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LOCUS ANNUAL POLL & SURVEY

# LOCUS

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## 2012 YEAR IN REVIEW COMMENTARY!

LIZA GROENTROMBI, GARY K.  
WOLFE, JONATHAN STRAHAN,  
FAREN MILLER, GARDNER DOZOIS,  
ADRIENNE MARTINI, CAROLYN  
CUSHMAN, RUSSELL LETSON,  
RICH HORTON, AND MORE!



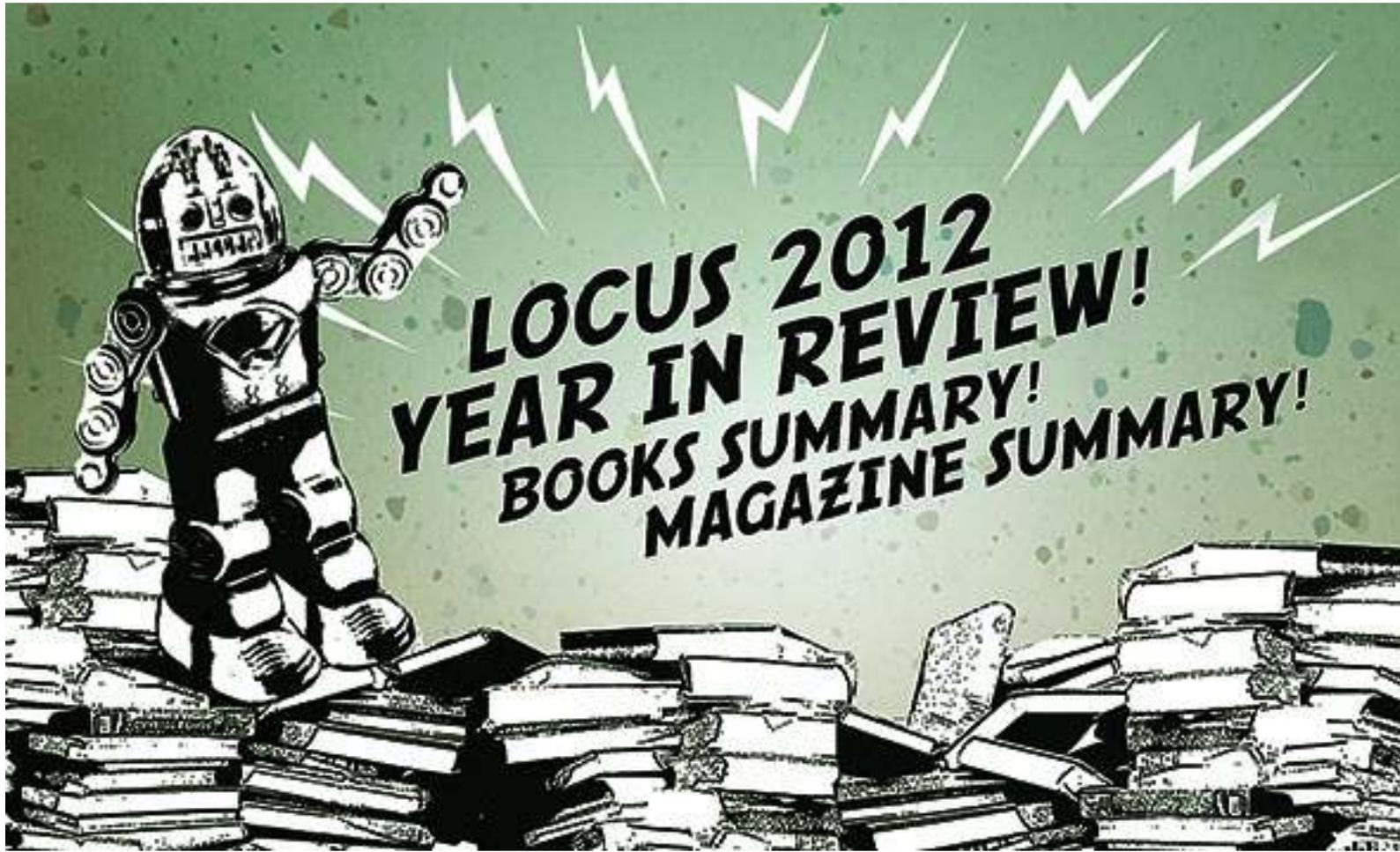
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CATHERYNNNE M. VALENTE  
& BRIAN SLATTERY!



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February 2013 • Issue 625 • Vol. 70 • No. 2  
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*Cover and Interview Designs by Francesca Myman*



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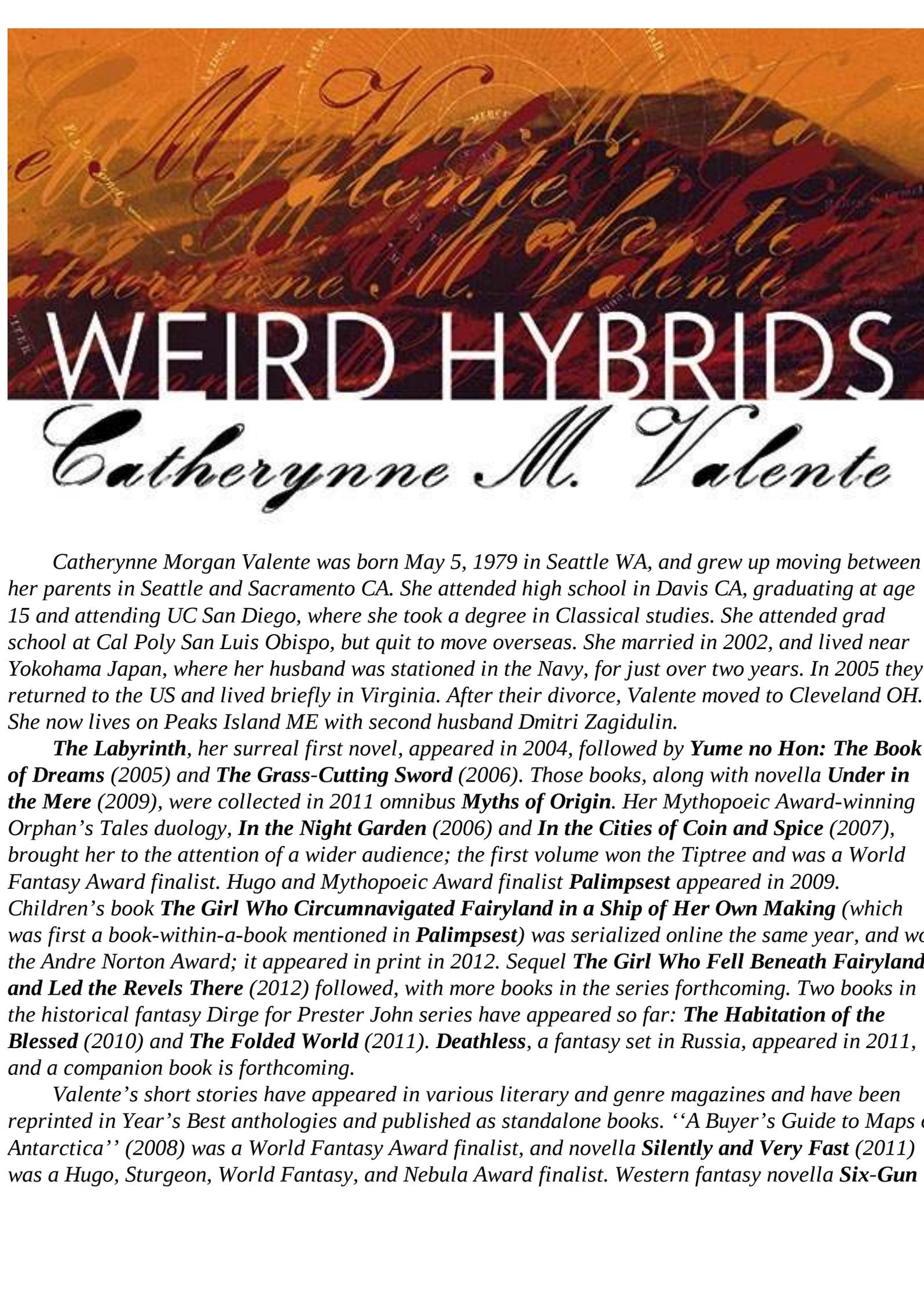
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# WEIRD HYBRIDS

*Catherynne M. Valente*

*Catherynne Morgan Valente was born May 5, 1979 in Seattle WA, and grew up moving between her parents in Seattle and Sacramento CA. She attended high school in Davis CA, graduating at age 15 and attending UC San Diego, where she took a degree in Classical studies. She attended grad school at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, but quit to move overseas. She married in 2002, and lived near Yokohama Japan, where her husband was stationed in the Navy, for just over two years. In 2005 they returned to the US and lived briefly in Virginia. After their divorce, Valente moved to Cleveland OH. She now lives on Peaks Island ME with second husband Dmitri Zagidulin.*

***The Labyrinth**, her surreal first novel, appeared in 2004, followed by **Yume no Hon: The Book of Dreams** (2005) and **The Grass-Cutting Sword** (2006). Those books, along with novella **Under in the Mere** (2009), were collected in 2011 omnibus **Myths of Origin**. Her Mythopoeic Award-winning Orphan's Tales duology, **In the Night Garden** (2006) and **In the Cities of Coin and Spice** (2007), brought her to the attention of a wider audience; the first volume won the Tiptree and was a World Fantasy Award finalist. Hugo and Mythopoeic Award finalist **Palimpsest** appeared in 2009. Children's book **The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland in a Ship of Her Own Making** (which was first a book-within-a-book mentioned in **Palimpsest**) was serialized online the same year, and won the Andre Norton Award; it appeared in print in 2012. Sequel **The Girl Who Fell Beneath Fairyland and Led the Revels There** (2012) followed, with more books in the series forthcoming. Two books in the historical fantasy Dirge for Prester John series have appeared so far: **The Habitation of the Blessed** (2010) and **The Folded World** (2011). **Deathless**, a fantasy set in Russia, appeared in 2011, and a companion book is forthcoming.*

*Valente's short stories have appeared in various literary and genre magazines and have been reprinted in Year's Best anthologies and published as standalone books. "A Buyer's Guide to Maps of Antarctica" (2008) was a World Fantasy Award finalist, and novella **Silently and Very Fast** (2011) was a Hugo, Sturgeon, World Fantasy, and Nebula Award finalist. Western fantasy novella **Six-Gun***

**Snow White** is forthcoming.

~~Valente was first published as a poet. Notable works of poetry include chapbook **Music of a Proto-Suicide** (2004), **Oracles: A Pilgrimage** (2005), **Apocrypha** (2005), and **The Descent of Inanna** (2006). She won a Rhysling Award for best long poem with ‘The Seven Devils of Central California’ (2007). She has also published and presented various critical papers, mostly about feminism, mythology, and literature. Valente helps run the SF Squeecast podcast, winner of a 2012 Hugo Award for Best Fancast.~~

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“I started out publishing in the small press. I wasn’t even living in the US then. I was living in

Japan when my first novels sold. I came to publishing assuming that nobody was going to do any promotion for me, so I just figured out how to promote myself on the web, because I couldn't be in the US, I couldn't go to conventions. I figured out ways to serialize things, to do websites that went along with books, and things like that. I had three novels and two collections of poetry come out from *Primo* and **The Orphan's Tales** came out from Bantam. **The Orphan's Tales** did well, much better after it won the Tiptree Award – that was the thing that set everything in motion – but never spectacularly well. It sounds weird to say now, but we all thought **Palimpsest** was my more commercial work.

“In 2008 we were making all these publicity plans for the book. **The Girl who Circumnavigated Fairyland** was just supposed to be part of **Palimpsest**. **Fairyland** is the protagonist's favorite novel from when she was a child, and **Palimpsest** includes the first paragraph of **Fairyland**. I never intended it to be more than that. The thing is, the economy crashed, and Bantam Spectra was reorganized. A lot of authors were let go. I call it The Great Diaspora. Tor got a lot of the authors, and Night Shade got some of us. It really was just a bomb that went off. My editor Juliet Ulman was laid off, my publicist was laid off. Basically everyone involved with **Palimpsest** was laid off six weeks before it came out. I had blurbs that never ended up on the cover of the book, because there was nobody answering the phones at Bantam. It was the worst possible time. I was the first person Juliet Ulman called. It was early in the morning, and I had that moment where the curtains close in your brain and you think, ‘This can't possibly be happening.’ I sat down with my husband to figure out what to do. We decided to create an alternate-reality game to promote **Palimpsest**.

“My husband's a programmer. I do graphic design as well as writing, so I did the graphics, he did the code, and we created a game that flowed through all these different websites, and I made a few short movies and audio tracks. The ARG was an insane amount of work. Maureen McHugh was my mentor, because she had worked on things like that, like the Halo alternate-reality game. She asked me how long I want the game to be, and I said three months. She said, ‘You'll be lucky to make it six weeks.’ She was absolutely right. I didn't believe her at the time, but it's an unfathomable amount of work for two people. As part of the alternate-reality game, we made fake Amazon pages for all of the different books that were mentioned in **Palimpsest**. I made a cover for **Fairyland** and the others, and the entire Amazon pages were there. You couldn't order the books – they would be listed as out of stock, or there would be one used copy that led to another page in the alternate-reality game.

“I made a book trailer for **Palimpsest**, which has over two and a half million hits now, and that had the link to begin the alternate-reality game. That was my first experience with something really going viral. Book trailers weren't brand new, but they had fallen out of fashion. I still have no explanation for the success. Obviously two million people didn't buy that book, so I have no idea why they watched – except that there are naked people in it, so maybe that's why. People started talking about trailers again, and mine was part of the wave of book trailers coming back. I can't take credit for that, but **Palimpsest** was definitely part of the conversation that led to book trailers becoming a thing again.

“We were running that whole game, but we decided that no one was going to support **Palimpsest**. It wasn't anyone's fault – it was just that there was no one to support this book. Because it was my third book with the publisher, and **The Orphan's Tales** had done well but not spectacularly, we had the feeling that this was it. We could either do something drastic to make **Palimpsest** a success, or I could go back to school and stop writing.

My friend S.J. Tucker – a singer/songwriter who did a tie-in album for **Palimpsest** – and her partner and her manager and my husband and I got in a truck, rented a trailer, and toured the country for four months from Maine to Los Angeles, living in the car and staying on people's couches. S.J. is

magical person. She is a truly extraordinary human being. That's one of the most amazing things about science fiction and fantasy – it's a family, it's a tribe, and when people are in trouble, they help each other out.

“I don't think we meant for the tour to be as long as it ended up being. It was winter, and we had to drive through a lot of snow. But it worked. We were selling the books out of the back of the truck. We took 40 fans on a train from Chicago to New Orleans, and did a masked ball in New Orleans. All the way across the country, everywhere I went, people asked, ‘Where can I get that **Fairyland** book? Is that real?’ And I would be like, ‘No, no.’ People said, ‘When are you going to write **Fairyland**?’ And I said, ‘Never. Nobody's going to publish a children's book that came out of an incredibly adult novel.’ It's not just adult like **The Orphan's Tales** or **Deathless – Palimpsest** is full of sex! So I said no, I'm not doing that. But I had already written half of the first chapter as an Easter egg in the alternate-reality game....

“We called the tour events ‘reading concerts’ when we pitched it to venues. Back then it was hard for people to understand. Now the venues know us, but back then they were like, ‘You want to read from a book, and sing songs?’ And we'd say, ‘Yes, and we have a snake dancer, and an aerial performer....’ We'd pick up local performers through Livejournal and Twitter. The show was different in every city. In Brooklyn we had aerial performers suspended from the ceiling, and in St. Louis we had the snake dancer. We had all these rope artists in New Orleans. The show grew, and kept growing and growing. Sometimes we'd have a cellist, sometimes we'd have a fiddler. It was a genuine circus, and we called it the ‘corset tour.’ I honestly can barely wear corsets anymore, after four months of that.

“We tried to make it a little more rock-star than your standard author reading. S.J. did a techno track to be played behind my readings, so even the readings were like spoken-word songs. We did one event in a hotel where we were all standing on different stairs on a winding staircase. I have a background in theater and so does S.J., so we stage-managed the hell out of those shows. They were something else. We always knew our people because they would come in these huge, elaborate costumes. **Palimpsest** itself, what the novel is about, is a city we create when we connect with other people. We had a following already from **The Orphan's Tales** and from the books before that and from the blog. I'd been blogging since 2000. And S.J. has her own following – she does filk but she also does these amazing original folk rock albums. I was a huge fan of hers, even before ever met her. I met her at Lunacon, and I was like, *she's so amazing*. We were sisters right away.

“We had been promised that there was a job waiting for my husband Dmitri when we got back home, but it evaporated; it wasn't there. People say, ‘How could you go on tour during a recession?’ But it cost very little. We stayed on couches the whole way across America, we sold books out of the car, and people fed us. We had savings, but we'd been using it to pay the rent. I mean, my husband's programmer; he'd never not had a job. But after the tour we got to the point where we didn't have money for rent the next month, and we didn't have money for groceries. And I thought, ‘All right, I guess I'm going to have to get a non-writing job, but I can't do that in time for next month's rent. I have to do something now.’ I remember talking to Amal El Mohtar, and saying, ‘I think I'll write a serial novel. I'll put it on my website with a donation button. It'll work.’ She said, ‘What are you going to write?’ I said, ‘I don't know. I'm looking through my ideas file for one I can sacrifice because nobody will ever publish it once I've published it online.’ This was before Kickstarter was a thing, and before people were reading on Kindle. It was new. I remember typing, ‘Oh, I could write **Fairyland**. Everybody wants to read **Fairyland**.’ And she said, ‘Oh, my God, please write **Fairyland**.’ I started posting chapters every Monday. I put a button up saying, donate whatever you think it's

worth, if you can. Neil Gaiman posted about it, Cory Doctorow posted about it, Warren Ellis posted about it, John Scalzi posted about it. And the serial went viral within a day.

“But it’s deceptive, because I published seven books first through traditional publishing. I get e-mails all the time – I signed myself up for a lifetime of this – saying, ‘How do I make my book do what yours did?’ And I tell people, ‘Publish seven books traditionally. Spend a lot of years getting to know people in the community of writers and editors and journalists and bloggers.’

“When I started the **Fairyland** serial I made a blog post and said, ‘Look. The economy is what it is, and seven months ago we were a three-income household, because my husband had two jobs, and now we are a no-income household. I couldn’t sell a book; nobody could sell a book in 2008 and 2009. We can’t pay the rent for the next month. I’m not asking for a handout. I was raised by a single mom, so asking for help is really tough. I don’t want charity – I want to work and be paid for work. So I am working. If you feel this work has value, you can pay for it. You don’t have to pay for it, even if you think it has value. You’re under no obligation.’

“James Owen called me and said, ‘Don’t be afraid. Don’t do this from a place of fear. Do it from a place of love for what you’re writing. You will be surprised how far this is going to go. I’ve read the first chapter. I know it will. You will feel better in five years if it came from a place of joy and not fear.’ I remembered that all the way through the writing. Lots of the people I know and work with have been in this same position. They struggle in the same way. We just don’t talk about it – we don’t talk about our failures. The way that people talk about the narrative of being a writer, there’s this idea that it’s always up, up, up. It’s magical thinking, like if we don’t talk about failure it won’t see us. I’ve proposed panels about authors discussing their moments of feeling as if their careers were over. I think everybody feels that. It still floors me that my lowest moment is what saved me, and that I was saved by my tribe, my family online, and by people who love books and want there to be magic in the world, and want something real.

“SFWA had only changed the rules to the Andre Norton and Nebula Awards two years before, to allow for digital publications. No book had yet had enough momentum to make the ballots. Mary Robinette Kowal e-mailed me and said, ‘Do you know **Fairyland** is eligible for the Norton?’ The book just skated in. I was blown away that it was even nominated. It had been picked up for print publication by then, but I knew it wasn’t going to come out in print until 2011. The Norton Award was in 2010. Scott Westerfeld and John Scalzi were both on the ballot. The only reason I went to the ceremony in Florida was because of the space shuttle – my husband and I had both dreamed of seeing a space shuttle launch.

“I didn’t write an acceptance speech. I thought, ‘I’m here to see a spaceship.’ I was so convinced I wasn’t going to win. All the blood rushed to my head when the winner was announced. I couldn’t quite comprehend it. The title is so long, the presenter didn’t get through the word ‘circumnavigated’ before people started clapping. I just couldn’t believe it. I cried. It still seems like a miracle. I have moments where I see **Fairyland** sitting on the table, and I think: ‘It’s a real book.’ This novel that was just a metaphor in another book, and now it’s sitting there for real, and it won this award.

“I didn’t think **Fairyland** would be traditionally published. Then it went to auction, and I was shocked! It’s amazing how fast this happened. Three years ago editors were like, why would you buy a book that’s already available online? All the **Fairyland** books are three-act stories. They have 24 chapters, eight chapters per arc. (There are also 24 chapters in **The Odyssey**. **Fairyland** is **The Odyssey** for little girls.) The publisher asked me to take the last act off my website, and right before the book came out they asked me to take down the second act. There are still eight chapters free on my site. And Tor.com put the first five chapters of the sequel, **The Girl Who Fell Beneath Fairyland**

**and Led the Revels There**, up online.

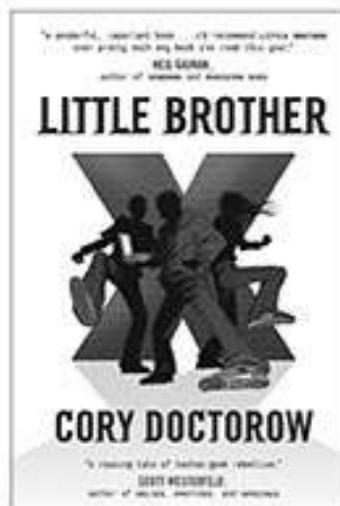
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*Interview continues after ad.*

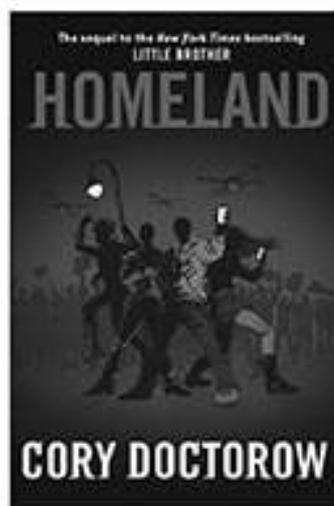
The kids are back for a little more

# REBELLION

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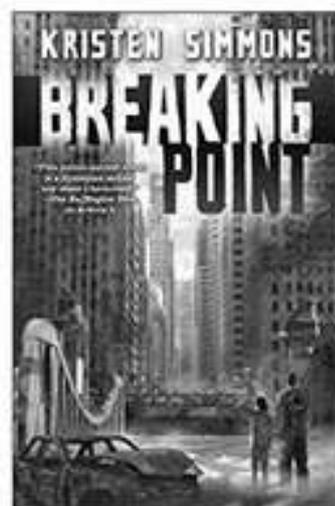
New York, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C., have been abandoned. The Bill of Rights has been revoked and replaced with the Moral Statutes. There are no more police—instead, there are soldiers. There are no more fines for bad behavior—instead, there are arrests, trials, and maybe worse.

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“Some of my foreign publishers have said, since I’m now a children’s author, ‘You should not swear in your Twitter.’ I said, ‘I’ve been writing for adults for eight years. I’ve been writing for kids for a year.’ Kids are going to the website, and I’ve never gotten any pushback. You could literally raise a kid through my books. I’ve done a picture book. I did **The Girl Who Circumnavigated Fairyland. Orphan’s Tales** is kind of YA, and there are all the adult books! I think people have been pretty good about understanding that I write for two audiences. Had **Fairyland** not come out online, I probably would have chosen a pseudonym to keep the children’s stuff separate. Now it’s all connected, but when I go on tour for **Fairyland**, all the publicity will refer to me as ‘Cat Valente,’ which is a subtle branding that I think works. I haven’t had any pushback from the YA community. They’ve all been really incredibly supportive. It is an entirely different world. It took me a long time to get to know people in that world, and their conventions are different.

“**Silently and Very Fast** took me a long time to write. It was originally supposed to be a novel. I cannot imagine now trying to make a full length novel out of that story. Because I’m not a natural short story writer, most of the time I try ideas on as novels. It just so happened that Capclave wanted me to do something for their convention publication, and I didn’t have anything they could reprint, so I decided to do an original. Who knew the runaway success would be the novel I published online? Who knew the thing that would let me sweep award nominations would be a convention book? It’s insane. Capclave did a reprint; the novella is very available.

“My husband’s a programmer, so I’ve been learning a lot over the last seven years about programming and computers and AI, which is his pet specialty, and how that works in the real world. I’m fascinated with it, because it hits all of my interests in consciousness and the way we express our humanity. I’d wanted to write about it and didn’t know how for a long time. Part of the reason there’s fantasy stuff in with the science fiction is because I wanted to write about these issues in a way that people who are not hard science fiction writers would still understand on a visceral level. I had someone come up to me and say this was the first time they’d ever felt like a story about computers was written for them. That’s where I feel like I’m going in my work – it’s a weird hybrid.

“The core of **Silently and Very Fast** is something that I think underlies a lot of my work: that the most human thing is telling stories. When you can tell a story about yourself, that’s the beginning of consciousness. You can see it in little kids, and it’s part of why dogs are not conscious. In all of the books I’ve read about AI, my favorite part is always when the AI talks. I wanted to write something where the AI was struggling with how to talk about itself. We have all these stories about sexbots and things, because nobody talks about how gender has to be programmed – everything has to be programmed. My husband gave me programming lessons. He sat me down and said, ‘You have to do your Hello World.’ It was sobering to see what it means when people talk about strong AI. And how much code it takes to do even a tiny thing. Once you’ve written the code, it isn’t done. There are bugs and it breaks. Nothing doesn’t break. The amount of code necessary for an AI is incredible. I learned about genetic programming, which is the mechanism by which the AI develops in **Silently and Very Fast**.

“Especially with **Silently** I’ve been going back and forth on the old question that everyone groans at: ‘What’s the difference between fantasy and science fiction?’ I don’t have a good answer, other than that science fiction feels the need to explain things, and fantasy is not obligated to, but can **Silently** feels like science fiction to me, but every time I’ve ever written science fiction I’ve had reviews saying it’s not science fiction. **Silently and Very Fast** is the first time nobody has outright said it’s fantasy, but they do say it has fantasy elements. I say it only has fantasy elements if you feel that folklore and mythology are fantasy – I feel they’re sociology and psychology. There’s a reason I

quote Bruno Bettelheim in the book. He wrote **The Uses of Enchantment**, which is all about fairy tales as psychoanalysis. I love telling folktales about science fiction.

“I think that’s part of what science fiction can do for us. We live in a world that we need explained to us. For a long time, if you were sufficiently smart and had sufficient resources, you could know a lot of what humanity knew, but that’s impossible now. We need things explained to us. We need fairy tales of the workplace and computers. For a long time people asked me if I was going to write science fiction, and I said, ‘I don’t think there’s room for me in science fiction. I don’t think they want me.’

“Science fiction, when you’re on the outside, feels surrounded by a rigorously defended wall. I didn’t think there was a place in science fiction for someone who writes with the kind of language I write. I didn’t think the things I’m interested in are things people would follow me on. Even though I’m interested in science fiction tropes, the angles I’m interested in are wrong. I did it, but it took me a long time. My first instinct was, ‘There’s nowhere for me to go.’ What I figured out was that I only want to write if I feel I have something new to bring to it. I didn’t have anything to bring to science fiction. I’m Red Riding Hood and there’s nothing in my basket. But telling folk tales about the science fictional world we live in was something I could do.

“I’m working on the third Fairyland book now. There will be five in the series. I’ve got two new adult books sold to Tor, **Matryoshka** and **Radiance**. **Radiance** is based on my short story ‘The Radiant Car Thy Sparrows Drew’ – it’s my deco punk alt-Hollywood history space opera mystery with space whales. But it’s also pulp SF, with the solar system the way it is in Zelazny, where Venus is a water world and uninhabitable. It’s also about movies and filmmaking. I’m working on writing that right now. The second is not a sequel but a companion piece to **Deathless**.

“I went to Rio Hondo a couple of years ago, and Carrie Vaughn was there. We were having one of those late night conversations about our careers. She hadn’t left her publisher yet and she was feeling frustrated, like she couldn’t write what she wanted to write. It was six months before **Palimpsest** came out, and I was really nervous about everything. She was talking about how she couldn’t get higher than 15 on the *New York Times* bestseller list. She was always slotting in at that same number and her publishers wanted her to be higher, and they just couldn’t seem to do it. I said, ‘I am never going to get on the *New York Times* list.’ She said, ‘It’s okay, I’m never going to get nominated for a Hugo.’ And the year I got on the *New York Times* list, Carrie got nominated for a Hugo. We e-mailed each other immediately – ‘*Oh my God!*’ We were co-guests of honor at Capclave so we told this story to the convention. I am Little Miss Least Likely To Make The *New York Times* List.

“Do I think it’s still very difficult for women in publishing? Yes, I do. Is it difficult for people of color? Yes, it absolutely is. Is it difficult for LGBT writers? Yes. Is it better than it was? Sure, in a lot of ways, it’s better. I think, as in many parts of our culture right now, we’re seeing something of a backlash against recent gains, panic at any change in the status quo, anger that anyone might care about the contents of a table of contents, and the dismissal of these conversations as demographic concerns or PC gone wild, even though the only people still talking about political correctness seem to be those who want carte blanche to behave callously and cruelly. There are still huge issues and hurdles. It’s still harder to become one of the big marquee names if you are a woman or queer or trans or a person of color. I just talked to someone who said there are very few British women being published in SF in Britain. We’re exporting American writing but we’re not importing translations. But I think it’s definitely improving and I think that there’s a generational shift. But it’s still really tough. You still see things like the reaction to the casting of people of color in **The Hunger Games**.

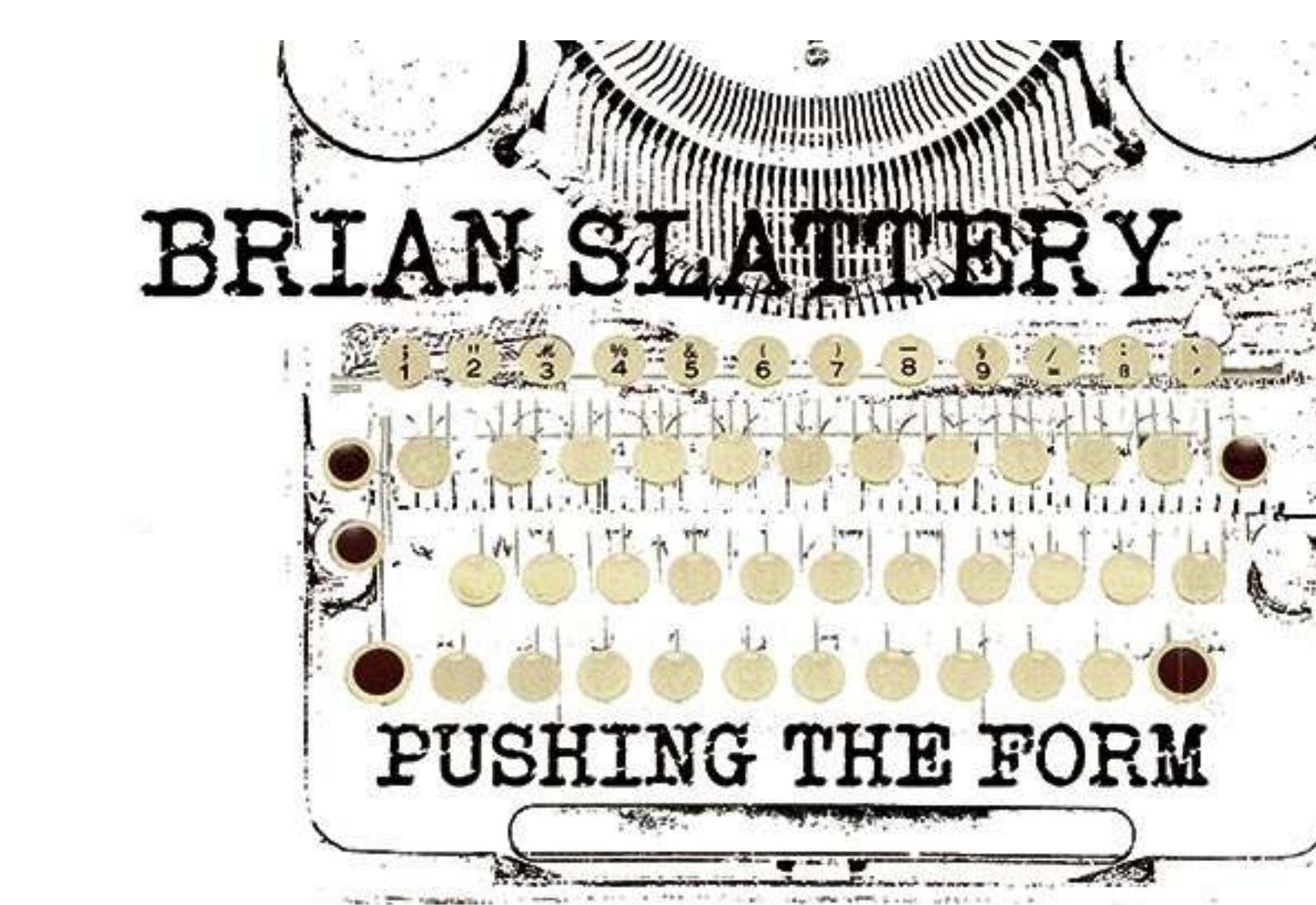
It's still hard to find protagonists that don't fall into very accepted demographics. I'm not sure that I think much of this is malicious. Everybody just runs on their cultural programming, and it's hard to break programming. That's part about why I wanted to write about AI, because we all run on programming, 24/7, and it's hard for a machine to break its own programming. We are complex machines, but our complexity does not make us better or different from that very basic equation. I hope we see greater diversity in the future. It's not only authors having better representation in their books, but having publishers and editors and readers who read outside of their comfort zone. With a wide range of authors having their own voices heard rather than hunting through mainstream novels trying to find one person who looks or thinks or loves like them. I've walked into people's houses and found no woman writers on their shelves. And I don't (usually) think they're consciously saying, 'Mwa ha ha, I will never read a woman!' They say they naturally gravitate toward men – and they're right. But when they say naturally they mean 'I was raised to think men's voices and stories have more gravity.'

“There's this idea that when we say gender issues, we're talking about women – that male is not a gender, it's the default. The idea that when we talk about race issues we're not talking about white people. I think all of that is brutally hard to break out of. At the same time, you have all these issues about how to write respectfully about a culture that is not your own. Those are hard problems and they should be hard. We should be wrestling with them. If you think it's easy and you're not questioning and struggling and thinking it's difficult, you're doing it wrong.

“We're trying to defeat the vacuum of living in a town where everybody looks one way, where heroes are defined as white, straight men. On the other side, we're trying to build a town where nobody has to look alike. There is a vacuum created when culture is a monologue. The vacuum of not taking part in a conversation, so you don't know what the conversation is about. But the conversation is vitally, undeniably important.”

–Catherynne M. Valente

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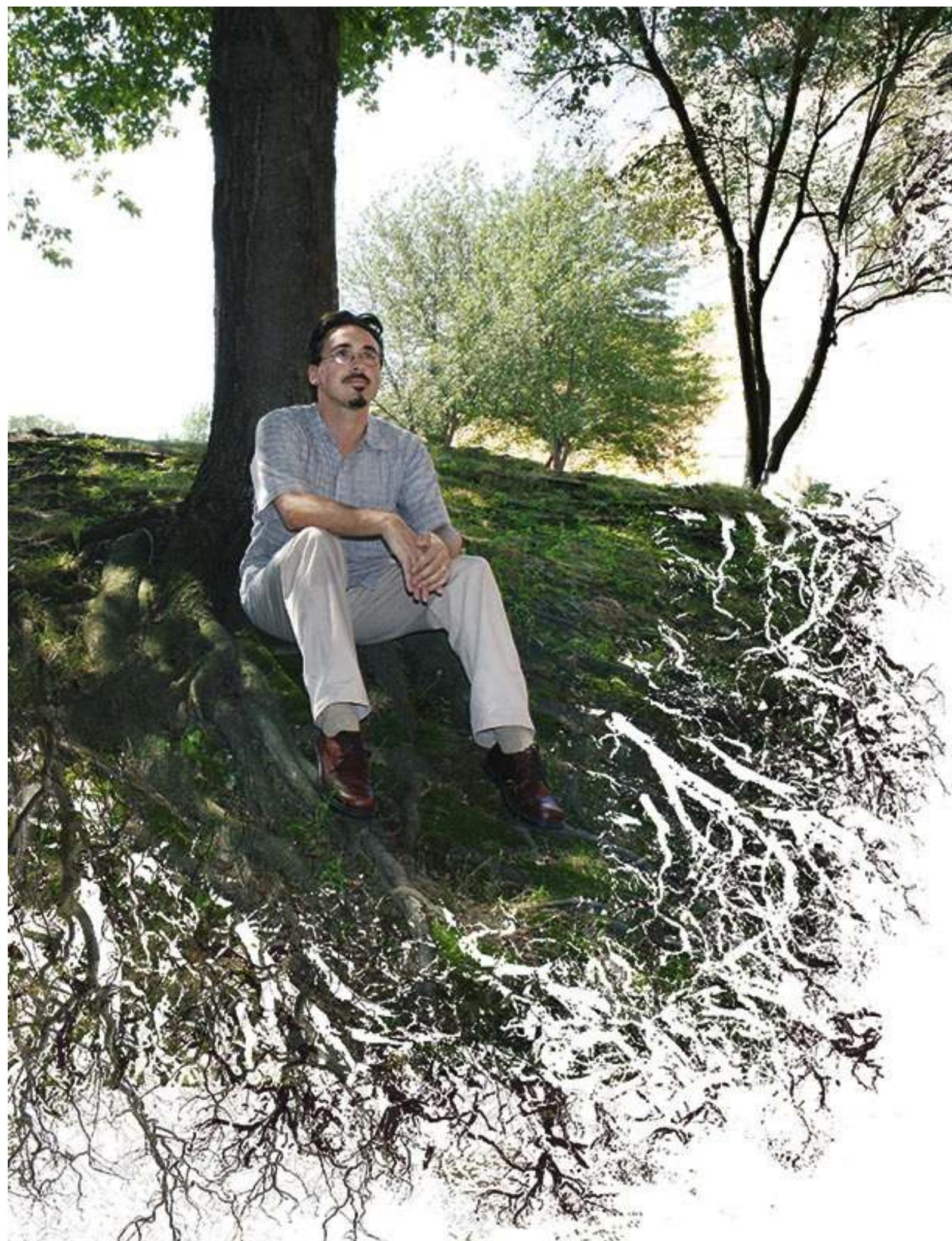
# BRIAN SLATTERY

## PUSHING THE FORM

*Brian Francis Slattery was born February 6, 1975 in Ithaca NY. He attended Williams College, graduating with a BA in English in 1997, and went to graduate school at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University, earning a Master's in International Affairs in economic development with a concentration in human rights. He taught English in Japan, worked for the Guggenheim Foundation and the Gimbel Foundation, and works as an editor specializing in economics and public policy; he is also occasionally a journalist. Slattery is currently an editor at the US Institute of Peace and for the New Haven Review. He is also an avid musician, playing fiddle and banjo. Slattery lives near New Haven CT with his family.*

*Slattery began publishing with mainstream literary story "The Things That Get You" (2002). He moved more firmly into the genre with his first novel, **Spaceman Blues: A Love Song** (2007), followed by **Liberation: Being the Adventures of the Slick Six After the Collapse of the United States of America** (2008) and **Lost Everything** (2012).*

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“I think genre labels are important and useful, especially for critics, readers, and publishers, but they aren’t something I spend much time thinking about when I’m writing something. I didn’t know what genre my first book, **Spaceman Blues**, was in when I finished it, and I decided to let someone else decide. I sent it around to literary fiction people and to science fiction people, and I figured whatever happened, happened. The consensus among literary fiction people was that the book was really confusing. For science fiction people it was the other way around; they were like, ‘Oh, this is cool, you wrote something that is pretty well written and it has a lot of stuff in it that we like.’ The label fits, and it has fit for all three books that I’ve published, and I’m quite happy with it.

“I try to be kind of intuitive when I’m writing, especially during the first draft; I try to just turn off the higher-functioning parts of my brain and react. The first spark for **Lost Everything** came when I did a gig with a couple of other musicians in New York City and we played a tune that’s actually called ‘Lost Everything’. As we played, this overwhelming, really serious ball of sadness just hit me. I’d never been sadder in years. And then the tune ended, and the gig ended, and I thought, ‘I don’t know what just happened.’ At the same time, I grew up in upstate New York, and I’d been trying for a long time to write a book about the area, and to get at the things about the place that I find interesting and that I love. I tried and failed for a long time, and for a while I just abandoned the idea, thinking it was something I couldn’t do. But as it turned out, I could do it if I approached it slowly. So it was a shot in the dark, and at the same time, something that had been gestating for a long time. I managed to cherry-pick the tiny fragments that were good from all the junk I’d tried to write before, and finally put it into a shape that seemed like something, instead of just a ridiculous collection of stuff. It was satisfying. Not necessarily fun, because I wouldn’t describe the book as fun, but it was satisfying.

“Part of the reason the book is sad is because, even since I was a kid, things have changed in upstate New York. Things seem to be getting worse in a lot of places. It’s really sad, and also underreported. Remember when Binghamton had that giant flood that cost I don’t even know how much to clean up? I was watching the news about that, and the newscaster on location had this attitude like, ‘Well, things are looking a little better around here, so let’s wrap this up.’ But behind him you could see that the bridge he was standing next to was *underwater*. I thought, ‘Turn around, man. Things aren’t actually looking that good. The bridge is underwater.’ Things still aren’t okay in Binghamton, and all they got was 30 seconds of attention – ‘Hooray, the rain stopped, so you’re good now, right?’ My native upstate New York hackles were raised at that point. A lot of the specific details in **Lost Everything** that give the impression of a place slowly deteriorating are less extrapolations than just straight-up descriptions of what I think I see when I go to upstate New York now, and what I hopefully remember right about what I saw when I was growing up there. The town I grew up in is doing fine, which makes sense because it’s a big college town. But a lot of towns aren’t, and I look around and just think, ‘How are they going to get out of this?’ It’s sad, because it’s a place that I care about so much.

“I’ve figured out that I can’t actually write about a place well unless I’ve been there. Oh, sometimes I can fudge. I can learn enough about a place by talking to people and reading to be reasonably confident that I can accurately represent it, but only if it’s a small part of the book. **Liberation** is full of cheats like that – instances in which I realized I only needed a page or so about a certain place, so I couldn’t justify spending the money to visit and walk around. But any place where more than a couple of pages take place, I have to go. Writing **Liberation** meant I spent a week just bumming around western Kansas and eastern Colorado, taking notes and a lot of pictures and asking the people who lived there a lot of stupid tourist questions, and when I got back I had to revise a *lot* of what I’d already written, because of so many things I got wrong. It’s the details I get from those trips

that I think make parts of the book snap into focus. Some of my favorite parts of all the books I've written, I couldn't have written without those details. Though interestingly, sometimes those are also the details – the descriptions of things that are actually there, or that actually happened – that strike people as the least believable.

“The book I just finished writing – we'll see if I can sell it – is about a highly dysfunctional, wealthy family in Cleveland, with Eastern European roots, and also about the rise of old and new forms of organized crime, in the '20s and in the '90s. So it's one of those books about different generations, where you get to learn all about the people and the crazy amount of trouble they get into which brings you from Africa to America to Eastern Europe. In terms of content, it's more like historical fiction; there are no science fiction or fantasy elements. The story just didn't need them. But in terms of form ... well, I'll just misquote Neal Stephenson. After he wrote **Cryptonomicon** and the **Baroque Cycle**, I vaguely remember coming across something where people said to him, 'you don't write science fiction anymore,' and he basically said, 'I feel like I am still writing science fiction. I'm just figuring out how far I can push the form.' I see what he means there, because even though this new book I've written doesn't have any specific genre elements in it, the structure of the book is much more like that of a science fiction or fantasy novel, in the sense that the book is ultimately about an idea that draws a lot of people together: In addition to being about the characters, the book has an overarching idea that runs throughout the whole book, and that idea is what drives the plot. I think that's a more typical genre move than what I understand as a more literary approach to plot. I'm also wincing, because these are huge generalizations I'm making about two genres, but whatever. We're talking about the labels, and for me, those labels are themselves just big generalizations about the genres, both of which are actually a lot livelier than the generalizations would suggest.

“My day job consists partially of reading a lot about some pretty bad things that are happening all over the world. Most of what I edit is about Africa, though some is about the Middle East and some of it is about South America. The war in **Lost Everything** draws pretty heavily from what I think I understand about what's going on in the intractable conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo – the way the war has lasted long enough that it's like there's this weird and horrific little engine right inside the conflict that is very hard to stop. I'm no expert on any of it, but what I read for work has influenced my books a ton. Going to grad school in public policy really did a lot for me too. I wrote fiction before that, but I didn't have very much to write *about*. There are a lot of people who have written beautiful things that are essentially autobiographical, but I'm not one of them. I realized I was much more interested in other people, particularly people whose lives are very different than mine. **Spaceman Blues** has a lot of information pulled from stuff I did in grad school, and people I met, and just understanding how the city of New York works. When I first started editing, I did a lot of work in economics – my degree was in economic development – and a lot of material in **Liberation** is pulled from things I was editing at the time about forecasts for the US economy and the way the economies of other countries work. Probably most important was visiting those kinds of places, where you see how different people's lives are, and the amazing ingenuity people have when it comes to getting the things they really need and helping each other out. Their lives are unquestionably harder – they're really, really hard. But they're not just lying down, they refuse to give up, and the way that they often pull joy right out of the air is just astonishing to me. A lot of that's in all three books I've published, or at least I've tried to put it there – how crazy savvy, and how great, people are.

“Music is a huge part of my life, and a nice balance to my job. Where my day job consists of looking at the horrible things that people do, in my musical life, I see people having a great time and generally being great to each other. You go, 'Ahh, we might make it after all.' It's always been

amazing to me that some of the most wretched places in the world pump out relentlessly happy music. You can kind of see why – their lives are really hard, and when they go out to have a good time, they want to have a good time. There’s something pretty awe-inspiring about that.’’

‘‘I’m not sure I would have tried to be a writer if I’d known how difficult it is to get published, and how difficult it is to publish something weird. My amazing lack of knowledge about how anything worked is what gave me the chutzpah to get going. Of course, the downside of not knowing anything that it took pretty much until after I was going to be published to realize that there’s this cohort of people who are writing similarly weird things. Discovering them opened up this whole other world of books to me, that I’m still exploring. I would have loved to have known about them sooner, first of all as a reader, because I love so many of their books now and wish I’d started reading them sooner – there’s so much to catch up on – but also as an emerging writer, to understand that there really is a place for the books I write, instead of just fumbling around like I actually did, and to a certain extent still do.

‘‘I know a lot more about the career-oriented, gamelike aspects of the publishing industry now, though I’d say I play it pretty poorly. Part of the reason for that is just because, between job, family, and music, I’m really busy. But sometimes I wonder how helpful playing the game is. There are people who are amazing at it and they turn it into something great, in my case I’m pretty sure it would have been paralyzing. I would have spent all kinds of time fretting about what kind of niche I fit into, what my identity was as an author, when really, I’m not sure I would have had a lot of control over that. I can say what I think my books are and what kind of writer I think I am, and some people – both readers and reviewers – will buy it, but other people won’t. And that’s perfectly valid. One of the most fun things about having books published is the way people who like your books like them for *really* different reasons. They understand them as very different books. Someone will say you wrote this great book about X, and then you’ll get someone who says you wrote this great book – the same book – about *not* X. I don’t think either of them are right or wrong. I’m just psyched when people like them. I love the sense of having connected with somebody. That’s really all I’m in it for. I’m trying to return some karmic favor. I love reading generally, of course, but my favorite books are the ones that came along at just the right time, when I was wrestling with something I couldn’t even figure out how to define, and I read something that helped me understand, that revealed something to me, and to this day I’m so grateful to the authors for writing those things. Things like Fritz Leiber’s *Fafhrd and Grey Mouser* series, or Michael Moorcock’s *Elric* saga, or Jorge Luis Borges’s short stories, or **Love in the Time of Cholera**, or **The Tin Drum**, or **Ulysses**. Then there’s David Quammen’s **Song of the Dodo**, Anne Fadiman’s **The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down**, and Noel Mostert’s **Frontiers**, a heartbreaking book about South African history. And then most recently Octavia Butler. What would do without her? And on and on.’’

–Brian Slatte

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## MILESTONES

Editor **JULIET ULMAN** & **MATT ULMAN** are the parents of **ELISE JOSEPHINE ULMAN**, born January 3, 2013.



*Peter David (2011)*

**PETER DAVID**, 56, suffered a stroke in late December 2012 while on vacation in Florida. He is now undergoing rehabilitation and is recovering well.

**ROBERT REGINALD**, 64, delivered **The Call of Lemnoc** by **FRANCIS JARMAN**, the 1,200th book he's edited for his Borgo Press imprint, on December 15, 2012. He's edited 1,955 books and magazine issues in his lifetime (so far).

## AWARDS

**JUNOT DÍAZ**'s **This Is How You Lose Her** is one of three finalists for the Story Prize, which includes a \$20,000 cash award for the winner, and \$5,000 for each runner-up. The award is given annually to an outstanding collection published in English in the US. Winners will be announced March 13, 2013

at a ceremony in New York.

## BOOKS SOLD

**THOMAS PYNCHON** sold his next novel, **The Bleeding Edge**, to Penguin Press.

**SEANAN McGUIRE** sold **Velveteen vs. The Multiverse** to Bill Roper of ISFiC Press.

**LAIRD BARRON** sold collection **The Beautiful Thing that Awaits Us All** to Ross Lockhart at Night Shade Books.

**TANYA HUFF**'s **Peacemaker**, part of the Torin Kerr/Valor series, sold to Sheila Gilbert at DAW via Joshua Bilmes of JABberwocky Literary Agency.

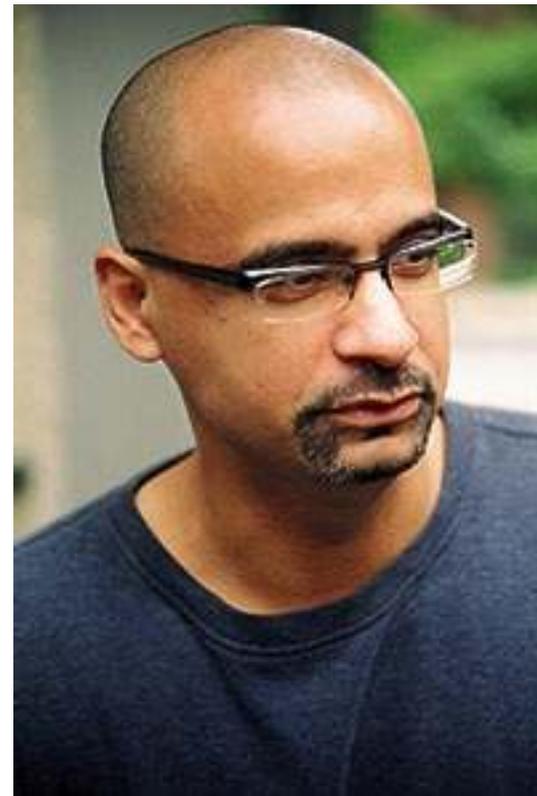
**GENEVIEVE VALENTINE**'s **Glad Rags**, a reimagining of the "Twelve Dancing Princesses" fairy tale set in 1920s Manhattan, sold to Daniel Loedel at Atria in a pre-empt via Joe Monti of Barry Goldblatt Literary.

**EDWARD WILLETT** sold space opera **Right to Know** to Bundoran Press.

**A.J. COLUCCI** sold a "science thriller" about a strange island to Toni Plummer at Thomas Dunne via Adrienne Rosado of Nancy Yost Literary Agency.

**CHARLES E. GANNON** sold two sequels to **Fire with Fire** to Toni Weiskopf at Baen via Eleanor Wood of Spectrum Literary Agency.

**D.G. LEVINE** sold **Hyde**, a "reimagining" of **The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde**



*Junot Díaz (2009)*

told from Hyde's point-of-view, to Jenna Johnson at Houghton Mifflin Harcourt via Erin Harris of Folio Literary Management.



*Tanya Huff (2012)*

**STEVEN SWINIARSKI's** new fantasy **Dragon/Princess** went to Sheila Gilbert at DAW via Eleanor Wood of Spectrum Literary Agency.

**ELLIOT JAMES** sold urban fantasy **Charming** and two more books to Devi Pillai at Orbi via Michelle Johnson and Marisa Corvisiero at Corvisiero Literary Agency.

**SONJA CONDIT's Starter House** sold to Carrie Feron at William Morrow via Jenny Bent of the Bent Agency, and to Sa O'Keeffe at Corvus in the UK via Hellie Ogden of Greene & Heaton on behalf of the Bent Agency.

**PATRICIA GRACE JOYCE's** timeslip novel **The Magi of Time** and three more books sold to Len Charla at Countinghouse Press via Diane Nine of Nine Speaker Agency.

**JEFFE KENNEDY** sold the Twelve Kingdoms fantasy trilogy to Peter Sentfleben at Kensington via Pam van Hylckan Vlieg of Larsen/Pomada Literary Agents.

**ANGUS WATSON** sold the Iron Age trilogy to Jenni Hill at Orbit (US and UK) via Angharad Kowal of Writers House UK.

**AUSTIN ASLAN's** SF survival story **The Islands at the End of the Earth** and another title sold to Wendy Lamb at Wendy Lamb Books via Julie Just of Janklow & Nesbit.

**JEFFREY COHEN**, writing as **E.J. COPPERMAN**, sold the sixth and seventh books in the Haunted Guesthouse paranormal mystery series to Shannon Jamieson Vazquez at Berkley Prime Crime via Josh Getzler of Hannigan Salky Getzler.

**F.J.R. TITCHENELL's Confessions of the Very First Zombie Slayer (That I Know Of)** went to Christopher Loke at Jolly Fish Press via Jennifer Mishler of the Literary Counsel.

**JEN McCONNEL's** novel **Daughter of Chaos** and two more books sold to Georgia McBride of Month9Books.

**MEGAN WHITMER** sold fantasy **Between** to Danielle Ellison at Spencer Hill Press.

**DANIELLE ELLISON** sold **Salt** and a second fantasy to Liz Pelletier at Entangled.

**CASSANDRA CLARE, MAUREEN JOHNSON, and SARAH REES BRENNAN** sold **The Bane Chronicles**, a collection of ten linked stories set in Clare's Shadowhunters world, to Simon & Schuster Children's via Russell Galen for Clare, Kristin Nelson for Rees Brennan, and Kate Schafer Testerman for Johnson. The stories will be published as e-books one per month in 2013, followed by print edition in 2014.

**KELLY McCULLOUGH's** YA **School for Sidekicks** sold to Holly West at Feiwel & Friends via Jack Byrne of Sternig & Byrne Literary Agency.

**LISH McBRIDE** sold YA fantasy **Firebug** and another book to Noa Wheeler at Holt Children's via Jason Anthony of Lippincott Massie McQuilkin.

**CARRIE JONES** sold two thrillers and a YA horror novel (the latter written with **STEVEN E. WEDEL**) to Melissa Frain at Tor Teen via Edward Necarsulmer IV of McIntosh & Otis.

**ROSIE BEST** sold YA fantasy **Skulk** and a second book to Amanda Rutter at Strange Chemistry via Catherine Pellegrino of Catherine Pellegrino and Associates.

**EVAN ANGLER's** fourth YA in the Swipe series sold to Molly Kempft Hodgins of Thomas

Nelson via Tina Wexler of ICM.

~~CLAUDIA GRAY~~ sold ~~**Can't Get Next to You**~~ and the rest of the Firebird trilogy to Sarah Landis at HarperTeen via Diana Fox of Fox Literary.

AMALIE HOWARDS sold **Alpha Goddess**, a YA take on the **Ramayana**, to Julie Matysik of Sky Pony Press via Liza Fleissig of Liza Royce Agency.

SUZANNE LAZEAR sold **Fragile Destiny**, third in the Aether Chronicles steampunk fairytale series, to Brian Farrey-Latz at Flux via Laura Bradford of Bradford Literary Agency.

CYN BALOG, writing as NICHOLA REILLY, sold SF YA **Dream Kingdom** and a second book to Annie Stone and Natashya Wilson at Harlequin Teen via Jim McCarthy of Dystel & Goderich Literary Management.

CAT PATRICK & SUZANNE YOUNG's **Just Like Fate** went to Simon Pulse via Jim McCarthy of Dystel & Goderich Literary Management for Young and Daniel Lazar at Writers House for Patrick.

AMY NICHOLS sold **Another Here, Another Now**, a YA about parallel worlds, and a second book to Katherine Harrison at Knopf Children's via Quinlan Lee of Adams Literary.

POLLY SHULMAN's **The Hawthorne Annex**, companion to **The Grimm Legacy** and **The Wells Bequest**, went to Nancy Paulsen of Nancy Paulsen Books via Irene Skolnick of Irene Skolnick Agency.



Joe R. Lansdale (2012)

TRENT REEDY's **Divided We Fall** near-future dystopian trilogy sold to Cheryl Klein at Arthur A. Levine via Ammi-Joia Paquette of Erin Murphy Literary Agency.

CAREY CORP & LORIE LANGDON sold **Doon**, a reimagining of the musical **Brigadoon**, and three more books to Jacque Alberta of Zondervan Children's via Nicole Resciniti of the Seymour Agency.

STEFANIE GAITHER sold **Falls the Shadows**, about a clone framed for murder, to Nava Wolfe of Simon & Schuster Children's via Sara Megibow of Nelson Literary Agency.

NEIL GODBOUT's **Resolve**, third in the YA vampire trilogy that began with **Disintegrate** and **Dissolve**, sold to Bundoran Press.

BRIGID KEMMERER sold three books in her **Elementa** series to Alicia Condon at Kensington Teen via Mandy Hubbard of D4EO Literary Agency.

S.G. ROGERS sold **Children of Yden**, sequel to **The Last Great Dragon of Yden**, to Stephanie Taylor at Astraea Press.

ALLIE DUZETT's **The Body Electric**, about a teen whose boyfriend might be related to Zeus, went to Isteria Books.

JEANIENE FROST's YA fantasy **Realm Walker** and two more books sold to Tara Parson at Harlequin with Margo Lipschultz to edit via Nancy Yost of Nancy Yost Literary Agency.

SCHUYLER EBERSOL sold **The Hidden World** to John Koehler of Koehler Books, with Joe Coccaro to edit, via Leticia Gomez of Savvy Literary Services.

ELISA FREILICH's first novel **Siren**, a YA fantasy described as "**Glee** meets Greek mythology," sold to Mary Cummings at Diversion Books via Jessica Regal of the Jean V. Naggar Literary Agency.

**KIM LIGGETT** sold YA fantasy **Blood and Salt** and a second book to Arianne Lewin at Putnam at auction via Josh Adams of Adams Literary.

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New writer **WILL CHANCELLOR** sold **A Brave Man Seven Storeys Tall**, about an Olympic athlete who encounters Greek gods, to Michael Signorelli at Harper.

First novelist **KATHERINE HARBOUR** sold **Thorn Jack** and two more books to Diana Gill at Voyager via Thao Le of Sandra Dijkstra Literary Agency.

**JOE R. LANSDALE** sold a psychological horror novella to Black Labyrinth.

**LAURA ANNE GILMAN** sold novella duology *Sylvan Investigations*, about a half-faun private investigator, to Jacqueline Smay at Plus One Press.

**MINDEE ARNETT** sold an e-book novella prequel to **Avalon** to Jordan Brown at HarperTeen Impulse via Suzie Townsend of New Leaf Literary & Media.

**J.F. JENKINS** sold fantasy novella **Legend of the Tribes** to Stephanie Taylor at Astraea Press.

## BOOKS RESOLD

**ARTHUR C. CLARKE**'s estate has sold **Childhood's End, 2001: A Space Odyssey**, and 33 more titles for e-book publication by RosettaBooks.

**ROBERT J. SAWYER**'s **Red Planet Blues** resold to Malcolm Edwards at Orion in the UK via Chris Lotts. *Supernatural Investigators*, the TV series Sawyer hosts on Canada's Vision TV, has been renewed for ten more episodes.

**MIKE RESNICK** resold **A Miracle of Rare Design** to Dog Star Books, with an introduction by **HEIDI ROBY MILLER**. Resnick sold film rights to "Down Memory Lane" to director/producer Kun Wu of Bona Film Group in China.

**DELIA SHERMAN** sold paperback rights to **The Freedom Maze** to Deb Noyes Wayshak at Candlewick in a pre-empt via Renee Zuckerbrot of Renee Zuckerbrot Literary Agency on behalf of hardcover publisher Big Mouth House.

The late **CHARLES SHEFFIELD**'s novels **Godspeed**, **The Cyborg from Earth**, **Putting Up Roots**, and **Billion Dollar Boy** resold to Shahid Mahmud of ArcManor via Justin Bell of Spectrum Literary Agency.

**SHERRILYN KENYON**'s **Styx** and two more novels resold to Donna Condon at Piatkus via Sylvie Rosokoff of Trident Media Group on behalf of Robert Gottlieb.

**JOHN GWYNNE**'s **Malice** and a sequel were resold to Tom Bauman at Orbit US via Harriet Sanders, rights director at UK publisher Macmillan.

**SUSAN EE** sold **Angelfall** to Kate Howard of Hodder Children's in the UK, via Teri Tobias Agency in association with US publisher Amazon Children's.

**VICTORIA LAMB**'s Tudor Witch trilogy, beginning with **Witchstruck** and **Witchfall**, went to Natasha Wilson at Harlequin Teen via Bronwen Bennie of Random House Children's UK.

**DAVID WELLINGTON** turned in **Chimera** to Diana Gill at Voyager.

**ADAM MANSBACH** handed in **The Dead Run** to Diana Gill at Voyager.

## PUBLISHING

**ANNE HOPPE** has left HarperCollins after 18 years to become senior executive editor at Clarion Books.

**BILL ROPER** has taken over as publisher of ISFiC Press from **STEVEN H SILVER**.

**ROSS LOCKHART** has left his position as managing editor at Night Shade Books.

- [Nature's New Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Roots of the American Environmental Movement online](#)
- [download \*It's What I Do: A Photographer's Life of Love and War\*](#)
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