



Space Cowboy Books Presents: Simultaneous Times Newsletter

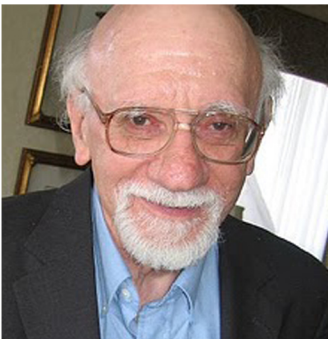
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Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the thirteenth issue of Simultaneous Times Newsletter. As we move deeper into spring and get our vaccinations, normalcy is on the horizon (hopefully). In this issue we bring you an interview with science fiction legend Tom Purdom, speaking about the rerelease of *I Want the Stars* and his long career in the field. We've also dug up an obscure poem from an interesting source, and as always we've got a spotlight on a great new book release. We'd love to hear from you about what you think of the newsletter, and what you'd like to see more/less of in future issues. Get in touch with us at: spacecowboybooks@gmail.com Jean-Paul L. Garnier

How did the 'I Want the Stars' reprint come about?



Gideon Marcus inherited his father's science fiction collection, which spanned 55 years, and came up with a classy use for it. Gideon's Galactic Journey website reviews the science fiction magazines and books published 55 years ago, advancing year by year. In 2019 the site got to 1964. Gideon read *I Want the Stars*, liked the vision of the future it presented, and decided his Journey Press should reprint it.

That vision of the future seems to be a vision many readers find appealing. It's a future in which economic and technological progress has continued to accelerate. Humans have lifespans measured in centuries, no one has to work, and their society is so rich you can have an interstellar spaceship just by asking for it. It's my personal idea of a desirable society. Everybody gets to do whatever they want and they can be trusted to use that freedom because they've developed psychologically and emotionally.

Having worked in science fiction for so long, what are some of the most significant changes you've seen in the field?

The first big change was the shift from a magazine centered genre to a book centered genre. That took about thirty years but books gained steadily from 1950 on. The fact that we still have magazines like *Asimov's* and *Analog* tells us something about the nature of science fiction and its unique qualities. The magazines still publish important, interesting stories, particularly in the novelette and novella lengths. Other big changes include the rise of fantasy and the rise and decline of the mass market paperback. Fantasy looked like it was dead up until the paperback success of *The Lord of the Rings* in the mid-60s. Now it outsells science fiction. There was a time when mass market paperbacks were all over the place—drugstores, department stores, dime stores. Today you have to go to a bookstore if you want to buy a science fiction book.

Tell us a bit about your online literary memoir?

I call it *When I Was Writing*—a response to Robert Heinlein's observation that writer's memoirs tell about all the things they did when they weren't writing. It's a group of pieces that tell how I wrote certain stories, including *I Want the Stars*. I tell how I got the basic idea, how I developed it, some of my dealings with editors and agents, why I included certain concepts. I like reading that kind of stuff and it gave me an easy, interesting project at a time when I was looking after my wife while she succumbed to Alzheimer's. *The New York Review of Science Fiction* put it into print over several issues and I've been told some writing teachers recommend it for their students.

Do you have any advice for beginning science fiction writers?

Learn how to save and invest. Resist the pressure to borrow and consume. Develop sidelines like freelance journalism and business writing. You might even consider some non-writing occupation, like accounting or nursing, that lets you work part time or sporadically. Writing science fiction is an insecure calling with no guarantee it can give you a dependable satisfactory income.

You are also a music critic, how has writing criticism affected the way you write fiction, and vice versa?

The two go together very well. I write reviews as if I was telling a story. I tell the reader what a certain person (me) experienced and the feelings and thoughts the experience evoked. I also like to give the readers some insight into the lives of musicians. As with all non-fiction, I learn things that I can use in my fiction, including some understanding of the people who work in a particular milieu.

I write about classical music, but that's a broader beat than many people realize. Philadelphia has a lively concert scene and I cover events presenting music written from 1400 to the present—Renaissance and Baroque music, chamber music, choral music, premieres (one or two a month), new music premiered elsewhere. The musical milieu has a lot in common with the science fiction scene, though both groups would probably be surprised to hear it. People mingle in the aisles at intermission and form social connections. Musicians and composers mingle with the audience at post-concert receptions, in the same way writers mingle with readers, editors, and other writers at science fiction events. The American composer Ned Rorem once defined a concert as "that which comes before a party." The classical music tradition has been generating parties for six centuries, science fiction for over eight decades.

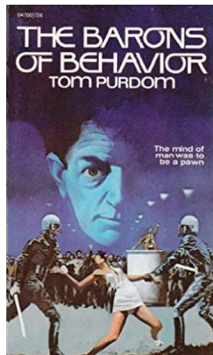
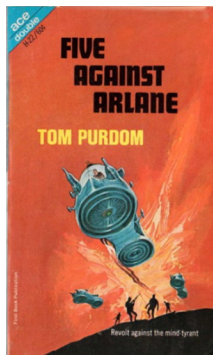
What themes and issues do you think will become increasingly important in science fiction?

I don't feel I can say. I think a lot of the most interesting science fiction subjects are perennials. Science fiction is an extended conversation, with writers creating stories in response to the stories they've read and the developments we encounter as we advance

into the real future. Heinlein gave us a vision of lunar colonization in the 1950s. My 1997 story *Canary Land* and John Kessel's 2017 novel *The Moon and the Other* present other possibilities. If we actually do colonize the Moon, the colonists may produce science fiction writers who give us their vision of their future, based on their reality.

What are you writing now and what's coming up next for you?

At eighty-five, I'm writing just enough to keep me feeling I'm still connected. My next *Asimov's* story is called "Long Term Emergencies". It's about someone who has to squelch small conflicts that could have major consequences. Currently I'm playing with a story that looks like it may have possibilities. I'm also looking for some subject I haven't written about that will strike a creative spark. Do you have any suggestions?



<https://www.philart.net/tompurdom/>

New From the Small Press



Goodbye to the Sun

By Jonathan Nevair

Tucked away in the blue sands of Kol 2, the Motes are on the brink of cultural collapse. Razor, a bold and daring pilot, leads a last-ditch gambit against their local oppressors, the Targitians. The plan - abduct visiting Ambassador Keen Draden and use him as a bargaining chip to restore her people's independence in the Sagittarius Arm. But when the operation unravels, Razor is forced to renegotiate terms with the arrogant diplomat. Battling furious Wind Tides

and pursuit by an infamous bounty hunter, Razor and Keen find mutual assistance in a dubious freelancer with a knack for exposing cracks in people's pride.

Light years away on Heroon a radical resistance blossoms. The alluring rainforest planet haunts Keen. All his problems started there during the Patent War, but it's where Razor's troubles may find a solution. The moral tide ebbs, exposing an impossible choice that links their futures together more tragically than they ever thought possible.

<https://www.jonathannevair.com/>

A Paradoxical Ode (After Shelley) – 1878

By James Clerk Maxwell

I

My soul's an amphicheiral knot
 Upon a liquid vortex wrought
 By Intellect in the Unseen residing
 While thou dost like a convict sit
 With marlinspike untwisting it
 Only to find my knottiness abiding,
 Since all the tools for my untying
 In four-dimensioned space are lying,
 Where playful fancy intersperces,
 Whole avenues of universes;
 Where Klein and Clifford fill the void
 With one unbounded, finite homaloid,
 Whereby the Infinite is hopelessly destroyed.

II

But when thy Science lifts her pinions
 In Speculation's wild dominions,
 I treasure every dictum thou emittest;
 While down the stream of Evolution
 We drift, and look for no solution
 But that of survival of the fittest,
 Till in that twilight of the gods
 When earth and sun are frozen clods,
 When, all its matter degraded,
 Matter in aether shall have faded,
 We, that is, all the work we've done,
 As waves in aether, shall for ever run
 In swift expanding spheres, through heavens beyond the sun.

III

Great Principle of all we see,
 Thou endless Continuity!
 By thee are all our angles gently rounded,
 Our misfits are by thee adjusted,
 And as I still in thee have trusted,
 So let my methods never be confounded!
 O never may direct Creation
 Breach in upon my contemplation,
 Still may the causal chain ascending,
 Appear unbroken and unending,
 And where the chain is best to sight
 Let viewless fancies guide my darkling flight
 Through aeon-haunted worlds, in order infinite.



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