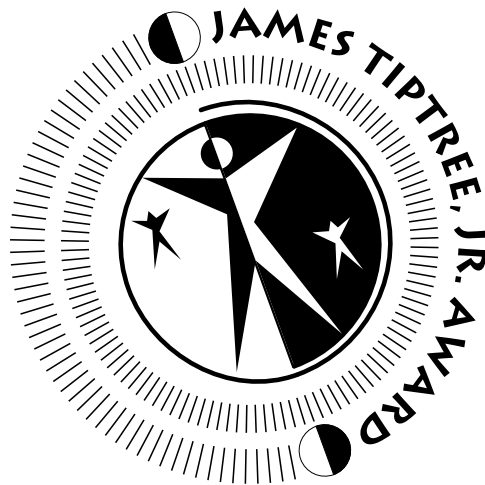


# James Tiptree, Jr. Award

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**Cumulative Lists:  
Winners, Shortlists and Longlists  
Plus Art Prizes and Songs**

***1991-2006***



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## The James Tiptree, Jr. Award

The James Tiptree, Jr. Award is given to the work of science fiction or fantasy published in one year which best explores or expands gender roles.

### The Founding Mothers

Karen Joy Fowler and Pat Murphy

### The Heroes

The people who made the bake sales, contributed to and produced the cookbooks, designed the t-shirts, sewed the quilt, donated unsolicited cash, attended the annual ceremonies, and otherwise contributed to the ongoing life and saga of the Tiptree organism. The energy and enthusiasm the award engenders is incontrovertible proof of just how hungry the science fiction community is for this award, and how ready everyone has been to make it happen and make it keep happening.

### The Process

Each year Founding Mothers, Pat Murphy and Karen Joy Fowler appoint a panel of five judges to read and discuss among themselves the merits of gender-bending fiction published in the previous year. Anyone and everyone is invited to forward recommendations for novels and short fiction to Karen Joy Fowler (3404 Monte Vista, Davis, CA 95616), who will request copies for the judges from publishers. Publishers are encouraged to alert Karen about soon-to-be-published gender-bending fiction.

At the end of a year of reading and deliberation, the judges choose a winner who is invited to the Tiptree Award ceremony to accept their award and prize money. Each year an award of \$1000 is presented to a winner, or shared among co-winners. Tiptree ceremonies have been held at several WisCon SF conventions in Madison, Wisconsin, as well as at Readercon in Massachusetts, at Potlatch in Oakland, California, and at the International Conference of the Fantastic in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

Although the judges choose not to release a list of nominees before the actual award, thus creating an artificial set of “losers,” they do publish a “shortlist” (and sometimes a “longlist,” as well) of fiction to which they wish to call readers’ attention.

“One of the most exciting things about the first panel of judges for the Tiptree Award was the intensity, care, and concern with which the judges read, and wrote about what they read. Everyone aired real concerns, everyone listened to each other.

“The James Tiptree, Jr. Award was started by visionaries, supported by nourishment, and selected with passion, patience and respect for difference. Alice Sheldon would have a lot to be proud of.”—Debbie Notkin, coordinator of the first Tiptree panel of judges, 1992

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## The 1991 James Tiptree, Jr. Award

**WisCon 16, Madison, WI**

**Prize:** chocolate typewriters

**Song:** “Sister Suffragettes,” from *Mary Poppins*

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### Judges

Suzy McKee Charnas

Sherry Coldsmith

Bruce McAllister

Vonda McIntyre

Debbie Notkin (coordinator)

*Non-attributed commentary harvested from correspondence among the judges.*

## Winners of the 1991 James Tiptree, Jr. Award

### *A Woman of the Iron People*

Eleanor Arnason, William Morrow, 1991

“Four-square grumpy humor and effortless inventiveness. It explores the situation of a people much more obviously (if not more deeply) fixed in mammalian psycho-sexual wiring than we are (or think we are). No easy answers, no question begging, just a clean, clever job.”

“That wonderful mix of ‘sense of wonder’ (alien-ness) and shock of recognition (humanity) which ... the very best science fiction has and which ... ‘courage’ in SF demands.”

### *The White Queen*

Gwyneth Jones, Gollancz, 1991

“The real reason this book is so good is its moral complexity. You don’t know whether to root for the heroes as they challenge the seemingly benevolent aliens or to pity the heroes for their xenophobia. Jones makes that decision as difficult for us as the decision to support the PLO or the IRA or the Mojahadeen (take your pick) is for people today. The book is infuriatingly and justifiably inconclusive; the characters are as confused as most of today’s viewers are.”

### 1991 Shortlist

#### *Orbital Resonance*

John Barnes, Tor 1991

“This book deserves serious consideration because of the viewpoint character (a teenage girl on a space station) and because of the changes Barnes postulates in people living in a new environment. It’s very good science fiction; excellent speculation. Quirky and interesting politics. He’s done a fine job of imagining what living in his creation would be like.”

#### *Sarah Canary*

Karen Joy Fowler, Henry Holt & Co., 1991

Karen disqualified this one early, because she administers the Tiptree with Pat Murphy, but the judges didn’t let her keep it off the shortlist. “Every bit as distinguished as *The White Queen*. After eight years of cyberpunk as a more masculine than feminine endeavor, two very strong writers [Fowler and Jones] have invented a feminist reply. In so doing, they’ve made a long overdue contribution to the great dialog of the SF field.”

#### *The Architecture of Desire*

Mary Gentle, Bantam Press, 1991

“Gentle not only successfully blurs the gender lines around rape, she raises all the questions so prevalent in contemporary culture about date rape, marital rape, and other situations where the lines are blurred. ... One of the best things about the book is that the protagonist understands what she’s done, and why, and through that, comes to understand what the rapist did, and why. Gentle also, in the relationship between the protagonist and her husband, deals with two [essential] gender issues (or at least relationship issues)—love without beauty and love in a context of controlled jealousy.”

#### *Moonwise*

Greer Ilene Gilman, NAL/Roc, 1991

“Women of various ages and stages and forms struggle over a most basic and grand ‘magical’ achievement, the accomplishment of the winter solstice and release towards spring. A victory is won without the toot of a single war-horn or clash of battle, and it works—without argument, without over-protection, without polemic of any kind, but just by being told, and well-told.”

### ***He, She and It***

Marge Piercy, Summit Books, 1991

“Women tend to talk differently from men ... Part of the reason women speak differently is because their concerns are different. I think that Piercy has taken on cyberpunk and made it answer the questions that women are most likely to ask about the future. Shira and Malkah, the protagonists, are not sleazoid-underworld-street-samurai; they’re women who’d like to raise a kid successfully as well as jack in. ... This was new; it is not a minor triumph.”

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## **The 1992 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

**WisCon 17, Madison, WI**

**Prize:** glass bowl etched with a seal in the style of Eskimo art, by Nevenah Smith

**Song:** ?

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### **Judges**

Eleanor Arnason

Gwyneth Jones

John Kessel

Michaela Roessner (coordinator)

Pamela Sargent

*Non-attributed commentary harvested from correspondence among the judges.*

## **Winner of the 1992 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

### ***China Mountain Zhang***

Maureen McHugh, Tor, 1992

“Homosexuality is a useful device for a political novelist—a male homosexual is a public agent who does not stand to benefit, in the terms of his own futurity, from anything the state can do. Throughout this novel there’s an understated, building tension between the loveless embrace of the ‘caring’ state and the unassuming humane behavior of Zhang the outsider. Deep in the heart of *China Mountain Zhang* there’s a very old riff: the wild talent, the young male outsider who is smarter, faster, much better than the system that rejects him. McHugh has given this old, old story an elegant transformation.”

“A sympathetic and subtle portrayal of women and men in nontraditional roles.”

“Avoiding preachment without abandoning thought is hard. Characters must seem real without seeming doctrinaire; issues must arise out of the story instead of being imposed on it. By this standard I’d say McHugh’s *China Mountain Zhang* is the best political novel I’ve read in years, because for the most part it doesn’t seem to be about politics at all.”

“Rigorous science fiction, set in a non-western culture. It’s well written and the characters live and breathe. It’s got it all.”

## **1992 Shortlist**

### ***Venus Rising***

Carol Emshwiller, Edgewood Press, 1992

“Liked the alien sense of Emshwiller’s amphibious people. An explicitly feminist story which also has an underlying, rationalized yet subtle science-fictional rationale. I like the way *Venus Rising* can be read both metaphorically and as a ‘pure’ science fiction story.”

### ***“Grownups,”***

Ian MacLeod, *Asimov’s*, 6/92

“This taps into some basic male discomfort with what pregnancy does to women’s bodies (although there is no pregnancy per se in the story), and also with adolescent fears about adulthood, the perception of growing up as a loss of vitality and identity.”

### ***Time, Like an Ever Rolling Stream***

Judith Moffett, St. Martin’s Press, 1992

“A good science fiction novel about incest or the threat or possibility thereof. Moffett also does a good job of showing the connection—for many conservative Christians—between religion, consumerism, disrespect for the planet and fear of different people.”

“Moffett’s writing on gender issues, and on the future of humanity, is profoundly and insidiously pessimistic. Under the placid surface of *Time*, there’s a truly terrible, and grimly justified, vision of the relationship between the sexes.”

### ***Red Mars***

Kim Stanley Robinson, Harper Collins, 1992

“Liked this book’s openly sexual interpretation of human power broking, and the way that sex-drive scrabbling for dominance is shown as being destructive on every possible level.”

“If this novel isn’t explicitly about gender roles, they certainly underlie and drive the characters and their interactions. This is rich, realistic, beautifully done science fiction with the kind of detail that makes one feel the writer has actually lived in the world he creates.”

### ***Correspondence***

Sue Thomas, The Women’s Press, 1992

“Thoughtful, philosophical, intelligent exploration of human/machine interfacing and transformations.”

### ***Lost Futures***

Lisa Tuttle, Grafton, 1992

“This book is a multiverse riff, strongly reminiscent of *The Female Man* and *Woman on the Edge of Time*, but the device is used for a personal, not a political story. It’s mildly yet pervasively eerie and disorienting.”

### ***In the Mother’s Land***

Elisabeth Vonarburg, Bantam, 1992

“Vonarburg’s writing has a seriousness of purpose that much American science fiction, even some of the best, lacks; moral issues and intellectual debates are an important and exciting part of her work. Change may be necessary, but one has a sense, in this novel, of how problematic it is and how much pain it can cause. One of the delights of this novel is that the reader learns about the protagonist’s world in much the way she does, first discovering her immediate environment and then, gradually, the world beyond it.

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## The 1993 James Tiptree, Jr. Award

Readercon 7, Worcester, MA

**Prize:** ceramic dish created by sculptor Jean Van Keuren (Jean Sillman)

**Song:** “There Ain’t Nothin’ Like A Dame” from *South Pacific* led by Susan Casper, backed up by Ursula and the Tips

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### Judges:

Steve Brown (SPB)

Susan Casper (SC)

Jeanne Gomoll (coordinator) (JG)

Ursula K. Le Guin (UKL)

Maureen F. McHugh (MFM)

*Commentary was harvested from correspondence among the judges and attributed by the judges’ initials.*

## Winner of the 1993 James Tiptree, Jr. Award

### **Ammonite**

Nicola Griffith, Del Rey, 1993

Griffith details a civilization—several generations old—composed entirely of women. Her novel displays uncommon skill, a compelling narrative and a sure grasp of the complexity of civilization. While avoiding rhetoric, cant and stereotype, Griffith’s politics run subtle and deep. [SPB]

A well-written first novel of a world on which there are no males, the men having been killed by a virus long ago. The story is told through the eyes of a woman who goes there to study the society that has evolved. This is the story of how people interact, and the evolution and adaptation of the protagonist to a world that is different from the one she’s always known. Also a novel which postulates that a society composed of only women would not be fundamentally different from one containing both genders. A real page-turner with beautifully well-drawn characters. [SC]

Ammonite is an interesting rite-of-passage novel in which the main character—Marghe—works out who she is and what she wants to do with her life. The culture of the planet Jeep—influenced by a virus fatal to most women and all men, that also facilitates genetic mixing and not-really-parthenogenic births—was fascinating and believable. This book is not based on “difference” gender philosophy (i.e., that women and men are basically psychologically different), and therefore, the women-only culture wasn’t portrayed as a utopia for its lack of men. Greed and mindless violence exist in this culture as in ours. Its gender-bending message was that sexuality is only a minor part of human relationships. The characters all seem to take it for granted that sexual preference is an almost irrelevant aspect of understanding one another. In fact, the lack of men in this world is important only for the fact that because of it, Jeep is quarantined from the rest of the (mainly corrupt) Federation, until and if an vaccine is discovered. The human women on Jeep are never referred to as a lesbian community. They are simply a community of people, all of whom happen to be women. [JG]

A self-assured, unself-conscious, convincing depiction of a world without men, this is perhaps the strongest pure science fiction on the list—doing what only SF can do, and doing it with skill and brio. Is it a gender bender? It answers the question “When you eliminate one gender, what’s left?” (a whole world, is the answer). but a lot of books like Moby Dick, eliminate one gender, and yet nobody thinks anything about it. I believe Kate Clinton has the answer: “When women go off together it’s called separatism. When men go off together it’s called Congress.” [UKL]

When plague wipes out all the men and many of the women of a contingent of marines, a planet is declared quarantined. Marghe is sent to study the “natives,” women left from an earlier colonization attempt which was also infected. *Ammonite* could have been a didactic novel or a utopian fiction, but Griffith has made her world of women complex and full of people both good and bad. [MFM]

## 1993 Shortlist

### **Ring of Swords**

Eleanor Arnason, Tor, 1993

A novel about human interaction with a culture where cross-gender relations are forbidden, and even contact is kept to a minimum. A lovely book, though the violent male, non-violent female aspects were a tad heavy-handed. Also suffers slightly from a read-the-next-book-in-the-series sort of ending. [SC]

This novel is both a rousing page-turner and idea-turner. The aliens in this book might be the technically advanced version of the aliens from Arnason’s Tiptree-winning novel, *Woman of the Iron People*. In both books, Arnason created an alien race whose social stability stems directly from the separation of male and female cultures. Both books are also based on the arguable premise that the male tendency toward violence differentiates gender. Given that premise, the culture and story that follows are fascinating. Both Hwarhath and Human culture must re-examine all their assumptions when the two races meet one another and begin negotiations to avoid war. (JG)

Both the narrators of this book use an understated, slightly self-mocking, casual tone which may lead the reader to take the story lightly. It is not a lightweight story. It is intellectually, emotionally, and ethically complex and powerful. A great deal of it is told by implication only, and so the moral solidity of the book and its symbolic and aesthetic effectiveness may pass a careless reader right by. The characters are mature, thoughtful, imperfect people, the settings are vivid, the drama is tense, and the science-fictional reinvention of gender roles is as successful as any I have ever read.

The only physical gender difference between human and Hwarhath is that alien women are a little larger than the men; but the cultural gender differences are immense and their implications fascinating, both as a device for questioning human prejudice and convention, and as the basis for a very good novel. The shadowy presence of a third species runs through it both unifying its ideas and always putting all assumptions back in question—a beautiful symbolic device. A beautiful book. (UKL)

A story of alien contact where the male of the species is considered too volatile to have at home. Arnason examines some of our assumptions of gender by creating an alien race whose assumptions are just enough different than ours to bring ours into high relief. (MFM)

### **The Robber Bride**

Margaret Atwood, Bantam Books, 1993

Two young girls, minor characters in *The Robber Bride*, demand that all storybook characters—good and evil—be read as female. So too does Atwood portray all the main characters of *The Robber Bride*—good and evil—as female. This fictional warping of gender role expectations forces an understanding that is ironically more complex than the so-called real world in which behavior and archetype are frequently divided into two sets, female and male. The hint of possibly supernatural motivations, give me the excuse to include this wonderful novel on the Tiptree shortlist. [JG]

Though in this book Atwood does not extrapolate from gender construction as she did in *Handmaid’s Tale*, gender construction and the behavior and relationships forced on people by their gendered sexuality is always one of her central topics. In this case we have a major artist at the height of her powers telling a very grim’s fairytale about what a Bad Woman does to Good Men and Good Women. It is a splendid novel, and far and away the funniest book this jury got to read. (UKL)

### **In the Garden of Dead Cars**

Sybil Claiborne, Cleis Press, 1993

To me this is the most original book we read, and the most honest. The grim, repressive urban future seems familiar, conventional, but it grows less so as we read: its vivid, gritty reality is not borrowed, but discovered. What has happened to men, how women have adjusted to it, who the “carnals” are, all this complex matter is told with a mature and subtle simplicity, as the background to a strong love story and to the yet more powerful relationship of a daughter and a mother. [UKL]

### **“Motherhood”**

L. Timmel Duchamp, in *Full Spectrum 4*, Bantam, 1993

Considers the very interesting premise that human sexual dimorphism (e.g., gender) is a physiological accident that might be swept away by a virus. A young girl reconsiders her body, her self and her relationship with everyone around her when she catches this virus. [JG]

A nineteen year old girl ! discovers that her boyfriend has given her a virus that makes her something not human, maybe not female, and the government wants to keep her quarantined. This story could have been the story of a victim but Duchamp has made Pat, her nineteen-year-old, both nineteen and anything but a victim. [MFM]

### **“The Other Magpie”**

R. Garcia y Robertson, *Asimov's*, 4/1993

Robertson has crafted a vivid portrait of a Native American society—the Sioux, at a time when the events of Little Big Horn are occurring just over the horizon. His main characters are two women, one enacting a warrior role and the other transvestite, that seem startlingly unlikely to our eyes. Robertson fearlessly avoids presenting his Sioux with politically correct Noble Savage stereotyping, giving us several thoughtless, cruel, even stupid examples, and ends up with a three dimensional picture of a fully human milieu. [SPB]

A vivid story about Indian Wars of the last century that explores gender in both its look at a young woman who takes on the role of warrior to assuage her brother's ghost, and her transvestite friend who has his eyes set on the white soldiers. [SC]

This story is interesting for its message that cultures based upon different understanding of humanity create dissonant communication when individuals from those cultures try to understand one another. Indians and Whites; women and men; White men and Indian women... [JG]

### **“Chemistry”**

James Patrick Kelly, *Asimov's*, 6/1993

In Kelly's vivid story, all of the interactive negotiations that transpire between lovers have been reduced to chemical transactions. One might think that this love story would end up as interesting as the purchase of a used car, but ultimately it is love story and a touching one. [SPB]

A lovely story which makes the distinction between love and sexual attraction in a different way. A sweet love story and good science fiction. If gender-bending can be construed to mean the way men and women relate to each other sexually, as well as socially, this one nicely fills the bill. [SC]

A short story that starts by talking about love as if it were the interaction of chemicals and ends by making the interaction of chemicals a sweet and poignant story of love. [MFM]

### **Dancing Jack**

Laurie J. Marks, *DAW*, 1993

Dancing Jack is a wonderful fantasy, with a very unusual portrayal of magic and powerful portrayals of three women characters—the heroes who rescue their post-plague world. This is a wasteland story: saved not by a fisher king or a single knight, but by the combined magics of a riverboat pilot, a farmer, and a toymaker. The land is infertile, crops are not growing, animals die; people have mostly given up. The magic with which these three women reclaim life for themselves and their land is the lesson that acceptance of pain brings the possibility of joy. It turns inside out the formula of the quest and the knight-hero with gender-bending insights. [JG]

I thoroughly enjoyed this very realistic fantasy, but found no gender-bending in it: just a fine depiction of competent, independent women working, and a very satisfying, lesbian love-story. Fantasies about grown-ups are very rare; and this is one. [UKL]

### **“Some Strange Desire”**

Ian McDonald, in *The Best of Omni III*, Omni Publications International Ltd.

McDonald has taken a well-worn fictional path, that of the non-human race that has always lived in parallel with us (usually responsible for the generation of vampire mythology), and reworked it into something new. His “vampires” have a sophisticated form of pheromonal communication and an ambiguous concept of gender. Their interaction with humans is compelling, and tragic. [SPB]

Aliens/changelings/an unrecognized third sex? McDonald doesn't quite say where these gender-shifting people come from, but they pay a high price for a desirability far beyond that of full-time women. Touching and well-written. [SC]

Any story that includes in its first sentence, “Mother says he can remember Grandmother taking him...” grabs my genderbending radar. It's a suspenseful story about aliens-among-us who change their gender at will from female to male to hermaphrodite, and who are subject to an awful AIDS-like disease. I liked it a lot. [JG]

### **Illicit Passage**

Alice Nunn, *Women's Redress Press*, 1992

One of my favorite novels of recent years, *Illicit Passage* concerns the actual mechanics of a feminist revolution, a revolution from within. As the individuals in the asteroid mining town in Nunn's novel learn self-confidence, their lives change. And as the people organize, the social order changes. The establishment panics and looks for “the usual suspects”—the revolutionary agitators, the bomb-throwers, and entirely misses the secretaries, mothers, factory workers, and servants plotting radical change right under their noses. *Illicit Passage* is a novel of mistaken assumptions, misdirected expectations. In fact, we never actually hear the main character (Gillie) speak. We only learn about her from characters who dislike or are intensely jealous of her. That we end up liking her very much anyway, in spite of the strongly biased points of view of the other characters, only strengthens our admiration for her. [JG]

### **Coelestis**

Paul Park, *Harper Collins*, 1993

This novel of an alien surgically transformed into a human woman who is gradually reverting-sloughing off one human attribute after another-and the confused human man who thought he was in love with her, is a dark and wrenching experience. Park explores the shadowy alleyways of the city of gender and studies the age-old imperialist clash between rich and poor civilizations. [SPB]

To me this ambitious and complex book is ultimately a failure both as a novel and as an exploration of gender. The self-conscious tonelessness of the narrative voice imposes a real lack of affect. As gender exploration it is seriously handicapped by the fact that there are no women in it, except a girl who is fucked on page 46 and killed on page 49. The alien called “Katherine” is supposed to have been transformed into a female or a woman, but appears, to me, merely genderless from beginning to end. The setting and mood is standard neo-Conrad-on-distant-planet. [UKL]

Simon, a human diplomat, falls in love with Katherine, a gifted pianist and more importantly, an alien who in ‘her’ natural state is not female. As a series of events deprive Katherine of the drugs that keep “her” human, she becomes less and less so. The book is written from multiple points of view and it becomes clear that while Simon continues to find human motivations in her actions, Katherine is more alien than he wants to know. [MFM]

## 1993 Longlist

### **Crash Course**

Wilhemina Baird, Ace/Berkeley, 1993

I enjoyed this book for its idea about three characters trapped in a movie, not sure which events are real and which are part of the script. I especially liked the gumption of the main character, Cass, who—when it became clear that her movie was a dangerous one—didn't just sit around waiting for the next plot development, but went out (and behind the scenes) to find out more about the genre that was trapping her, and then defended herself against the movie makers rather than the script. The relationship between Cass and her two male housemates/lovers was an interesting one. [JG]

### **X, Y**

Michael Blumlein, Bantam/Dell, 1993

The cover says "A psychosexual thriller," and though I very much wanted it to be more, that's what this book is. Starting with a self-perceived "man in a woman's body," it promises a subtle exploration of an anomalous psychology, but as sadomasochism takes over the story it loses direction, becoming disappointingly predictable. [UKL]

The more I think about it (and possibly rewrite it in my head so that it makes some sort of sense to me) the more I am convinced that there was no strange phenomenon in this story at all, simply an abused woman who wanted to fight back. But since she is convinced that society defines women as being incapable of the kind of worldview and behavior she aspires to, her subconscious provides her with an release for her "inappropriate" feelings: she's not a woman after all. . . . I was disappointed however, that male behavior, for the purpose of this story, was almost totally defined as sadomasochism. [JG]

### **Glory Season**

David Brin, Spectra, Bantam Books, 1993

I was first impressed by how eager Brin seems to be to enter into the discussion of feminist issues in SF, enough so that he signaled his intentions by labeling various towns and groups "Ursulaburg," "Vondaites," "Tiamatians," "Perkites," and "Herlandia." Brin's main thesis seems to be that feminist utopian writing endorses the idea that technology is evil and the pastoral culture is the only good culture. At one point in *Glory Season*, the male hero says that the galactic federation will not allow the pastoral, anti-technological culture to continue once it regains control of its lost matriarchal colony. Brin says throughout the novel that pastoral culture can only be maintained at the expense of humanity, history and finally, of survival. He says, by implication, (with all those towns and groups of women named after well known feminist SF writers) that feminist SF fiction endorses an anti-human, anti-historical, anti-survival ethic.

If anything, Brin attempts to strengthen the familiar gender assumptions. There is little gender-bending in this novel. [JG]

A very ambitious book with a courageous program of gender-exploration, seriously weakened by the author's dislike or distrust of his own invention. It is worth asking why male authors inventing a society of women tend to make the women all alike: the old "hive worlds" of the pulp days, or, in this case, clones. It is worth asking why the male assumption so often is that a society genuinely run by women (as opposed to one run by women under the control of men) would be static, rigid, closed to change, closed to thought, needing to be saved from itself by a man. And it is worth asking why male authors so often show women as inherently anti-technological. Brin begs this last question in his afterward, saying that "This novel depicts a society that is conservative by design, not because of something intrinsic to a world led by women." All the same, he chose to depict that society.

Though the book is unnecessarily long, the storyline is plausible and fast-moving, with well-imagined details; the social institutions of Stratos are carefully worked out; it is in the characters and the language that the book fails. p. 44: "Among the ambitions she shared with Leie was to build a hall of their own, where she might yet learn what delights were possible—unlikely as it seemed—in mingling her body with one such as those, so hirsute and huge. Just trying to imagine made her head hurt in strange ways." p. 55: "'I knew him,' Odo went on. 'Virile, summer-rampant in frost season, a sick envy of my own sisters!' Odo leaned forward her

eyes loathing. 'He never touched you, yet he was and remains yours. That, my ruttly little virgin, is why I'll have a price from my Lysos-cursed clan, which I served all my wasted life. Your company in hell.'" The silliness of the language faithfully renders gender-stereotyped emotions (a woman irresistibly drawn to men; a woman hating another woman because of a man). This world of women is totally male-centered. Despite his excellent apparatus of clones and clans and sexual seasons, Brin hasn't really got us any farther than about 1955. It is too bad, because the book has a likable freshness and optimism. [UKL]

### **Drawing Blood**

Poppy Z. Brite, Bantam

Brite mixes artists and rock and roll, New Orleans, comic books, computer hackers and a slow and sleepy southern town. The main characters are gay or bisexual, but not particularly gender bending. Horror isn't my balliwick, but if you like your books full of atmosphere and your heroes decadent in the long tradition that began with Lord Byron, you'll eat this one up. [MFM]

### **"Lost Girls"**

Pat Cadigan, in *Dirty Work*, Mark V. Ziesing Books, 1993

A cute story in which Pan returns for generation after generation of Wendys, finding each less and less willing to take the convenient role of cook and housekeeper until finally one sets herself up in competition. A nice updated look at the Barrie legend. [SC]

This is a fun story. I've always been fascinated by Peter Pan: a play in which the main character is nearly always played by a female actress. I think of Peter as a splintered character. Peter and Wendy are two parts of the same whole, splintered by the society which carefully segregates boys' behavior from girls' behavior. I liked Cadigan's take on this strange story in which it is suggested that eventually Wendy's descendant won't be content with her limited role. [JG]

### **The Rising of the Moon**

Flynn Connolly, Del Rey/Ballentine, 1993

Women lead this Irish revolution, but I found them unconvincing both as women and as revolutionaries. Merely changing the hero's gender does not undo the heroic fallacy; and a long history of women's collision with their oppressors can't be credibly reversed by a few fits of righteous indignation. [UKL]

### **The Rainbow Man**

M. J. Engh, Tor, 1993

A culture in which an infertile woman is called, and treated as a man: this is a promising place to explore gender in. Somehow the exploration never seems to happen, perhaps because it is derailed by religious issues. I wanted this book to have the kind of power *Handmaid's Tale* has; but it doesn't—it somehow slides away from its own central issues. [UKL]

### **Harm's Way**

Colin Greenland, Avon, 1993

*Harms Way* is farcical Dickensian fantasy set in a universe that might have been constructed by Kepler or Jules Verne. A young girl plays the part normally played by the male adolescent—the outrageously, naive youth who has picaresque adventures, learns the Shocking Truth about her ancestry and Grows Up. [JG]

### **"Touching Fire"**

Nicola Griffith, Interzone, 4/1993

This is a great SF love story. The SF element—the light-activated orchestral machines, and a person who can "play" it with her body—is a fascinating one. But does the fact that the lovers are lesbians make this gender-bending? [JG]

### ***The Assimilation of Leah Wennover***

Stephanie T. Hoppe, Evoe Press, 1993

This is the story of Holdfast and her two fellow time-travelers, Tai and Heart's-ease who attempt to rescue the spirits of women killed as witches in the Burning Years. The trio also play the roles of the three female archetypes: spinner, weaver, and cutter; symbols of birth, life and death. Invisibly they bear witness to the crushing of a woman's spirit (Leah Wennover) and assimilate her spirit, rescuing it from a time she was not allowed to live. The idea of this story bears a resemblance to the idea behind the Tiptree Award: to look again and rescue. [JG]

### ***"Schrödinger's Cathouse"***

Kij Johnson, *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, 3/1993

A cute little story about a metaphysical cat house where the prostitutes may or may not be female or male; one never knows until they come. The image of these androgynous creatures is nicely done. [JG]

### ***"Forever," Said the Duck"***

Jonathan Letham, *Asimov's*, 12/94

A funny little tale about the uses we'll put our past and present lovers to, once we have the ability to make a virtual, keepsake copy of them. [SC]

### ***Songs of Chaos***

S. N. Lewitt, *Ace/Berkeley*, 1993

The story impressed me less than the setting—this fantastic, organic cyberpunked Brazilian rainforest transplanted onto a space station in which parrots act as living monitors, sort of. The outsider, Dante, discovers that the very thing that makes him an outcast in one world makes him a powerful genius in Manguera. Skinny Fatima thinks she's an outsider and different from everyone else in Manguera, and she too discovers that the thing that makes her different turns out to be her most valuable contribution to the community. Bisexual relationships on board the Manguera are accepted as the norm. [JG]

Highly competent and enjoyable, with a nice, original take on virtuality, great parrots, good men characters, good women characters; but no bending of gender that I could see. [UKL]

### ***Evolution Annie and Other Stories***

Rosaleen Love, *Women's Press. Ltd.*, 1993

Imaginative, funny, spirited, subversive, many of these stories explore and play with gender and gender-roles in one way or another. The title story sets the stuff about Man the Hunter and the Ascent of Man and all that on its ear: "The Daughters of Darius" is a haunting tale/meditation; and "Strange Things Grow at Chernobyl" packs immense power into six understated pages. [UKL]

### ***The Year the Horses Came***

Mary Mackey, *HarperCollins*, 1993

The story of *The Year the Horses Came*—a matriarchy demo posing as an adventure travelogue—is set at the crux of change, just before the patriarchal, misogynist, horse-riding hordes sweep across the continent from the east. The main character travels from the far western edge of the matriarchy, east into the territory of the marauders. I was sympathetic with Mackey's conviction that culture is molded by the way its members raise their children and by its cosmological assumptions, but less impressed by the ponderous storyline. [JG]

Woman-centered, goddess-worshipping, free people of prehistoric Western Europe meet up with the male-dominant, aggressive horse-riders of the Steppes. The rather naive "agenda" overwhelms the novel, but there are some vivid scenes and good moments of culture-shock. [UKL]

### ***An Eye for Dark Places***

Norma Marden, *Little, Brown*, 1993

Norma Marden's *An Eye for Dark Places* is an extraordinary book. Its portrayal of a woman stifled in an unrewarding marriage reminded me strongly of Perkins's *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Through a possibly imagined journey into a fantastic, utopian world beneath London, she comes to understand the kind of relationship and life she wants, and when she returns, she leaves her family and starts a new life. [JG]

I did a cover quote for this book, saying "This spare, radiant book emotionally exact and profoundly imagined, is an extraordinary first novel." As a genderbender I think it breaks no new ground; but as an exploration of human/sexual/familial relationships up to and perhaps over the edge of madness, it is very fine. [UKL]

### ***Deerskin***

Robin McKinley, *Ace/Berkeley*, 1993

Deerskin reexamines fairy tale archetypes (the perfectly beautiful princess who falls in love with the perfectly handsome prince and the happily-ever-after period that is presumed to naturally follow such a perfect match). It's a great story, and its genderbending aspect has to do with the way fairy tale archetypes get under our skin and get confused with morality and gender definitions. Its plot follows the child of the perfect royal couple after her father rapes her, and her recovery from that experience. [JG]

A strong—indeed a superhumanly endowed and unerring—female protagonist does not in herself constitute a genderbending novel, even when she is an abuse survivor. This fantasy might be a good "role-model" book for girls, but I found the heroine way too tall, beautiful, gifted, etc. to identify with. [UKL]

### ***"The Best Years of Our Lives"***

A. R. Morlan, in *Full Spectrum 4*, *Bantam*, 1993

Set in the next century after one of those pesky, gender-specific diseases has struck down most of the men in the world. At first, everyone expects that the world will become a more sane—or at least a less violent—place. Instead, war becomes more terrible than it ever was, because women feel they must prove themselves in the absence of men. The story is told by way of letter excerpts written by successive generations of women soldiers. Pretty depressing script, but jolting reminder that when the powerless gain power, they frequently adapt their behavior to their new role. [JG]

### ***"Liberator"***

Linda Nagata, *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, 6/1993

The foreground of Nagata's story is a Moslem society in which the women characters struggle against powerful religious constraints. With the placement of a memory chip containing a mother's personality into the brain of a daughter, Nagata also is able to speculate on some unusual potentials in the mother/daughter relationship. [SPB]

### ***Burning Bright***

Melissa Scott, *Tor*, 1993

An entertaining novel about a spacer and famous gamer/author, Quinn Lioe, who takes leave on the planet Burning Bright during its annual storm festival, in order to play "the game." The game is played across several empires in the galaxy and involves one fictional world and several plot lines (empire, revolution, court intrigue, psi wars, etc.) which are mirrored in the situation Lioe finds herself enmeshed in real life on Burning Bright. In fact, by the end of the novel, it is clear that she has brought the game's plot to a conclusion and will begin a new game that involves players in active commentary and involvement in the real world. The genderbending element of this novel has to do with the society's tolerance of all sexual preferences. There are lots of ways to get into trouble in this world, but none of them involve personal sexual behavior. Most of the characters appear to be bisexual. [JG]

### **“A Defense of the Social Contracts”**

Martha Soukup, *Science Fiction Age*, 9/1993

Maybe the world would be a better place if everyone was required to wear nametags identifying their sexual preferences. Soukup extrapolates upon this idea and imagines a world in which everyone must declare themselves monogamous, non-monogamous, celibate, or group family types. Fascinating. I couldn't figure out whether she believed that such categorization was doomed from the start—because we can't enforce who falls in love with whom; or whether she thinks that such a system would at least start to sort out the confusion. I liked this story a lot. [JG]

### **“The Story So Far”**

Martha Soukup, in *Full Spectrum* 4, Bantam, 1993

This story is a sort of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern based upon 1950s romances rather than Hamlet. The main character of this story is a mere spear-carrier in another story which centers around her husband, Dennis. Throughout “The Story So Far,” Emily tries to figure out the plot of the short story in which she is enmeshed, and is dismayed to learn that the main plot line proceeds entirely while she is offstage. She learns that both she and another woman character are entirely superficial to Dennis and the plot, but despite this revelation the two fictional woman characters strive for actual existence. This genderbending story concerns itself with gender as defined by (B-rated) literature rather than by life. [JG]

### **A Plague of Angels**

Sherri S. Tepper, Bantam, 1993

Like many of Tepper's novels, it contains a chunk of gender commentary. In nearly all of her books, and she deals with gender in a very interesting ways. *A Plague of Angels* further develops Tepper's favorite idea of gods created by people and the worlds they inhabit—sort of a self-conscious Gaean system, applied to all worlds with intelligent life. In *Plague*, the self-conscious earth deity intervenes in human history to repair the human/nature balance—so badly skewed that people are on the brink of extinction. Along the way, Tepper delves into the idea that men and women cannot live together without damaging one another—given the way women and men are currently socialized. One of the few hopeful communities in this world is one in which men and women live mostly separately, getting together now and then, and learning—within their subgroups—to change their ideas about gender. [JG]

I wish Tepper would spend more time rewriting. There's great stuff in this, but it's shapeless and repetitive. As in so many of her books, a great beginning goes dry in pointlessly complex plotting about the villainous fools who run things. The paranoid element that was part of the strength of her real gender-exploring novel, *The Gate to Women's Country*, here is a weakness; and the gender roles are conventional. [UKL]

### **Virtual Girl**

Amy Thomson, *Ace/Berkeley*, 1993

*Virtual Girl* is a re-working of the Pygmalion myth, of a man creating his idea of a perfect woman, who then turns into a real person and leaves him. In this case, the male creator is a nerdy hacker who creates a cyborg woman. In a moment of crisis, the cyborg hears only a portion of a command/programming input, “You are the most important thing to me.” All she hears is “You are the most important thing,” and from that, she entirely re-programs herself. Self-actualization saves her life, but dooms the odd couple's relationship. [JG]

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## **The 1994 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

### **Potlatch 4, Oakland, CA**

**Prizes:** Le Guin received chocolate; Springer received a feathered mask by Michaela Roessner

**Song:** ?

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### **Judges**

Brian Attebery [BA]

Ellen Kushner [EK]

Pat Murphy [PM]

Susanna J. Sturgis (coordinator) [SJS]

Lucy Sussex [LS]

*Commentary was harvested from correspondence among the judges and attributed by the judges' initials.*

## **Winners Of The 1994 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

### **“The Matter of Seggri”**

Ursula K. Le Guin, *Crank!* #3, 1994

“The Matter of Seggri” is a story that is bigger than it looks. Within its thirty-some pages the world of Seggri is discovered, explored, and altered. Half a dozen distinct and memorable storytelling voices give us comic misunderstandings, tragedies enacted and averted, histories recounted and dreams revealed, all within the frame of a convincingly strange society. Fourteen hundred years are distilled into a few key moments. One of the ways Le Guin has managed to pack so much into this tale is by making it a gateway—a mental hypertext—to a lot of other stories, including her own explorations of gender and society in *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *A Fisherman of the Inland Sea* as well as the thought experiments of other gender explorers like Joanna Russ, Eleanor Arnason, Sheri S. Tepper, and James Tiptree Jr. The world of Seggri invites comparison with Gethen and Whileaway and Women's Country without being an imitation or a simple answer to any of them, just as it invites comparison with aspects of our own world without being reducible to an allegory or a simple inversion of existing gender roles. Whereas *Larque on the Wing* uses the machinery of fantasy to get at the inner experience of gender, “The Matter of Seggri” uses science fiction to map out social implications. It asks how gender enters into institutions like schools and marriages and how it might do so differently. It asks how power and love and justice might be redistributed along gender lines, and what the effect might be on individual lives. It asks what stake society has in enforcing models of femininity and masculinity and what happens to those who fail to follow the template. Most remarkably, Le Guin makes us care about the people we meet: First Observer Merriment and her never-seen partner Kaza Agad, young Ittu and his sister Po, even the fictional-within-a-fiction lovers Azak and Toddra and Zedr. In the few pages each gets on the scene, we recognize their uniqueness even as we learn the social patterns of which they are a part. They make *The Matter of Seggri* matter. [BA]

It could be a how-to manual on how to explore gender issues through the use of science fiction. [EK]

A short story perfect in its parts as a snowflake, or Chekhov's “Lady with a Little Dog.” This is the first time the Tiptree has been awarded to a work of short fiction, and “Seggri” proves that explorations of gender can be as efficient pithy as lengthy. [LS]

This deals with gender issues in a way that only science fiction can: by creating a society that has different assumptions than ours, thus forcing us to examine our own. It makes stunning use of different viewpoints to give us an understanding of the society that we couldn't obtain any other way. Fascinating for its anthropological detail, “The Matter of Seggri” shows the emotional and societal consequences of a different social organization, and the consequences of changing or disrupting that organization. [PM]

Just when I was beginning to fear that no work of short fiction could



stand up to the powerhouse novels contending for the Tiptree—along came “Seggri.” On Seggri, women far outnumber the men, an imbalance that, notes one Hainish observer, “has produced a society in which, as far as I can tell, the men have all the privilege and the women have all the power.” Men and boys over the age of 11 live in hierarchically organized “castles.” They gain glory by competing in games, cheered on by the women; the women do all the productive and political work of the society, and the two genders meet only in the “fuckeries.” The women may enjoy sex with men, but naturally they form their primary erotic and social bonds with other women. Both the society and the story are complex, covering several generations and told from various viewpoints. Though undeniably different from our own society, Seggri eerily echoes it, and like several of this year’s shortlisted works—notably Arnason’s “The Lovers” and Charnas’s *The Furies*—the focus is on those who, by asking questions and/or not fitting in, become harbingers of change. [SJS]

***Larque on the Wing***  
Nancy Springer, AvoNova, 1994

When is a middle-aged woman not a middle-aged woman? When she’s a ten-year-old girl and a young gay man. In Nancy Springer’s *Larque on the Wing*, the main character unintentionally releases her grim and grubby child self as part of a mid-life crisis. Her young doppelganger leads her to a place called Popular Street, which is both gay ghetto and enchanted land. There she is transformed from frumpy Larque to handsome Lark, who was, it seems, always there inside. Lark can have the adventures Larque has denied herself: can explore the dangerous night world, wear cowboy boots, beat up homophobic thugs, act on erotic impulses (gay because Larque is attracted to men). As engaging as Larque (and her husband Hoot) may be, what sticks in the mind from the novel is Popular Street. Cheerfully sleazy and genuinely magical, Popular Street manifests unpredictably wherever the forces of order aren’t paying attention. It is a place of desires and of truths, both of a sort that conventional society covers over. On Popular Street, features of homosexual subcultures—the lure of the forbidden and the secret, irreverence toward middle-class values, acknowledgment of the varieties of pleasure, a sense that gender identity is something that can be put together and tried on like a costume—become the basis for a powerful and transforming enchantment. What fantasy does best is to take the insides of things and express them as outsides. An ent is the inside of a tree, a beast is the inside of a prince (and vice versa). Nancy Springer has used this property of fantasy to get inside gender and sexuality. She shows that the inside of intolerance is fear, the inside of art is truth-telling, and the inside of a woman is a whole cast of characters of all ages and genders. [BA]

Playful and outrageous, this book taps into some of our less-admissible and more potent fantasies! [EK]

Gender is 90 percent of comedy, but seldom does the comedy step outside traditional sex roles. *Larque* is the exception, managing to be simultaneously challenging, disturbingly so at times, and hilarious. [LS]

Springer’s novel considers the startling, funny, indescribable adventures of Larque, a middle-aged woman whose mid-life crisis takes on concrete form. A ten-year-old version of Larque (blinked into existence by Larque’s own uncanny abilities) leads Larque into an exploration of her life and the compromises she made while growing up. Along the way, Larque is transformed into Lark, an adolescent boy, and works magic of many kinds. A rollicking, offbeat, thoughtful fable for our time. [PM]

*Larque on the Wing* was a front-runner from the day I read it, very early in the year. In this wittily, wildly original contemporary fantasy, Nancy Springer expands, explores, and bends more gender conventions than most authors recognize. Most notably, Larque emerges from a makeover session not with a new hairdo but with the body of a 20-year-old gay man. And Springer restores scruffy, nose-wiping vitality to a useful concept turned tedious cliché: the “inner child.” Then there’s Larque’s mother, Florence, who sees what she wants to see—with a vengeance. Larque does have a weak point or two. Larque’s best female friend, Doris, is characterized mostly by her carrot addiction. More significant, and striking in a novel that draws explicit parallels between the Otherness of women and gay men, is the absence of lesbians, from both Popular Street and the ranks of Larque’s inner selves. Lesbian characters, erotic love between women: these are still out on the gender-bending frontier. [SJS]

## 1994 Shortlist

### “The Lovers”

Eleanor Arnason, Asimov’s, 7/1994

Arnason has explored this territory before but finds new insights this time around. The story concerns heterosexual love in a world that allows no such thing. The lovers convincingly embody gender choices that neither their society nor ours is quite prepared to sanction. [BA]

Like Arnason’s other “hwarhath” stories, this poignant tale explores gender on several levels, like a mobile of mirrors that catches new reflections with each turning. Neither Eyes-of-Crystal nor Eh Shawin is a revolutionary, yet their love both grows from and profoundly challenges the deepest assumptions of their society. By incorporating comments about the “author” of the tale, and finally its evidently human translator/editor (who might well be Anna Perez of *Ring of Swords*), Arnason sketches a broader timescape of a culture in transition. I’m impressed! [SJS]

### *The Furies*

Suzy McKee Charnas, Tor, 1994

Charnas follows up her groundbreaking novels about Free Fems and Riding Women with a dark and challenging story of revenge. The Free Fems have returned to Holdfast in order to tear it down. The question that is never resolved is whether they will be able to make a new life for themselves and the remaining men. Amid uncertainty, bitterness, and betrayal, the heroine of the earlier books struggles to keep the Free Fems from becoming what they have escaped from. [BA]

The 1994 jury was both blessed and cursed with an abundance of riches. This is a book that not only encourages but forces the reader to question assumptions about gender. It connects the words/ideas “women” and “power” and “violence” in a way few authors have ever cared or managed to. [EK]

This continuation of *Walk* and *Motherlines* is powerful, brooding, and extremely dark. Somebody commented that the two previous novels embodied key moments in the history of feminism; if that is so, then *The Furies* shows we live in interesting times (in the Chinese sense). It shows women turning on men, then on themselves, but battles in the end towards a type of understanding, if not forgiveness. Very few novels indelibly impress upon the mind, and this is one of them. [LS]

Like its predecessors, *Walk to the End of the World* and *Motherlines*, *The Furies* explores the consequences, for both women and men, of a violently patriarchal society. Here at last the Riding Women, who have never been either slaves or slave owners, see the Free Fems in the latter’s own context—which is to say that they really see the Free Fems for the first time. There are acts of excruciating violence in this book, men against women, women against men, women against women; such is the power of the writing that I couldn’t look away. *The Furies* is one of the most important feminist novels I’ve ever read—why then did it place a shade behind the winners of this year’s Tiptree Award? Because its brilliance lies not so much in exploring and expanding gender roles—here *The Furies* clearly builds on the earlier books—but in asking the unaskable questions about revolutionary change, and in imagining, and facing, the unimaginable answers. What shapes the relationship of liberator and liberated? Leader and led? What to do with the despised but indispensable former oppressor? Langston Hughes asked what happened to a dream deferred; Suzy McKee Charnas asks what happens to a dream on the verge of fulfillment. [SJS]

### *Cannon’s Orb*

L. Warren Douglas, Del Rey, 1994

Like *Genetic Soldier*, this novel hypothesizes that pheromones control large areas of human behavior that we think are rational.

Contact with an alien race has altered human pheromones, with the result that everything from sexual cycles to xenophobia is transformed. The book takes a wrong turn toward the end, but in the interim a lot of assumptions about gender and society are questioned. [BA]

The book begins in an interesting fashion—examining the biological roots of human behavior. But starting from there, the story went in a direction that reinforces our cultures biases in what I consider to be a totally wrong-headed fashion. According to my reading of *Canon's Orb*, the biological role of women is to control from behind the scenes by flattering and bolstering the ego of the man they have chosen as the alpha male. Women gain their power by supporting men. It sent chills up my spine—and I mean the wrong kind of chills. Because I had such a visceral reaction to the book, it did force me to examine my beliefs related to gender. [PM]

### **“Cocoon”**

Greg Egan, *Asimov's*, 5/1994

A frightening, and all too credible account of what might happen if corporate R&D capitalism ever decides to really cash in on homophobia. A scientific thriller par excellence. [LS]

### **Amazon Story Bones**

Ellen Frye, *Spinsters Ink*, 1994

The opening stories, revised myths from a feminist perspective, seem a little smug, and I don't believe traditional mythic figures ever talk quite so much. But when it gets to the central narrative, about the fall of Troy and its impact on the lives of Amazons and other women, the book is powerful and convincing. One of the most interesting touches is that the Amazons are never actually there—they're either anticipated, in the mythic sections, or sought, in the more naturalistic narrative. They're a possibility that changes the world, rather than an actuality that can be pushed into the margins. [BA]

Who says that history has to be written by the winners? A tantalizing, evocative account of some of the lesser-known losers of the Trojan war, and how their herstory might have been; at its best when rewriting Homer. [LS]

This book's Amazons are always off-stage. They are a promise and an inspiration. I like that. [PM]

A fine, not to mention rare, example of what can happen when feminism and fantasy marry. The myths that open the book read like a First Contact tale; familiar gods and heroes are seen through the bemused, benevolent, and often fatally naive eyes of the goddesses they displace. A generation or so after the fall of Troy, a young girl, Iphito, dreams of the near-legendary Amazons and listens to the stories of two old women, one an Amazon herself. This unconventionally structured novel both describes and embodies how storytelling can expand gender roles, especially by sparking the imagination of girls. [SJS]

### **North Wind**

Gwyneth Jones, *Gollancz*, 1994

In this follow-up to the Tiptree-winning *The White Queen*, Gwyneth Jones continues to redivide the gender pie in most interesting ways. There is a war going on between Men and Women—but the Men are not necessarily men. There are also aliens of undoubted sexuality but disputed gender. The narrative itself alternates between masculine and feminine pronouns for one of the main characters, depending on whose perceptions are being echoed. [BA]

A writer friend recently opined, apropos of *The White Queen* that there is more in Gwyneth Jones' paragraphs than there is in most novels. *North Wind* is a worthy follow-up to her earlier Tiptree winner, dense with ideas to the extent of almost being too much of a good thing. A fascinating read. [LS]

### **“Eat Reecebread”**

Graham Joyce & Peter F. Hamilton, *Interzone*, 8/1994

A study in demonizing the Other, in this case hermaphrodites. Even the sympathetic hero is implicated in their oppression, until the seemingly innocuous Reecebread of the title solves the problem. [BA]

The narrator, an English police officer in the not-too-distant future who falls in love with a hermaphrodite, tries to steer a course between the violent hatred of his colleagues and what he perceives as the extremism of some hermaphrodites—with predictably tragic results. Like several other works considered by the 1994 jury, this draws elements of *Romeo and Juliet*, not to mention *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* and *The Crying Game*, into the service of defusing hostility to gender difference. [SJS]

### **“Forgiveness Day”**

Ursula K. Le Guin, *Asimov's*, 11/1994

Like “Young Woman in a Garden,” this novella explores the undermining of the assumptions about class, culture, and gender, dearly held by each protagonist, with immense compassion for both—and, by extension, all the rest of us. I loved the choice of “asset” to describe the slaves/bondspeople; it neatly extends the concept of unfreedom into the so-called free marketplace. [SJS]

### **A Fisherman of the Inland Sea**

Ursula K. Le Guin, *Harper*, 1994

The title story interacts intriguingly with “The Matter of Seggri.” The world of O could not be more different in its sexual arrangements from the strict separation of Seggri. A marriage on O requires two women and two men, each interacting sexually with two of the others—but not with the partner of the same moiety. That would be immoral. This is a story about having it both ways: not only heterosexual and homosexual but also living two different lives, thanks to the paradoxes of Churten physics. [BA]

Just about my favorite part of this collection was the Introduction, “On Not Reading Science Fiction,” in which, with her usual quiet panache, Le Guin nails the use and purpose and intent of science fiction for even the meanest intelligence to perceive. [EK]

Though I enjoyed all of the stories in this collection, I recommend it for the shortlist because of one story in particular: “Another Story.” Le Guin is second to none in imagining interesting cultures. The culture in “Another Story” has marriage customs that, quietly and matter-of-factly, stand our assumptions on their ear. [PM]

“Another Story, or A Fisherman of the Inland Sea,” the only 1994 story in this collection, “only” redefines family and provides a scenario whereby one really can, in certain circumstances, go home again. Clearly a shortlist contender in its own right, it's ably amplified by its impressive company here. Read, or reread, “Newton's Sleep,” in which what one doesn't see refuses to go away”; “The Rock That Changed Things”; and especially “Dancing to Ganam.” Reality, said Lily Tomlin's Trudy, is “nothing but a collective hunch;” Ursula Le Guin shows how it works. [SJS]

### **Temporary Agency**

Rachel Pollack, *St. Martin's*, 1994

I liked about this book for its matter-of-fact use of demons and magic in an otherwise contemporary world. As for the book's gender-bending credentials—Ellen, the main character, is a strong-minded, capable, heroic young woman (she's a teenager at the start and an adult by the end), she ends up in a relationship with another woman; a group of transgender hackers assists her in her work. And (here's the big one for me) in the end, Ellen and her lover, using limited resources and their wits, save the world. I'm always so happy when women save the world. [PM]

### **Unconquered Countries**

Geoff Ryman, *St. Martin's*, 1994

There is virtually nothing Geoff Ryman writes that does not explore gender or sexuality; his hand is so steady on that wheel that he can steer the vessel off in completely other directions, and still have more to say on gender than do many stories that use it as their focal point. While other writers struggle with questions of, “Gosh, can women be strong and nontraditional, and men complex and conflicted, and how can I show it ...?” Ryman's assumption is that they not only can be but already are; he begins there, and takes the work where he wants it to go. This collection is notable for his 1994 story “A Fall of Angels, or On the Possibility of Life under Extreme Conditions.” [EK]

I'd recommend this for the shortlist because "O Happy Day!," one of the four novellas it includes, is a powerful examination of the consequences of gender and power and violence. In this world run by women, a group of gay men are the cleanup crew in a concentration camp where heterosexual men are exterminated. The story takes place in a concentration camp. It's a powerful and gripping story, one that I find impossible to ignore. [PM]

### ***Trouble and Her Friends***

Melissa Scott, Tor, 1994

Wild grlrs invade the cyberpunk boys' club. Trouble and her friends are virtual amazons, at home inside the virtual world and outside the law. The story includes a lot of weird hardware, an on-line cross-dressing seducer, and a genuine love story between prickly Trouble and independent Cerise. [BA]

Lesbian relationships in F/SF, still lamentably scarce, tend to take place either on the peripheries of the main story or in societies—like those of last year's winner, *Ammonite*—where there are no men. Had Melissa Scott done no more than put Trouble and Cerise front and center in a near-future U.S., this novel would be worth celebrating. But Scott goes much further, exploring the challenges to and implications of unconventional relationships in a vivid social context. She uses the gender ambiguity of the virtual world to play an erotic joke on one of her protagonists, and to have fun with a U.S. mythos that generally excludes women: the Wild Wild Western. Perhaps most important, she examines with compassion and insight the slow recovery of a partnership from desertion and betrayal. [SJS]

### ***"Young Woman in a Garden"***

Delia Sherman, in *Xanadu 2*, Tor, 1994

Delia Sherman delicately undercuts assumptions about gender and art with this time fantasy about an artist, a lover, a model, and a scholar, none of whom are exactly the person one expects. [BA]

A lovely, haunting story that puts gender considerations in an intriguing historic perspective. [PM]

A young American graduate student finds more than a dissertation topic in this beautifully written story. True to its central imagery, the tale is about learning how to see what lies in plain sight, and here the "what" has much to do with assumptions about gender and sexuality, not to mention the complex relationship of artist/scholar and subject. [SJS]

### ***Genetic Soldier***

George Turner, Morrow, 1994

In the future Earth of this book, social roles are predestined by genes and enforced by pheromones. Some are mothers, some are soldiers. Turner combines social and biological extrapolation to produce a very strange world that is at the same time a mirror of our own. [BA]

The influence of pheromones on sex roles has been explored recently in SF, but seldom with the narrative edge of Turner. A fascinating exploration that rewrites the theme of star-crossed lovers most nastily and inventively. If anything, this is a metaphysical thriller, with gender ultimately transcended. [LS]

## **1994 Longlist**

### ***"Metamorphosis"***

Milbre Burch, in *Xanadu 2*, Tor, 1994

### ***"Paris in June"***

Pat Cadigan, *Omni*, 9/1994

### ***Stardust Bound***

Karen Cadora, Firebrand, 1994

### ***Sundowner***

Chris Claremont, Ace, 1994

### ***The Warrior's Tale***

Allan Cole and Chris Bunch, Del Rey, 1994

### ***"Bicyclefish Island"***

Daniel P. Dern, *Tomorrow*, 2:8, 4/1994

### ***The Wind-Witch***

Susan Dexter, Del Rey, 1994

### ***"Somnus's Fair Maid"***

Ann Downer, in *Black Thorn, White Rose*, Morrow, 1994

### ***Earthsong***

Suzette Haden Elgin, DAW Books, 1994

### ***"Rites of Spring"***

Lisa Goldstein, in *Travelers In Magic*, Tor and Asimov's, 3/1994

### ***"One Last Zoom at the Buzz Bar"***

Alison M. Goodman, in *The Patternmaker*, Omnibus Books, 1994

### ***Stranger at the Wedding***

Barbara Hambly, Del Rey, 1994

### ***"The Valley of the Humans"***

Phillip C. Jennings, *Asimov's*, 11/1994

### ***"Big Guy"***

James Patrick Kelly, *Asimov's*, 6/1994

### ***Wildlife***

James Patrick Kelley, Tor

### ***"Margin of Error"***

Nancy Kress, *Omni*, 10/1994

### ***The Orchid Eater***

Marc Laidlaw, St. Martin's, 1994

### ***Summer Of Love***

Lisa Mason, Bantam, 1994

### ***"Legitimate Targets"***

Ian McDonald, *New Worlds* 4, 1994

### ***Nautilus***

Vonda N. McIntyre, Bantam, 1994

### ***"Amazons"***

Severna Park, *Louisville Review*, 8/1994

### ***"Rat"***

Mary Rosenblum, *Asimov's*, 10/1994

### ***Heartstone and Saber***

Jacqui Singleton, Rising Tide, 1994

### ***Metal Angel***

Nancy Springer, Roc, 1994

### ***A College of Magics***

Caroline Stevermer, Tor, 1994

### ***Shadow's End***

Sheri S. Tepper, Bantam, 1994

### ***Uncharted Territory***

Connie Willis, Bantam, 1994

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## The 1995 James Tiptree, Jr. Award

WisCon 20, Madison, WI

**Prizes:** Roszak received a beaded version of the Tiptree Quilt by Rose Cane. Hand received chocolate.

**Song:** ?

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### Judges

Sara Lefanu (SLF)  
Richard Russo (RPR)  
Nancy Springer (NCS)

### Winners Of The 1995 James Tiptree, Jr. Award

#### ***Waking the Moon***

Elizabeth Hand, HarperPrism, 1995

The struggle between women and men, between the female and the male principles, dramatized with intelligence and humor in a novel that spans the 1970s to the present day and marries a nineteenth-century high realism style to a modern gothic content. The author offers no solutions but raises questions both metaphysical and emotional, confronting issues of power, violence and sexuality. [SLF]

#### ***The Memoirs of Elizabeth Frankenstein,***

Theodore Roszak, Random House, 1995

A powerful book about, among other things, the sexual politics of science, and the relationship between gender and knowledge—how gender may affect ways of knowing, ways of approaching and doing science, and affect our world views. It posits that the domination of “male” ways of knowing and doing science, lacking an understanding of, and sympathy for, the Earth and Nature itself, have resulted in a world being ravaged and destroyed in the name of progress and science. And it does all this in the context of a variation on the book many believe marks the beginning of modern science fiction. You may not agree with everything in this book, but you will think about it for days and weeks after reading it. [RPR]

### 1995 Shortlist

#### ***“And Salome Danced”***

Kelley Eskridge, in *Little Deaths*, ed. Ellen Datlow, Millennium, 1994; Dell Abyss, 1995

Deserves a spotlight. A new and stellar treatment of an old metaphor—theater as life—this story is an exquisitely written exploration of the shuddering fascination that gender-limited people feel toward androgyny. This is also a tragedy imbued with a clear-eyed, chilly-hearted beauty worthy of the biblical Salome herself. A must-read. [NCS]

#### ***Little Sisters of the Apocalypse***

Kit Reed, Black Ice Books, 1994

An intriguing short novel, finely written, and thought provoking. Will probably infuriate many, but will encourage debate about our assumptions about men and women, social roles, and the effects on women of life without men. [RPR]

#### ***“Food Man,”***

Lisa Tuttle, *Crank!* #4, Fall 1994

A nicely finessed story about an eating disorder carried to the illogical extreme, gives food for thought (sorry) about body image. Who really “owns” the way we look—or try to look? Where is it written that women shall be thin? What are the sexual politics involved, the hidden connections between food and power—or empowerment? The ending was not unequivocally satisfying but the story explores some quirky gender issues and deserves to be recommended and read. A highly original story. [NCS]

## ***The Armless Maiden and Other Stories for Childhood’s Survivors***

Terri Windling, ed., Tor, 1995

This anthology includes stories and poems from writers known within and outside fantasy and science fiction, such as Louise Gluck, Jane Gardam, Emma Bull, Tappan King, Tanith Lee, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Jane Yolen, and the editor herself, Terri Windling. They are of a strikingly high literary quality. Through retelling fairy tales and folk tales they explore the grim terrain of abused childhood, Tiptree territory of pain and cruelty. But while they explore the pain of children cruelly exploited, they also recount the stories of their growing up and the piecing together of their shattered selves into women and men capable of loving and being loved. A powerful, haunting collection. [SLF]

### Other Works of Note, 1995

#### ***“The Pumpkin Eater”***

Isobelle Carmody, *She’s Fantastical*, ed. Lucy Sussex and Judith Raphael Buckrich, Sybylla Press

#### ***Lines Upon the Skin***

Julie Haydon, Pan

#### ***Women of Wonder: The Classic Years and Women of Wonder: The Contemporary Years***

Pamela Sargent, ed., Harcourt Brace

#### ***Shadow Man***

Melissa Scott, Tor

#### ***Other Nature***

Stephanie Smith, Tor

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### Special Award, Retro winners

WisCon 20, Madison, WI

**Prizes:** Suzy McKee Charnas, Ursula K. Le Guin, Joanna Russ—all received lucite cubes with silkscreened art by Freddie Baer

**Song:** none

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### Winners Of The James Tiptree Jr. Retrospective Award

#### ***Walk to the End of the World***

Suzy McKee Charnas, 1974

#### ***Motherlines***

Suzy McKee Charnas, 1978

#### ***The Left Hand of Darkness***

Ursula K. Le Guin, 1969

#### ***We Who Are About to . . .***

Joanna Russ, 1975, 1976, 1977

#### ***The Female Man***

Joanna Russ, 1975

## Retro Shortlist

### ***The Handmaid's Tale***

Margaret Atwood

### ***The Wasp Factory***

Iain Banks

### ***Swastica Night***

Katherine Burdekin

### ***Wild Seed***

Octavia Butler

### ***Babel-17***

Samuel R. Delany

### ***Triton***

Samuel R. Delany

### ***Carmen Dog***

Carol Emshwiller

### ***"When I Was Miss Dow"***

Sony Dorman Hess, reprinted in *Women of Wonder: The Classic Years*

### ***Watchtower***

Elizabeth Lynn

### ***Dreamsnake***

Vonda N. McIntyre

### ***Memoirs of a Spacewoman***

Naomi Mitchison

### ***Woman on the Edge of Time***

Marge Piercy

### ***The Two of Them***

Joanna Russ

### ***Women of Wonder, More Women of Wonder, New Women of Wonder***

anthologies edited by Pamela Sargent

### ***The Barbie Murders***

John Varley

### ***The Clewiston Test***

Kate Wilhelm

### ***Les Guérillères***

Monique Wittig, translated by David Le Vay

### ***"The Heat Death of the Universe"***

Pamela Zoline, reprinted in *Women of Wonder: The Classic Years*

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## The 1996 James Tiptree, Jr. Award

ICFA 18, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

**Prizes:** Both authors received vests by Kate Schaefer

**Song:** Tom Lehrer's "The Vatican Rag"

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### Judges

Karen Joy Fowler [KJF]

Richard Kadrey [RK]

Janet M. Lafler (coordinator) [JML]

Justine Larbalestier [JL]

Delia Sherman [DS]

*Commentary was harvested from correspondence among the judges and attributed by the judges' initials.*

## Winners Of The 1996 James Tiptree Jr. Award

### ***"Mountain Ways"***

Ursula K. Le Guin, *Asimov's*, August 1996

This is a fuller and, for Tiptree purposes alone, more satisfying exploration of the marital customs on the planet O, set up in earlier Le Guin work. In some ways, the story suggests that every society's sexual norms and taboos are arbitrary and this is an interesting idea to bring back to our own world. In other ways, the marriages on O seem, as opposed to arbitrary, more rational and reasonable than our own simple twosomes. In the end, even on the world of O, it is the twosomes who finally dominate the story, and that, too, is interesting to think about. Le Guin never falls an inch short of brilliance. [KJF]

A lovely story and yet another of Le Guin's thorough and heartfelt explorations of new configurations of desire and belonging, both on a personal and a cultural level. [RK]

On rereading this story I was struck by its second paragraph, which says that mountain people "pride themselves on doing things the way they've always been done, but in fact they are a willful, stubborn lot who change the rules to suit themselves...." This story is partly about the gap between ideals and practice, and about the way that people make new traditions for themselves or change the old ones to fit their needs. The story takes place on the planet O (a place Le Guin has visited before), which has a system of marriage based on norms of bisexuality and polyfidelity. Le Guin portrays this culture with depth and subtlety, so that the story's events and the characters' development have a naturalness and inevitability. She's also managed to create a story in which an act of cross-dressing has a whole different set of meanings than it would in our society. As usual, Le Guin's sense of place is impeccable. [JML]

A gentle, spare and beautiful story. Le Guin first introduced us to the marriage customs of O in "Another Story, or A Fisherman of the Inland Sea." In that story the system of marriage was another detail of an alien world in a story centred around a time paradox. In "Mountain Ways" the implications and potential tragedies of these four-person marriages are explicated in exquisite detail. Like all fine science fiction and fantasy, particularly that of Le Guin, there is a double process at work; the alien is rendered knowable and familiar, and the taboos and normalities of our own worlds start to seem as "unnatural" as those within the story. Raising questions like why is marriage between two, and not three, four or five? Why is heterosexual union privileged over homosexual? Why formalise sexual relations at all? The story grew with each new reading so that many months after my initial reading I still find myself thinking about it and wondering about the deliberately ambiguous ending. One of my biggest pleasures in reading Le Guin's work is its cumulative power and the way she takes up and reshapes elements of her vast invented universe so that you are forced to look at them in an entirely different way. [JL]

The emotional effect of "Mountain Ways" is strengthened by its being about characters and relationships as well as about sexuality and morality. I like the way complexity of desire overwhelms the relative simplicity of the characters and the fact that no matter how flexible a social system

seems, human beings can find new ways of making themselves feel guilty and sinful. As always with Le Guin, the writing is crystalline and the background much more lively and present than the number of words used to convey it would seem to warrant. [DS]

### ***The Sparrow***

Mary Doria Russell, Random House, 1996

Loved this novel—great old-fashioned science fiction in some indefinable way, but with a modern sensibility. A very smart and passionate book. I was initially concerned that the sexual content was slight, but my enthusiasm finally swept these doubts away. Although never quite defined as such, the transformation of the protagonist takes place largely through sexual experience, from his initial celibacy, to the middle of the book with his longings, to his final climactic and terrifying journey offworld. [KJF]

A fine first contact novel and a subtle exploration of the choices people make in their lives, especially those concerning self-definition, which always includes sexuality and gender roles. [RK]

This novel haunted me for months; I kept thinking about it and mulling it over, and the more I did, the more I found to think about. The story centers on the spiritual crisis of Emilio Sandoz, a Jesuit priest who has had his view of God (and, not incidentally, his masculinity and his sexuality) challenged by his experiences on the planet Rakhat. The story of this crisis is counterbalanced by the stories of other priests, each with his own accommodation to sexuality and celibacy. On a different level, in her portrayal of the inhabitants of Rakhat, Russell makes fascinating connections among the binary oppositions of male/female, person/animal, ruling class/laboring class, pushing these connections in new directions. To say more about this would be to give away spoilers—and this book is so suspenseful that it wouldn't be fair to do that. Suffice it to say that *The Sparrow* is rich and complex and provides a lot of food for thought about power, gender, sexuality, and the connection between body and spirit. [JML]

*The Sparrow* is one of most haunting evocations of first contact I have read in recent years—on this occasion the contact is between a Jesuit-led team of scientists and some of the inhabitants of the planet Rakhat. How does the novel explore and expand gender? Central to *The Sparrow* is the examination of the importance of sexuality to gender identity, specifically masculinity. Can you be celibate and still be a man? At the same time the understandings of human masculinity and femininity that dominate the thinking of the Jesuit landing party make little sense in the face of the entirely different gender models of the two alien races. I read this not unduly small book in one sitting. I could not put the book down even though this Australian judge was somewhat put out by an entirely unconvincing (though mercifully brief) attempt at characterizing a 'typical' Aussie bloke (pp. 122–123). [JL]

Profoundly moving and upsetting and very much about cultural constructions and difficult questions, including those of gender. Russell's subjects are faith, religion, the structure and purpose of the Catholic Church (or maybe just the Society of Jesus), and saintliness. There's a gay Father Superior and a woman who (although beautiful and petite) reads more male than many of the male characters. There is an alien race whose genders are ambiguous to humans, mostly because the females are larger than the males and the males raise the children. The center of the book is the hero's struggle to reconcile the fact that the aliens he had moved heaven and earth to study have abused him terribly, with God's Plan, celibacy, and his own macho upbringing. [DS]

## **1996 Shortlist**

### ***"The Silent Woman"***

Fred Chappell, from his novel *Farewell, I'm Bound to Leave You*; St. Martin's, 1996

A wonderful exploration of "womanliness" which transforms the supposed passive virtue of silence into an almost magic strength. [JL]

At the end of the millennium, noise is king. Flying in the face of that, this is a story that dares to explore the power and beauty of silence. And it does so beautifully, creating an exquisite object, like a literary Faberge egg. [RK]

### ***"Beauty and the Opera, or The Phantom Beast"***

Suzy McKee Charnas, *Asimov's*, March 1996)

In this gorgeous re-imagining of "The Phantom of the Opera," Christine strikes a bargain with the Phantom and lives with him for five years. Much of the story has to do with the precarious balance of power between the two. Christine has a moral hold over the Phantom, but she doesn't take it upon herself to absolve him, to reform him in any absolute sense, or to sacrifice herself to him. He remains a monster, and not always a sympathetic one. Their passion is based on this tension, and of course it's one that can't endure indefinitely, as Christine knows. The moral and psychological complexity of this story can't be easily summarized. Think of it as an antidote to the fable of the evil man redeemed by the love of a good woman, but don't stop there; it's many other things as well. [JML]

A fascinating exploration of domesticity and power and literary roles. Even though she's the heroine of a Romance, Christine is no fainting, yielding, pliable victim. She is a hard-headed business woman who knows how to negotiate with managers and directors and monsters, too. Erik, on the other hand, is governed completely by his passions. In most Romances, the heroine must teach the hero to feel and to express his feelings. In "Beauty," it's the other way around. [DS]

### ***"Welcome, Kid, to the Real World"***

L. Timmel Duchamp, *Tales of the Unanticipated*, Spring/Summer/Fall, 1996)

Thematically perfect for the Tiptree. I admired its brains and awareness of its subject matter immensely. It's a wonderfully imagined externalization of all the little decisions we make every day that add up to who we will be as adults. Only in Duchamp's world, the decisions are entirely self-conscious and deliberate and revolve around the gender role you will carry, like a big digitally-crafted, chrome albatross around your neck for the rest of your life. [RK]

In this story, an apparent gender freedom (the ability to choose one's gender at a certain age) is embedded within a rigid gender system. A pointed commentary on the problem of "choice" when none of the options is worth choosing. [JML]

### ***A History Maker***

Alasdair Gray, Canongate Press, 1994; revised edition Harcourt Brace, 1996

The flip side of Tepper's *Gate to Women's Country*. War is a rugby match to the death, and the world is run by wise old women. A very funny, pointed, extraordinary look at maleness. A marvelous book. [KJF]

In this "post-historical utopia," which one of the characters describes as a "mild matriarchy," women live in communal households and raise children, while most men live separately and pursue "manly" activities such as warfare. Sound familiar? That's just the beginning. This is a funny, loony, and irreverent book, but it also has flashes of horror, despair, and lyricism, not to mention the best portrayal of warfare-as-sport that I've ever read. [JML]

### ***"Five Fucks"***

Jonathan Lethem, in his collection *The Wall of the Sky, The Wall of the Eye*; Harcourt Brace, 1996

A story of heterosexual love as a sick compulsion. In this sharp, funny, clever story the disease undoes the very fabric of time and space. Straight men and women are aliens locked into combat until the end of time. Literally. [JL]

The reductio ad absurdum of "can't live with 'em, can't live without 'em." [DS]

**Nadya**  
Pat Murphy, Tor, 1996

This is a book primarily about questions. As the protagonist comes of age at the opening of the western US, she begins to question everything in her world, including her identity and the settled life that she is expected to grow into. When she makes one crucial break with her past (avenging the killing of her parents), the questions deepen, encompassing everything, including her sexuality. What makes the book work is that the questions aren't obvious and political in the soapbox sense, but grow out of the increasing natural awareness of a young woman moving into and finally rejecting the "civilized" world. [RK]

An exploration of (among other things) the borders between male and female, masculine and feminine. Nadya herself slides from man to woman as she slides from woman to wolf, redefining gender in the face of a society whose gender definitions are as unrelenting as they are arbitrary. The characters are persuasive, the background is colorful and beautifully researched, and there's enough suspense and adventure to make it a convincing Western. A feminist Western. Well, that's gender-bending, too. [DS]

**Godmother Night**  
Rachel Pollack, St. Martin's, 1996

I thought the use of fairy-tale elements, while fun, was a bit easy and undisciplined. (Picture me with my arms folded and a stern look on my face. Undisciplined use of fairy-tale elements! Capital crime.) But I loved the identification of the fairytale godmother with death. If death seemed to be a little more the topic than sex, there was plenty of sexual stuff going on. It was a great read, with many beautiful moments. A top contender. [KJF]

Pollack is interested in playing with types of fairy tale and contemporary society. In Pollack's universe, the only real sin seems to be too strict adherence to one traditional gender. What I liked (and found Tip-treesque) about this book was the androgyny of many of the characters (especially the dead and inhuman ones). If the Le Guin is an exploration of Things as They Might Be, Godmother Night is an exploration of Things as They're Getting to Be, with "gendered" behaviors like nurturing, passing judgment, avoiding intimacy, and wearing dresses seen more as a function of individual personality than of biological programming or social expectation. [DS]

**The Pillow Friend**  
Lisa Tuttle, White Wolf, 1996

Not all horror novels have monsters and not all monsters have scales and wings. This is a novel about the horror of daily existence, of desire for an impossible "perfect" union. Where longing makes the whole world gray and seemingly constructed of chalk. [RK]

I had a visceral reaction to this novel—I loved it and simultaneously found it extremely disturbing. It captures perfectly one of the main reasons that people (particularly women) stay in bad relationships, ignore warning signs, and pretend to enjoy bad sex—because they're stuck in their hopes and dreams from the beginning of the relationship, when they thought it was going to be the answer to all their desires. Thus, *The Pillow Friend* can be read as a story about the ways that both women and men are imprisoned by fantasies of romantic fulfillment; about the frustrated desire for perfect connection with another; and about the destructiveness of that desire. [JML]

**"And She Was the Word"**  
Tess Williams, *Eidolon*, Winter, 1996

This story derives its impact from its position among other feminist texts to do with naming and unnamings (including the Biblical one). A young woman isolated on a remote planet creates her own words. A lovely variation on a favorite theme. [KJF]

This story is rich with echoes of earlier science fiction by women. Like Suzette Haden Elgin's fascinating *Native Tongue* trilogy, language is used to remake the world. However, this time it is one woman and her child who reinscribe the world in which they find themselves. The scenario of a young woman bringing up her child alone on a planet reminds me of Marion Zimmer Bradley's 1959 story "The Wind People" though in Williams' story the woman and her child reinvent their world rather than letting it invent them. [JL]

**Leaning Towards Infinity**  
Sue Woolfe, Vintage, 1996

This was one of my personal favorites among the books we read this year. Although it alludes to some fantastical mathematics, the fantasy content is minimal. It involves a family in which mathematical genius runs, unacknowledged and primarily untrained, through the female line. It deals with issues of women in (and out of) academia, of the appropriation of women's work, and offers a quick education in the female mathematical tradition, sparse, but there. But the heart is a three-generational mother and daughter story. Beautifully written, absolutely original. Sensational! [KJF]

I really loved this book. It's about a famous mathematician, Frances Montrose, and is her history from the 1950s when she was a child until the discovery of her genius in the late 1990s. The novel centres around two first person narratives. The first I is that of Frances' daughter, Hypatia Montrose, who is trying to come to terms with her extremely difficult relationship with her mother. The second is Frances' I. However, the stories of this I are told as imagined by Hypatia. It is one of the most dazzlingly beautiful negotiations of the lives and relations of mothers and daughters that I have ever read. [JL]

## 1996 Longlist

**Pussy, King of the Pirates**  
Kathy Acker, Grove Press, 1996

This retelling of Treasure Island as "a girl's story," (the author's words) is like Switchblade Sisters on the High Seas. A combination of high-theory on women's bodies, possession and language and drive-in movie biker violence. There's no one else who writes like Acker. [RK]

**The Memory Palace**  
Gill Alderman, HarperCollins, 1996

A wonderfully decadent and intricate look at traditional gender archetypes, ringing changes on celibacy, impotency, fecundity, purity, decadence, magic, story-telling, words, nature and unnature. Really well (if a touch over-) done. [DS]

**Jigsaw Woman**  
Kim Antieau, Roc, 1996

The central character is engaging, the characters she's made up of (you'll understand that if you read it) are interesting, the book has a sense of humor about its subject (which takes some doing), and a sense of compassion about the things that living in an unrelentingly patriarchal culture do to men. [DS]

**"Y Chromosome"**  
Donald Antrim, *The New Yorker*, November 18, 1996

Doug and his ninety-nine brothers have gathered in the family library for some male-bonding before dinner. A mighty funny look at the dance of dominance, told by a shoe-fetishist who ends up on the floor. [KJF]

### ***Alias Grace***

Margaret Atwood, Doubleday, 1996

Whether or not this book is fantasy depends on your interpretation of a crucial scene towards the end of the book, though it certainly has minor fantastic elements (fortune-telling and premonitory dreams). So be warned: this book is only tenuously eligible for Tiptree consideration, but, in my opinion, too fine to be overlooked on a technicality. *Alias Grace* is a novel about the famous 19th century “murderess,” Grace Marks, a servant who was convicted, along with her fellow servant James McDermott, of the murder of their employer and his housekeeper (and mistress). The way in which the historical Grace was involved in the murders is not clear, and Atwood is careful not to give a definitive answer. Instead, through the imagined Grace’s experience, she explores work, sexual and class exploitation, fame, and the public fascination with murder, especially murder of or by a good-looking woman. Also innocence, responsibility, and memory. [JML]

### ***Excession***

Iain M. Banks, Little, Brown, 1996

Gender-exploring in a vein similar to that of Banks’ other Culture novels—the people of the Culture routinely change sex and many of the characters are genderless machine intelligences. In addition, one of the main characters in *Excession* is a woman who has arrested her pregnancy for forty years. Entertaining, but not Banks’ best work. [JML]

### ***“Blue”***

Francesca Lia Block, in her collection *Girl Goddess #9*; HarperCollins, 1996

Block is a truly wonderful writer. Her power is rooted in a deceptively simple prose style which is compounded of young adult novels and children’s fairy tales. Block takes these simple elements and weaves magical little stories with them. “Blue” is the story of the breakdown (and resurrection) of a family after the mother’s suicide. The title character is a tiny transsexual dwarf who appears at a moment of crisis to a young girl in the story (and the only fantasy element). Is Blue an externalization of her own superego or simply a sign that she shares her mother’s madness? Will she survive to know? Unfortunately, there isn’t quite enough gender exploration in the story for it to be a Tiptree winner, but it’s as emotionally strong and true and well-crafted as anything the judges read this year. [RK]

### ***“Girl Goddess #9”***

Francesca Lia Block (in her collection *Girl Goddess #9*; HarperCollins, 1996)

A creepy encounter between two teenage girls and Graves’ *White Goddess*, with an ambiguous end which may be interpreted as a critique of the patriarchal vision of the female muse. Or not. [JML]

### ***Dead Things***

Richard Calder, St. Martin’s 1996

*Dead Things* is the resolution to a complex trilogy chronicling the coming of a new sort of being into the world: predatory and hyper-sexualized females, the Lilim. Imagine a kind of perfect, frictionless Barbie doll with fangs. *Dead Things* is all about gender, but its challenge is inverted. It doesn’t show new possibilities, but parodies accepted gender roles by pushing them to Wagnerian heights, making them all-defining, all-consuming and grotesque. It’s a brutal kind of parody—fascinating, but an acquired taste. And that’s part of the problem. *Dead Things*, the last book of the trilogy, does not stand alone. In fact, as the most stylized of the three books, it’s almost incomprehensible without the background and language provided by the other two books. Taken together, the trilogy—*Dead Girls*, *Dead Boys*, *Dead Things*—is a literary head kick, pushing gender and bio-tech buttons as hard as something like *Neuromancer* pushed the romance of digital criminality. My recommendation is to read the whole set of books. And maybe try to convince a publisher to reprint them in a single volume, or better yet, to publish something like this in a single year so that a future committee can consider the work as a single thing, rather than being served a wing and a leg and trying to vote on the whole chicken. [RK]

### ***“The Lucifer of Blue”***

Sherry Coldsmith, in *Off Limits*, Ellen Datlow ed.; St. Martin’s, 1996

A haunting story of the Spanish Civil War. Coldsmith sets the piece in a brothel and gives us the amalgam of war and sex, without glamorizing or simplifying. [KJF]

### ***The Splendor and the Misery of Bodies, of Cities* (excerpt)**

Samuel R. Delany, *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*, Fall, 1996

An intriguing fragment in which the sexual identifiers change from paragraph to paragraph; woman appears to be the large category and man the subset, or the other. The setting is off world, there are aliens and the added layer of alien sexual identifiers. I am eager to see this play out in a longer work. [KJF]

### ***Lunatics***

Bradley Denton, St. Martin’s, 1996

An exploration of the current status of the war between the sexes, *The Big Chill* with wings and talons. [DS]

### ***Distress***

Greg Egan, Orion, 1995

“Gender migration” as the ultimate critique of identity politics. Egan makes a credible case for the virtues of asexuality and androgyny, one that made me wonder just why I find the idea so disturbing. In contrast to Tepper, who comes off (to me at least) as anti-sex, Egan is clearly pro-freedom. [JML]

### ***“Tiresias”***

Firecat, in *Genderflex*, Cecilia Tam, ed.; Circlet Press, 1996

A very sexy story which, incidentally, illustrates the distinction between gender change and sex change. [JML]

### ***The Bones of Time***

Kathy Goonan, Tor, 1996

Great read. Reminded me of *Distress* a bit—a perilous, shoot-em-up mystery plot with a lot of physics theory filling in the cracks. Early on, the narrator, a Hawaiian woman of Japanese ancestry, mentions that the old gender-biased educational system has been completely eradicated. We then rocket through an international chase, which allows no time to pause and see what the results of this have been. But what we’re left with is a story in which no one’s sex seems to matter at all. Which has its own kind of refreshment for the weary reader. [KJF]

### ***The Lunatic Café***

Laurell Hamilton, Ace, 1996

The adventures of Anita Blake, vampire assassin and zombie hunter. She’s a Christian and doesn’t believe in premarital sex. I find this more unusual and intriguing than the fact that she packs a piece and doesn’t hesitate to use it. Things have come to such a pass! For our purposes, there are interesting dominance issues throughout, made more interesting by the fact that half the characters are werewolves and pack animals. Lots of the book is same old/same old sexually, but enjoyed for the same old reasons, which means enjoyable. Great fun in fact. [KJF]

### ***Into the Forest***

Jean Heglund, Calyx, 1996

A very poetic book about two young sisters living in rural isolation after the collapse of civilization. None of the gender issues are very pointed, but the relationship of women and wilderness is a particular fascination of mine, and I found this an entirely engaging addition to the tradition. The writing is especially lush. [KJF]



### **No Quarter**

Tanya Huff, DAW, 1996

Tanya Huff has to be one of the most dependable writers of cracking good fantasies around. This book is no exception. Compulsively readable and great fun. The Tiptree elements concerns a man existing (as a separate being) within the body of a woman. However, for Tiptree purposes, there is really not enough exploration of this intriguing scenario. [JL]

### **“Red Sonja and Lessingham in Dreamland”**

Gwyneth Jones, in *Off Limits*, Ellen Datlow ed.; St. Martin's, 1996

A nasty twist on virtuality's mutual dreaming and the insidious clichéd archetypes that have such a tenacious grip on our imaginations. [JL]

### **Manchu Palaces**

Jeanne Larsen, Henry Holt, 1996

No one has ever managed to analyze the power of concubines in any new and interesting way. But in the last thirty pages of this wonderful book, Larsen does throw out our previous sexual assumptions and go somewhere unexpected. This is an intricate and beautiful book made up of stories about stories which contain stories, and I loved it. [KJF]

### **“The Reason for Not Going to the Ball”**

Tanith Lee, *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, October/November, 1996

A new version of an old nemesis. Lee's fairytale shows that there is always and infinitely another side to things. A good addition to the growing body of Cinderella rewrites. [KJF]

### **“Sleepy People”**

Jonathan Lethem, in his collection *The Wall of the Sky, the Wall of the Eye*; Harcourt Brace, 1996

A woman finds a man asleep on her doorstep and brings him into the house, where he remains asleep through various events. I read it as, in part, a comment on the lumpish husband who sits in front of the TV and is herded around by his wife: male protector/provider reduced to the role of passive icon. [JML]

### **Remnant Population**

Elizabeth Moon, Baen, 1996

A consciousness-raising novel about an old, working class woman named Ofelia who has spent most of her life bowing to the will of her husband, her employers, and her children. The book is mostly about Ofelia “finding” herself, developing a new strength, and, at the same time, becoming a pivotal person in the formation of the relationship between humans and another intelligent species. Elderly female protagonists are rare (I'm tempted to say unknown) in science fiction, and it's refreshing to see one portrayed with complexity and honor. Unfortunately, Ofelia's opponents and detractors are all straw men (and women); they are so completely one-dimensional and unsympathetic that Ofelia's ultimate triumph seems cheapened. In retrospect, the most interesting aspect of the book, to me, was the aliens' combination of youth (as a species) and intelligence. In science fiction, humans are often pitted against primitives or against older and more “advanced” (but stuffy and conservative) alien civilizations. It's rare to see a situation in which humans are coping with a new, young alien race that's smarter than we are. Of course, this has nothing to do with gender. At least, I don't think so. [JML]

### **Foragers**

Charles Oberndorf, Bantam, 1996

The set-up, with some agreeable twists and additions, is the human anthropologist among an alien race—known in this case as the slazans. Humanity is at war with one set of these aliens, when another, an isolated group of hunter/gatherers, is found. The human anthropologist finds among them that the primary value is for solitude. This is an ambitious book with an obvious sexual component and a complex web of plots and subplots. [KJF]

### **Serial Killer Days**

David Prill, St. Martin's, 1996

While not terribly pointed in terms of gender content, this novel does contain a marvelous send-up of beauty pageants and the American entertainment industry's appetite for young murdered women. The protagonist is competing for the crown of Scream Queen and fighting her own unfortunate and unmarketable fearlessness. Very funny and absolutely original. [KJF]

### **Blue Mars**

Kim Stanley Robinson, Bantam, 1996

The final and best book of one of my favourite science fiction trilogies of all time. On finishing it my first impulse was to go back and re-read the whole thing in one go. Robinson's *Mars* is one of the most fully-realised, fascinating future histories ever written. However, from a Tiptree point of view, the book's speculation about gender is disappointing. On page 43 we are told that sexual violence against women has disappeared and on page 345 that patriarchy has been brought to an end. We are not shown this reinscription of the roles of men and women, however, as, in much loving and convincing detail, Robinson delineates many of the other changes on Mars as its human society is created and grows. [JL]

### **“A Boy's Night Out”**

Lori Selke, in *Genderflex*, Cecilia Tam, ed.; Circlet Press, 1996

A light-hearted story about the irrelevance of sex to gender, and vice versa. [JML]

### **“Fetish”**

Martha Soukup (in *Off Limits*, Ellen Datlow, ed.; St. Martin's, 1996

I sometimes think that in the West gender difference is all about hair, not genitals—this story is a witty, sharp exploration of just that. [JL]

### **Fair Peril**

Nancy Springer, Avon, 1996

What Springer does with the structures and assumptions of fairy-tale, the way she weaves Story and psychology, the way she makes us hate a character like Prentis and then shows us enough of his vulnerability to make him more than a simple MCP stereotype—not to mention the fact that I kept laughing out loud—are delightful. [DS]

### **“Bicycle Repairman”**

Bruce Sterling, in *Intersections: The Sycamore Hill Anthology*, John Kessel, Mark L. Van Name, and Richard Butner, ed.; Tor, 1996

The protagonist is on anti-libidinals as a member of the Sexual Deliberation Movement, and argues briefly that true freedom is freedom from the urge to reproduce. There's also a fabulous social worker in the story. All a bit peripheral, but fine stuff, nevertheless. [KJF]

### **Holy Fire**

Bruce Sterling, Bantam, 1996

It begins with a crone. In a period of extended lifespans, sex and family and connections of any kind are something she long ago put behind her. She is a well-behaved, rich, and powerful old person who says she has become something other than a woman. She takes a new rejuvenation treatment and becomes a young, beautiful, badly behaved girl and, for a time, a model. I don't think Sterling understands the world of high fashion any better than I do, which is to say, not at all. The sexual aspects of his character's identity are more interesting in the crone part of the book, which is relatively short, than they are in the vamp part of the book. And the sexual aspects are drowned under the less familiar and more fascinating generational aspects. What would it be like to be the last generation of humans who die? This is a wonderful novel and maybe Sterling's best to date. [KJF]

### ***Cloud's End***

Sean Stewart, Ace, 1996

A magical blending of fairy tale, myth and fantasy. Although the book is packed with as much fairy tale adventure as any Tolkien clone the book's heart is in the realms of the domestic. The book offers a traditional hero named Seven and then makes his story a minor melody. Marriage, children and home are central. However, this is not the saccharine family values imagined by the political right. Home and hearth are as disturbing and uncertain as any of the more traditional sites of adventure *Cloud's End* has to offer. [JL]

### ***Nearly Roadkill***

Caitlin Sullivan and Kate Bornstein, High Risk Books, 1996

I wanted to like this book better than I did. It takes place in the near future, and it takes the form of a series of transcriptions of Internet communications with various backgrounds filled in through connecting narratives. It's the story of two people's erotic adventures on-line in a variety of different guises and genders, and of their battle against the world that doesn't want to accept them. Perhaps inevitably, given its structure, it suffers from a certain "talkiness," and I found the tone irritatingly self-congratulatory. [JML]

### ***The Scarlet Rider***

Lucy Sussex, Tom Dougherty 1996

A scholarly mystery, all about history and research and women in Australia, told in Sussex's best wry prose. Among its subjects are women's roles on a frontier, communities of women, how men and women deal with women who act like men, and how men and women can be friends. [DS]

### ***"The Dead"***

Michael Swanwick, in *Starlight 1*, Patrick Neilsen Hayden, ed.; Tor 1996)

An intense disturbing story written in Swanwick's usual elegant ice. You'll never sleep with another dead person! [KJF]

### ***The Tale of One Bad Rat***

Bryan Talbot, Dark Horse, 1996

Well drawn and well meant. The protagonist is a young girl, a homeless runaway, struggling to come to grips with her father's sexual abuse. Three things eventually save her. They are 1) self-help books, 2) a move to the country—the countryside, itself, really—wilderness—and 3) her identification with Beatrix Potter. [KJF]

### ***Desmodus***

Melanie Tem, *Headline Feature*, 1995

Tem's writing always disturbs me and *Desmodus* is no exception. She strips the vampire myth of any black nail polished romanticism. Her matriarchal vampires are wholly unlike any others, with lives which are on the whole nasty, brutish and sometimes even short. [JL]

### ***Gibbon's Decline and Fall***

Sherri Tepper, Bantam, 1996

I love the characters, taken each by each, and I think that she's remarkably fair-handed about having good men and honorable lesbians among them, but I wish, oh how I wish, that she wouldn't insist upon Sex being What's Wrong With the World. Even when I don't agree with Tepper's conclusions, she makes me think. And I'm never, ever bored. [DS]

### ***"The Hermaphrodite"***

Edmund White, *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*, Fall, 1996

This story, written in 1960 but only just published, has some interesting threads—the notion that grief and despair are less intimate than sex, a sort of conflation of upper class with female and lower class with male. This story argues that sexuality is not just a mental construct, but that there are always physical facts to be dealt with. A deceptively simple story with a sad and inevitable conclusion. [KJF]

### ***"The Stupefaction"***

Diane Williams, in her collection *The Stupefaction*; Knopf, 1996

Not to be confused with the collection of the same name by the same author in which this novella appears, this is a poetic narrative, very apt to our purposes, with some provocative bits. Because of its impressionistic approach, the images and moments last longer than the whole. [KJF]

### ***Map of Power***

Tess Williams, Random House, 1996

Williams' novel explores, in part, what happens when three very different people from societies with radically different ideas about gender interact. The author has the courage to confound romantic expectations by depicting this interaction as one of continuing conflict, confusion, and miscommunication, rather than resorting to a climactic, happily-ever-after resolution. [JML]

### ***"Natural Permanent Boy"***

Laurel Winter, *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, February 1996

A suggestive story about identical boy-girl twins and the business of growing up. [JML]

### ***Looking for the Madhi***

N. Lee Wood, Bantam, 1996

This book looked very promising. It's about an "ugly as a mud fence" female journalist who, for various reasons (e.g. to make it easier for her to report from the Middle East), dresses as a man and takes on a male persona. There's lots of potential for gender exploration here, but it all gets frittered away. We never get much sense of how the protagonist feels about her disguise, and we never find out how her Arab buddies from her days as a war-correspondent react when they find out she's a woman. The disguise just becomes a plot device. On the other hand, this book has the virtue of being about the only one I can think of in which a woman-disguised-as-a-man is truly ugly, not just slender and "boyish." [JML]

### ***"Utensile Strength"***

Patricia Wrede, in her collection *Book of Enchantments*; Harcourt Brace, 1996

Who says gender exploration can't be fun? Wrede neatly deflates half a dozen gender-bound fairy tale conventions and provides an excellent chocolate cake recipe to boot. I laughed out loud. [JL]

### ***The Frequency of Souls***

Mary Kay Zuravleff, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996

The story of a man trying to define himself within his relationships and without reference to or seeming awareness of the template of masculinity. The book looks at male sexuality, but is written by a woman. So is its charmingly passive male well done and refreshingly novel, or is it just a female fantasy of what men might be? I think the former, but what do I know? [KJF]

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## The 1997 James Tiptree, Jr. Award

### Readercon 10, Westborough, MA

**Prizes:** Ellen Klages designed gifts for both winners.

Dorsey received a hand-painted silk scarf (with images from *Black Wine*). Link received a snowglobe.

**Song:** For Candas we sang “Black Wine” (to the tune of “Bottle of Wine”)

*Book of Black Wine*

*Fruit of my mind*

*Canadian, sexy and slender*

*Leave me alone*

*Let me go home*

*I'll write a new book about gender*

*Sitting around Edmonton town*

*writing for nickels and dimes*

*Times have been tough*

*I ain't had enough*

*To write me a book of Black Wine*

*(Repeat Refrain)*

For Kelly, we sang “Let it Snow.” “Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow! Oh the weather outside is frightful, but her writing's so delightful.”

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## Judges

Terry Garey (chair) [TG]

Liz Hand [EH]

Nalo Hopkinson [NH]

Jerry Kaufman [JK]

James Patrick Kelly [JPK]

*Commentary was harvested from correspondence among the judges and attributed by the judges' initials.*

## Winners of the 1997 James Tiptree, Jr. Award

### **Black Wine**

Candas Jane Dorsey, Tor, 1997

*Black Wine* is a slippery book, neither science fiction nor fantasy; instead it stakes out territory all its own. It is an intricate, fierce and lyrical examination of gender and identity. Teeming with ideas made flesh, *Black Wine* gazes unflinching at the wonder and horror of humanity. [JPK]

In *Black Wine*, Candas Dorsey took on the whole question of gender, shook it out till it suited her, cut, stitched, and fitted till she came up with a wondrous garment I had never seen before. Then she showed me it was reversible and just as wondrous on the inside, which was now the outside. This is a book well worth reading and I hope lots and lots of people do. [TG]

### **“Travels With The Snow Queen,”**

Kelly Link, *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*, Winter, volume 1, Issue 1

This is a story that puts its arm around the reader and leads him back to places he's been but hasn't really seen. A clever, often funny, conflation of deconstructed fairy tales with a modern relationship going sour, it's about a young woman's journey through gender stereotypes to self-acceptance. Link makes us understand that, in this story, the traditional “happy ending” would be very silly indeed. [JPK]

## 1997 Shortlist: short fiction

### **“The Oracle Lips”**

Storm Constantine, in *The Fortune Teller*, ed. Lawrence Schimel & Martin H. Greenberg, Daw Books, 1997.

I liked the imagery, particularly the recurring and faintly threatening tube of red lipstick. The image of the unremarkable woman envying the glam one resonated. We've all been there in one way or the other. But at the end of the story, I'm not sure what I was supposed to have taken away from it. [NH]

“Oracle Lips” explores the idea that, just as the fashion and advertising industries tell us, makeup and accessories make the woman, and does so in the context of an original method of fortune-telling. [JK]

### **“Alice, Alfie, Ted and the Aliens”**

Paul Di Filippo, *Interzone*, March 1997

I found myself uncomfortable with the way DiFilippo diddles so many genre icons in this gonzo alternate history, attributing to them (and Alice Sheldon especially) outrageous histories and cartoonish behaviors. But I wonder whether the point here is that this is the harvest we reap in a field that churns out alternate history anthologies by the yard. I had the sense that he was aiming this story at the Tiptree jury. Nice shot, Paul! [JPK]

Like some of my fellow jurors, I got the impression that this story was aimed and fired deliberately at the Tiptree Award. It's abrasive and it's presumptuous—and it's well-written. I laughed out loud in parts. A bracing dissenting voice. It's not about gender, it's about our favorite writers who write about gender; a meta-fictional in-joke that skillfully parodies the writing styles of those authors. It lampoons the lives of very real people in ways that I found more cruel than pointed, and for that reason less effective as satire. [NH]

### **“The Apprenticeship of Isabetta di Pietro Cavazzi”**

L. Timmel Duchamp, in *Asimov's*, September 1997

One of the great pleasures of this novelette presented as excerpts from a diary is the effortless way in which Duchamp recreates the Italy of 1629. This historicity helps put over the story of a young woman coming to understand her supernatural powers in the wake of an unhappy love affair. Duchamp convinces me that if witches existed, this is what they'd be like. [JPK]

So, how d'you suppose women treated yeast infections in the days before Canesten? Seems quite reasonable that the infestation could get so extreme that it would turn a woman raving mad. I had a sardonic giggle over this as one cause of women's ‘shrewishness.’ I can't speak for the historic accuracy of the story. I enjoyed it (in fact, I think I've enjoyed every story of Duchamp's that I've ever read), though I found the healer too all-knowing and Isabetta's conversion to wisdom and forgiveness a bit too pat. [NH]

### **“Balinese Dancer”**

Gwyneth Jones, in *Asimov's*, September 1997

“Balinese Dancer” is an elliptical look at the end of the world as we know it. As human sexual differentiation erodes in the background, a well-realized couple works through their marital tensions in the foreground. A gender apocalypse is hinted at in this subtle and disturbing story. [JPK]

The opening line of this story continues to take my breath away, as do some of the author's insights into human behavior. But ultimately the plot elements didn't quite gel for me and the news that humanity is beginning to evolve beyond gender seemed more like a plot device than the topic which the story wanted to explore. Nevertheless a very readable story. [NH]

### **“The Firebird's Nest”**

Salman Rushdie, *New Yorker*, June 23 and 30, 1997

Brilliant writing that pointedly references and critiques the practice of suttee and a system in which women are chattel. Good to read writing from within a particular culture, albeit from a privileged place in that culture. I wasn't keen on a subtext that seemed to pit the “primitive” East against the “enlightened” West, but that may be just my reading of it. I remain blown away by the craft and style. [NH]

## 1997 Shortlist: Novels

### ***Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins***

Emma Donoghue, HarperCollins, 1997

Like Angela Carter and A.S. Byatt before her, Emma Donoghue puts a distaff spin on traditional fairy tales. But Donoghue doesn't deconstruct Perrault and the Brothers Grimm so much as she reconstructs them in a series of interlocking stories, letting the heroine of one tale grow into the villainess of the next, who then becomes the benign crone of the next, and so on. Her stories are ribald and often harsh in their assessments of male/female relations, and damning of the ways in which women—in fairy tales and real life—too often give in to what seems to be a preordained fate, rather than struggling for independence. Donoghue's tales also have a bracingly, and unapologetic, gynocentrism: in \*her book\*, it's the witch who gets the girl, not the prince. And *Kissing the Witch* makes a nice companion piece to Kelly Link's revisionist "Travels With The Snow Queen." [EH]

*Kissing the Witch* took my normal expectations of fairy tales, un-normal as they are, and shook them around again. The writing was beautiful. [TG]

### ***The Dazzle of Day***

Molly Gloss, Tor, 1997

*The Dazzle of Day* is a rigorous examination of a monoculture under mortal stress, as a rickety ship of Quaker colonists arrives at a planet that would seem to be inhospitable. Although not particularly flashy, this is a deep book. I was particularly taken by Gloss's bold narrative strategy in opening and especially in closing. She delivers what seems to me to be exactly the right ending without telling me anything of what I thought I wanted to know. [JPK]

### ***Signs of Life***

John M. Harrison, St. Martin's Press, 1997

A spare, beautifully written, utterly haunting novel about the human desire for transcendence, and its limits. In the ruins of contemporary Europe, a young woman who longs to fly mutilates herself in a doomed effort to become more birdlike. A tormented con man endures the knowledge that the single moment of sexual and spiritual transcendence he experienced in his youth has destroyed his life. And the man who loves them both can do nothing to save them, or himself. There's no false sense of redemption here, only the protagonist's final realization that our struggle for meaning—however futile—may be all we have, and the only thing worth living (or dying) for. [EH]

### ***Sacrifice of Fools***

Ian McDonald, Victor Gonzallencz, 1996.

I was sorry to have finished *Sacrifice Of Fools* because it is such a great read. I like how McDonald has bent to police procedural to his devious ends. The familiarity of the mystery tropes helps us navigate through the strangeness of his alien Shians. I found the characters—human and Shian—complex and wonderfully unpredictable. I loved the way this book deals with the clash of cultures, so that its imaginary surface reflects and refracts real world flash points. And most of all, I like what this book is saying about the diversity and perversity of the human sexual response, especially in its often withering portrayal of the male id. [JPK]

Ian McDonald's *Sacrifice of Fools* is a rough, scary book that looks at gender from a blue collar futuristic point of view. If genderless aliens were to visit earth, this is exactly what might happen, right on the streets, right in your face. It should be read. [TG]

### ***The Moon and the Sun***

Vonda N. McIntyre, Pocket Books, 1997

I read *The Sun and the Moon* with a delicious sense that I had just stepped off the alternate world platform and caught a train to another time and place. The two female protagonists are creatures misplaced out of their elements in ways not of their own choosing. McIntyre explores the meanings of alien and gender in a way I've not seen it done before. This is a sensual book rich in detail that kept me intrigued through the end. [TG]

### ***Cereus Blooms at Night***

Shani Mootoo, Press Gang Publishers, 1996

*Cereus Blooms at Night* offers superb characterizations of people we never see in the genre, each with stories we would have never thought to tell. Even though not particularly fantastic, *Cereus* is magical. [JPK]

My highest priority is this novel by Canadian Shani Mootoo. A Caribbean-based exploration of queerness, gender and preference written defiantly from within, given that in some Caribbean countries, being openly queer can invite societally condoned bashing. This novel is a radical act. It's well-written and compelling. The invented tropical island of Lantanacamera is an evocative, faintly unreal setting that is clearly meant to echo aspects of Trinidad. A gay male nurse with a fondness for women's clothing is the buffoon of his community, until he's given the care of an old mad woman who may or may not have committed a horrible crime. A love story in which neither gender nor sexual preference are absolute. The SF content of *Cereus Blooms at Night* is nebulous, but it is in every way a book most worth reading. [NH]

### ***Waking Beauty***

Paul Witcover, HarperPrism, 1997

*Waking Beauty* is like a poke in the soul with a sharp stick, which is one reason why I'll never forget it. In terms of ingenious world-building, I don't think I've read anything better this year. *Waking Beauty* has a labyrinthine plot, but it certainly comes together enough to satisfy this reader. Its obsessions are its own; they made me feel exceedingly icky without making me feel exploited. As to whether it's misogynist, of course the Hierarchate is misogynist, in the same way that the state of *The Handmaid's Tale* is misogynist. But so what? The author's intentions are always between the lines in dystopian novels. [JPK]

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## The 1998 James Tiptree Jr. Award

ICFA 20, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

**Prize:** a an intersex doll by Melissa M. O'Grady

**Song:** ?

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### **Judges**

Kate Schaefer (chair) [KS]

Ray Davis [RD]

Lisa Tuttle [LT]

Sylvia Kelso [SK]

Candas Dorsey [CJD]

*Commentary was harvested from correspondence among the judges and attributed by the judges' initials.*

### **Jurors' introductory comments**

#### **Candas Jane Dorsey**

"Reflecting on the "meaning" of "expressing gender issues" in the award guidelines has been an interesting challenge. As others on this jury and in the wide world, have said in many ways, gender seems to be what people are pointing to when they use the term. In general, I think it is a social construct, but I still have a lot to learn about why, then, some people so strongly feel they have an innate gender instead of simply a set of equipment issued without palimpsests of gender pre-written on them. Because I seem to have such personal trouble foregrounding gender as an interpersonal datum, I like to think I can transcend gender, but at the same time I am the product of a very specific and powerful social process that has shaped me, not just in intellectual ways, but in mandating such intimate matters as what clothes I find sexy on what kinds of bodies. Still, it has always been such a struggle for me to learn the "rules" of gender discourse, from the status-quo rules about the presence or absence of men and women in social, sexual and intellectual discourse to the nouvelle proprietries of the hardcore theorists in the revolution against mono/hetero/sexism. The best I can manage as I go about my life is to confront my contradictions willingly, and be honest. In the jury process—schooling

myself to read for content that I often do not foreground, a change in reading habits that was remarked upon by more than one jury member—I read for honesty, both intellectual and emotional, and for a willingness to step beyond the boundaries of what we think we know to a new and revolutionary image or landscape.

The most powerful statement that I made during the judging process was when I articulated that it's not enough to posit alien biology nor to imagine a different culture based on that biology—nor, I'd add, is it enough to tell a dystopian tale about how bad things are, nor use a cute premise to add interesting background, nor to posit future gender wars, biological mutations, genetic tampering, utopias—if that's as far as the story or novel goes. The first condition of a Tiptreeable text for me is to show beings at the edge of change, transformation, challenge—on the boundary of questions. The second condition, equally as important, is that their story be told with surpassing excellence.

As I was reading, I also assumed that whether or not gender was the main theme of a book, if it made a significant step in how it handled gender or if it did something gender-bending in narrative or character, I considered it eligible. But I came to realise also that alternative orientations are very much in the public awareness now (if I were cynical, I'd say "Trendy!") but we read many good and even some brilliant stories which deserve better than a flippant dismissal—and that makes, and none too soon I think, the presence of diverse characters and relationships part of the normal range of possibilities when constructing fiction in the present day. Therefore I came to believe that they are—and should be, I think—background, not foreground, and therefore the presence of a gender-bending element was not the only thing which would move a story into eligibility for the final list.

(It also struck me as I read so many stories from *Asimov's* that Tiptree juries could give commendations to venues which consistently published Tiptreeable work (or, more formally, "work which includes sex, gender, orientation, and social structures of family and relationship as important subjects of speculation"). and that certainly, on the evidence, *Asimov's* would deserve such a commendation.)

As I developed my reading criteria, I realised that each year, as more and more works are eligible, we see a growth in the way that gender is considered one of the core issues a speculative writer must consider: whether that be to take issues of sex and gender into consideration in creating a culture, foreground social processes around sex and gender or simply include as part of the texture and fabric of a story about something else altogether. It strikes me that as gender itself begins to disappear or to be transparent, this award could gradually phase out—and that this is a consummation devoutly to be wished. The Tiptree Award is about the cutting edge of treatment of gender issues. If there were no issues because gender had ceased to be such a consuming preoccupation among people, then the Tiptree Award would vanish too. These musings make an obvious connexion with the story I place at the top of my short list, "Congenital Agenesis of Gender Ideation," by Raphael Carter (in *Starlight 2*).

Among many lyrically written and powerful stories and books considered this year, this was one of the few that moved me into new territory. For a moment, I could glimpse the end of gender—and glimpse at the same moment the impossibility of living in that country ("...then I awoke and found me here on the cold hillside...") [CJD]

## Kate Schaefer

In our comments on individual works jurors often remark that a work is about something other than gender. As I've re-read these comments, it strikes me that the tone may come across as a complaint that writers are not addressing gender directly. We do have this complaint, but it's a complaint peculiar to being a juror for this particular prize, rather than a substantive complaint which will carry over into our general reading. Many writers address gender indirectly, use it as a metaphor for some other concern, or treat it as something resolved; as a reader, I am interested in how well they use it for whatever purpose their art requires. As a juror, I am instructed to look for gender expansion or exploration, and when those don't occur in a piece of fiction about which I'm really excited, I'm disappointed. Another good work I can't suggest as a prize-winner, I think, and turn to the next work on the pile. I look forward to returning to my normal reading mode, in which my concern with my own enjoyment

will be greater than my concern with the fiction's focus.

There is certainly still plenty of science fiction and fantasy which ignores gender concerns altogether. Because of the nature of the Tiptree award, very little fiction of this sort was sent to the jurors. There is also plenty of science fiction and fantasy which does not ignore gender concerns, but incorporates them as extremely minor elements as a matter of course while concentrating on other stuff. Two stories of this sort I'd like to mention were Michael Swanwick's "The Very Pulse of the Machine," a great piece of first-contact science fiction with no gender exploration and no leftover 50's assumptions, and Bruce Sterling's "Taklamakan," a story in which a person of neuter gender is a major character. Sterling only explores the implications of a neuter person for about two sentences, long enough to establish that the idea is there, and then goes on to the rest of the story.

Candas mentions the number of stories we considered which were published in *Asimov's*; I'd also like to point out that we received more novels from Avon than from any other publisher, and that all of the novels we received from Avon were pertinent to the award's concerns. We greatly appreciate the generosity of all the publishers, without which we'd be hard-pressed to get through all this reading. I also appreciate the resources of my local public library, which buys a lot more new and obscure fiction than I had ever suspected.

This whole process has lead me to conclude that I don't know what the hell gender is; the more I look at it, the more it doesn't seem to be there. It has something to do with sex, something to do with genitals and what people do with them and with whom they do those things, something to do with reproduction, and something to do with what people do to earn a living and how they dress while they do it, and something to do with how people look at themselves and how others look at them, but it's something else, too. Damned if I know what it is, but I do know when a story is about it. [KS]

## Winner of the 1998 James Tiptree, Jr., Award

### "Congenital Agenesis of Gender Ideation"

Raphael Carter, *Starlight 2*, edited by Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Tor Books, 1998

Funny, well-researched, as focused on gender as anything could be, and very likely even the truth. Hard SF at its best. [RD]

Excellent. Really does twist and exercise the mind and emotions—oddly for such a form, emotions are fully engaged—and the reader emerges with a new way of seeing gender. [CJD]

This story does the science/social sciences discourse Real Well—walks the walk and talks the talk down to the referencing. There is NO doubt it is more definitely about gender as opposed to biological sex than anything else so far. There is no doubt I love that last line. It's the detonator that blows the entire very prettily constructed deconstruction of "gender constructs" clear into the air. "He's a twelve. I know he's a twelve. How do I know he's a man?"

At the same time, the story has a couple of problems, and one of them is right in there. If "he" is NOT a man, how come you can, with such confidence, say "he?" Gender is what gives you the undisputed pronoun, "he" or "she"—so if "he" is a twelve—how come there's doubt that he's a man?

Again, the twins' differentiation of types within the overall gender binary—"woman not yet to menopause," "man with atrophied sex organs"—are all based on biological variations—subtle, fascinating, eye-opening so long as you regard gender as biologically based, and certainly does things with the idea of the bare binary pair—and this schema does allow for hermaphrodites, yes. But what does it do with performed gender identities? How would the twins categorize a drag queen or a butch lesbian in full regalia? It seems to me that although this story comes closest to overt deconstruction, even it has not completely mastered the intersection in "gender" between culture, performance, and biology.

That said, this is the closest to an overt and outright exploration of gender that I've seen so far, and for that it deserves the winner's vote. [SK]

On the political journey to understand gender, I had reached the point of thinking that gender is all external to the person; but external and manifested by the person whose gender it is. I read this story as saying that it's external and manifested by the person who is reading the gender, and what's more, either there are actually no genders, or there are many, many genders. The idea that there are as many as two, or only two, is completely dismissible. By the end of the story, the idea that gender can be known by the person reading the gender has grown questionable, and along with it the means of knowing gender.

Gender perception or lack of it is not related to sexual desire in "Congenital Agenesis," which makes me like the story all the better.

A complaint I've often had this year is that fiction ostensibly about gender turns out to be about freedom/slavery, or children, or race. The idea of The Other is so slippery, and so useful, allowing any Other to stand in for any other Other. In "Congenital Agenesis" Carter looks gender straight in the face, and gender is the thing that blinks. [KS]

## 1998 Shortlist

The following list consists of works the jurors felt were in some way exceptional, taking into account both writing and content. The list does not reflect complete jury consensus on any work except the winner.

### "The Gauze Banner"

Eleanor Arnason, in *More Amazing Stories*, edited by Kim Mohan, Tor Books, 1998

This Goddess-as-horny-trickster story was genuinely funny, and, instead of seeming simply referential, the slightly distorted echoes of familiar myths and fairy tales simulate the holographic quality ("all stories can be deduced from this story") that many humorous folk tales have. Arnason's "lying myth" frame story builds in forgiveness for any tone-wavering between anthropologist-reported folk tale and art fairy tale, and makes explicit the tension between the supposed center of the story (the gauze banner) and the storywriter's emphasis on hermaphroditism and moral relativism. [RD]

A strong story. I am not sure that it had something NEW to say about gender, or just did more ringing the changes...but I liked very much the Goddess who was whatever s/he pleased. I liked the mythology, it had the right ring to it. Arnason is a wonderful writer with a rigorous expectation that the reader will journey far, even during a short piece like this. This particular journey was both improving and a lot of fun. [CJD]

### Parable of the Talents

Octavia Butler, Seven Stories Press, 1998

A middle-of-a-trilogy which I suspect I like all the more for its pruned ambitions. Three pivotal years in the early career of the young African-American female founder of a new religion are presented, including persecution, betrayal, and loss of family, with little in the way of SF gee-whizzery or supernatural imagery; even the religion's bible is bare-bones and abstract. As with McHugh's *Mission Child*, the restraint pays off in credibility and emotional power, even though the on-again off-again (but mostly off) use of genre possibilities can be frustrating. Gender exploration angle: the conflict between the role (and rewards) of a prophet and the roles (and rewards) of wife and mother. [RD]

A powerful book, immensely passionate and well-realised, but like other brilliant works that we read, in the end gender issues took second place to other discussions. Other awards, yes; the Tiptree, unfortunately not. The portrait of the miscommunication between family members is enough to break your heart, even without the external oppression by the fundamentalist thugs. [CJD]

### "Story of Your Life"

Ted Chiang, in *Starlight 2*, edited by Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Tor Books, 1998

A great science fiction story about free will—but free will is what it explores, not gender. Instead, traditional gender assumptions are taken for granted to make the author's job easier: The protagonist must not take action. That's easier for the reader to accept if she's female. But there must be no doubt that the protagonist wants to take action. Thus, the legendarily powerful love of mother for child is brought into play. The story deserves an award, but not the Tiptree. [RD]

This is the best SF story I have read this year. On the one side, brilliant handling of speech analysis discourse, grasp of physics, and exploration of ideas of non-linear time and its consequences. On the other, an equally striking ease with what might be called The Mother Tongue—the voice of a mother talking to or of her child was never out of tune, from its most loving to its most exasperated.

Add to this some of the most determinedly unorthodox aliens I've met in a long time, and a firm grasp of what a "performative" in language really means; add to that, a restrained elegiac tone that underlines the final tragedy/irony of the story, the fact that, given its premises, free will is a matter of choice—but not as we understand it in linear concepts of time—and I can't think of much else I'd want in a piece of SF. Not a Tiptree winner, because it is not concerned to explore the concepts of gender—but the head spins when you wonder what might have happened if it did. [SK]

Explores motherhood in an interesting way, though its focus is on the nature of time (or perhaps a nature of time) as expressed through grammar. May be the best single story I've read this year; my choice for the novella Hugo, but not the Tiptree. [KS]

### Singling out the Couples

Stella Duffy, Sceptre, 1998

Couple resentment is often felt but seldom so delighted in, and, after some suspenseful flirtations with warmth, Duffy stands loyally by the forces of nastiness. The most harmless fantasy-life stereotypes become real-life monsters, efficiently raising some interesting points about escape and control fantasies in general. The Aphrodite-as-Kali theme is handled here with unusual lack of misogyny, and the book convincingly associates couple-envy and the desire for coupling with other non-gendered emotions, rather than tying it to gender-based character clichés. [RD]

Excellent wicked, very nihilistic—I was depressed all evening after I read it—but I liked its relentless social critique. Nobody got to be the good guy. Do you ever wonder how a writer can live inside a distasteful book long enough to write it? I don't mean a BAD book, but one like this that is brilliantly distasteful—or like Delany's *Triton*. I wondered, after I read the ending, how hard it would be to live in Duffy's head...or for Duffy to live in the head of this book from start to finish. (Which came first, the chicken or the egg?) I think the Bouncing Baby Both was one of the spots where it perhaps broke new ground on gender, but in the end, the gender issues took second place to other effects. [CJD]

It's bitter, witty, cruel, and thorough in exploring certain fantasy aspects of gender. [KS]

Wonderfully written, stinging, zingy modern fairy tale combining recognizably real life in contemporary London with a dark, archetypal fantasy world. The main character is a heartless princess who sets out to break up three happy couples, wooing away from their beloved in turn a heterosexual man, a gay man, and a married woman. I thought this looked at gender in a different way—not as roles within society, not as an attempt to redefine those roles or break them down or get rid of them, but rather it considered "Male" and "Female" as markers of incompleteness, needing to be made whole by finding a partner (not necessarily of the "opposite" sex, either, since the gay couple was just as socially rewarded as the married and engaged heterosexuals) and being validated only within a partnership. I also liked the way the princess was represented—she's not breaking up couples for the usual "female" reasons of a loneliness or revenge on a rival—and I liked the fantasy of the ungended, perfect "bouncing Baby Both." [LT]

### Black Glass

Karen Joy Fowler, Henry Holt and Company, 1998

It's too bad that "The Travails," which found first publication in *Black Glass*, is ineligible for the Tiptree. Sardonic, funny, and heart-lacerating enough to give Jonathan Swift a run for his money, this is the best lives-of-wives story I've ever read. [RD]

Karen Joy Fowler's book is ineligible but really wonderful—beautifully written, allusive, provocative stories. If it hadn't been written by a Founding Mother of this award, I would want to give the award to this beautiful book, or split the award with Raphael Carter. [CJD]

### ***The Ice People***

Maggie Gee, Richard Cohen Books, 1998

A fascinating portrait of a person and a future. The notably nasty and effective evocation of the Good-Overseer man in a broken Europe reminded me of *Triton* in a peculiar way... I found it chilling (pun intended). Rather than taking him as expressing some opinion of the author, I thought the white middle-class het Ice People narrator was a rhetorical device (like in *Triton*) and thus meant to be detestable, and it was one of the things I admired the author for. I personally have never been able to stay inside the head of a character that annoying long enough to write a short story let alone a whole book. Gives me the creeps all over and I have to change points of view. The rhetorical effect of such a character is powerful and nasty. [CJD]

The ideas are interesting, but it seemed to me that she was positing a future for the sake of rhetoric, without having compelling enough rhetoric or entertaining enough fiction or high-quality enough prose to make me excuse her for it. [KS]

### ***Halfway Human***

Carolyn Ives Gilman, Avon Eos, 1998

I was pleased to see an SF writer working with something like the Greek form of slavery, in which slaves were spoken about as if they had biologically-determined traits even though many of them began life as unenslaved Greeks. I also liked the “you’re in or out” decision based on arbitrary test results, and the very believable way the novel conflates slave labor and child labor. Since both of those overlap to a confusing (and, I think, stabilizing) extent with sexism and sexual exploitation, it also raises interesting thoughts about gendered society. But (as far as I could see, anyway) it didn’t investigate those thoughts so much as report them. [RD]

I enjoyed this book, and upon first reading placed it on the short list without reservation, but I did wonder about the happy ending: it seemed a bit slick, after all that complexity earlier. There were times when the book seemed a bit of a tract, but the story carried me along enough that I didn’t mind. Not so much about gender, however, as about child abuse, slavery and prostitution. [CJD]

The conflicts seemed to me to be about child abuse and slavery rather than about gender—to make the book actually be about gender, I’d need to see more response to the sexless gender from the population of “normal” humans. It read more like a traditional positing of the Other as alien and then using the Other to work out displaced emotions concerning sexual child abuse and enslaving “primitive” races. This is a traditional use of science fiction, a way safely to examine things that are too scary to look at directly, but what it does to the thing looked at directly—in this case, gender—is render it invisible, since it’s being used as a stand-in for something else.

With all that, it’s a thoughtful book. Gilman does try to confront what it would be like if there were another gender, an asexual gender, to take away the burden of child-rearing; and what if all familial relations were abolished, and what if there were a Platonic Republic? Her answer is yet another unfair society, as it must be; Plato’s Republic is an unpleasant place, and all journeys toward it are dehumanizing (vide Cambodia). [KS]

I found this a good, old-fashioned read which reminded me of why I like SF in the first place. I loved the passion and intelligence here brought to bear on a serious subject—that of the creation and perpetuation of an hereditary underclass. In this book, the class is a neuter sex, supposed to be childlike and unintelligent, which is abused and exploited in the name of “protection” and whose existence allows adults to avoid both sexual discrimination and undesirable tasks. Although this is how women have been “made” and treated in the past (and still are—consider forced prostitution, coerced marriage and breeding), for most readers this will probably seem to be more about issues of slavery and the abuse of children than cutting-edge gender issues. [LT]

### ***Flesh And Gold***

Phyllis Gottlieb, Tor Books, 1998

A good book for another award. I loved it for itself, and enjoyed the last pages particularly, but didn’t feel it made as much comment on gender as many on this short list, so had to agree it had limited eligibility. [CJD]

Another well-written book addressing concerns of slavery, freedom, and sentience rather than gender. [KS]

### ***Brown Girl In The Ring***

Nalo Hopkinson, Warner Aspect, 1998

An excellent book and I hope it wins other awards, but it doesn’t say as much about gender as about other areas of human emotion: parenthood, community, power, creating the divine, etc. [CJD]

### ***“La Cenerentola”***

Gwyneth Jones, Interzone, October 1998

Immediately climbed onto my shortlist, just below “Lovestory” and for some of the same reasons of skill, emotion and subtlety. Evoked many questions and explorations of gender/ parenthood/ ownership. A strange and somewhat haunting mixture of genres. Hard to comment without breaking the fragile, intense mood it generates. [CJD]

Lovely, powerful, absolutely brilliant story set in the near future. In part a reworking of “Cinderella” (that’s the title), in part a warning about possible spiritual consequences of being able to reform the world (and the people in it) closer to the heart’s desire, at first glance it might not seem to be about gender. There are no men in the story; all the important characters are women, and even little Cinders’ chief object of desire, her “prince,” is her mother; the narrator is partner in a lesbian marriage (presented matter-of-factly), and no one’s sexuality or gender is presented as an “issue.” The focus of the story is parenting and reproduction, and on the fantasies children have about their parents, and which adults have about their children (real and potential). I say “Parenting” rather than “mothering” because despite all the characters being women, the issues apply to both men and women. In the world of the story the creation of children has been divorced from nature and chance alike and become (for the wealthy) a matter of completely personal free choice, thanks to cloning, gene-splicing and other techniques enabling them to create “perfect” children whether as lifestyle accessories or out of love for their partners or whatever. Reproduction and the consequent need for mothers and fathers clearly demarked has been the most consistent reason for forcing people into one of only two genders. Removing the link between sex and reproduction will inevitably change perceptions of gender—and this story begins to explore that area, way out on the frontier in Tiptree territory. [LT]

### ***“Lovestory”***

James Patrick Kelly, Asimov’s, June 1998

Le Guin’s “Unchosen Love” is like a folktale; this is like a Douglas Sirk movie. Splitting Mother’s role from Wife’s role is a natural way to run a three-sex story, and the story is sharply constructed to bring out the edges of the ensuing family structure in the shortest possible space. A wonderfully moving piece: my favorite work by Kelly. [RD]

I wrote “a contenda!” when I read it. It was the first thing I read that went Beyond in a way I found significant and moving. I wrote: “Yes! Brilliant moment of change and its effects!” I read it as a tragedy demonstrating—without preaching—that people are prevented by rigid gender roles from 1) pursuit of individual goals and self-expression 2) even being able to communicate about differences from rigid role norms 3) being able to avoid hurting others in relationship when rigid roles collide with individual desires 4) respecting others. The Mam is respected more by the mother who leaves than by the father who “protects” her from discussions and then is unable to see her response for what it is. I was moved very strongly by the depth of the mis-communication and pain between them as a result of rigid social norms. I had the same hit off it as I got from Henry Kreisel’s “The Broken Globe,” a classic story about the conflict between the flat-earth view of an old-world religious fundamentalist and his young son being educated in scientific things (son eventually becomes cosmologist). In that story, the end, when the old man

gestures to the prairie horizon and says “See? She is flat, and she does not move!” is one of my favourite moments in literature. The heart of the story is not the triad combo (indeed, everything we’ve seen has been done before, in a way) nor the individual roles, but the tragedy that comes of applying those roles like cookie-cutters to people’s lives. The fact that the story never gets didactic, stays right in the realm of feeling, makes it all the more powerful. You can see that all these likeable people are trapped, and are teaching their children to trap themselves in turn—and there are, as always, sanctions for those who dare step out. It is not that she was the mother that was the problem—the story could have been told from the mother’s POV with the father going, though that would have had a different loading of reader preconceptions—it is that anyone went, and learned that there was a different way—and even more, dared then to come back and say so.

In discussion with other judges, who might have seen the mother as the butt of the societal disapproval, I realised that I thought that all the characters in “Lovestory” were in a predicament. It wasn’t just uppity mother, obdurate nanny, well-meaning father with ideological loading for our time. I thought the ideological loading was “everybody who subscribes to gender roles suffers one way or another.” As for the “Kit Reed housewife” Mam, that was one of the things I found very neat—that content was there without rubbing it in. It gave me the creeps without ever the author having to say “look how awful this is,” like Reed does, and so I thought Kelly did a better job of warning about the dangers of these rigid social practices than Reed did (which is saying quite a bit!) Look at the way the father condescends to the Mam because the Mam is only a Mam, can’t think, etc., and how surprising to the father when the Mam has a rebellion, and how little he understands anything the Mam does or says, and how relieved he is at the end when order is restored. And remember, “all these happy smells made Valun a little ill.” Valun respects the Mam more than Silmien does.

What I liked was that they were all blind, misguided, tyrannical (each in their way), understandable (each in their way), stubborn, struggling and so on. All of them were acting from the pressures that their contact with a different system, and the knowledge that comes with it, was putting on their own social system. What systems theory in therapy tells us is that there is often an “identified patient” who acts out the stress, dysfunction or pain of the whole family. The mother acted for them all, and they were all equally responsible and suffered equal consequences. That’s why I liked the story so much, because it didn’t set up the Good Female Rebel Crushed by The System as represented by the Hidebound Father and the Earthmother Nanny. Instead, it just presented a bunch of people in the throes of love, change and pain. That to me is what makes for a powerful piece of art which conveys a complex message, rather than just stands as an artful polemic: “Lovestory” is definitely the former rather than the latter. [CJD]

A wonderful example of how depicting an alien way of being “normal” can make our own “normal” society look weird. The three-way marriage comes across as cosy, inevitable and tragic; when you learn that it is not inevitable, the scariness of the modern human condition, with technology releasing us from all the inevitables which confronted our ancestors, comes sweeping through like a cold wind, lonely, terrifying and exhilarating. With “La Cenerentola” and “Congenital Agenesis of Gender Ideation”, “Lovestory” makes up a triptych that everyone interested in the human condition in what may be a genderless or multigendered future really must read, and among the very best the SF field had to offer in 1998. [LT]

### **“Unchosen Love”**

**Ursula K. Le Guin, in *More Amazing Stories*, edited by Kim Mohan, Tor Books, 1998**

Le Guin takes a gothic romantic plot and uses some gender-relation-shifting to replace the more tragic or less believable endings we’d expect with what would seem to be a fairly conventional happy ending in the story’s culture. Fun as a romance, and very believable as an implied defense of the “rightness” of the culture the romance was purportedly written for. [RD]

Very moving, and of course with her usual openness and creativity in what is a relationship—and her beautiful writing. But this is one year I don’t think she’s gonna get the chocolate... Another award, by all means, and the sooner the better, but not this one, this year. [CJD]

### ***Dragon’s Winter***

**Elizabeth A. Lynn, Ace/Berkley, 1998**

I enjoyed reading the book but felt that in the years since Lynn was out on the frontier with the phenomenal authorial courage represented by her trilogy and *The Sardonox Net*, others have followed her into that territory and built settlements around her, so that now she sits firmly in the centre of a certain kind of intelligent, emotional, beautifully-written fantasy. This book has some of her familiar tropes, and I am immensely glad she is writing again, but I wish the Tiptree had existed at the time of her earlier books, because this one has been crowded down the list by a couple of others. [CJD]

### ***Mission Child***

**Maureen F. McHugh, Avon Eos, 1998**

At first, I was disappointed by the familiarity of the characters and set-up, but as McHugh stuck to her initial concept, I gained real affection for the book, and the cross-gender cosmopolitan “citizen of the world” that’s finally delivered seemed an honestly earned reward for the author’s restraint. My only stumbling block was the overkill of the book’s genre. Why was this science fiction instead of a mainstream novel about a refugee from a Third World country? [RD]

A beautiful book but there’s an odd condensation at the end which moves gender and family to the side and saving the world in. I fully support saving the world, and I consider this an amazing piece of work with the courage to be harsh and uncompromising, but others made more direct comments on gender, and so in the end I moved it down in the ranking order. I hope it wins some other award though... [CJD]

*Mission Child* went right onto my short list, despite or perhaps because of being about work rather than about gender, and I always find work (as opposed to adventure) as the subject of science fiction fascinating. McHugh’s subject is always work, just as Cecelia Holland’s subject is always power. Work: what work men do, what work women do, what clothes they may wear while they do that work, what clothes they must wear while they do that work, and what difference dropping those requirements can make to an individual. Hmm. As I think about it, her subject wasn’t work, at least as she probably saw it: her subject was the disruption experienced by a society at the entrance into it of a technologically different society, but since she portrayed that subject through the medium of a the life of a member of the more primitive society and since life consists of getting food, shelter, and clothing, it was about work. [KS]

### **“The Hetairai Turncoat”**

**Karl-Rene Moore, in *Wired Hard 2*, edited by Cecelia Tan, Circlet Press, 1997**

The notion that a run-of-the-mill gay porn hero (buffed, blond, and Bondaged&Disciplined) would so quickly and joyfully turn into a soft blob who loves soft blobs really did hold some shock value for me. It may not be the cleverest, widest-ranging, or most moving fiction that I read this year, but it’s genuinely speculative sex writing which manages to distinguish “man” from “manly” and “woman” from “squishy.” [RD]

I must say that the ongoing fondness for “The Hetairai Turncoat” baffles me. I find it an undistinguished piece of gay porn with a strong streak of the misogyny that sometimes accompanies such porn, and with repetition of common themes. I don’t believe it has anything new to say about male gender whether queer or not. I would have strenuously opposed putting it anywhere near the short list, but some of the elegant readings of it, which I find far more creative than the piece itself, do seem to deserve the light of day. [CJD]

One of the few contenders to deal specifically with masculinity rather than feminine or general gender constructions. A sometimes delicately ironic look at constructions of masculinity through the overlaid conventions of gay erotica and science fiction—first contacts, sex with aliens, transformation by aliens—but not heterosexual sex, and not orthodox transformations. But it was the further intersection between images of hegemonic masculinity—hard, impervious, muscular—with general Western attitudes to weight and obesity, that interrogated and even deconstructed the party lines in straight OR gay masculine gender constructions. If this did not open new visions on gender, it offered a striking critique of at least one gender orthodoxy. [SK]



### **“Accelerated Grimace”**

Rebecca Ore, *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, February 1998

Creepy, deliciously nasty, reminded me of Kit Reed. Good work but not Tiptreeable. [CJD]

Why I like “Accelerated Grimace” so much: a great deal of it is Ore’s tone, which is flat and as affectless as it can be while expressing despair. The narrator suffers from the deadly sin of anomie, not one of your more popular deadly sins. This story explores the extreme of traditional gender roles in which the woman gives up everything to support the man emotionally, everything, even in her core, so that the man sees himself as the center of the universe. The woman believes that she sees herself as the center of her universe, as any healthy person should, and is worried by a new technology which will allow her husband-the-artist to see what she really thinks, so he can use it as material for his art. He is not disappointed to discover that she sees herself as his future widow, because as a widow she is defined in relation to him, not in relation to herself; she is devastated to realize that this is true.

No, this is not at all a new idea. It’s the same old ugly idea we’ve seen over and over again, baldly displayed and labeled as ugly, with the unpleasant thrill of recognition that says, no matter how ugly this is, no matter how many times it has been exposed and named, it’s still here. It’s still a truth about men and women, and as long as it is a truth, it needs to be said. It is the story which reminds me most of Tiptree—of her own bleak stories, often devoid of hope—of any we’ve read this year. It is an uncomfortable story.

I like the way it explores art (the work of making stuff that one has to make, because one has to make it even though it isn’t useful) and Art (the cult of personality around people who have to make stuff and who, for some reason, have found other people who want to look at the stuff). [KS]

### **Ghost Country**

Sara Paretsky, Delacorte Press, 1998

The novel’s Ishtar figure is a portrait of a deity that could have been influenced by *Sarah Canary*’s portrait of the alien: allowing for the gap in writerly skill, there’s a similar feeling of inevitable rightness about the unknowability of the character. It’s a conception worthy of (dare I say it?) Emshwiller. Sexuality and the Big Woman Figure (the nourishment/threat/sensuality of mama’s breasts are Starr’s most obsessible/accessible aspect) are at the heart of Paretsky’s goddess F/X, and if only for managing that without ruffling my bristles in any of the usual ways, I’d have to say that Paretsky has expanded my understanding of gender. [RD]

A beautifully angry book, the Goddess manifest out of female rage, and worthy of the shortlist for its passion, but doesn’t push the envelope far enough. [CJD]

I was expecting this to be dismissible, and I was astonished to find it the most compelling read of the year except for *Singling out the Couples*. Despite thinking that none of the characters were likable and that some of them were clichés, I had to keep turning the pages. Paretsky’s portrayal of Ishtar is as a flawed, silent, healing deity, reflecting the inner natures of the book’s characters back at them, making them more wholly what they already are, sometimes to their benefit, sometimes to their peril. [KS]

### **Hand Of Prophecy**

Severna Park, Avon Eos, 1998

For sheer pleasure, my favorite of the many slave novels we considered. Unlike Mary Doria Russell, Severna Park remembers that the gladiator scenes of “Spartacus” were more interesting than the speeches. Writers often seem to think that every battle is between the “good” and the “bad”; *Hand of Prophecy* efficiently pushes the need for the oppressed to operate together while different oppressors fight over them. *Hand of Prophecy* is pulpish in some ways, and one of them is the attraction built biologically into the protagonist. But, oh, did I appreciate Park’s pointing out that biology is not necessarily destiny; that just as the Heinlein hero refuses to obey his fear, it’s possible for a human being (even a female!) to refuse to obey powerful romantic cravings without that refusal being construed as some sort of craven defeat. [RD]

Notable for its energy and strong statements but in the end it is more about slavery and power than gender, so others crowded it out. [CJD]

### **Weird Women, Wired Women**

Kit Reed, Wesleyan University Press, 1998

The scary aspects of protofeminism can’t be brought out much more directly than in 1974’s “Songs of War,” a “womanist” SF story energetically dedicated to the proposition that things cannot change. Gutsy, funny, nasty, timid, prescient, and insulting, “Songs of War” is a knockout piece with a knockout-drop hangover. Insofar as “exploration” includes notes like “here there be monsters,” it’s a gender-exploring story powerful enough to gather the collection around it, even though the collection is actually weighted towards middle class American mother-daughter conflicts. [RD]

I found this book almost unbearable to read, not because it was bad but quite the opposite, rather because it was such a relentless indictment of a certain era of social prejudices that reading one story after another in chronological order was like watching a torture session, hearing scream after scream. If we are to reward works which comment on gender in any fashion, then a work which makes so obvious the horror and waste of the “traditional” (that is to say nineteen-fifties-and-sixties middle-class American) role of women (and children) is a strong contender. I realise it is an interpretation of the guidelines that has not so far been considered, but few other works I’ve seen this year were as disturbing nor as (coldly, I admit) passionate. [CJD]

A significant body of work, including stories from 1958 through 1997, relentlessly focussed on women, mainly on women as mothers and daughters. It’s difficult to read straight through; a good short story packs a wallop, and few of us stand up well to wallop after wallop. [KS]

### **“Bride of Bigfoot”**

Kit Reed, in *Weird Women, Wired Women*, Wesleyan University Press, 1998

One of the few playful stories from a collection more notable for its sustained foregrounding of women’s struggles and suffering under the cultural demands of gender: especially, it feels, in the ’40s and ’50s. “Bigfoot” begins with an interesting but not unusual reverse on the “woman-kidnapped-by-alien” theme, a longtime source of nightmare to such women’s owners, and hence, like the you’ll-be-raped-outside scenario, used to make them stay where it is “safe.” In this case home turns out unsafe. The second, now fairly common twist, is that the kidnap victim turns out not to be a victim. The final but not so common twist turns the submerged terror behind the cautionary tale back on its instigator. “What if she \*liked\* being kidnapped”—which of course implies, Because I wasn’t as good sex as the kidnapper—becomes an ironic and ultimately thoroughly erosive query about the instigator’s own sexuality, and with it established and orthodox gender roles: What if I, the bereft husband, should like being kidnapped too? A glimpse too brief to merit the award itself, but in its momentary vision quite as unsettling. [SK]

### **“Whiptail”**

Robert Reed, *Asimov’s*, October 1998

Interesting but not quite “Lovestory”—a hard shove at it though. [CJD]

### **“The Eye of God”**

Mary Rosenblum, *Asimov’s*, March 1998

Yes, gender is central, and there is one shift of perception, and the irony that goes with it, but I don’t think it is going to beat out some of my favourites, though I found it memorable. [CJD]

### **The Children Star**

Joan Slonczewski, Tor Books, 1998

Does a beautiful job of “disappearing” gender, and is a strong and moving book, but it does not speak directly to Tiptree concerns and others which do crowded ahead of it on the short list. [CJD]

Gender really doesn't seem to be an issue for any of the sentient races in this book, and Slonczewski pulls this off as background. Deep enough background that I didn't notice it until I realized that she had portrayed two of the most powerful beings in her universe as lesbian lovers, and no one comments on this, not at their introduction, not later, not ever. The word "lesbian" doesn't appear in the book.

This is what I want to see in society, and don't ever expect to see in any of our lifetimes. I like seeing it in fiction, and I honor Slonczewski for doing it so successfully. Because it's done in deep background, gender is not explored nor expanded: it's resolved. The issues in the book are not gender issues, but issues of freedom, slavery, and sentience: extremely interesting issues, but not Tiptree-award concerns. [KS]

### **"The House of Expectations"**

Martha Soukup, in *Starlight 2*, edited by Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Tor Books, 1998

A rare, possibly unique, critical and sympathetic look at The Liberal Heterosexual State of Things in which feminist tenets, "guy stuff," sex workers, and the emotional needs of romance all supposedly coexist without conflict or confusion. A brilliantly observed story with a long overdue twist on the male-becomes-female surprise ending. [RD]

An excellent story qua story, which I liked reading it, and it does the satire of romantic expectations from lovers and from joy-houses very prettily, but the ending just did not carry enough impact. It was *House of Sleep* over in small so far as I was concerned, and with less interest in the ambiguity, because in *Sleep* at least the reaction to the change of sex is left open to the imagination.

Elegant but not quite there for me. [SK]

### **Mockingbird**

Sean Stewart, Ace, 1998

Another reader-vs.-juror conflict, since I immediately began pressing this book on friends while remaining reluctant to push it for the award. The well-observed down-to-earth humor of the narrator's problems is a wonderful relief from the usual wild-assed ideas of conflict: her seduction-cum-firing scene alone makes the novel worth reading. The "exotic" elements seem like parts of life rather than easy marks of "coolness" or "authenticity"; for example, how many genre writers would not end up demonizing Carlos and his Muertomobile? And the embedded Little Lost Girl tales were creepy enough to be excerpted into horror anthologies. But the finishing flourish of the last two pages knocked this Tiptree juror out of the book and onto the author photo: this is a nice guy generalizing in a sentimental way about women. [RD]

I loved the book. I don't think it significantly speaks to gender but it is a wonderful piece of work. The protagonist certainly has to deal with some gender roles—but what I like in Sean's work is the human approach to relationships in general, the idea of the centrality of everyday life as the battleground of all important human events, and his willingness to speak the language of emotion. [CJD]

### **Playing God**

Sarah Zettel, Warner Aspect, 1998

The pleasures of this novel are in its expository structure and its big SF ideas. Zettel's aliens aren't evil barbarians set on conquest of humanity; they're more realistically set on elimination of each other. The various intrigues and betrayals among peoples ring much truer (cloudier, more vicious) than the politics of the other SF I've read this year. As for gender exploration—let's try to ignore the human side of the story, since that boiled down to "Men and women can be friends as long as they're well-educated and usually separated" and "Gender parity is achievable in a childless heterosexual professional setting." But I loved the alien family structures: that menopause variation, the believability of the unconventional ties Zettel draws between warring, motherhood, and kinship, and the SF-ization of sitcoms' comic bumbling father figure. [RD]

While it was good reading, it didn't really go anywhere new for me. It wasn't about human gender but about getting used to aliens who had different genders, and putting them in the forefront narratively at times, which did not seem to be all that new a concept. Some of the micromanagement of the story was pleasing and interesting, but I also had some difficulties with it. [CJD]

Some rather wooden and rather politically correct human characters only highlight the fascination of Zettel's aliens, a female-centred species whose internecine conflicts and the culture consequent on their inhuman biology were both believable and intriguing. The most interesting questions raised by this book were biological at base, and came from a parallel with humanity, and a recollection of Elaine Morgan's hypothesis, that menopause was evolved to keep old females' wisdom as a human resource, rather than have them expend their biological resources in dangerous births. The obvious twist in the *Dedelphi* story is the gender switch at menopause and the charmingly ironic reversal, both of all those patriarchal SF stories where aliens mutate into deadly female forms, and of all those old quips about brainless women. Because *Dedelphi* men are the post-menopausal form of *Dedelphi* women, and they have literally lost their minds. But the less obvious twist is the question that arises in parallel with Morgan's hypothesis: is the violence that plagues this society due to the absence of "old" women? Could this book function as a parable or investigation of women's post-menopausal possibilities, a fictional version of Germaine Greer's *The Change*? There is no clear indication of such a purpose. Nevertheless, the potential it invokes make a shortlisting no more than its due. [SK]

The aliens in this book were among the most fascinating, and fully-realized, I've encountered for some time, and I loved the very different take on gender the alien society offered. [LT]

## **1998 Longlist**

### **"Datableed"**

Pat Cadigan, Asimov's, March 1998

Good story, but didn't go far enough. A promising premise underutilised. [CJD]

### **House of Sleep**

Jonathan Coe, Alfred A. Knopf, 1998

A fun novel of variations on sleep, positioned in a pleasant overlap of melodrama, cleverness, satire, and farce. As for gender exploration, I don't see it. The book is much more interested in exploring dreams, film, obsession, memory, and the spotty history of the mental health profession. Loved that eyelid fetish! [RD]

A nastily well-written book, and with some excellent commentary on the difference between how our sexuality perceives gender and how we think it does—but did not take us anywhere we hadn't been. Greg-Hollingshead-meets-*Crying-Game*. [CJD]

### **Quintessence: Realizing the Archaic Future**

Mary Daly, Beacon Press, 1998

"It's different," as my mother often says when hard-pressed. Daly's style's gotten even loopier, the book's "future" may be the least clearly visualized utopia I've encountered since Sunday school's heaven, and it's no more (or less) fiction than a Scientology tract. But a vision that insists that kitties, bunnies, and snakes would all frolic peacefully together if only the patriarchy was gone is at least a ridiculousness at drastic variance from all the other ridiculousnesses I've had to deal with this year. [RD]

Difficult in ways which did not engender product loyalty. (Completely unreadable and coy to boot.) [CJD]

### **Pig Tales: A Novel of Lust and Transformation**

Marie Darrieusecq, New Press, 1997

Effective, blackly-funny—but oddly anachronistic. I felt like I had gone back twenty years and was reading one of the texts that inflamed the feminist anger of the late sixties and early seventies. Stating the problem might have been enough then, but much literature which expands the boundaries of gender issues has gone under the bridge since then. [CJD]

*Pig Tales* strikes me as a guilty romp. I enjoyed it and occasionally thought it was saying something about the relations of men and women or about the powerful and the powerless, but in the end its beastliness left me without new insights, or even old ones revisited. [KS]

***Sirens and Other Daemon Lovers***  
edited by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling, Harper Prism, 1998

While many of the stories were effective, I didn't feel that overall, individually or collectively, they contributed new insight on gender issues. [CJD]

**"Transit"**

Stephen Dedman, *Asimov's*, March 1998

An example of a type of narrative we have seen several times this year, proving that what was radical in 1969, when Genly Ai sledded across the ice with a monosexual in *The Left Hand of Darkness*, is mainstream in our field now. While I saw with appreciation that "mother" and "father" were function words now (mother who carried the child and thus historically was granted a particular relationship while the sperm donor was the father and had less authority, cf. the last page) and that was consistent, I wondered also what this very traditional teenaged romance structure was going to lead to. Well told, though not my cup of tea as far as romance, but no for the award. [CJD]

***The Plague Saint***

Rita Donovan, Tesseract Books, 1998

A good book—I should think so, as I published it—but I have to concur with the other judges that it doesn't push the gender envelope. [CJD]

Didn't seem to me to explore gender, but a beautifully-written book about involuntary sainthood and some of the odd uses religion can be put to. [KS]

**"Oceanic"**

Greg Egan, *Asimov's*, August 1998

There's one gender twist: penises that are exchanged during sex—but I did not find the society consistent with such a biology. I was curious about why, in a society where bioengineered people could exchange genitals and anyone presumably could bear a child due to the physically-clumsy mechanism of the exchangeable penis, there are still words for "brother" and "sister" and other gender specifics when from time untold they have had this ability; and does Martin turn into Daniel's sister when he trades off his penis or are they still brothers; and why are there still gender specific names, and... A 1960s coming of age story with a religious challenge instead of a physical one, and with a powerfully Freudian metaphor for sex—but it doesn't hold together socially or biologically once the well-told tale is analysed. [CJD]

***"The Eye of the Storm"***

Kelley Eskridge, in *Sirens and Other Daemon Lovers*, edited by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling, Harper Prism, 1998

Enjoyable story, notable for the treatment of gender, gender balance, and sexual orientation as resolved issues in an otherwise nearly-standard high fantasy world. [KS]

***"In the Realm of Dragons"***

Esther M. Friesner, *Asimov's*, February 1998

Another story which does effective work in the new mainstream of gender-conscious speculative fiction. It's nice that queers get more ink, and it's a nicely told story, with an excellent intention to help convince readers to oppose bashing—and to remind people that we hate in others what we fear in ourselves—but didn't cross frontiers of the kind I was looking for for the award. [CJD]

***Commitment Hour***

James Alan Gardner, Avon Eos, 1998

Another example of a type of narrative which considers questions which seem to me to have become mainstream in our field now. I find all these "discovery texts" anachronistic. Stating the problem is no longer enough to win a Tiptree. That said, I must say that I welcome the efforts of a wide spectrum of writers to consider these issues. What seems cutting-edge for me after twenty-seven years of reading the landmark texts in this area is one thing: the young conservative het males who read Jim Gardner and other writers working in this part of the forest will consider this work cutting-edge and apply that Occam's Razor to their own developing lives.

Someone has to take them into this landscape which is new to them if not to us. I think that it is interesting to see what happens in the swirls and eddies behind the icebreakers and the exploration vessels. This is what the midlist, the "mainstream" of F&SF, thinks is out-on-the-edge. [CJD]

***"Time Gypsy"***

Ellen Klages, in *Bending the Landscape: Original Gay and Lesbian Science Fiction*, edited by Nicola Griffith and Stephen Pagel, The Overlook Press, 1998

Nice time travel story about cut-throat academic physicists; compares and contrasts modern acceptance of lesbians with the closeted world of 1956. [KS]

**"Snow"**

Geoffrey A. Landis, in *Starlight 2*, edited by Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Tor Books, 1998

A lovely lovely little piece, heartbreaking—but not for this award. [CJD]

***Dark Water's Embrace***

Stephen Leigh, Avon Eos, 1998

I liked reading *Dark Waters Embrace* but again I found it was following not leading, same as does Jim Gardner's book, and I agreed with another judge who said it was biology not gender. I do think it is a lapse of the imagination to assume that the alien humanoid culture would have bi-phobia just like ours, especially if the Ke were not only part of the species but a necessary part of reproduction. It would be like hating your sexuality, and while I realise Augustine managed that, still...there, it would be fundamentalists who defended the trio family, wouldn't it? I fear that at the last it fails because the author can't imagine past male-female fences. [CJD]

***Killing Darcy***

Melissa Lucashenko, University of Queensland Press, 1998

I liked it, and I thought it was a real winner of its type—but didn't cross any boundaries in Tiptree terms: we know there must be non-het aboriginals—so? If I were judging a YA book award, it's be a short list item or even a winner, (as long as there wasn't a Jill-Paton-Walsh ringer in the field), but for our purposes, no. [CJD]

***Children of God***

Mary Doria Russell, Villard Books, 1998

It is not gender but issues of parents and children which drive this book, and Russell's themes seem somehow more conservative in this one than in *The Sparrow*. [CJD]

*Children of God* is concerned, as *The Sparrow* was, with Tiptree-type issues (the celibate's role in society, women's role in society) and explores them, both in the human context and in the context of the alien world, Rakhat. However, the primary concern of the novel is the transformation of a precariously balanced society into a possibly more just but certainly different society once the balance is disturbed by an outside force. It's an interesting concern, but not the one we're focussed on here. [KS]

***The Drag Queen of Elfland***

Lawrence Schimel, Ultra Violet, 1997

Thought "The Drag Queen of Elfland," despite the realisation that he was Le Belle Dame etc., was not about gender, but was a one-note gender-substitution story with no real surprises that couldn't have happened to opposite-sex couples. [CJD]

***Six Moon Dance***

Sheri S. Tepper, Avon Eos, 1998

I'm not much for biological determinism, and I'd feared the worst. But the novel's exaggerations along those lines were satirical and tidily taken care of by plot twists. And I welcomed the mellowness of the humor and the classically comedic conclusion, though the dialects should've been dropped fast and hard. Highly recommended. [RD]

I admire Tepper's ideology and passion, but for some reason did not find this as winsome as did some other judges. I was sorry not to, for I think that Tepper is doing important work. [CJD]

## **Nameless Magery**

Delia Marshall Turner, Del Rey, 1998

This book has a female mage in a male college of mages, in some ways a typical genre fantasy set-up, but she's on another world where the gender roles are wonky (to her) while on her own world, magic is considered sentient and has its own pronoun (lle, ller). Not a winner for this award, but worthy of being on the list of nominees. [CJD]

## **"The Body Politic"**

Tess Williams, in *Dreaming Down-Under*, edited by Jack Dann and Janeen Webb, Voyager HarperCollins, 1998

It's about a woman working, and a man ignoring or misinterpreting all her signals, spoken and unspoken, leading to his death at her hands. Her work is a particular kind of prostitution; he hires her for a different kind, thinking he can set the terms of the contract at will. I'm a sucker for stories that look like they're about sex but turn out to be about work. [KS]

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## **The 1999 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

### **Diversicon 7, Minneapolis, MN**

**Prize:** a silver pendant carved with images from *The Conqueror's Child*, by Laurie Edison & cake painted with book cover art by Georgie Schnobrich

**Song:** "Four from the Holdfast" (sung to the tune of "Down in the Boondocks")

*Four from the Holdfast.*

*Four from the Holdfast.*

*People stop and look 'cause that's the kind of book we're all drawn to.*

*We're Fems for sure, and so's Suzy,*

*But we don't fit in society.*

*Lord have mercy on the fans who read 'bout the Hold-fast.*

*Suzy Charnas wrote four books; it took her twenty years. She wrote of pain, of war and slaves, she wrote about our fears.*

*We grew up reading Motherlines.*

*The Furies made us weep.*

*The quartet ends with Conqueror's Child,*

*Now the Tiptree's hers to keep.*

*Four from the Holdfast.*

*Four from the Holdfast.*

*People stop and look 'cause that's the kind of booke we're all drawn to.*

*We're Fems for sure, and so's Suzy,*

*But we don't fit in society.*

*Lord have mercy on the fans who read 'bout the Hold-fast.*

*Lord have mercy on the fans who read 'bout the Hold-fast.*

*Lord have mercy on the fans who read 'bout the Hold-fast.*

## **Judges**

Bill Clemente [BC]

L. Timmel Duchamp [LTD]

Kelly Link [KL]

Diane Martin, chair [DM]

*Commentary was harvested from correspondence among the judges and attributed by the judges' initials.*

## **Winner of the 1999 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

### ***The Conqueror's Child***

Suzy McKee Charnas, Tor Books, 1999; ISBN: 0312857195

With this remarkable conclusion to the Aldera Cycle, Charnas brings to fruition the complex and compelling issues raised—and at the heart of feminist concerns for the past couple decades—in the previous novels, providing the cycle an inspiring and satisfying conclusion. With respect to the specific issues the Tiptree award acknowledges, this narrative also stands on its own and questions with acute vision human relationships in the context of gender, power, and history. While concluding on a hopeful note, the narrative refuses to sidestep the minefield of conflict women and especially men (who must work to overcome the consequences of what centuries of artificial gender differences have inculcated in society, resulting in unnatural distinctions that uphold male domination) must negotiate to understand and confront gender-based inequalities that inform society. [BC]

Demanding, rich, compelling, intelligent. This outstanding exploration of gender vastly expands our understanding of how gender works in significant areas of human experience and puts one of the major problems of political equality on the map in a way that has simply not been done before. In Charnas's post-liberation Holdfast, we see that for society to become politically inclusive, not only do men have to cease to be masters, but also their conception of what a socially normative man is must change. This is science fiction as political laboratory at its finest. [LTD]

A wonderful, wonderful, complex book. One of the great pleasures of being on the jury this year was the opportunity (excuse) to reread and think about all of Charnas's Holdfast Chronicles, and then to concentrate on this book in particular. There's a lot in it: the current society of the Holdfast is in flux. The past is exclusionary: religion, relationships, history and storytelling (the men's books and the Riding Women's self-songs) all split along gender lines. The future must include both sexes: the women of the Holdfast will give birth to sons as well as daughters. I take away three images: the abandoned open Grasslands, the dark, claustrophobic structure of the Endpath, and the memorial of stones that Sorrel builds for the male child, Veree, in the shape of a Riding Woman's tent, attempting to build a future which will include both male and female. [KL]

While *The Conqueror's Child* rides on the shoulders of the previous three books in the Holdfast Series, it's also a monumental work all by itself. It explores gender, power, and personal as well as social change. Far and away the best gender-bending novel I've read this past year—maybe in the past 20 or 30 years. Strong, thoughtful, relevant, and beautifully written. [DM]

## **1999 Short List**

### ***If I Told You Once***

Judy Budnitz, Picador USA /St. Martin's, 1999; ISBN: 0312202857

A thoughtful and rich chronicle of women and children through a number of generations, beginning in the Old World and crossing to the New, the novel recalls *The Painted Bird's* landscape though with less dreadful consequences as the women involved confront old battles in new territory. [BC]

Strikingly imaginative magic realism, subtle and complicated, often Angela Carteresque, that tells the story of several generations of women in a family that moves from the Old World to the New, focusing on "the pattern repeating. An endless procession of women following a single set of footprints in the snow." [LTD]

A novel about mothers and daughters, and sisters and brothers. The New World, like the Old World, is full of magic and strangeness, wolves, unobtainable heart's desires and curses. The narrative which begins in Ilana's voice, breaks into smaller and smaller pieces, spoken by her daughter and so on: the end shows us how the Ilana, the mother contains all of their stories within her own story, like an egg. [KL]

More showing than telling, the gender exploration is not overt, but it flows throughout the whole book, telling the story of a family of strong women. [DM]

### **"In the Second Person"**

by Sally Caves, *Terra Incognita*, Winter 1999/2000

A love story literally in the second person, about she, he and IT (Identity Transfer) in which minds, bodies, brain, and gender become inextricably tangled and changed. The details are telling—simultaneously claustrophobic and liberating. [KL]

An illuminating gender-bending story that illustrates how significantly the body mediates consciousness (something that should be obvious to everyone, since the brain is a biological organ, but as the film *Being John Malkovich* demonstrates, is not). [LTD]

Very much in the spirit of the Tiptree award. The writing is not always the smoothest, but the exploration of gender is most thorough, taking a clear and broad look at sex and gender roles. [DM]

### **"Pinkland"**

Graham Joyce, *Crossing the Border*, ed. Lisa Tuttle; Indigo, 1998

A story about the flesh-mind disjunct of cyberspace that does not write off the flesh as something to be escaped and denigrated, in which the in-the-flesh gender identities of the two Internet lovers, the obsessive focus for most of the narrative, turn out to be far less important than other differences that open between them when they meet off-line. [LTD]

Most of this story has the texture of a dream, in which two lovers settle down and construct a house and a life online together, and then one day decide to meet. A series of meetings ensue online and then finally, in a bar, face to face. Layers of identity and gender have been assumed and peeled away and turned upside down and finally cast off. At the end, the physical world has taken on a nightmarish, unreal fixed quality—fluid, abandoned Pinkland was Paradise. [KL]

Uses the Internet as a venue to explore gender, sex, and communication. Unsettling, this story twists and turns in a series of switchbacks until you hardly know what is "real." [DM]

### **The Woman with the Flying Head and Other Stories [collection]**

Kurahashi Yumiko, translated by Atsuko Sakaki; M.E.Sharpe, 1997; ISBN: 0765601583

Offering a remarkable array of perspectives, sometimes provocative at others humorous, the collection moves in many and always satisfying directions. [BC]

A collection of strange and powerful stories that use Noh dramas and masks to explore how subjectivity operates through the ordinary, conventional, and sometimes extreme roles (all of which are, of course, gendered) that people assume in their relationships, roles depicted as aspects of the individual that shift according to circumstance. [LTD]

A series of stories in which: a sister and brother achieve space travel by climbing between an alien's legs and into its vagina; faces are put on like masks, cats behave like women and vice versa; women's heads fly chastely to their lovers, while their bodies remain vulnerable, at home in bed. The borders between sexes, the commonplace and otherworldly, human and animal, taboo and familiar (familial) are trafficked and transgressed. [KL]

A continuing metaphor of masks links these stories, as does a skillful ordering by the translator. Male/female, mortal/supernatural, parents/children, animals/humans, things are not always what they seem. [DM]

### **"5001 Nights"**

Penelope Lively, *The Five Thousand and One Nights* (European Short Stories, No. 4; 1997, Fjord Press, c/o Partners West; ISBN: 0940242737

A delightful and delicious tale exploring the gendered character of literary conventions and gendered (and competitive) ways in which men and women read and write fiction. [LTD]

Satisfying in so many ways: the bloodthirsty Sultan has been "tamed by narrative," and this is the "happy ever after" math. Marriage has a structure, Lively suggests, like fiction, and Scheherazade has moved on from genies to Mansfield Park and the strange tale of *Mrs. Dalloway*. In self-defense, the Sultan becomes a storyteller too: Westerns, SF, Hemingway. In the end, we've circled back to the old good stories about fishermen and genies, and the children have climbed up onto the bed to listen. [KL]

A retelling of *The Arabian Nights* with keenly described and hilarious gender role-reversal. [DM]

### **The Iron Bridge**

David Morse, Harcourt Brace, 1998; ISBN: 0151002592

An interesting historical science fiction novel, this story examines the ambivalent consequences of progress and history's powerful, complex sweep, providing insights into the gender suppression behind magnificent yet potentially destructive creations [BC]

Offers unusually fine insight into the nature of historical change, showing gender's work and functions, using the future/past confrontation to illuminate not only gender's differences, but how gender works as a part of the whole functioning of the social fabric. [LTD]

In which a woman travels backwards, into the past, to save the world from its future. The iron bridge, the thing that links the two places, past and future, (which she has come back to bring down before it is even built) is beautifully described, and seems to take on gender as it is drawn, considered, constructed. Persons, historical artifacts, society, history itself seem to be unexpectedly gendered. [KL]

This is "big picture" gender exploration, showing the intertwined effect of history, culture, and gender. A woman is sent back in time to change history. We see how she makes a difference, though not in the way she intended, and how doing so changes her as well as history. [DM]

### **"Sexual Dimorphism"**

Kim Stanley Robinson, *Asimov's*, June 1999

This well developed hard-science fiction tale offers a disturbing slant on the scientific method; the narrator's warped perspective demonstrates the power of persuasion to undermine analysis and to perpetuate myths concerning the biologically determined basis for gender differences. [BC]

A brilliant and subtle demonstration of how the theory Charnas delineates in *The Conqueror's Child* would work in practice, in which the author uses hard SF protocols to show how a reactionary, essentialist ideological agenda that naturalizes gender produces bad science. [LTD]

Personal loss, character, and desire inform a man's scientific research. As his own life falls away, he begins to find in his work hints of explanations, clues for the puzzle of personal disasters. Unable to find a pattern for his own life, he looks harder for elusive patterns in the junk DNA of dolphins, and as is often the case, finds what he was looking for. He devises a sort of evolutionary take on *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus* and in the end, gives himself over to the sea, the desired, female, alien element. [KL]

Polished, troubling, the gender stuff is so subtle it's hard to see at first; it sneaks up on you. The real gender exploration comes out in the differences between the protagonist and the narrator. [DM]

## 1999 Long List

### ***“The Actors”* and *“Dapple”***

Eleanor Arnason, *F&SF*, Dec 1999, & *Asimov’s*, Sep 1999

Two installments of a continuing saga of stories of and about Hwarhath. This is a world where male/female social roles are divided up differently than what we’re used to. A young girl wants to be an actor and a playwright in a world where this is the exclusive purview of men. Because of (or perhaps in spite of) the characters being aliens, the gender differences are not as logically presented as they might be. [DM]

### ***A Civil Campaign: A Comedy of Biology and Manners***

Lois McMaster Bujold, Baen Books, 1999; ISBN: 0671578278

This novel expanded my understanding of the gendered implications of romance conventions and their relation to both women’s and men’s material lives. Its very title ironizes the overdetermined outcome of its marriage plots. I found it an entertaining read, but oh how fascinating it would have been if Miles had been forced to change to win Ekaterina the way Lord Peter Wimsey had to do to win Harriet Vane. Miles, alas, gets away without even so much as writing a sonnet. [LTD]

The portion of the novel that deals with gender (specifically a sex-change) is relatively minor to the story, but it is done very well, and makes its point effectively. [DM]

### ***Silver Birch/Blood Moon***

[anthology, Avon, 1999; ISBN: 0380786222 edited by Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling]

This is the penultimate volume of Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling’s six fairy tale anthologies, and as in the earlier books, we are presented with fairy tales (many familiar) that have been turned upside down, shaken, turned inside out, and stitched back together again. There are various amphibians—Tanith Lee’s Frog Prince transformed stands out in particular—and examinations of the ever afters that must follow on happy endings. Gender (as well as all the other elements of these retellings) is given vigorous, thoughtful redress. [KL]

### ***“Remailer”***

Debra Doyle & James D. Macdonald, *Not of Woman Born*, edited by Constance Ash, Penguin USA, 1999; ISBN: 0451456815

With a film noir/cyberpunk feel, considerable charm, and an innovative flair, this story centers on an oddball genetic detective in an age with three genders and truncated language, but the tale’s signal feature probably involves investigating and expanding genre considerations more than offering gender analysis. [BC]

Essentially a mystery novel, the story takes place in a society where mutation has created a third sex, a go-between male and female. A detective is asked to find a missing person. Difficulties ensue. Would have been much better if more emphasis had been placed on showing how this mutation affected society, relationships, and individuals. More what, less why. [DM]

### ***Teranesia***

Greg Egan, HarperCollins, 1999; ISBN: 006105092X

It’s interesting how much of the work we looked at this year was concerned with transformation. In this novel, butterflies, protagonist—the entire world—is being made new by a sort of genetic plague, the Sao Paolo gene. Even the feminist academic Amita (a caricature, rather than a character) wishes to transform the binary code, switching the vaginal “zeros” with the phallic “ones,” to create the transputer. [KL]

One of those books that didn’t go where I wanted/expected it to go. I really wanted more to happen with the protagonist’s sister, who was conceived and born on the island Teranesia. And, though not central to the plot, Egan’s extrapolation of academia in the mid-21<sup>st</sup> century was by turns side-splitting and infuriating. [DM]

### ***The Vintner’s Luck***

Elizabeth Knox, Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1998; ISBN: 0374283923

Perhaps one of the most innovative and well-written works considered this year, this historical SF novel chronicles the often tragic but ultimately wonderful consequences of an individual’s choices as well as describing the rich tapestry human experience can weave. [BC]

A beautifully written book. Each chapter presents an annual meeting between a vintner and an angel, bottling the encounters like vintages of wine. The effect is rich and sensual, and the reader will come away drunk on Knox’s language. [KL]

Skillfully and thoughtfully written, the gender connection is less effective than it might have been, because the angel who visits the (male) protagonist once a year for 40 years is also male. Somehow, though, it’s not the kind of maleness we are used to. [DM]

### ***“Dragonfly”***

Ursula K. Le Guin, *Legends: Short Novels by the Masters of Modern Fantasy*, edited by Robert Silverberg; Tor Books, 1998; ISBN: 0312867875

A well-written and magical story about a strong-willed and intelligent young lady who overcomes patristic obstacles and creates her own destiny. [BC]

As in *Tehanu*, this novella is concerned with the workings of different kinds of magic (male and female), closed societies, the opening of things rather than resolutions, transformations. There are interesting parallels between the girl Tehanu and the protagonist of this story, Dragonfly, and of course, Le Guin’s work not only reflects upon the earlier Earthsea books, but on fantasy literature in general, and also on the world we live in. [KL]

### ***Speaking Stones***

Stephen Leigh, Eos, 1999; ISBN: 0380799146

Sequel to *Dark Water’s Embrace*, this novel deals with a mutated human race. A lost colony isolated on a reproductively hostile planet, the settlers only gradually become aware of the tri-sexed natives, and feel threatened when they find themselves falling into the same biological pattern. What’s not clearly defined is *why* there is so much resistance. [DM]

### ***The Terrorists of Irustan***

Louise Marley, Ace Books, 1999; ISBN: 0441006191

Taking place in a quasi-Muslim society, the heroine deals somewhat uncomfortably with her sexuality and more importantly struggles with issues of gender inequality, attempting to make social change. [DM]

Calling to mind the gender apartheid under which women presently suffer in Afghanistan, Marley’s generally intriguing novel might have gained from following the dictum “less is better,” for in the final analysis the excessive violence erodes the narrative’s plausibility and dulls its otherwise thoughtful message. [BC]

### ***Singer from the Sea***

Sheri S. Tepper, Avon, 1999; ISBN: 0380974800

Political biology, secret technology, patriarchal oppression. Once again a brave woman saves the world from evil men. What sounds trite and simplistic in summary is nonetheless a heart-felt plea to see our current values as wrong, urging change before we destroy ourselves. [DM]

With an ecofeminist perspective that spans centuries and which will strike readers of Tepper as perhaps overly familiar, this latest effort, while complex and entertaining, resolves the horrors men visit on women but provides a romantic conclusion that will probably disturb many, for here in particular Tepper may well bend gender to an un-satisfying angle. [BC]

In this book, which contracts and diminishes our understanding of gender, biology is destiny with a vengeance. Blood of lactating females=immortality; blood of males= death; and Special Genes enable the heroine to save her world from a long-term male conspiracy of unimaginably evil proportions. [LTD]

## ***The Fathergod Experiment***

L. A. Taylor, Allau Press, 1999; ISBN: 0963602675

The premise, as one might gather from the title, has something to do with gender and genre. But the real pleasure in reading this book is in the characters—especially the sensible, intelligent protagonist Lilz—and in the way L. A. Taylor conflates various genres: mystery, romance, sf, fantasy. There are orphans, villains, poetry, and poisons—something for everyone. A smart, blissful, Young Trollopian novel, which will hopefully find a large and appreciative audience. [KL]

What Kelly said. My absolute favorite of all the books we read, gender stuff not withstanding. A complete and utter delight. I read it cover to cover and then over again, immediately. It is a real shame that this is Taylor's last work (she died in 1997. [DM])

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## **The 2000 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

### **WisCon 25, Madison, WI**

**Prize:** the first Tiptree winner to be crowned with the Tiptree Tiara—(made and donated by Elise Matthesen).

Molly received calligraphy by Jae Adams:

What would the world be, once bereft  
of wet and wildness? let them be left

O let them be left, wildness and wet

Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet

**Song:**“Molly Gloss, Molly Gloss” (sung to the tune of  
“Lollipop,” by The Chordettes)

*Molly Gloss, Molly Gloss*

*Oh Molly, Molly Molly*

*Molly Gloss, Molly Gloss*

*Oh Molly, Molly Molly*

*Molly Gloss, Molly Gloss*

*Oh Molly, Molly Molly*

*Molly Gloss*

*[Pop] Ba-bum-bum-bum*

*We call our winner Molly Gloss*

*Tell you why*

*Her book is feminist and droll and wry*

*And when she writes about those Sasquatch guys*

*Man, we think it's worth a prize*

*We call her*

*Molly Gloss, Molly Gloss*

*Oh Molly, Molly Molly*

*Molly Gloss, Molly Gloss*

*Oh Molly, Molly Molly*

*Molly Gloss, Molly Gloss*

*Oh Molly, Molly Molly*

*Molly Gloss!*

## **Judges**

Lisa Goldstein

Ellen Klages

Helen Merrick

Donna Simone (chair)

Jeff Smith

## **Winner of the 2000 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

### ***Wild Life***

Molly Gloss, Simon & Schuster, 2000; ISBN: 0-684-86798-2

Charlotte Bridger Drummond, the heroine of this novel, is a free-thinking feminist who makes her living as a Jules-Vernesque fantasy writer. She lives both physically and symbolically on the fringes of society, in Western Oregon at the turn of the 20th century.

She rides a bicycle, smokes cigars, and dresses in mens clothes because they are comfortable. She is a staunch advocate for womens rights, with a sense of strength and humor that informs everything in her daily life and how she chooses to raise her five sons.

When she embarks on an adventure into the wilderness, a mission of mercy, she encounters danger at every turn. After a sexual assault by a logger, she becomes lost in the mountains in a terrifying storm, and is eventually rescued by a family of the legendary Sasquatch. She returns home with her outlook about everything profoundly altered by her encounters with the creatures, whose social roles begin to seem much more civilized than those of the logging camp or even her hometown.

Gloss is a brilliant stylist. In this novel she encompasses exquisitely researched historical fiction, a compelling mystery story, a wilderness adventure, and a fantastic journey with a tribe of mythic creatures. She manages to pull off that risky literary feat with such skill that by the end the novel becomes a meditative musing on wildness and human nature, told by one of the most memorable heroines in recent memory.

## **2000 Short List**

### ***“Fidelity: A Primer,”***

Michael Blumlein, *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, September 2000

This is a story about circumcision, a very gender related issue. It is one of the rare stores that explores gender issues by examining male body issues, and the choices they involve.

### ***“Diagram of Rapture”***

James L. Cambias, *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, April 2000

A woman researching neurohormones discovers a brain chemical that naturally triggers sexual arousal. The resulting drug artificially does the same thing, affecting sexual interactions on a larger social scale, as well as hanging relationships within the scientist's own family.

### ***The Danish Girl***

David Ebershoff, Viking

The fantasy elements in this novel are so slight as to be almost non-existent, but it was so compelling that the jury could not bear to leave it out. It is the story of Einar, a man in 1920s Denmark who turns himself into a woman, Lili, first through dress and mannerisms, then through lifestyle, and ultimately surgery. One of the most interesting aspects of the book is the portrayal of Greta, who is both Einar's wife and Lili's best friend, as she runs through a tremendous range of emotions when her husband and her life are transformed.

### **Ash: A Secret History**

Mary Gentle, Victor Gollancz

This enormous novel (published as an 1100 page book in the UK and as a four volume work in the US) is set in an alternate 15th century. Its main characters are Ash, a female mercenary, and Flora/Florian, a woman who dresses as a man in order to study medicine. It is a vividly realized portrait of two powerful and unusual women surviving in a time that is openly hostile to them.

### **"Soma"**

Camille Hernandez-Ramdwar, in Nalo Hopkinson ed., *Whispers from the Cotton TreeRoot*, Invisible Cities Press

This is a powerful story about fitting in, about body image, and about how physical appearance influences what others think about a woman's personality and sexuality.

### **"The Glass Bottle Trick"**

Nalo Hopkinson, in Nalo Hopkinson ed., *Whispers from the Cotton TreeRoot*, Invisible Cities Press

A seamless blend of fairy tale and Caribbean folklore, this chilling tale examines the roles of men and women in courtship, and how those roles change with marriage and pregnancy.

### **Midnight Robber**

Nalo Hopkinson, Warner Aspect

A rollicking Caribbean feminist tale about a little girl turned outlaw, it is a blend of action-adventure, science fiction, allegory, and myth that offers a unique intersection of gender, race, and identity issues. While not overtly about gender, the ideas and concepts of gender are at its very heart.

### **Perdido Street Station**

China Miéville, Macmillan UK Ltd.

An amazing read, a big epic wonder of a novel that constructs an urban fantasy world that is both Dickensian and futuristic. Its main themes are about inter-species relationships and what it is to be human, but there is a strong gender sub-theme that weaves its way through the city and the lives of its main characters.

### **"Once on the Shores of the Stream Senegambia,"**

Pamela Mordecai, in Nalo Hopkinson ed., *Whispers from the Cotton TreeRoot*, Invisible Cities Press

A very scary story about colonization and gender. The author uses a future society to explore questions about what it means to be in a female body, and what the consequences are when a woman's choices about her body are not under her control.

### **The Annunciate**

Severna Park, Eos

A fresh and interesting feminist take on the Garden of Eden myth, with new treatments of the familiar symbols of apple, gate, and garden.

### **Sea As Mirror**

Tess Williams, HarperCollins Voyager

Set in an overpopulated, environmentally precarious not-so-distant future, this novel deals with the theme of inter-species communication, and is a fascinating look at what it means to be the Other.

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## **The 2001 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

### **Readercon, Boston MA**

**Prize:** Electronic painting based on *The Kappa Child*, created by Kandas Elliot.

**Song:** "The Cucumber Song," to the tune of *Botany Bay*

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*A restless young lady from Canada,  
Developed a wonderful trend,  
To purchase cucumbers for pleasure,  
'Cause she found they were better than men.*

### **Chorus**

*So line up for your cucumbers, ladies,  
They're selling for two bucks apiece,  
Your frustrated days are all over,  
'Cause cucumbers never get pissed.*

*In Thailand they're eaten with chilis,  
In Britain they're put between bread,  
But in Canada we use them as 'jammies,  
'Cause we know that they'll never want head.*

*They'll never leave stains on the mattress,  
They're happy to live in the fridge,  
The loo seat is never left standing,  
And I've never seen cucumber kids.*

### **Judges**

Joan Haran, chair [JH]

Suzy McKee Charnas [SC]

Ama Patterson [AP]

Peter Halasz [PH]

Kathleen Goonan [KG]

*Commentary was harvested from correspondence among the judges and attributed by the judges' initials.*

## **Winner of the 2001 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

### **The Kappa Child**

Hiromi Goto, Red Deer Press

*The Kappa Child* is a beautiful book, beautifully written, about the girlhood of a Japanese immigrant living on the Canadian prairie and how she eventually grows to incorporate and transcend the mental boundaries instilled by an abusive father and a spectacularly dysfunctional family. The protagonist is pregnant with her own new being—a Kappa Child. She is replenished rather than depleted by this pregnancy. It strikes me as a rather Jungian book, if Jung and his thoughts are not entirely out of fashion or actively disliked by a lot of people. An original and wonderful book. [KG]

This captivating magic realist novel is, from start to finish, a pure delight to read. Although clearly fantastic it is written with a "mainstream" sensibility so that emphasis is placed on the protagonists, their growth and their inner worlds rather than on an action-driven plot with which genre readers are more familiar. This book pulls no emotional punches yet remains both a loving and a positive work.

Goto's warm, delicate and humorous touch had me, a straight and sometime conservative male, effortlessly identifying with the alienation felt by four Japanese-Canadian sisters, one of them queer, growing up within the confines of a strict, paternalistic family on the Canadian prairie. Quite a feat, that.

Add an immaculate conception, alien abductions and a kappa to the blend and you have an irresistible charmer of a book. [PH]



Goto creates a complex emotional landscape for her protagonist, woven from Japanese mythology, the Little House books of Laura Ingalls Wilder, and the complexities of filial and sibling relationships in a dysfunctional family. A collector of abandoned shopping trolleys, she has attempted to close the book of her childhood, but it insists on returning to haunt her. Also haunted by a phantom pregnancy after an encounter with a mythical stranger, she restarts her stalled life as she gestates her Kappa Child, coming to understand that the story she has told of herself is somewhat at odds with the stories of those with whom she shared her childhood and the few friends with whom she has tentative arms-length relationships.

This is a lyrically beautiful book which blends fairytale and narratives grounded in the everyday experience of Japanese-Canadians struggling to grow Japanese rice on the dry Canadian prairies. Without shrinking from exploring the ways in which familial violence can damage both victims and perpetrators, *The Kappa Child* is nonetheless a story of healing. [JH]

*The Kappa Child* is a delightful, wholly original book, a multi-layered story of dysfunctional family life, unexpected pregnancy, true friendship, alien abduction, budding romance and intimate encounters with mythical creatures.

It is a beautifully, gracefully told story. The prose glides from the narrator's real-time (shopping cart collections, poor self-image, cucumber binges, halting, if not downright painful interactions with family and friends), to her childhood recollections (presented in hilarious, heart-breaking contrast to Little House on the Prairie), to her recent encounters with the Stranger/Kappa, to brief meditations about water, birth, growth, identity (as told by the Kappa? the magically conceived fetus? the narrator's nascent self? all of the above?) There's so much vivid imagery here: lots of water, lots of green; and many oppositional references to American television and Japanese mythology.

This is definitely a trickster's tale; things are not what they seem. The narrator's subservient, long-suffering mother is revealed as an alien abductee quite capable of self-actualization and self-defense. The narrator finds that she herself is not as isolated as she'd believed and that her sisters are not as shallow, spacey or damaged. The kappa itself is a genderless entity, no nipples or navel, for all that it first appears as a woman in a red silk wedding dress. This trickster is a loving one; by the book's conclusion, there's reconciliation, friendship, romance and rain. [AP]

## 2001 Short List

### *Half Known Lives*

Joan Givner, New Star Books

I'm just as impressed as all get-out. Beautifully written, paced with a breezy confidence that takes my breath away, this book is about maternity, motherhood in many forms, without suggesting that it's \*just\* a female matter. Questions are raised about the course of women's lives in the absence of blood-children, but also about the lives of women raising their own kids. The apparently inescapable centrality of reproduction (or its lack) to the lives of women is tackled head-on in a very imaginative way. On the downside, the SF plot-pivot is very scantily envisioned and realized, more of a maguffin than a serious event, and it leads to nothing beyond the personal for the women involved (although the male surrogate mom manages to turn everything to his advantage in a way that women seldom seem to be able or willing to do). I wanted less sure-handed writing and characterization, and more exploration—which is not usual with me at all. Watch this author. [SC]

*Half Known Lives* shows people at their best and at their worst—brave, innovative, and adventurous, and at the same time manipulative, secretive, selfish, and destructive. The characters are brought forward by Givner in their interactions, but ultimately recede frustratingly into the mist, elusive and unknowable. Pregnancy is inflicted on a male politician whose views concerning women have always been ... half-baked. All of the women involved in this scheme have their own reasons for participating, some of which are not revealed for years past the birth of the child. This book is intricately woven, and, ultimately, the man who went through the pregnancy is the character who is most changed. [KG]

*Half Known Lives* is arguably the book with the most complex women depicted in any of this short list. Ostensibly a recounting of the conspiracy to kidnap and impregnate a male-chauvinist, anti-abortionist lawyer and

his subsequent confinement by a coterie of feminists it works better as an exploration of the sequelae left on all by this outrageous action.

It isn't often that heroines, let alone heroes, are depicted warts and all. Givner refreshingly, fearlessly, paints her characters in living colour. They are not uniformly static "black hats" or "white hats," rather they are complex emotional human beings who undergo changes in their lives. In other words villains can and do turn into a semblance of heroines or heroes and even the best of us have clay feet. [PH]

I'm really not sure what to make of this book. It's exquisitely written but it felt emotionally barren to me ñ but that may be the point. I'm sure Joan Givner finds it tiresome to be compared to Margaret Atwood, but it struck me that there was a very similar sensibility of female misogyny to the feeling I get when I read Atwood's work. The science-fictional premise of using a right-to-life conservative male to gestate a fetus to term is shared with *The Fresco*, but it seems implausible in the context of this novel. The Half Known Lives of the female characters whose lives crisscross in the course of this narrative invited no real empathy or sympathy from this reader, and seemed at times to be simply occasions take cheap shots at various moments in feminism. To me this novel seems like a series of vignettes around which a plot has been loosely wrapped ñ I really didn't feel like I'd reached the end of a journey when I reached the last page. [JH]

Although the plot of *Half Known Lives* turns on the impregnation of an anti-abortion male politician, the real story here is the relationships and interactions between the female co-conspirators and their associates—all brilliant, damaged and intriguing characters. These are the "half-known lives" of the title, revealed in a subtle, understated narration that sharply contrasts with the tragedies and transcendences of their experiences. [AP]

### *Dark Light*

Ken MacLeod, Tor Books

This lively, intelligent, and politically sophisticated novel is really "about" manipulative, revolutionary politics conducted by a crew of spacefarers who have become more or less immortal; it's not "about" gender, and so for me falls outside the purview of central Tiptree concerns. I was delighted to see a question of gender roles lightly folded into the mix here as if it were at last part of an ongoing conversation instead of a great thumping elephant dropped into the middle of a central discourse concerning everything but; yet maybe the folding is a bit too light. What I missed in this aspect of *Dark Light* was—why? What has led this culture to align gender identities with outside work/inside work, meaning what \*advantage\* does this confer or appear to confer, socially and economically, that would lead a society to adopt it? [SC]

*Dark Light* is the second volume in Ken MacLeod's *Engines of Light* series. This series of Space Operas does not set out to explore traditional Tiptree territory and even *Dark Light* itself is not, primarily, about gender-bending.

But, and it's a big "but," in *Dark Light* MacLeod offhandedly introduces a society wherein sexual identity is conferred by societal/occupational roles rather than by gender as we are used to. Thus, with no fanfare at all, and with no "explanation" until fairly late in the book, we are introduced to characters who are variously referred to as male in one context and female in another. My eyes suffered from whiplash the first several times I found a character referred to as "he" or "him" on one page and "she" or "her" on the next. This lack of exposition is an insidiously effective way of getting the reader to do the real work of speculation.

Months later, I find myself still occasionally going back and reflecting about the possible dynamics of such a scenario. I worry away at it like an itch that just will not go away. How could this have developed, how would it affect relationships (of all kinds), why did this society develop in this way as opposed to ... and what ... well, you get the idea. Since none of this was "spelled-out" in *Dark Light* I get to fill in the blanks—and think about it in the process. Mind-bending as well as gender-bending. [PH]

## **The Song of the Earth**

Hugh Nissenson, Algonquin Books

Definitely about the major matter of the Tiptree, in the characters' efforts to reconcile at least two pairs of essential opposites (maybe more, but I may have missed some)—male/female and life/death. In its deployment of more than competent and sometimes very fine art and poetry, and a lively if machine-gun verbal delivery, *Song of the Earth* strikes me as pretty damn brilliant. This is a book from a clever, sly, talented author that takes the gender divide as its central theme and runs with it. Some of the SF elements—future climatic changes, very fancy genetic tinkering, domed residential “keeps” and their effects—are well presented, and the blending of volitional hermaphroditism with Gaia theory is interesting and provocative. But the characters, whom I found thin, glib, and mostly all talking in the same voice, kept putting me off, and their story ended without the surprise or revelation I had hoped for. [SC]

*The Song of the Earth* is breathtakingly ambitious. It could be construed as a cautionary tale concerning genetic manipulation—but only if one assumes that such manipulation would eliminate the fact that humans are complex, multifaceted individuals and will probably continue to be so even if genetically engineered. My reading is that it hinges much more on the destructive aspects of parental expectations, as well as the angst of being inflicted with an artistic sensibility and drive, but the future of gender is also an issue in this fine, complex novel. [KG]

This “epistolary” biography will, sadly, never appeal to a mass audience. Not only is the epistolary mode a difficult one to pull off, but Nissenson's highly cerebral approach is not the stuff of mass best-sellerdom. In this instance at least that's a pity.

Near future speculation is used to explore such disparate things as what it means to be an artist, gender reassignment and the “war” between the sexes. Incredibly, Nissenson makes it work.

In a way *The Song of the Earth* is the polar opposite of *The Kappa Child*. They come from different places, the one from brilliant intellect and the other from lucid emotion. They employ radically differing vehicles, the one an epistolary biography and the other a traditional novel to travel to, and arrive at, the same destination—a further, better and less simplistic exploration of central Tiptree issues.

Make no mistake, this is a bravura writerly performance stunning in its accomplishment. [PH]

What would a “post-gender” society look like? What would be the cultural effect if people could freely select the gender (and other traits) of their unborn, could pick and choose from the full menu of human physiology? These are some of the questions Hugh Nissenson explores, to great effect, in *The Song of the Earth*.

*Song* presents a fully imagined future, rich in detail, encompassing credible changes in the natural and social environments (floods, dust storms, extreme inflation, and phallocrat vs. gynarchist terrorism). Advancements in medicine, bioengineering and genetics have rendered gender and sexuality (as well as other natural physical traits) secondary to ideology and belief. These are the times of John Firth Baker, the world's first genetically engineered visual artist. His story, from birth to violent death allows extensive meditation on art, creativity, love, sexuality, religion and faith.

*Song* is such a “complete” work. I loved the epistolary biographical format, and found the shifts between commentaries, poetry, interviews, journal entries etc. truly engaging. The color plates at the end are the icing on the cake. The book itself is beautiful—a fully realized artistic vision. [AP]

## **The Fresco**

Sheri S. Tepper, Harper Collins/Eos

This is a real mulligan stew of a book, rocketing all over the place and offering a nifty alternative to those stuffy, class-ridden Galactic Empires we get so much of in space opera SF, along with about a ton of other stuff in a lively mixed bag. It all has a hurried and slightly superficial feel, perhaps due to cramming in so much activity, several different (and often very funny) types of aliens, and all that (ahem) richly deserved retribution (go, girl!).

I wanted to slow down and play more with all that, to savor it fully, and I felt that matters fell into line a little too easily for our heroine, much as I liked her and was rooting for her. But the story sure does rip along, and I read eagerly and enjoyed the ride: all rackets and gallumphing with irony, savagery, slapstick, and truculent politics, a kind of portmanteau-Tepper with lots of cartoon characters and a couple you really care about and a whirlwind of events. There's plenty of momentum once you get past a somewhat slow start.

As is often the case at the end of a Tepper novel, I am struck by how consistently her plot-resolutions hinge on somebody taking an action that simply **forces** people to “reform” and behave. Alas, if it were only so easy . . . [SC]

One of the great virtues of *The Fresco* is its wicked sense of humor. Tepper goes after the roots of gender hypocrisy with a red-hot icepick. Using the time-honored methods of satire and wit, she hoists on their own petard those who attempt to oppress and control women. *The Fresco* draws the reader through quickly, with smooth professional aplomb, and the reader is often laughing out loud—but is just as often rightly disturbed by the truth embedded in the narrative. [KG]

*The Fresco* is a superb example of Sheri Tepper's acerbic wit and her global take on female oppression. Benita is a somewhat flawed heroine, unless you're an admirer of passive aggressive women, but she has clearly suffered at the hands of her drunken, violent, slob of a husband, so perhaps hers is a reasonable survival strategy. However, once the friendly shape-changing aliens have done her a “welcome reversal,” she reshapes her life in somewhat more positive ways if only we could all have aliens ex machina to provide the funds and the psychic clarity to put our houses in order!

Familiar Tepper themes of ends justifying means and of the iniquities of patriarchal religion infuse this novel, but some very dark humour is employed in the devising of ingenious and pointed solutions, like the Ugly plague in Afghanistan and the disappearance of the contested city of Jerusalem into a large virtual hole in the ground. The opportunity given to right-to-life conservative patriarchs to embody their own philosophy also provides a bitter chuckle for the reader who can remain convinced they would not wish this experience on their worst enemy.

The eponymous Fresco is an interesting metaphor for the founding mythologies of a society, and is a tool for reflecting on the need for convincing rationales for behaving in a neighbourly fashion, locally and globally. Polemical, like all Tepper's works, *The Fresco* is nonetheless a fast-paced, rattling good read and the polemics are well worth pondering over. [JH]

Tepper has created a likable, sympathetic character in Benita Alvarez-Shipton, and it is Benita's physical and personal journey which propels the plot of *The Fresco*. Tepper takes on extraterrestrials, abusive husbands, pro-life politicians and religious fundamentalists of all stripes in this fast-paced feminist parable, while also exploring the relationship between art and artifice, religion and belief. [AP]

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## The 2002 James Tiptree, Jr. Award

Eastercon (Seacon 3), Hinckley England (Harrison),  
and WisCon 27, Madison, Wisconsin (Kessel)

<http://www.seacon03.org.uk/main.htm>

**Prize:** fabric cakes by Zhenne Wood

**Song** for Harrison:

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*H - A - Double R - I - S - O - N*  
*Spells Harrison. Harrison*  
*wrote a book whose theme is gender bending,*  
*won the Tiptree for its plot and ending.*

*H - A - Double R - I - S - O - N, you see!*  
*It's his name*  
*and now fame*  
*ever will be connected with*  
*Harrison, that's he!*

**Song** for Kessel:

---

*Oh, Johnny's been writing prose again,*  
*Hurrah! Hurrah!*  
*We'll give him some Tiptree chocolate then,*  
*Hurrah! Hurrah!*  
*The men will cheer and the boys will shout,*  
*The ladies they have all turned out,*  
*And he's won the prize,*  
*'Cause Johnny's been writing prose.*

*Oh, Johnny he wrote about the moon,*  
*Hurrah! Hurrah!*  
*A colony will be there soon,*  
*Hurrah! Hurrah!*  
*The men and boys play, by and large,*  
*For ladies there are all in charge,*  
*And it gets quite strange when*  
*Johnny's been writing prose.*

*His story appeared in Asimov's*  
*Hurrah! Hurrah!*  
*It's read by folks both coarse and suave*  
*Hurrah! Hurrah!*  
*[slowly]*

*Oh, it's gender-bending fiction that [pause]*  
*Won John a pearl-encrusted hat.*  
*And we're all so glad that*  
*Johnny's been writing prose!*

## Judges

Matt Austern (chair)  
Jae Leslie Adams  
Molly Gloss  
Farah Mendlesohn  
Mary Anne Mohanraj

## Winners of the 2002 James Tiptree, Jr. Award

### *Light*

M. John Harrison, Gollancz, 2002

*Light* is a stunning work that's part space opera and part Something Else. Some of us found the protagonists (a physicist and serial killer; a mass-murdering pirate; a VR addict) to be unlikable; others found them brutal, cruel, self-deluded, but completely real, people about whom we cared deeply. All the characters are shaped in ways that very specifically have to do with the structuring and exploration of gender. The male characters are in love with ostentatious masculinity as a thing that's sometimes joyful and sometimes horrifying; the female characters are often consumed with fierce denial of their bodies and their own femaleness. Hanging over all of this is the enigmatic figure of the Shrandar, whose gender identity, like so much else, is ambiguous and complicated. *Light* is rich, horrible, sad, and absurd, and says a lot about how the body and sex inform one's humanity. It will reward rereading.

### *"Stories for Men"*

John Kessel, *Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, Oct/Nov 2002

"Stories for Men" is a story about masculinity, about how individuals define themselves in the context of kinship and community, and about how we construct gender roles by telling ourselves stories. The story begins with a female-centered society that mirrors some of our assumptions about social power relations between men and women, and then explicitly refers to our own society's assumptions (in the main character's encounter with a twentieth-century fiction anthology) in a way that makes those assumptions seem new and strange. It reexamines those tales of outcasts and lone heroes and manly individualism within the context of a story of community. It raises questions about the links between connectedness and exclusion, consensus and stifling conformity, patriarchal protectiveness and sociopathy. "Stories for Men" is a short work, one that's more subtle than it first appears.

## 2002 Short List

Note: This is not the list from which the judges picked the winners. Rather, it is a list of books that the judges found interesting, relevant to the award, and worthy of note.

### *"Knapsack Poems"*

Eleanor Arnason, *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, May 2002

A story that explores the boundaries of personal identity, and the relationship between personal identity and gender, in the context of a culture where the basic unit of identity is a "team" rather than a single biological individual.

### *"Liking What You See: A Documentary"*

Ted Chiang, *Stories of Your Life and Others*, Tor Books, 2002

This story presents what's literally a different way of thinking. It makes the familiar (perception of beauty) seem strange, and makes what we normally consider necessary seem contingent. It doesn't deal directly with gender, but rather works by implication: it raises questions about how many of our ideas about gender are tied in to contingent habits of thought.

### *Appleseed*

John Clute, Tor Books, 2002

An homage to science fiction, with barely a trope untouched. Sexuality and sexual imagery are central to the book, which shuffles through the implications of dimorphism and dualism as components of human thought and experience.

### *"What I Didn't See"*

Karen Joy Fowler, [scifi.com](http://www.scifi.com)

[http://www.scifi.com/scifiction/originals/originals\\_archive/fowler/](http://www.scifi.com/scifiction/originals/originals_archive/fowler/)

In dialogue with the Tarzan stories and with Tiptree's "The Women Men Don't See," this story examines gender and heterosexual attraction within the frame of an emerging feminist and ethical consciousness. Not eligible for the Tiptree Award, because the author is one of the founding mothers.

### **"Madonna of the Maquiladora"**

Gregory Frost, Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine, May 2002  
[http://members.dca.net/gregory\\_frost/Pages/madonna.html](http://members.dca.net/gregory_frost/Pages/madonna.html)

This coolly told story is in large part about the way women (and men) are treated in the maquiladoras of Juarez. It explores several kinds of power relationships: dispossession, complicity in institutional oppression, the blindness of well-meaning individual help, the self-image of masculinity as a mark of colonial identity.

### **The Melancholy of Anatomy**

Shelley Jackson, Anchor Books, 2002

A collection of thematically linked short stories that, taken together, form a unified whole: surrealist play on sexuality, gender, and the body.

### **Salt Fish Girl**

Larissa Lai, Thomas Allen & Son, Ltd., 2002

A beautifully written novel about class and female identity. *Salt Fish Girl* draws on Chinese mythology, and is simultaneously fantasy and science fiction.

### **Conjunctions 39: The New Wave Fabulists**

Peter Straub (ed.), see [conjunctions.com](http://www.conjunctions.com)  
<http://www.conjunctions.com/joidx.htm>

Many of the stories in this anthology deal with gender issues in one way or another. Some of the most interesting stories are the ones by John Crowley, Elizabeth Hand, Nalo Hopkinson, Kelly Link, James Morrow, and Paul Park.

## **2002 Long List**

### **"The Potter of Bones"**

Eleanor Arnason, *Asimov's*, September 2002

### **"The Fool's Tale"**

L. Timmel Duchamp, *Leviathan Three*, Ministry of Whimsy Press, 2002

### **Schild's Ladder**

Greg Eggen

### **"Grandma"**

Carol Emshwiller, March 2002

### **"Princess Aria"**

R. Garcia y Robertson, *F&SF*, July 2002

### **Effendi**

Jon Courtenay Grimwood

### **Pashazade**

Jon Courtenay Grimwood,

### **Sisters of the Raven**

Barbara Hambly

### **Amy Unbounded: Belondweg Blossoming**

Rachel Hartman

### **"Freedom, Spiced and Drunk"**

M.C.A. Hogarth, *Strange Horizons*, May 27 2002

### **Whipstock**

Barb Howard

### **The Fall of the Kings**

Ellen Kushner and Delia Sherman

### **"Wild Girls"**

Ursula K. Le Guin, *Asimov's*, March 2002

### **"Seasons of the Ansarac"**

Ursula K. Le Guin, *Infinite Matrix*, June 3 2002

### **"Breathmoss"**

Ian MacLeod, *Asimov's*, May 2002

### **Fire Logic**

Laurie Marks

### **The Scar**

China Mieville

### **"Princes and Priscilla"**

Ruth Nestvold, *Strange Horizons*, April 8 2002

### **Years of Rice and Salt**

Kim Stanley Robinson

### **Hominids**

Robert J. Sawyer

### **Empire of Bones**

Liz Williams

### **"The Waif"**

Gene Wolfe, *F&SF*, January 2002

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## **The 2003 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

**WisCon 28, Madison, Wisconsin**

**Prize:** artist Georgie Schnobrich

**Song for Matt Ruff** based on "Secret Agent Man"

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*There's a man who wrote a book with voices.  
E'vry soul makes odd and quirky choices.  
With Andy, Gage and Jake,  
A fiction risk they take.  
Odds are they will Set This House in Order.*

*It's a MATT Ruff book!  
It's a MATT Ruff book.  
We're giving him some choc'late  
And letting him wear the crown.*

## **Judges**

Maureen Kincaid Speller, chair [MKS]

Michael Marc Levy [ML]

Vicki Rosenzweig [VR]

Lori Selke [LS]

Nisi Shawl [NS]

## **Winners of the 2003 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

### **Set This House in Order: A Romance of Souls**

Matt Ruff, Harper Collins 2003

Andy Gage is dead. Andrew Gage, a 26-year-old born two years ago, is in charge of Andy's body, while his father, Aaron, runs the house he built inside it ...

The truth, as *Set This House in Order's* characters keep telling one another, is complicated. Andy, Andrew, Aaron and the house's hundred or so other inhabitants are "alters," to use a psychiatric term. They are the multiple personalities that arose after repeated incidents of childhood abuse shattered Andy's sense of self. Instead of attempting to reintegrate them all, Aaron, a dominant personality, has constructed a stable inner landscape, a common gathering spot. The various alter characters act as if it's a real place, though the concept's not a scientifically proven model for treatment either inside or outside of the novel. This leads to the book's slipstream feel.

Andrew carefully allots time in control of the body to genteel Aunt Sam, childish Jake, mall-loving Simon and others. The inclusion of both male and female alters in his community of self reflects the experience of real-life multiples and forms a solid basis for Matt Ruff's daring treatment of gender issues and expectations. [NS]

A number of books and stories this year did fascinating things with gender and several of them were extremely well written, but Matt Ruff's *Set This House in Order* combines literary quality with gender exploration in an unparalleled manner. The subtitle of the book, *A Romance of Souls*, tells the reader that what s/he's reading is fantasy-multiple personality syndrome doesn't really work this way-but everything is so well constructed, so believable, that it becomes difficult to see the book as anything other than a realistic novel concerning the way MPS actually works, or at least would work if the universe were a more remarkable place than it really is. Andy Gage and Penny Driver, the souls who spend the majority of their time as the public faces of the two multiples at the center of this story, are characters we really care about despite, or perhaps because of their various tics and eccentricities. The dozen or so other souls that we get to know over the course of the novel, some of them mere partials, are also well drawn, as are the supposedly normal secondary characters. Ruff's exploration of what the interior, virtual reality world of a multiple might be like, the "House" of the title, is particularly fascinating. This is a rich and wonderful novel that brings a truly fantastic world to vibrant life. [MML]

## 2003 Short List

### ***Coyote Cowgirl***

Kim Antieau, Forge 2003

Jeanne Les Flambeaux is a loser: can't ignore the voices in her head; can't cook, though her mother and father run a famous restaurant; can't pick a lover without having him steal the family jewels. Her pursuit of Cousin Johnny and the Ruby Scepter becomes a fast-paced Heroine's Journey of a sort mythologist Joseph Campbell could never have dreamed up. Seeking her animus as countless heroes have sought their anima, Jeanne's path leads her through a world in which the mundane and supernatural are inextricably linked. Completion, (according to Jung, always the goal in these stories) comes not with the aid of romance, but through introspection and reclamation of repressed history. [NS]

### ***"The Catgirl Manifesto"***

Christina X (Richard Calder), in *Album Zutique*, ed. Jeff Vandermeer, Ministry of Whimsy Press.

A political missive from a world not quite our own, detailing the emergence and politicization of a new gender—the hypersexualized "catgirl," a sort of walking anime heroine who is irresistibly cute and sexy, capriciously independent, and utterly contemptuous of the men who fall for her. A sort of new-millennium wedding of the Victorian woman-child and her deadly vampiric counterpart, the catgirl satirizes certain ideas about women and girls (not just on the part of men—a catgirl could easily grace the next cover of *Bust*), yet discovers the hidden subversiveness of those very same tropes. Catgirls are infantilized, but they are hardly domesticated—and they're ready to start a revolution of (not so) little girls. [LS]

### ***"The Lady of the Ice Garden,"***

Kara Dalkey, in *Firebirds*, edited by Sharyn November, Firebird Books, 2003

Kara Dalkey sets her retelling of Hans Christian Andersen's "Snow Queen" in Japan's militaristic Kamakura period; as she showers us with gorgeous images written in her paradoxically spare, poetic prose, Dalkey also pierces common assumptions about gender with the sharp insights embedded in "The Lady of the Ice Garden."

Rather than being kidnapped by an overwhelming and amoral feminine power as was Kay, Andersen's hero, Keiken leaves his home and family voluntarily, driven by a desire to distance himself from all emotion (which he perceives as vulnerability) and drawn to the frigid perfection of the Lady of the Ice Garden, his ideal woman. Following in the footsteps of Andersen's Gerda, Dalkey's heroine Girida searches for her childhood friend, but her quest doesn't end in rescuing him with her tears. She has embarked on an adventure all her own in which she is the subject, the active force, reaping her own rewards. [NS]

### ***"Boys,"***

Carol Emshwiller, from *scifi.com*

Carol Emshwiller's "Boys" is instantly recognizable as feminist dystopian fiction, kin to *The Gate to Women's Country*, (Tepper) *The Wanderground*, (Gearhart) and *Walk to the End of the World*, (Charnas) but it's somewhat unusual in that it's told from a male perspective. The narrator lives up in the mountains with the rest of the men and boys. In the valley below are the villages of the women. The enemy, other men, live in the mountains on the other side of the valley and no one remembers how this state of affairs developed. Once a year the men descend to the valley to copulate with the women and steal the boys who have grown old enough to survive in the mountains. On one such raid, however, things change. The women fight back, badly defeating the men and capturing the narrator. Wounded, he knows he will never survive in the mountains, and must adjust to the idea of living in the women's world, unsure of what changes the future will bring. What makes "Boys" special is Emshwiller's decision to strip the story down to its essentials, relating what might well be a novel in another writer's hands in a brief, parable-like narrative that packs considerable power. [ML]

### ***A Fistful of Sky***

Nina Kiriki Hoffman, Ace 2002

Gypsum LaZelle, the protagonist of Nina Kiriki Hoffman's *A Fistful of Sky*, lives in a family of mages and can't understand why, at twenty, she's the only one of her siblings without magic. Feeling inferior, she's grown up lacking confidence, clothing sense, or, for that matter, a steady boyfriend. Then Gypsum falls terribly ill and, recovering, discovers her magic, the ability to curse. Sounds like something you've read before, doesn't it? But this is Nina Kiriki Hoffman, remember, and Gypsum's curses turn out to be like no one else's. First of all there's the fact that she can't not curse; if she doesn't use her power, it builds up in her until curses erupt at random. Then there's the time that she curses herself with ultimate fashion sense and drives everyone crazy with her dead-on but decidedly unwanted clothing critiques. Hoffman's tale, by turns frightening and hilarious, tracks a young woman's bumpy path to magical adulthood, allowing her to try on a variety of gender roles as she attempts to find her place in her family and the world. [ML]

### ***Fudoki***

Kij Johnson, Tor 2003

*Fudoki* interweaves two stories: the title tale-within-a-tale of an orphaned cat who takes to the road and is transformed into a human, and autobiographical reminiscences by the elderly Princess Harueme, who is writing the tortoiseshell woman's story. In doing so, she reflects on her own life and motivations, and the limitations that both gender and class have imposed on her: she has had luxury, but almost no freedom. The "fudoki" is a cat's story and her place in the world, in an imagined cat-culture that is entirely female-centered. The cat Kagaya-hime is seen as somehow strange by the humans she travels among, even those who don't realize that she isn't human. She in turn regards them as strange, in part because men are so central to family life in medieval Japan.

Most of the fantastic elements are in the cat's tale: Harueme, as she writes, gives her the tools and knowledge she needs for each part of her adventure.

The cat's tale begins in the fire that destroys her home and family. Meanwhile, Harueme is gradually burning all her old diaries, and burning each notebook of Kagaya-hime's story when she finishes it. At the end of her life, the princess is fleeing a family and structure that have trapped her, seeming glad at least to have never borne a child. Meanwhile, the cat is walking toward a home and family, though she only realizes this at the end of her journey. The female-centered fudoki is a place where motherhood gives her importance and authority, rather than being seen as a trap. [VR]

### **"The Ghost Girls of Rumney Mill"**

Sandra McDonald, in *Realms of Fantasy*, August 2003

"The Ghost Girls of Rumney Mill" explores the persistence of gender roles and expectations. Ghosts, by definition, lack bodies; they can barely affect the living, or any other part of the physical world. What they have left is memory and desire. MacDonald's ghosts are teens and children, believably so. They have separated themselves by gender, and take the separation entirely for granted. Pauline, the narrator, didn't like boys when she was alive, and doesn't think death has improved them. When a new boy wants to live with the girls, she rejects him, even though Matthew wants to be Michele, and the boys want no part of a ghost who turned up in a blue dress and insists that he was supposed to be a girl. Pauline gets to know Matthew/Michele slowly, and her developing acceptance of Michele as a girl arises believably as she learns more about Michele's life and death. In the process, she learns more about herself, and speculates about what is keeping her, and the few other dead youths, trapped in the rundown outskirts of the town. [VR]

### **"Looking through Lace"**

Ruth Nestvold, in *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, September, 2003

Toni is a young anthropologist with a sexist boss whose ego can't deal with the fact that a woman may be better equipped to learn about a women's society. The indigenous people on the planet they are studying have very distinct men's and women's cultures, and some incomprehensible and rather gruesome gendered rituals. As Toni struggles both with the hostility of Dr. Repnik and the polite distancing of the women she hopes to understand, she also discovers a growing attraction to an indigenous man, on a planet where she doesn't understand the rules and boundaries.

Nestvold develops this familiar situation in a complicated filigree not unlike the beautiful lace made by the indigenous women, until her growing understanding of her alien surroundings allow her to create an ingenious solution to an otherwise-fatal culture clash.

### **"Birth Days"**

Geoff Ryman, in *Interzone*, April 2003

In "Birth Days," Geoff Ryman uses the diary of a gay man living in the near future to play with, and undermine, ideas of biological and gender determinism. The narrator, a gay male biologist in a future where the genes for sexual orientation have been identified and are being calmly eliminated from most gene pools in the developed world, invents a way for men to bear children. If two men can be the biological parents of a child, and one of them carry the child to term in his own body, what does gender mean?

Ryman foregrounds various attempts to find simple explanations for complicated phenomena: Ron's mother, even knowing better, talks about "the gene" for sexual orientation, and speculates that it might be an alien plot left over from the time of the trilobites. Ron, while sure there's nothing wrong with him, doesn't see any reason that eliminating the genes that made him would be a problem. Then he makes his scientific breakthrough, and turns the biological explanations on their heads. Odd myths—virgin births, Athena born from the head of Zeus—are offered as factual evidence, and a heterosexual nurse suggests that heterosexuals, rather than homosexuals, are an "endangered species."

When I first read this story, I wrote "Whatever you're doing, you find the stories to justify" on the back of the last page. Ryman shows us some of that story-telling, in the difficult area where gender and sexual orientation run into biology and ethics. [VR]

### **Maul**

Tricia Sullivan, *Orbit*, 2003

*Maul* alternates between two story lines. One unfolds in a world where most men have been wiped out in a series of "Y-plagues," and those that survive are kept penned up like the fragile endangered species they are. They are let out only to compete in large-scale competitions for sperm donor rights by engaging in extreme sports and other acts of hypermasculinity. The second story is set in a suburban shopping "maul" dominated by gangs of armed adolescent girls. Tricia Sullivan exhibits a sharp parodic wit and a healthy irreverence toward gender role expectations both traditional and feminist; her satiric tone is reminiscent of some of the best 70's feminist science fiction. Best of all, she is fearless enough to delve into the biology of sex and gender—a territory that's been all but ceded to the evolutionary biologists for the past few years. This is a fast-paced, hugely entertaining novel with enough depth to reward the careful reader, especially those interested in the issues the Tiptree Award was founded to encourage exploration of. [LS]

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## **The 2004 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

### **Gaylaxicon, Boston MA**

**Prize:** artists, Charles Vess ("Troll")

and Mary Anne Mohanraj ("Camouflage," charcoal & ink)

**Songs** for Haldeman and Sinisalo:

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### ***The Ballad of Joe Haldeman***

*Come and listen to this story by a man named Joe,  
'Bout a creature from space who spent eons far  
below.*

*And then one day it was living as a shark,  
Wandered up on land and turned human for a lark.*

*Rich man's son.*

*Randy boy.*

*Well the next thing you know, he's fighting in a war,  
Changing bodies often to get rid of blood and gore.  
He says Bataan's not a place he ought to be,  
So he turns into a shark and goes back into the sea.*

*Changes gears.*

*Swims for years.*

*Well when we found its space ship and we needed  
scientists,*

*The creature said, yeah, I'll be a part of this.  
It switched its gender, turned from he into a she,  
And that's how Joe won himself the ol' Tiptree.*

*Award, that is.*

*Camouflage.*

*Ya'll read it now, ya hear?*

### ***Happy Trolls***

*Happy Trolls, to you.*

*You thought they were tall tales.*

*Happy Trolls, to you.*

*They've got sharp teeth and nails.*

*Who knew that they'd like guinea pigs for lunch*

*And make their housemate shudder at the crunch?*

*Happy Trolls, to you,*

*Until we read again.*

## Judges

Margaret McBride, chair [MM]  
Judith Clute [JC]  
Alan DeNiro [AD]  
Ursula K. LeGuin [UKL]  
Cecilia Tan [CT]

## Winners of the 2004 James Tiptree, Jr. Award

### ***Camouflage***

Joe Haldeman, Ace Books, 2004

Haldeman is a Hemingway scholar, and it shows in the elegance of his minimalist prose in this thought-provoking book. In the best tradition of “hard” sf, Haldeman mixes scientific speculation with purely human “what if?” in wondering what would happen if a shape-shifting alien predator became, essentially, human? This book explores the human condition as thoroughly as any literary work, with understanding of gender at the crux of that understanding. For me it was one of the best science fiction books I have read in years. [CT]

An ageless, sexless entity who can take any form is at first indifferent to gender; as it grows more human, the choice becomes more important to it; it ends up a woman by preference. If gender isn’t the central concern of this novel, it’s near the center, and the handling of it is skillful, subtle, and finely unpredictable. [UKL]

I like the problem-solving: how do we figure problems out and how do people relate to others, how do they understand themselves and others and even figure out that some of their instinctive (or learned) sexual responses are not healthy ones. [MM]

### ***Not Before Sundown, (U.S. title Troll: A Love Story)***

Johanna Sinisalo, Grove Press, 2004

A deft novel of how human society is ruled by complex territorial relationships. In particular, Sinisalo reveals the life of the human male as closely as zoologists/biologists do chimpanzee social groups, only she does it through a quick-paced story of gay bars, advertising agencies and veterinarians. Does it matter who the king of the urban jungle is, when a real live troll cub turns up on the doorstep of a lovelorn 30-year-old photographer? Well written and affecting. [CT]

The subject is the dehumanisation of the Other—a great subject. It may be the fault of the translation, but the apparent gendering of the trolls as all male sentimentalises what might have been a more powerful story. Still, very much worth looking at. [UKL]

This one has grown on me, perhaps, the most out of any of the books read. The excellent world-building and intriguing use of pheromones really impressed me. The troll’s own gender issues were interesting, as a kind of unspeakable Other. [AD]

I always wondered what happened to changelings when they grew up, both the humans in Fairyland and the trolls coping with humans. This book retells troll stories, with some major twists, in the context of the current commercialization of sexuality in jean ads and picture book brides/sex slavery. [MM]

The two books stand completely opposed in so many ways—you could almost say they define the opposite edges of what is conceivable for the Tiptree. Haldeman, the well-known, Hemingwayesque, male, very American, hard sf writer at one end, and Sinisalo, the European, not-well-known (in the US and within our genre, I mean), female contemporary fantasy writer at the other. Hmm, and we have the male writer creating a female protagonist (well, eventually female) and the female writer creating a male protagonist. That clicks in my head as a balance I would enjoy. [CT]

## 2004 Short List

### ***Little Black Book of Stories***

A. S. Byatt, Chatto and Windus 2003; Knopf 2004

None of the five stories bend gender very far—unless a woman turning bit by jeweled bit into a troll counts, which I think it might, as troll sexuality is

either nonexistent or a very open question . . . But Byatt handles relationships in a way that I think is essentially tiptroid. The stories are adventurous, risk-taking (at least once to the point of falling flat on the face), nervy, savvy, genuinely imaginative, and very, very well told. [UKL]

Beautiful, haunting stories that thoroughly have gender issues inhabiting them. I particularly liked “The Pink Ribbon” and “The Thing in the Forest.” [AD]

All of the stories are beautifully written; the use of the fantastic in “The Pink Ribbon” & “Stone Woman” gives an original and interesting exploration of how cultural interactions affect the way we perceive gender in ourselves and others. [MM]

### ***Love’s Body, Dancing in Time***

L Timmel Duchamp, Aqueduct Press 2004

I see most gender issues as cultural and the evocative details in “The Gift” remind me that aspects of gender, sexuality and love that I sometimes take for granted are actually societal assumptions. [MM]

“The Heloise Archive” startled in how effortlessly it shapeshifts in all of its textual patterns—which are embedded in gender exploration. The narrative structure is brilliant, archetypal and clumsy at the same time. But I think it ‘s intentionally clumsy and archetypal and a brilliant attempt at trying to create a new type of story where gender transgression inhabits. [AD]

### ***“All of Us Can Almost...”***

Carol Emshwiller, Scifi.com, 11/17/04

A hilarious riff on the human condition. Power plays and sexual strut. And what about hard wiring? The story could be read as a revenge story on stupid males, but I think that would miss the point of this glorious flight of fantasy. [JC]

### ***Sea of Trolls***

Nancy Farmer, Atheneum 2004

Published as Young Adult, a genre we ought to keep an eye on. Tiptroid mainly in one character, a girl whom the protagonist and the reader think is a boy for quite a while, largely because she wants so much to be one and is so angry at not being one—a keen and canny portrait. Not world-shaking gender invention, but an unpretentious, slyly edgy presentation of transgendering without surgery or sf elements. [UKL]

The aspects of “gendered jobs” in early history are an interesting addition to this YA novel. I love the little surprise about verse at the end. [MM]

### ***Stable Strategies and Others***

Eileen Gunn, Tachyon Press 2004

Gunn doesn’t address gender as a central issue in these stories, but it’s there, in the title story, in “Nirvana High,” and others, and the take on it is marvelously dry and sly. [UKL]

Grunge as a curriculum in “Nirvana High” by Gunn and Leslie What—what makes this story work in a Tiptroid fashion is the hard-to-do depiction of teenagers with gifts, and using the ultra-male grunge music as a lens into this society and into how femininity is constructed. Probably the faintest “pulse” of Tiptroid materials of any of my shortlisters, but it’s there, and seamlessly embedded in the narrative. [AD]

### ***Life***

Gwyneth Jones, Aqueduct Press 2004

From a conversation early in the book: “Sex is in everything. I didn’t put it there. The most significant thing in your entire social and cultural life is your assigned gender. Everything else comes after that fact, including your relationship with technology.” In many different ways, this novel examines how gender affects our lives, our relationships with friends and children, our jobs, etc. The scientific discussions work as metaphors for gender and sexual issues. [MM]

The main characters are moved through their paces in order to present the story of genes and chromosomes and the possibility of sexual shift in the growing embryo. Woven through that story is the woman, Ramone, who describes in heated hyperbole the contemporary fault-line of the sexual divide. Anna is obsessive: she often talks about her work to her

partner Spence. In another conversation where she's been drawing triggers of regulatory proteins, he adds his expertise: "Well whadd'ya know. This is Boolean Algebra. These are logic gates!" So when the AI SURI (who had joked that she should have been named GAIA) was killed, it's an emotional blow. "Yeah," said Anna. "You can clone her. But it won't be the same person." The most interesting character to move through the social politics of this book is Ramone who, at one point, suggests that Anna was right: "Numbers were everything. You can regard what went on in the battle of the sexes as a chemical reaction, a fractional distillation... You could show how feminism in the classical model was doomed..." Ramone "set up camp on the border, on the actual fault-line of the Great Divide..." and lived her life accordingly. [JC]

### **"Kissing Frogs"**

Jaye Lawrence, *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, May 2004

Short, light, deft, elegant (and the author's first published story); one of the few magazine stories we read that really, truly fit the Tiptree guidelines. [UKL]

A pleasing after-dinner mint of a story (I don't mean that as a slur) that is very funny and does exactly what it sets out to do. [AD]

I almost always like "revisions" of a well-known tale. This whimsical version of the frog who can change into a prince with a kiss—told through the medium of "looking for a partner" ads—made me smile and stop to think about gender issues in our society. [MM]

## **2004 Long List**

### **"The Other Angelas"**

Christopher Barzak, <http://www.pindeldyboz.com/cbangelas.htm>

Only semi-tiptroid, but it's a brilliant and charming story. [UKL]

### **"This Tragic Glass,"**

Elizabeth Bear, *Scifiction*, April 7, 2004

What if we could determine the biological gender of poets based on something measurable in their words? Even if that poet's outwardly expressed gender differed? This story was part *Shakespeare In Love* part Connie Willis' *Fire Watch*, and anyone who is a sucker for "writer stories" will like it, too. [CT]

A relatively straightforward but intricate story with sound scholarship and moving characterizations. Keats is kind of a bore, but on the whole, this story strikes at the heart of how gender informs authorship, and vice versa. [AD]

### **"Burning Day"**

Glenn Grant, *Island Dreams: Montreal Writers of the Fantastic*, ed. by Claude Lalumière (Vehicule Press)

I love a story that goes right through exploring what it means to be male or female and ends up getting at what it means to be human. This is a stylish, action-laden science fiction story, not a navel-gazer. [CT]

A well-plotted story in Hardboiled Mode—people smoking cigarettes even though they're androids, and cracking wise, and driving cars in cities, all very TV-cop show. More about species than gender, but has an original twist in the emphasis on the desire/compulsion to reproduce one's kind. [UK]

An interesting examination of sexuality and gender—how do expectations still influence "post-humans"—with film noir detective-story tropes. [MM]

### **Unspeakable Vitrine**

Victoria Garcia, *Clawfoot Bathdog*, 2004

To me, the story that qualifies this uneven, entertaining collection as of interest to Tiptreers is "Wally's Porn," which is funny and touching. [UKL]

"Anthropology" is a fun look at relationships too. [MM]

### **Hopeful Monsters**

Hiromi Goto, *Arsenal Pulp Press*, 2004

Goto writes with vigor and energy, in a voice very much her own. "Night" and "Tales from the Breast," are both real Tiptroid fantasies, though you mightn't think so till right towards the end of both. [UKL]

### **Mortal Love**

Elizabeth Hand, *William Morrow*, 2004

A gorgeous and rococo (at times) set piece of a novel—could have used more exploration of the vampiric femme fatale for Tiptree purposes. [AD]

### **Inventing Memory**

Anne Harris, *TOR*, 2004

A message of hope about the possibility of inventing a new world by understanding one's own history and the history of the larger world. . . Goddesses in a science fiction context. [MM]

Even the Stones, Marie Jakober (2004, revised from the 1993 Gullveig Books edition of High Kamilan) No gender bending, but a serious, realistic, and grown-up novel of male-female power relationships, which is so unusual in "high fantasy" as to be practically invisible to many readers. [UKL]

### **River of Gods**

Ian McDonald, *Simon & Shuster*, 2004

"Nutes," a third sex, have had their sex organs removed and a sex-command centre placed in subtle ridges down "yt's arms. The same Dream Surgeon who performed these operations also does operations for AIs, called Aeais. The plot works interestingly around the world of Nutes and Aeais and humans plugging into the Aeai's communication lines by "lighthoeks." [JC]

In addition to looking at how women might fare in India when the male/female ratio has become skewed with so many more males than females, a whole new gender is possible, surgically brought about. [MM]

### **Sleep**

Kat Meads, *Livingston Press*,

This is a fierce, unrepentantly experimental, somewhat raw novel about motherhood in a highly gray utopia. The societies depicted are pitch perfect and the entire narrative is filled with edginess and a great sadness as we see how families become molten in a postmodern economy. [AD]

### **Monstrous Regiment**

Terry Pratchett, *Harper Collins*, 2004

Terry Pratchett is very good at making fun of things, and in this book he makes fun of archaic gender roles through a tried and true method: by dressing up his heroine as a male and marching her off to war. Only it being Pratchett, the farce escalates as quickly as the war, and we soon discover that not only are the other soldiers in the "monstrous regiment" vampires and trolls and the like, most of them are cross-dressing too. It's vintage Pratchett, which you will either love or hate depending on whether he is funny or tiresome to you. Now if only we could be so sure that those archaic gender roles are actually a thing of the past. [CT]

Some nice perceptions of maleness and femaleness; genuinely funny when not merely facetious; charming and plausible when not glib and overconfident. Heterosexuality is assumed as the norm, to the point of sniggers and cute innuendoes about homosexuals. Is this 1944? That, and a certain artificiality or calculation in the central gender concern, are bad flaws in a good read. [UKL]

### **"Romance for Augmented Trio"**

Tom Purdon, *Asimov's SF*, Feb. 04

—feels almost like a challenge story to lead to this concluding statement: "...the obsolete human and the future human had to start reconstructing the relationship they had been fashioning before the aberrant human interrupted them. [JC]



### ***"Time's Swell"***

Victoria Somegyi & Kathleen Chamberlain, *Strange Horizons*, 11/15/04

An eerie, very disturbing piece about prostitution and mysterious time travelers. Maybe a little bit too elliptical but the characters' dulled reactions spoke a lot to the objectification of bodies. [AD]

### ***Tonguecat***

Peter Verheest, Translated from Dutch by Shery Marx Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003

This novel is structured with colliding, disorienting stories which act like a string of chants to keep us from the base-line of the book: the awfulness of war. And there's an exploration of gender in the stress of this urban violence: Ulrike, Prometheus's lover and guide through the underworld, is also Tonguecat the prostitute who can tell and retell stories. [JC]

### ***Master of None***

N. Lee Wood, Warner, 2004

A gender-exploration tale in the classic mold: lone man on the planet of women. Wood manages to find a few patches of fresh ground here, in a branch of the sf genre that was once a staple but now is rarely explored without irony—that of the self-consciously Utopian world. If you like a dash of up-front politics in your science fiction, this book is for you. [CT]

This novel reminds me how much our beliefs about gender are cultural—a role reversal of power from male to female with some subtle side plots and interesting minor characters. [MM]

Epic planetary gender-reversal with good world-building and empathic characters of all stripes. But the main character is straight out of central casting for Male Scientist Who Saves Planet. [AD]

## **2004 Special Mention**

### ***Changing Ones***

Will Roscoe, St Martin's Griffin, 2000

—Nonfiction that would be of interest to anybody interested in the Tiptree. It is about "berdache"—men who took/take women's roles and women who took/take men's roles, or as Roscoe calls it, third and fourth genders, in Native American societies and cultures, from first contact through the present. I have never read anything that gave me so many and such useful different ways to think about sex/gender. (It involves in fact a total, non-European, non-binary redefinition of gender.) It is extremely well written; the scholarship and research is as careful as it is readable. It is generous-hearted (he never sneers at anybody because they didn't know what we know, or were benighted for one reason or another). It is tough-minded. It is a splendid book. [UKL]

### ***Stars in my Pockets like Grains of Sand***

Samuel R. Delany, 20th anniversary republication, Wesleyan University Press, 2004

The prologue has images that have stayed in my head since I first read it (my memory was accurate when I reread it too). The rest of the book will "play with your head"—a culture with the ability to decode your perfect sex partner down to precise details and what an amazing variety of sex and gender partners they have! "When there are so many paths and parameters along which and around which women—young, old, human, evelm, male, female, and neuter—can develop both community and communion to be passed on to others, why should you restrict yourselves to direct egg-and-sperm relations?" [MM]

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## **The 2005 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

WisCon 30, Madison, WI

Prize: Darlene Coltaine

Song:

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### **Judges**

Liz Henry (chair) [LH]

Nike Bourke [NB]

Matt Ruff [MR]

Georgie Schnobrich [GS]

## **Winner of the 2005 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

### ***Air: Or, Have Not Have***

Geoff Ryman, Orion 2005 / St. Martin's Griffin, 2004

What happens when all boundaries are crossed, national, cultural, and individual, when "Air," an internet-in-your-head technology, connects people with drastic consequences. Mae, the book's heroine, is a rural dress-maker, fashion consultant, and entrepreneur. Flooded with the memories of her 90 year old neighbor, she struggles to maintain her identity against madness. Political machinations and a flood threaten to overwhelm her country and her village in "Karzistan." Mae has to act quickly. The unusual pregnancy in mid-book is jarring, which challenges readers' expectations of what boundaries stories can push. That level of wrongness dislocates the reader, to give an analogous experience of the boundary-violations the characters are experiencing. [LH]

What's amazing about *Air* is not just what it accomplishes but what it avoids. There are many ways this novel could have gone wrong, and as I read it for the first time, I was torn between excitement at having discovered something truly special and fear of the inevitable false step that would ruin it. But Geoff Ryman never stumbled.

*Air* is a smart, moving story about men and women—especially women—striving to adapt to a new technology and the threat and promise of cultural change it brings with it. Though the issues it dramatizes are all too real, is never preachy. Its characters are not props in service of a polemic, but three-dimensional human beings you can believe in and care about. And while Kizuldah is a fictional village in an imaginary country, it feels more genuine than many a third-world literary setting I could name.

In short, is fantastic. Read it. [MR]

## **2005 Short List**

### ***Willful Creatures***

Aimee Bender, Doubleday, 2005

The stories in this collection are more surreal than sfnal, and the exploration of gender is often subtle, but this is the kind of rich, imaginative writing for which I am only too happy to stretch genre boundaries. An author who can make me care about the fate of a half dozen baby potatoes—yes, I said baby potatoes—deserves whatever special recognition I can give her. [MR]

Literary short fiction with some speculative elements, that explores mainly male-female and parent-child relationships. The potato baby story is probably the most interesting to SF readers. [LH]

### ***"Wooden Bride"***

Margo Lanagan, in *Black Juice*, Eos, 2005

Although technically only one of the stories in Margo Lanagan's *Black Juice* is "Tiptroid," the collection as a whole is so good that you'd be cheating yourself if you skipped the rest of it—and why put up with injustice when you don't have to? [MR]

### **“Little Faces”**

Vonda N. McIntyre, *SciFiction*, 02.23.05

All the women in the story live on their own sentient living spaceships and fly around with complete independence. Their sexual relationships with each other involve their male parasites/mates/children/hard drives/pets, which are attached to their bellies, kind of like weird half-telepathic dildos with faces, veiled in lace on formal occasions. The male... things... have names, emotions, and personalities; the women love them, in a way. A disturbing, outrageous way. The women's relationships, the problems of anarchism, and collective politics, drive the story's conflict; in a universe without nations, war is still terribly possible. A weird and wonderful story. [LH]

A far future space tale where the impressively alien world rather overwhelms the story. The world is peopled with fascinating females who, like deep ocean fish, wear their males as a body part. The issues explored are those of identity and the memories of others. [GS]

### **A Brother's Price**

Wen Spencer, *Roc*, 2005

An alternate history romance novel, in a steam-and-rifles pioneer-flavored world. Long ago, the gender ratio was skewed by a virulent strain of syphilis. Groups of 10–30 sisters and half-sisters share one husband, who keeps house and raises all the children. Men's chastity is vital because of the danger of sexually transmitted disease. Male children are very rare. Their betrothal prices (and thus, their virtue) are key to a family's upward mobility and economic health. Jerin is a perky, plucky, starry-eyed young man who bakes a great pie and can ride and shoot like a woman. Over the course of the story, he meets some marriageable princess sisters, bravely risks rape and sex-slavery, solves a mystery, and saves his country from civil war. It's both tongue-in-cheek and a serious exploration of the social and narrative construction of gender. [LH]

A good discussion starter. Spencer's premise is intriguing, and even if, like me, you disagree with many of the worldbuilding choices she made, there's a lot of fun to be had in contemplating what you would have done differently. [MR]

It's always fun to play with role-reversal. In our history as we know it, breeding women have been traded as commodities, sold as marital ambassadors to other powers, and protected and kept close as the producers of the future. In this book's alternative world of scarce young men, Jerin Whistler's sphere is domestic and guarded. The modest plot takes a back seat to the readers' speculation about how that role will affect Jerin. Does a circumscribed life infantilize? Do you suspect that “testosterone will out”? This one is worth it just for the discussion. [GS]

### **Misfortune**

Wesley Stace, *Little, Brown*, 2005 / *Back Bay Books*, 2005

Think of it as alt-lit-history: a 19th-century English novel that no 19th-century English novelist could have gotten away with writing. For me, this tale of an orphaned boy who is brought up as a British lord's daughter was the only serious competition *Air* had for the tiara. It also has the distinction of being the only Tiptree nominee that left me weepy. (There were a number of titles submitted that made me want to cry, but that's a whole other thing).

Like its protagonist, *Misfortune* has an interesting pedigree: it's a first novel written by a professional musician who tours under the name of John Wesley Harding. If this is the caliber of work he's able to turn out in his off hours, it's a little scary to think what might happen if he took to writing full-time. I think we should encourage him. [MR]

A vaguely 18th century romance/adventure novel in which the heroine, Rose, was raised as a girl although born either male or intersex. While it is not speculative, there were fantastic and mythological elements in the research into the fictional poet Mary Day, in the connections with mythology, and in dream sequences. [LH]

Counts as a fantasy only in the way Dickens does, but it is a thorough exposition of the mind and heart, through the experience of gender and identity confusion. Rose is found abandoned as a baby and taken up by an eccentric young lord to be his heir and the replacement for a beloved lost sister. The one catch is that the baby is a boy, but is not allowed to know

it. Adolescence reveals truth, but what is the truth? Can rose assemble an identity from the pieces of his/her psyche and become a complete human being, or suffer as a sort of monster? How can Rose feel and express sexuality? I found it an absorbing trip. [GS]

### **Remains**

Mark W. Tiedemann, *Benbella Books*, 2005

In Chapter One, *Remains* struck me as a standard adventure novel, sort of an airport novel in space, with spies, a punctured dome, maybe some terrorists, and Mace, a hardboiled cop who's out to find out who killed his wife Helen. The story quickly gets weirder than that. Helen's brain is in her husband's D.P. or “Domestic Personality” house-automation program. Mace is an unreliable narrator, steered by gender-linked blind spots. The real mystery he must solve is in his understanding of himself and his relationships, and his resentment of Helen's professional status, wealth, and power. Nemily, the book's female protagonist, a working class immigrant from the dystopian Moon, has a modular brain. As she slots in different modules, her perceptions, thoughts, identity, and behavior change; with beautiful subtlety, the omniscient narrator's writing style also shifts to reflect Nemily's different brains. Nemily's multiple consciousness, skirmishes with madness, and her attitude towards romantic love, made this a notable exploration of gender in fiction. *Remains* really manifests the Cyborg Manifesto! [LH]

## **2005 Long List**

### **“Arcana”**

Emily Brunson, *CSI Forensics fanfic website*

### **Touched by Venom**

Janine Cross, *Roc*, 2005

### **The Mercy of Thin Air**

Ronlyn Domingue, *Atria*, 2005 / *Washington Square Press*, 2006

I freely confess to being a sucker for any story about a love powerful enough to defy the grave, and Domingue gets bonus points for never once making me think of Demi Moore. But the best part of this ghostly tale, in which a New Orleans suffragette's daughter continues her activism in the afterlife, is its portrait of a chapter in feminist history I knew very little about: the underground birth-control movement of the 1920s. [MR]

### **Alanya to Alanya**

L. Timmel Duchamp, *Aqueduct Press*, 2005

### **The Red Rose Rages Bleeding**

L. Timmel Duchamp, *Aqueduct Press*, 2005

### **Mister Boots**

Carol Emshwiller, *Viking Juvenile*, 2005

Although its protagonist is a girl being raised as a boy, the cross-gender theme seemed far less central here than in *Luna* or *Misfortune*. It's a good story, though. [MR]

A story of growing up wherein the “otherly” atmosphere is as strong as it is ambiguous. A world that harbors were-horses (or whatever Mr. Boots is--) might include girl/boys, and have the power of the stage to transform a neglectful father into a worker of wonders. But which is real? Tragic appeal. [GS]

### **The King in the Window**

Adam Gopnik, *Miramax*

### **Tesseract Nine**

Nalo Hopkinson and Geoff Ryman, editors, *EDGE*, 2005

Lemmings! [MR]

### **“In the Shadow of the Stones”**

Rosaleen Love, in *The Traveling Tide*, *Aqueduct Press*, 2005

### **“Close to You”**

Meghan McCarron, *Strange Horizons*, 4/18/05

### ***“Planet of the Amazon Women”***

David Moles, *Strange Horizons*, 5/16/05

An engrossing tale reminiscent of early J.G. Ballard. My one complaint is that it's over much too quickly. [MR]

### ***Melusine***

Sarah Monette, *Ace*, 2005

### ***The Icarus Girl***

Helen Oyeyemi, *Doubleday*, 2005

What if childhood imaginary friend were a paranormal being who exists through you, but apart from you, and might not have your best interests at heart? Elegantly written. [GS]

### ***Luna***

Julie Anne Peters, *Little, Brown*, 2004

If it had been the least bit sfnal, this wonderful story about a girl growing up with a transgendered brother would have been a contender for the award. As it is, I can only recommend it as something that Tiptree fans will likely enjoy. [MR]

An honest, tender, and tough Young Adult story about a sister and her transgendering brother-to-sister. Although not science fiction or fantasy, it asks some big and difficult questions. What does it take to *be*? What does a young person owe his/her family? What do they owe themselves? Very readably done. [GS]

### ***Uglies***

Scott Westerfeld, *Simon Pulse*, 2005

Don't let the opening sentence scare you off. [MR]

### ***Margarettown***

Gabrielle Zevin, *Miramax*, 2005

*Margarettown* was the first Tiptree nominee that I really fell in love with. Unfortunately, no amount of category stretching would make it fit the basic criteria: it's not really about gender, and what initially appears to be a fantasy scenario turns out to have a nonmagical explanation. But that didn't stop me from devouring the whole novel at one sitting. [MR]

## **2005 Special Mention**

### ***Writing the Other***

Nisi Shawl and Cynthia Ward, *Aqueduct Press*, 2005

It's one of the more vexing questions a novice writer faces: "How do I learn to portray people from other cultures without needlessly giving offense and/or making a fool of myself?" Nisi Shawl and Cynthia Ward don't promise to make it easy—as with so many artistic skills, this one requires plenty of trial and error to develop—but they do offer tips and strategies for avoiding the more obvious mistakes. A concise guide that is cheaper and less carcinogenic than a flame-retardant suit. [MR]

### ***Regender***

(<http://regender.com/index.html>)

When I first heard about *Regender*, it struck me as little more than a gimmick. Then I tried it out on Google News, and began reading about the latest doings of President Georgia W. Bush and her Vice President, Diane Cheney.... While I still don't think it's taught me anything about gender stereotypes, as a portal for looking into an alternate universe—one

in which I am Mary Ruff, beloved wife of Lionel Gold—*Regender* earns itself a bookmark on my web browser. [MR]

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## **The 2006 James Tiptree, Jr. Award**

**Nippon, Japan**

**Prize:** artist ?

**Song:**

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### **Judges**

Midori Snyder chair

Joan Gordon

Takayuki Tatsumi

Diane Silver

Laurel Winter