



# Space Cowboy Books Presents: Simultaneous Times Newsletter

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## Letter from the Editor

Welcome to another Simultaneous Times newsletter. In this issue we bring you an interview with award winning speculative poet Christina Sng, as well as a wonderful reading recommendation list from Arley Sorg. The worlds of speculative fiction are vast, and if one looks they will find 'infinite diversity in infinite combinations'. Science fiction, for a relatively new genre, has covered a lot of ground and continues to instigate the imagination to consider the wide array of possibilities for our future. If we are to create a positive future for everyone, we must first be able to imagine positive futures. As always, we'd love to hear from you, so get in touch at [spacecowboybooks@gmail.com](mailto:spacecowboybooks@gmail.com)

- Jean-Paul L. Garnier

Eventually, I put together my first book with my best and favorite poems from the last 20 years: A Collection of Nightmares. Raw Dog Screaming Press accepted the manuscript and published it. I never imagined it would be on the ballot, let alone win a Stoker!

Winning the Stoker gave me the confidence to compile the other book I had in mind, one that included my fantasy series of poems I'd been collecting for 20 years loosely titled "The Mephala Poems" as well as my fairy tale poems.

Neither had sufficient poems to be standalones and I feared this would be the last collection I'd be able to put together. I wanted to see them published before I died. So it came to me to divide the book into 5 parts, telling the overarching story of birth and death.

A Collection of Dreamscapes combines horror, science fiction, and fantasy, yet it has enough horror elements to be classified as horror. I wasn't sure how it would be received, given the mix of genres. Still, I was so happy to see it published. When the reviews came out, I was buoyed. And then it won me my second Stoker and second prize in the Elgin Awards.

All I feel is such gratitude to the horror and science fiction communities for their support of my work. Writing from halfway across the world is often a solitary journey, but being a part of the SFPA and the HWA makes me feel embraced and included.

*As a poet and a writer of fiction, how does your process differ from one medium to the next?*

Fiction takes longer and I need a stretch of time to write, which is why you often don't see a story from me for years since it usually takes me that long to edit it and find it a home. I do hope to write faster and better. I'd like to finish writing a novel one day.

Poetry as a medium flows faster for me as I've been writing poetry for most of my life. The words come to me and I put them down on paper. The editing part is where I take the longest time.

I still edit word by word, line by line to make sure it is perfect and no word is repeated.

I ask myself if a word can be replaced by a better word. This is when Google helps so much. In the old days, I had to look through the thesaurus, pick a word, check the dictionary, then find examples of appropriate use to make sure the word would fit.

It can be tedious but it's so set in me already that it's impossible to change. Sometimes my eye just sees that error and can't unsee it. This is why I tend to keep my work in edit for a long time before I send it out. The thought of spotting an error after publication haunts me.

For Dreamscapes, I had to clear my head and focus myself to read the book aloud over 20 times, making sure the words flowed well and the narrative moved smoothly from poem to poem.

*What themes and issues do you think will become increasingly important in speculative poetry?*

What's happening in the world. Climate change, which has been escalating during this covid pandemic, is going to affect us all with its potentially apocalyptic effects. We will need poetry as a salve for what's to come.

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

My speculative poetry collection on short form poems THE GRAVITY OF EXISTENCE from Interstellar Flight Press is slated for 2022-3.

*What brought you to writing speculative poetry?*



I grew up in the 80s which was a fabulous time for horror and science fiction. My older brother was a huge fan and we watched a lot of the genre on TV. As a child, I wanted to become an astronaut. I still hope to visit space one day. When I was a teenager, I read horror almost exclusively. Novels by Dean Koontz and Robert McCammon were my constant companions. It

has always felt like second nature telling stories in these genres.

*What challenges and strengths do you encounter when switching from science fiction to horror to fantasy, and operating across the spectrum of the speculative arts?*

None, actually. Each story tells itself and then I look at it and determine the genre. Many of my works cross genres and I wish I didn't have to label them as horror or science fiction or fantasy. Often, real life is horror, science fiction becomes science, and fantasy becomes reality.

*You have been the 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner of the Elgin Award in both the books and chapbooks categories, what has that experience been like?*

I am in awe, to be perfectly honest! I am so grateful to the SFPA members for giving my book this tremendous honor. Having my work touch someone is the greatest gift. Receiving an honor for it feels like a dream.

*You are also a two-time winner of the Bram Stoker Award for superior achievement in a poetry collection, what has this experience been like?*

Part of me still thinks I dreamed it. I keep my Stokers in a glass cabinet so I don't have to keep pinching myself.

I gave up my IT career for 15 years to raise my children and I gave up poetry for 8 years because I was too sleep-deprived to write being 24/7 with the kids.

When I began writing and sending work out again, the industry had changed so much. It took me 2 hours to get a Submittable submission together.

But every night when everyone was sleeping, I'd write and send work out. I felt like I'd lost so much time and needed to catch up, even if it meant 4 hours of sleep every night.

## Read Differently - Recommendations from Arley Sorg

In 2017 Murderbot Diaries author Martha Wells spoke at World Fantasy, calling on readers to examine the ways we celebrate some



individuals and pretend others don't exist.<sup>1</sup>

*Beloved* author Toni Morrison took a stand against Jana Wendt during a 1998 television interview.<sup>2</sup> Morrison defended the value of Black stories written about the lives and concerns of Black people.

If you think back on what you read growing up, the stories given to you in school or college, the stories promoted in bookstores, there are probably a variety of perspectives missing. As our taste is developing through our youth, we are told which authors are wonderful; even as other kinds of wonderful authors are not made available to us.

To better understand BIPOC voices, queer voices, and really, any other voices you might not have read, there's one fantastic solution: Start reading! And, hey, I'm here to help. Short fiction is a wonderful way to explore a range of voices, perspectives, and experiences. I've curated a list of "suggested reading" to get you started.

Read more broadly, read with an open mind, an open heart, and with a touch of empathy.

Stephanie Andrea Allen & Lauren Chelle, *Black from the Future: A Collection of Black Speculative Writing* (BLF Press)  
Kinitra Brooks, Linda D. Addison, Susana Morris, Sycorax's Daughters (Cedar Grove)  
Patrice Caldwell, *A Phoenix First Must Burn: Sixteen Stories of Black Girl Magic, Resistance, and Hope* (Penguin)  
Bill Campbell, *Sunspot Jungle* (vol's 1 and 2), (Rosarium)  
Bill Campbell & Edward Austin Hall, *Mothership: Tales from Afrofuturism and Beyond*, (Rosarium)  
V. Castro & Cynthia Pelayo, *Latinx Screams* (Burial Day)  
Zen Cho, *Cyberpunk: Malaysia* (Buku Fixi)  
C.L. Clark & Charles Payseur, *We're Here: The Best Queer Speculative Fiction 2020* (Neon Hemlock)  
Dhonielle Clayton, *A Universe of Wishes* (Crown Books for Young Readers)  
Oghenechovwe Donald Ekpeki, *The Year's Best African Speculative Fiction (2021)* (Jembefola)  
Rose Fox & Daniel José Older, *Long Hidden* (Crossed Genres)  
Jaymee Goh & Joyce Chng, *The Sea is Ours: Tales of Steampunk Southeast Asia* (Rosarium)  
Matthew David Goodwin, *Latinx Rising: An Anthology of Latinx Science Fiction and Fantasy* (Mad Creek)  
Paula Guran, *Far Out: Recent Queer Science Fiction and Fantasy* (Night Shade)  
Nalo Hopkinson, *Mojo: Conjure Stories* (Warner)

Nalo Hopkinson & Uppinder Mehan, *So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction and Fantasy* (Arsenal Pulp)  
Walidah Imarisha & adrienne maree brown, *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements* (AK press)  
Swapna Krishna & Jenn Northington, *Sword Stone Table: Old Legends, New Voices* (Vintage)  
Victor LaValle & John Joseph Adams, *A People's Future of the United States: Speculative Fiction from 25 Extraordinary Writers* (One World)  
Lucas K. Law & Derwin Mak, *Where the Stars Rise: Asian Science Fiction and Fantasy* (Laksa)  
Ken Liu, *Invisible Planets: An Anthology of Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction in Translation* (Tor)  
Karen Lord, *New Worlds, Old Ways* (Peekash)  
Mahvesh Murad & Jared Shurin, *The Outcast Hours* (Solaris)  
Christine Ni, *Sinopticon: A Celebration of Chinese Science Fiction* (Solaris)  
Ellen Oh & Elsie Chapman, *A Thousand Beginnings and Endings* (Greenwillow)  
Sunyoung Park & Sang Joon Park, *Readymade Bodhisattva: The Kaya Anthology of South Korean Science Fiction* (Kaya)  
dave ring, *Glitter + Ashes* (Neon Hemlock)  
Tia Ross, Sandra M. Grayson, et al, *Black Sci-Fi Short Stories* (Gothic Fantasy), (Flame Tree)  
Tarun K. Saint, *New Horizons: The Gollancz Book of South Asian Science Fiction* (Gollancz)  
Nisi Shawl, *New Suns* (Solaris)  
Sheree Renée Thomas, *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora* (Warner Aspect)  
Sheree Renée Thomas, *Dark Matter: Reading the Bones* (Aspect)  
Sheree Renée Thomas, *Obsidian's Speculating Futures: Black Imagination & the Arts* (Downstate Legacies)  
Joshua Whitehead, *Love after the End: An Anthology of Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer Speculative Fiction* (Arsenal Pulp)  
"People Destroy" special issues by *Lightspeed*, *Nightmare*, and *Fantasy* Magazines, plus *Uncanny Magazine's* "Disabled People Destroy" special issues for both science fiction and fantasy.

Other cool resources:

Nisi Shawl, "Take a Tour Through the History of Black Science Fiction": <https://www.tor.com/2020/07/07/take-a-tour-through-the-history-of-black-science-fiction/>

Mithila Review, "Asian Science Fiction & Fantasy: The Essential Reading List": [https://mithilareview.com/asian\\_sf\\_2016/](https://mithilareview.com/asian_sf_2016/)

Arley Sorg is co-Editor-in-Chief at *Fantasy Magazine* and a 2021 World Fantasy Award Finalist. He is also senior editor at *Locus Magazine*, associate editor at both *Lightspeed & Nightmare Magazines*, a columnist for *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, and interviewer for *Clarkesworld Magazine*. Find him at [arleysorg.com](http://arleysorg.com) or on Twitter as [@arleysorg](https://twitter.com/arleysorg)

Footnotes:

1 <https://www.tor.com/2017/11/07/unbury-the-future-martha-wells-full-speech-from-the-2017-world-fantasy-awards/>

2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQ0mMjII22I>

Find Arley's upcoming essay *What You Might Have Missed* In *Uncanny* issue #43 on 12/7 <https://uncannymagazine.com/>

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