



Space Cowboy Books Presents: Simultaneous Times Newsletter

Vol. 16 August 2021

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Letter from the Editor

Welcome to issue sixteen of Simultaneous Times Newsletter, time is flying by and it's hard to believe that what started as a way to connect with you during lockdown has blossomed into so much more. It has been a great honor to interview so many interesting people from the worlds of SF. It's a sweltering summer here in the Mojave and only a few brave tourists are visiting the store, but we're still going strong with our podcast, publications and online events. In this issue we bring you an interview with the amazing Charlie Jane Anders about her latest books, a speculative poem from F.J. Bergmann, and more. As always, we'd love to hear from you and we've provided our social media links for you to get in touch – or hit us up at spacecowboybooks@gmail.com –Jean-Paul L. Garnier



Tell us a bit about your latest novel?

Victories Greater Than Death is the story of Tina, a seemingly normal girl on Earth who's secretly a clone of an alien hero who died before she was born --- and now that Tina is old enough, she's ready to claim her destiny. But when the aliens come to get Tina and she discovers the truth about her heritage, she finds that

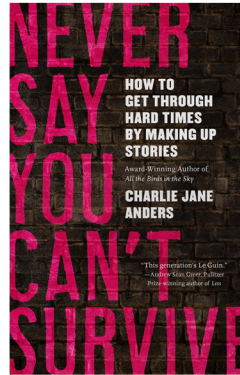
being a hero is a lot more complicated than she thought. This is my tribute to Star Trek, Star Wars, Doctor Who, Steven Universe, and all the other space adventures that I love.

What made you decide to write a YA novel, and how does the process differ from your adult fiction?

I'd always wanted to try writing YA, and I was noticing that there were a lot of fun action-packed books coming out under the YA banner --- stuff like Leigh Bardugo's Grishaverse, for example. Or Marie Lu's Warcross. I was excited to write something more fun and fast-paced, with narrow escapes and explosions and fights and desperate last stands. The main difference in terms of process is that my editor encouraged me to go back and drastically rework the first 1/3 of the book, cutting out about 25,000 words, to make it move faster and get Tina away from Earth sooner. And I worked hard on developing a YA "voice."

You also have a book of non-fiction coming out this month, can you tell us about that, and the process of writing it?

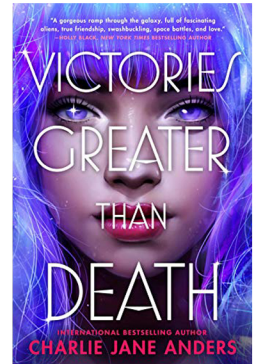
Never Say You Can't Survive actually comes out August 17. This is my book of advice about how to use creative writing to get through scary hard times. I wrote these essays during 2020 and posted them



weekly on Tor.com, but for the book version, I went back and tightened them a lot, eliminating any repetition. And then I added a ton of new material. I feel like being able to make up stories is even more important when the world is going to hell, and I have lots of thoughts about how to keep writing when stuff gets nasty.

There's great world-building in your books, how do you go about it, and where do you start when building a world and culture?

I feel like world-building is a process that never really stops. For *Victories*, I spent months coming up with the different alien species, and all the technologies on board my starship, and the whole history of the galaxy. And then as I wrote, I had to keep coming up with more stuff. Often times, it's a mixture of trying to cook up things that feel internally consistent and congruent, and also avoiding doing something I've seen too many times before. Usually the tenth thing I think of is the thing that feels cool and relatively fresh to me -- it's sort of a process of banging your head against the wall until something good shows up.



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

I think now that the effects of climate change are absolutely inescapable and undeniable, we'll be telling a lot more stories about how humans can cope with the hangover from the anthropocene. And also, how we can work to mitigate the long-lasting effects of our collective hubris. I'm also very encouraged by all the stories I'm seeing that focus on communities rather than the individual, and especially chosen families. We're all going to have to work together to get through the next century, and alternative families are an amazing source of strength.

Do you have any advice for beginning science fiction writers?

Read lots of other genres, including mysteries and romance novels and literary fiction.

Find ways to make writing a communal activity --- join writing groups, read your work to people, share your work with others, go on writing dates.

Try to find the strangeness in the everyday, and find ways to turn your personal experience into something speculative and off-kilter. Find the concepts that speak to you emotionally, as well as being cool and clever.

What's next for you, and what are you currently working on?

I'm currently plugging away at the third book in the Unstoppable trilogy (Victories Greater than Death) is the first one. And I'm in the middle of putting together a new adult novel that it's too soon to talk about --- but I hope it'll be announced before too long. I also have some other projects that I definitely cannot talk about! And my first full-length short story collection, *Even Greater Mistakes*, comes out in November...



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

Journey

By F.J. Bergmann

By the time we got where we were going we'd developed a new, anthropocentric mythology: everything was for the best. Our drones had unaccountably missed the alien presence despite their silvery citadels and the radioactivity that lay everywhere like a stain of invisible light. We convinced them that we were only migrants looking for work and would be moving on any day now, as we set about settling in. They convinced us they were fiends incarnate, colored lights and death-rays glowing randomly from bulging rings encircling their multiple heads like tonsures. Our life-support structures opened outward like terrestrial flowers we would never see again, while our vocabularies expanded. The kids all ran wild together. Oblivious to the heat and their dosimeter readings, they learned the names of the new gods.

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Open Call



2021 Science Fiction & Fantasy Poetry Association Poetry Contest

For speculative (SF, fantasy, supernatural horror) poems only. Open to all poets, including non-SFPA members. \$3 entry fee per poem. Cash prizes to 3rd place in each division. Deadline August 31. Judge: Sheree Renée Thomas, editor of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*. See sfpoetry.com/contests.html for details.

New From the Small Press



Sibyl Sue Blue

By Rosel George Brown

Before Ellen Ripley, before Honor Harrington, before Camina Drummer, there was Sibyl, kicking ass and saving the day:

Stop a murder, save two planets!

Who she is: Sibyl Blue, single mom, undercover detective, and damn good at her job.

What she wants: to solve the mysterious benzale murders, prevent more teenage deaths, and maybe find her long-lost husband.

How she'll get it: seduce a millionaire, catch a ride on his spaceship, and crack the case at the edge of the known galaxy.

Sibyl Sue Blue (1966) is a thrilling, ground-breaking story of crime, mystery, action, and romance. This is the book that started a genre. *Sibyl Sue Blue* will enrapture readers of Octavia Butler, Lois McMaster Bujold, and David Weber with its classic charm and fast-paced, high-stakes action.

"Rosel George Brown's long-overdue first novel, SIBYL SUE BLUE, is something, believe me, else...froth and fun and furious action" — Judith Merril