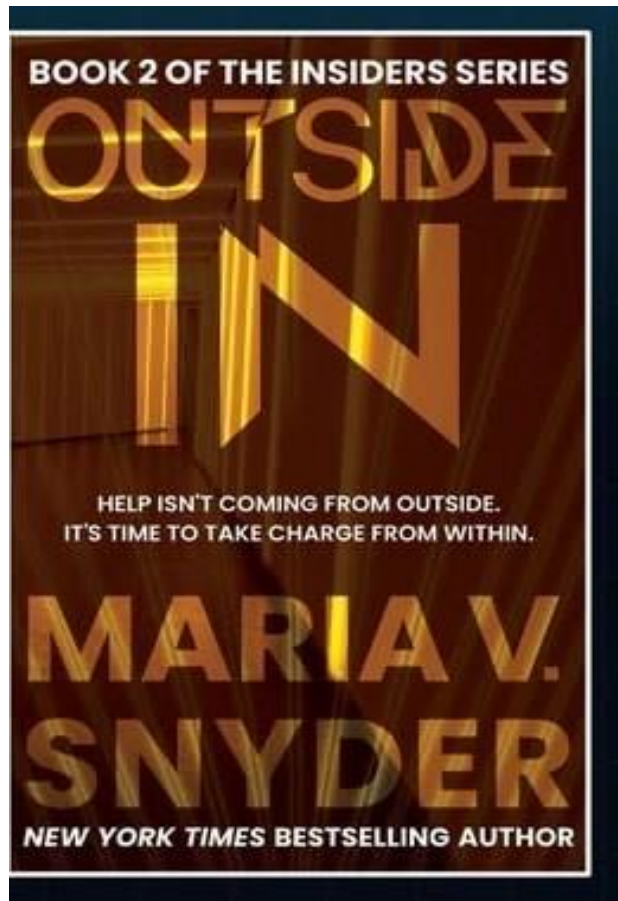
Best Artwork - "The Long Winter, 1158: Gandalf Helps the Hobbits", Miriam Ellis

Best Online Content

*Tea with Tolkien*



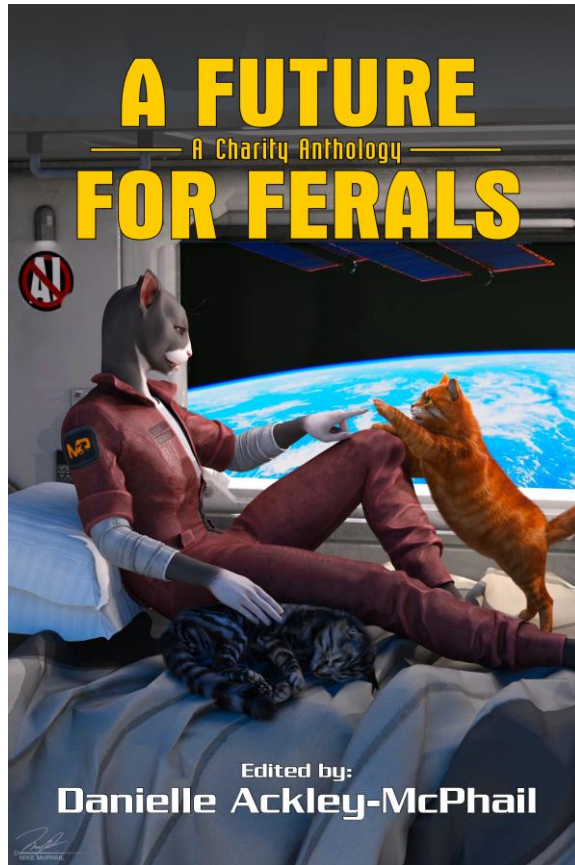
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# TILLYER'S NEWS OF THE HIGH FRONTIER

-Is there a short cut to the Moon? Perhaps in terms of energy there is. Given that fuel is part of the payload of explorational vehicles that traverse the solar system and more payload creates a need for more fuel, the less you have to carry, the better. Besides there is a better motive force out there free for the taking – gravity. Probes that are sent out to Jupiter, Saturn, or even farther are sent on paths that allow them to use gravity assists to increase their acceleration. These paths are sometimes called the Interplanetary Transportation Network. But we're talking about the closest destination to Earth, can we really make that much of a difference and why hasn't this been used before? In terms of gravity the two immediate forces are those of the Earth and the Moon and these create a variate or a natural path to a lunar orbit. But what appears obvious may not be the best answer. A team of researchers took on the task using an advanced modeling system to crank through around 30 million possible routes to find the best one. Going back to the variate we talked about earlier, instead of entering the path closest to Earth, taking the path at the opposite end allows for an increase in efficiency of 58 mps less fuel usage than before. There is also the added advantage that the new orbit would not take a future Artemis mission behind the Moon blocking out communication. This isn't guaranteed to be the best route because the model only takes into consideration the gravitational effects of the Earth and Moon. Further modeling adding in the other influences of the planets and the Sun can dial in even further the efficiency. All of these new routes will allow NASA to not only save money but also offer the opportunity to take along more necessary materials.

-Look out Moon, the company Lunar Outpost has big plans for you. With a rover called Eagle and a mini rover already on site, the company just spread the word that it has acquired 30 million in funding for another in-between sized rover called Pegasus. When humanity starts to explore its closest neighbor, they will need transportation as well as robotically controlled explorers and Lunar Outpost plans to meet as many of those needs as possible. Pegasus bears some similarity to the Apollo moon buggies while the Eagle is the SUV version. At this point, Lunar Outpost is leading the rover race, but their ambitions lie beyond that. Someone or rather more clearly stated someone and somethings will be responsible for creating the lunar bases to house the visiting astronauts. Lunar Outpost's first mini rover made it to the Moon, but its transport did not stick the landing, so now the company has four more attached to other missions including the Artemis 4. Lunar Outpost envisions humans paired with autonomous rovers exploring the surface together and that's just the beginning.



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