

# Scratch Pad 52



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Based on *The Great Cosmic Donut of Life No. 37*, a magazine written and published by Bruce Gillespie, 59 Keele Street, Victoria 3066, Australia (phone (03) 9419-4797; email: gandc@mira.net) for the April 2003 mailing of *Acnestis*. Cover: 'The Crack in Space' (photo by Elaine Cochrane of the east-facing wall, 59 Keele Street, Collingwood).

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As Elaine describes next page, Our Home and Castle is under threat. Which means that my precious collection, or at least the part that lives in my workroom, will be packed in boxes and taken elsewhere. That's the sound of my arms being ripped off!

I'm not sure where I'll be sleeping for several weeks. (At least two rooms will be out of action at any one time.) The nice people next door have said that I can set up my computer and work in one of their rooms, but occupying space in someone else's house poses problems. It's not clear where Elaine will be setting up her computer. She has an even greater amount of freelance work than I have.

For more than six weeks at the beginning of the year, I had almost no paying work. I went ahead and published *SF Commentary* 78 anyway. It cost a lot more than I had put aside for it — more than \$4000. By the end of February I was broke. I still am. (Elaine is not broke. That's why we can repair the side wall.)

Christmas was as boring as ever, except for a genuine family gathering at my mother's place; the first time my two sisters and I had been together at Christmas for many years. Christmas brought letters from two people I hadn't heard from in — in one case, 15 years, and in the other case, 27 years. I found myself writing daily email messages to the latter person. This is about the frequency that people post to weblogs (blogs). I wonder: how do they do it? I soon

found that the events of my own life are pretty boring, although the other person's letters have not been.

I had no paying work in January, but produced a fanzine. Now I have lots of paying work. In the bits of time left over, I try to answer a few letters, watch a few films or DVDs, and even listen to some CDs. That's life. It's not pretty; it's not exciting; it's really really boring to write about.

Which is why this bit is shorter than you'd expect from Bruce Gillespie. The book list at the end of this issue tells you what I've been reading, and what I watched last year. Best films of 2003 so far include *One Hour Photo* and *Death to Smoochy* (both with Robin Williams acting against type), *Donnie Darko*, and *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, which I've seen three times. As usual, I'm way behind on listening to CDs, although I can recommend the new Calexico album, *A Feast of Wire* (each track a different genre, although there is a basic TexMex sound to about half the tracks).

Otherwise, much is doom and gloom, with both John Foyster and Peter McNamara distinctly unwell, each suffering from a brain tumour; two non-fan friends of mine, the same age as me, being treated for cancer, as is the daughter of a friend; and deaths all over. Much missed is Harry Warner Jr, dead at the age of 80 (17 February 2003, which was also my fifty-sixth birthday). Next issue will feature his life and work.

While I was finishing the last stages of this issue, Yvonne Rousseau, John Foyster's partner, phoned Elaine and me with the news that John Foyster died at 9 p.m. South Australian time, on 5 April 2003, just eight days short of his sixty-second birthday.

In 28 September 2001, Yvonne sent us the news that John had suffered a severe stroke in Adelaide. It took until the first week of January 2002 for John to receive the diagnosis that he was actually suffering from a brain tumour. In the 15 months since then, John has suffered much, but has also had many relatively comfortable weeks and months. During that period he produced 14 issues of his email fanzine eFNAC, has been awarded the A. Bertram Chandler Award for his lifetime of service to the Australian SF community, and has maintained contact with his friends all over the world. John Foyster has been an integral part of my world since 1966, and of Elaine's since the mid 1970s. Like many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people all over the world, we feel severely bereaved. Much love and thanks to Yvonne for her long vigil, and to others, such as Myfanwy, Miranda and Jenny, who have cared for and visited John and Yvonne during the last year and a half.

You might remember that I sent everybody in *Acnestis* a copy of *SF Commentary* 77. I received responses from almost nobody, so this time I sent copies of *SFC* 78 to a few members of *Acnestis*, and I didn't receive responses this time either. Did you get your copy, Chris, Maureen and Paul, and Andy's Butler and Sawyer? I know Dave Langford received his copy, because he sent me a really useful letter of comment (and a copy of *Maps*). Steve Jeffery had reviews published in *SFC* 78, but I haven't heard from him. Does that mean that most of the copies disappeared across the Indian Ocean?

However, many people in *Acnestis* might still like a copy of *SFC* 78, even though they didn't reply to No. 77. If so, just

ask. I still have copies left.

I can't think of anything to say about The War that other people haven't said. Heath Ledger said it best on Andrew Denton's TV interview program: 'I feel ashamed of being part of a country whose government has helped attack another country.' That's what I feel about President Shrub's unilateral action, supported by li'l ol' arse-licker Howard (still only supported in any way by about half the Australian voting public). What journalists are not saying is: What if the USA suddenly doesn't like *your* country? What hope have you got then?

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## Elaine Cochrane

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### The crack in space Cover story

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I know we need a bigger house, but this is ridiculous!

Our subsoil is reactive clay, and the depth of foundations used in 1914, when our house was built, did not allow for this. Hence the effect shown. It's a little disconcerting when you see the sun shining through your bookshelves, ten feet from the nearest window.

In the middle of the year we called on a much more competent friend to come and glue it together for us. Trouble is we had precious little rain after that, so we had to get him back again in November. It's since opened up as much again, so much so that we're going to get the whole wall replaced. It will take months just to get the paperwork

done before the builders can start, so it could be a very cold and draughty winter. At least the crack is on the east side so we don't get much weather through it. Meanwhile I'm taking cuttings of all the plants along that bed — they won't stand a chance against the builders — and wondering how much else of the garden will be destroyed.

For various complicated reasons to do with land-use regulations we can't extend the house into the garden area — not that I want to lose any garden anyway — and in any case we couldn't afford to. Replacing the wall and restumping the back half of the house is going to clean me out financially as it is.

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## Robert Hoge interviews Bruce Gillespie

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### Writing Workshops in Australia

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[Robert Hoge, who interviewed me from Queensland via email, gave the impression that this was to be a feature article in *Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine*, the busy little Australian SF magazine. Instead, my impeccable thoughts and deathless prose were reduced to one quotation of three lines within a quite different article! So enjoy the following interview: I'm certainly not going to reprint Hoge's treatment of it.]

How did you become involved in the 1975 Le Guin

#### Workshop?

In Australia we knew about the *Clarion* writers' workshop method through reading the *Clarion* anthologies published by Robin Scott Wilson (founder of the method) during the early seventies. Lee Harding had conducted a small workshop as part of the 1973 national Easter convention, held in Melbourne, and I have a vague memory that George Turner conducted a one-day workshop in Adelaide in 1974.

But we — that is, the organising committee of the 1975

World Convention, Aussiecon I, held in Melbourne — went ahead with a week-long workshop because Ursula Le Guin asked for it. At the end of 1974, because of pressing personal reasons she wanted to withdraw from being our Pro Guest of Honour at Aussiecon. She would only stay on and make the journey from Portland to Melbourne, she said, if she could teach a Clarion-style writers' workshop in the week before Aussiecon. We agreed.

Who would organise the workshop? Other members of the Aussiecon committee pointed at me, although I had no experience of organising such an event. Carey Handfield offered to help. We scouted several locations, and in January 1975 found the beautiful Booth Lodge, a Church of England retreat in the Dandenong Ranges.

We had to choose the students who would take part in the Workshop. Most of our advertising was done through writers' groups such as the Fellowship of Australian Writers and the Australian Society of Authors. As a result, we knew almost none of the people who applied. I sent the applicants' stories to Ursula Le Guin, who chose the participants. One of the applicant stories, Philippa Maddern's 'The Ins and Outs of the Hadhya City State' was so good that it has become an Australian SF classic.

We also had to raise a fair bit of money so that the participants could afford to attend. John Bangsund used his connections with the Literature Board of the Australia Council to obtain a large grant that enabled the Aussiecon committee to keep student fees down.

Finally, we had to set up a viable photocopying operation (using the massive old thermal photocopiers of the time), so that every participant could read everybody else's submissions, then read all the stories during the week of the workshop. Most of this organisation was done by David Grigg, Robin Johnson, Don Ashby, Ken Ford and members of the Magic Pudding Club (Melbourne's slushack of the time). Somehow all the participants got to Melbourne, then to Booth Lodge, just in time to welcome Ursula, who had just stepped off the plane.

**From an organisational point of view, what was the biggest surprise for you that came out of the 1975 Le Guin workshop? What was the most enjoyable aspect? And the least?**

I was a hopeless organiser in 1975. Many kind souls took over from me and did the organising. This was the least enjoyable aspect of the workshop, especially as the same people were supposed to be organising the last stages of Aussiecon itself. The most enjoyable aspect was meeting Ursula Le Guin, and becoming one of the writing students instead of merely remaining an onlooker.

Surprises? Everything was surprising. It remains possibly the most exciting week of my life, because not only could I see my own writing improving, but I could also see astonishing improvements in the work of all the other participants. People worked at a lunatic pace: staying up to one or two in the morning to finish their stories, getting up at 8 for breakfast, workshoping the stories all morning, then settling down to the next story (or next revision of the previous story) after lunch. We became a group mind, each encouraging the other, with every triumph of every person giving extra energy to everybody else.

**In *The Altered I* you talk about Le Guin in part by saying: 'That she trusted us to trust each other to trust ourselves.' Could you expand a bit on this please? Were you saying that at the end of the day, the participants in the workshop are**

**as much if not more important to the experience than the tutor, or something else?**

What is the essence of the Clarion writers' workshop method? A circle of writers in a large room. A few hours before, we have received copies of the stories or versions written the day before by all the other participants. We discuss each story in turn. The person whose story is being discussed cannot reply until every other person has made his or her comment. This could become a ghastly experience. I've been told that some writers in residence at some American Clarion workshops have chosen to make these sessions into confrontations that have left some students psychologically scarred for life. Not so when Ursula Le Guin is in the room. A spirit of enthusiastic joy suffuses the room. Other students' comments might not be always perceptive, but many are very helpful. When everybody else has had their say, Ursula says two or three sentences; nothing more. And we pass onto the next story. The student whose story has just been discussed goes away at the end of the session, works most of the night, and comes back with a story that neither that person nor the rest of us could have expected. Magic is here, and it is created by every person present.

**As someone who was at the centre of organising Australia's first real live-in SF workshop, what advice would you be giving the organisers of Clarion South? If there was one crucial thing they must get right, what would it be? Is there anything you'd change about the 1975 workshop if you could go back and redo it?**

After attending the 1975 workshop, I would have said that, apart from choosing the right teacher or teachers and picking the participants carefully, physical surroundings are the most important aspect of a successful workshop. Someone has described the usual six-week Clarion-style workshop as 'boot camp for writers'. If so, nobody wants to be worrying about uncomfortable beds, heat or cold, or badly cooked meals. The cost must include such amenities. Booth Lodge had idyllic physical surroundings (the hills of the Dandenongs, cutting us off from the rest of the world), comfortable rooms, adequate heating and superb meals.

However, the 1979 workshop in Sydney, at which Terry Carr and George Turner were the writers in residence, undercuts my argument. The facilities were awful, the rooms were ferociously hot, and almost every physical aspect was judged a failure. Yet the 1979 workshop has proved the most successful of the three in turning out writers who have continued to publish in the eighties and nineties (Sussex, Frahm, Buckrich, Blackford, and several others). The participants felt that they had their backs to the wall; physical discomfort is perhaps a better training for the writer's life than the comforts of Booth Lodge in 1975.

I can't offer much advice to the organisers of Clarion South except to take on board everything they've heard or read about six-week-style workshops. Such workshops cannot sustain the level of intense activity that people remember from the 1970s Australian workshops. Nobody can stay on a high plain of excitement for six weeks without expiring. There must be time and facilities for leisure activity at weekends. The style of each writer in residence must be different from the person teaching the week before or week after.

**What is your opinion of residential writing workshops in general? How successful can they be and what sort of people**

**benefit most from them?**

The organisers of Clarion workshops in America and Britain can point to the large numbers of graduates who have become successful writers. In Australia, we can point to some successes, but most of them are from the 1979 workshop. Most of the brightest stars of the 1975 and 1977 workshops became successful in other fields — Pip Maddern in academic history, David Grigg in IT, Rob Gerrand in public relations, etc.

The problem with writers' workshops is that they come to an end. That extraordinary buzz generated by a community of like-minded people, the buzz that causes lots of literary caterpillars to turn into high-flying butterflies, must end. Writers go back to lonely desks. Many of them turn back into caterpillars. They keep in touch with each other, but ordinary existence robs them of writing time. With any luck, today's writers' workshops place much more emphasis on the practicalities of the writer's life than they once did.

My guess is that writers who were always going to be a success gain most from the workshops. They can speed up the learning process immensely, gain connections in the publishing world, learn about what sells, work out their own literary priorities. As for the rest of us, the also-rans — we tend to remember the workshop itself as a highlight of our lives. I've long since given up writing fiction, although I still write a large amount of non-fiction.

**How did the 1975 and 1977 Writers' Workshops lead to the publication of *The Altered I* and *A View from the Edge*?**

No event takes place in a vacuum. In 1975 and 1977, our collective confidence that we could hold such workshops sprang from our collective confidence in all aspects of Australian SF activity. In 1975, Carey Handfield, Rob Gerrand and I began Norstrilia Press, a small press that continued until 1985. Lee Harding edited the best stories from the 1975 workshop, as well as telling the story of the participants. Ursula Le Guin contributed a story. *The Altered I* appeared in 1976, and was republished in America by Berkeley Books. After the 1977 workshop, held at Monash University, with Christopher Priest, Vonda McIntyre and George Turner as writers in residence, George put together *A View from the Edge*.

**Would you like to see Clarion South produce its own equivalent of *The Altered I* and *The View from the Edge*?**

Why not? Today, there are plenty of small presses capable of producing a good-looking volume. You would have the advantage of deciding to do a book *before* the workshop, not after it. A major publisher might pitch in. If your writers in residence are willing to contribute new stories to such a volume, you might be able to sell overseas rights, as we did for *The Altered I*.

**Is the Australian SF community big enough on its own to support an annual six-week workshop catering for 17 or 18 writers? Are there enough writers to make it viable as an ongoing concern?**

Any doubt about this proposition would be banished by attending any of the recent national SF conventions in Australia. Not only do we now have several writers earning a good living from fiction (which was not the case in 1975), but we have vast numbers of wannabe writers who have great

potential but perhaps don't yet know how to forge a career. The only restriction on numbers could be cost per student — the organisers of Clarion South will have to become expert money-raisers as well as solving the other details of running a six-week workshop.

**If successful, what would the establishment of an annual residential writing workshop mean to Australian speculative fiction?**

That depends on the publishers. In 1975 and 1977, the only regular publishers of Australian SF were our two small presses, Norstrilia Press and Cory & Collins, and a few overseas publishers, such as Berkeley and Gollancz, who were on the lookout for good Australian novels. Today we have several major publishers earning a great deal from local authors, plus quite a few overseas markets, such as Tor, buying novels from Australian authors. Writers now can see a career path before them, which was not the case in the 1970s.

**To what extent did the Australian SF community get behind the 1975 and 1977 workshops? Was that important to its success? How important is it for the organisers of Clarion South to try to involve the wider SF community as much as possible?**

As I've tried to show, the 1975 and 1977 workshops were at the centre of SF writing activity at that time. Apart from anything else, Ursula Le Guin dazzled us with her wit and wisdom. Two years later, Chris Priest and Vonda McIntyre stayed on for Monoclave, the convention held out at Monash University on the Australia Day weekend, January 1977. This set the pattern for inviting overseas guests of honour to local conventions. In 1979, Terry Carr was an exciting writer to have around, and George Turner's overseas career in publishing SF was beginning. Heady days indeed.

But what was just as important was the backing of the Literature Board of the Australia Council for the three workshops. I suspect such funds are no longer available.

Therefore the involvement of the whole SF community will be important, both for alerting promising new writers to the possibilities of the writers' workshop method, and in raising money to hold Clarion South.

**Clarion South has announced the first half of its lineup for 2004 — Terry Dowling, Lucy Sussex and Jack Dann. Given the organisers are hoping to run Clarion South annually, who would be on your wish list (national and international) as tutors?**

My wish list would have little to do with the authors I most enjoy reading. They must be good teachers. Find out the people who have proven most successful at workshops, both here and overseas. Remember that such a person has to be a substitute parent for a week, often dealing with trivial matters and conflicts as well as the major task of inspiring writers. You don't need too many overseas people, except perhaps an overseas agent or publisher's editor. Terry, Lucy and Jack have all taught workshops, and quite a few other well-known writers have been writing teachers — Alison Goodman is an obvious candidate. Philippa Maddern has not published much fiction for awhile, but would be a superb teacher (and she attended both the 1975 and 1977 workshops), whereas other working writers might not relish

the role of teacher. Clarion South should also consider non-SF writers who have been successful writers and workshop teachers, such as Garry Disher, Thea Astley, and Liam

Davison.

— Bruce Gillespie, 22 November 2002

# BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS

## Books read since 21 March 2002

### Ratings

\*\* Books recommended highly.

\* Books recommended.

☹ Books about which I have severe doubts.

\* **THE BIG BLOWDOWN** by George P. Pelecanos (1996; Serpents Tail 1-8524-670-5; 313 pp.)

Thanks to Jamie Reuel for lending me this book, even if he overpraised it. Pelecanos is supposed to be the Hot New Writer in American crime fiction, but to me this book didn't demonstrate his clear superiority in any branch of the writing game. I found the book's style overwritten and laboured. It has an overcomplicated plot about Americans of Greek background who run into, across and over each other in Washington in the 1940s. I had the constant feeling that it was being pitched at a director such as Sidney Lumet, who might base a Big Serious Movie on it. I like my American crime fiction with a slightly lighter touch than this, which is perhaps why I enjoy mysteries by Lawrence Sanders. I'll try another couple of Pelecanos's books before giving up on him.

\* **A WOMAN'S EYE** edited by Sara Paretsky (1992; Dell 0-440-21335-0; 448 pp.)

A disappointing collection, but not because of any lack of editorial skill by Sara Paretsky. This collection shows that mystery fiction is not a short story medium. With a few exceptions, these stories read like breathless condensations of mystery novels. The exceptions include 'Deborah's Judgment' by Margaret Maron, which is a memorable tale about revenge within a closely knit family, and Dorothy B. Hughes' 'That Summer at Quichiquois', a vividly Gothic story of digging up the past. The best story, 'Lucky Dip' by Liza Cody, is a story full of merry twists and turns, a jaunty jape about an English graveyard and an unlikely con artist.

\*\* **WALKIN' AFTER MIDNIGHT** by Lauren St John (2000; Picador 0-330-39182-8; 277 pp.; £7.99/\$A20.05)

Alternative country music (often called alt.country) is not an overwhelming interest of most people I meet. If, like me, you worship the names of Emmylou Harris, Buddy and Julie Miller, Steve Earle, Gillian Welch, and the other people Lauren St John followed around America for a year, you must buy this book. If you have no idea what alt.country is, I can tell you that it's where rock and roll went when it was deleted from the playlists of mass-market radio stations. That's not the whole story: many of the performers discussed by St John are devoted scholars of bluegrass, country blues and other traditional forms of American music. I particularly enjoyed St John's account of Emmylou Harris's and

Steve Earle's lives on the road: no pretensions, not much comfort, and sometimes a lot of negative aggro to their leftish (by American standards), cause-motivated benefit concerts. St John has since written a biography of Steve Earle.

\*\* **THE TELLING** by Ursula K. Le Guin (2000; Harcourt 0-15-100567-2; 264 pp.; \$US24/\$AUD52.80)

I couldn't add much to what the other reviewers (including Ros Gross in *SF Commentary* 78) have said about this book. It follows much the same pattern as Le Guin's other political liberation books, whether SF (*The Dispossessed*) or non-SF (*Malafrena*), but rings some new changes. Particularly enjoyable is Le Guin's description of the landscape of the planet on which this novel is set. We trudge along every step of the way with the main character's journey over the mountain to the caves of knowledge, much as we trudged with Genly Ai through the whiteout landscape of *The Left Hand of Darkness*. *The Telling* has only one moment of fantasy, which for me is the most memorable paragraph in the book.

\*\* **THE OTHER WIND** by Ursula K. Le Guin (2001; Harcourt 0-15-100684-9; 246 pp.; \$US25/\$A57.95)

As a reader, I stepped off the ship at the beginning of *The Other Wind*, and felt right at home. Like many readers, I feel that Earthsea is the planet I should really be living in. However, the beginning of *The Other Wind* introduces us to a troubled set of communities, with dragons flying in from the west, and people restive all over. The main character has nightmares that centre on the images of death most recently encountered in Le Guin's *The Farthest Shore*. All, it seems, was not solved by Ged's sacrifice of his powers at the end of that novel. The wizards might have got the whole picture wrong. *The Other Wind* shows that rarest of phenomena: a novelist dramatising, in the form of her own characters and landscapes, major pangs of revisionism about her own pet ideas. It's a disturbing process, and I'm not sure the result is an entirely successful novel, but I wouldn't have missed a page of it.

\*\* **TALES FROM EARTHSEA** by Ursula K. Le Guin (2001; Harcourt 0-15-100561-3; 296 pp.)

I'm not sure whether or not this collection of five novellas was published before *The Other Wind* or after it. It shares the novel's spirit of Earthsea revisionism. In the first novel, *A Wizard of Earthsea*, Earthsea appeared as a self-sustaining anarchy, the sort of place we would like to live rather than on old earthy Earth. In *Tales from Earthsea*, the anarchic situation is shown as a fragile situation, often a cover for oppression and

warfare. Le Guin here is all in favour of a king, or somebody to set things straight. In the first novella, Gont is shown as a wizardly Second Foundation, the kernel of a wisdom group that will some day take things in hand. By the end of the end of the book, we meet the lady who is also a dragon, the redemptive but dangerous figure who bursts into the finale of *The Other Wind*. It's very enjoyable to meet Le Guin inhabiting her world in this spacious way, but we also get the feeling that she enjoys the company of wizards, royalty and gentlefolk more than she likes slogging around with the farmers and townfolk of Earthsea. Maybe the next chapter of the Earthsea saga will give us a completely non-patrician view of the place.

\* **BLUE SILENCE** by **Michelle Marquardt** (2002; Bantam 0-86325-251-7; 404 pp.; \$A17.95)

*Blue Silence* won the George Turner Prize (\$10,000 and publication by Random House Australia) in 2000, but it took two years for the book to appear, and there is no indication that the prize will be awarded again. Does this mean that *Blue Silence* was the poor best of an uninteresting group of contenders? I fear so, because the book has some problems. The greatest difficulty is that, after slogging through 120,000 words, the reader is no closer to finding out anything about the aliens who, as the blurb puts it, arrive in a mysterious craft that docks on a space station in orbit around Earth. We find out a lot about the people who are investigating the craft, and have to put up with some very banal spaceship and terrestrial politics, but in science-fictional terms almost nothing happens in this book. Did Michelle Marquardt originally submit a book twice this size, which was split into two for publication? Will there be a sequel? A sequel seems necessary, but I won't bother reading it. Meanwhile, surely there are much better SF manuscripts floating around Australia waiting for somebody to publish them?

\* **ENGLISH MUSIC** by **Peter Ackroyd** (1992; Hamish Hamilton 0-241-13257-6; 400 pp.; £9.99)

This is a very odd book. As the blurb tells us, Timothy Harcombe, apprentice to his father Clement, a faith healer, can pass over to earlier periods of English history and art during his 'visions'. Each vision is supposed to exemplify the artistic essence of the period he visits. The blurb, presumably written by the author, says that the main character is attuned to 'the Englishness of English literature and English art — in other words, he hears English music for the first time'. However, Timothy's 'real' life, as well as the lives he leads in his visions, are so uniformly dreary and ponderous that Ackroyd persuades us that the English should have given up on art, music and the whole damn thing around the time of Chaucer. The idea for the book is attractive, and the book is a convincing work of fantasy, but Ackroyd's lugubrious approach makes nonsense of the idea itself.

\*\* **IN THE SECRET STATE** by **Robert McCrum** (1980; Hamish Hamilton 0-241-10322-3; 250 pp.; £5.95)

Robert McCrum is a more compelling writer about English spooks than John Le Carre, because he uses many fewer words to revel in plots that are as convoluted as Le Carre's. In this early effort of McCrum's, we do not even discover the name of the agency in London for which Frank Strange works. Sinister events

lead him to suspect almost everybody, and in turn he becomes a prime suspect, although it is hard to find out who is suspected of what. McCrum's theme is not loyalty, as the blurb claims, but the solipsistic nature of spy organisations. Nobody is much concerned about the Overseas Enemy; instead, the bloke next door is likely to be the real foe.

\*\* **BEWARE OF PITY (UNGEDOLD DES HERZENS)** by **Stefan Zweig** (1938; Penguin Modern Classics 0-14-006807-4; 353 pp.; £4.95/\$A8.95)

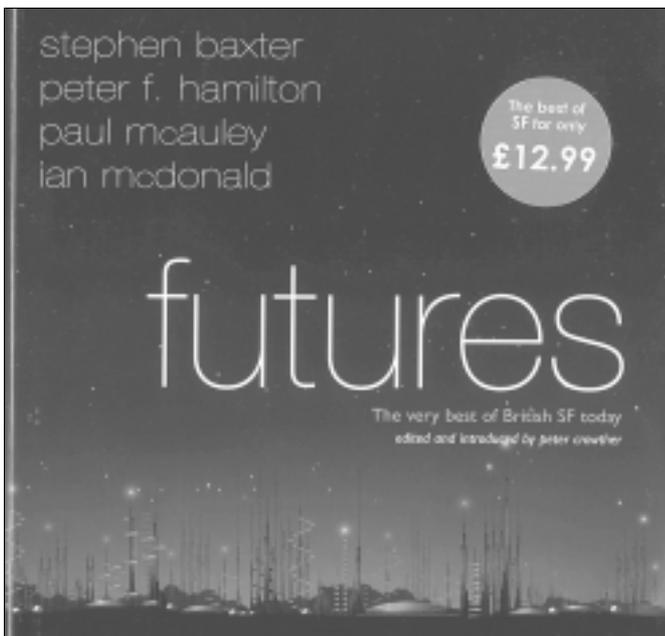
I suppose *Beware of Pity* is not well known because it is essentially a nineteenth-century novel, but published just before World War II. Forget this difficulty, and you find yourself reading a rattling good novel that never pretends to be anything but high melodrama. This novel feels unapologetically anachronistic in style and mood although it tells of events that happened just before World War I. It is also unapologetically German in tone: the main character, the story-teller, is extremely high-minded, pure of spirit, noble, brave, and would be very boring if he hadn't made a number of ghastly misperceptions about human relationships. The slow disaster of his fall is fascinating because we can see what's happening and he can't. We feel the pain he causes to other characters in a way he never quite can, because by the end of the book he's become aware of his predicament and is trying to cover his back. The story is simple: a young, naive officer is offered friendship by a wealthy family in the back-country town where he's stationed. He falls in love with the beautiful daughter of the family, and offers friendship, out of a kind of self-important pity, to the other, crippled daughter, whose sufferings actually rule this family. In the process, he makes a promise he cannot keep. The plot is predictable, but the maze of agonies and self-lies we find in the story-teller's mind are as original as anything in Proust.

\* **JUBILEE** by **Jack Dann** (2001; HarperCollins Voyager 0-7322-6719-2; 443 pp.; \$A24.95)

Several Jack Dannels appear in this large selection from a lifetime's short stories (1978–2001). The chatty, avuncular Jack Dann is the least successful writer of short fiction. Even 'The Diamond Pit', a recent story written in this style, seems to be packed with too many words to support its premise. (Many readers might like a sentence such as 'It was dark when they found me, but the moon was so big and bloated that everything looked like it was coated with silvery dust, except the shadows, where the moon dust couldn't settle', but that seems overdone to me.) An entirely different Jack Dann can be found in 'Da Vinci Rising', the award-winning novella that became the core of the novel *The Memory Cathedral*. This Jack Dann relies on clear observation of place and character, slow unfolding of events, and lean, muscular sentences. Yet another Jack Dann, the author of *The Silent*, has become a major American artist, but nothing in *Jubilee* quite hints at this writer except the exquisite short story 'Tea' (first published 1988). I hope later anthologies will contain more stories of the standard of 'Tea' and 'Da Vinci Rising'.

\*\* **A WALK AMONG THE TOMBSTONES** by **Lawrence Block** (1992; Orion 0-75283-748-6; 339 pp.; £5.99/\$A16.10)

I can't add much to what I've already said many times about Lawrence Block's tales of Matt Scudder. Each of



these stories starts in a welter of interesting detail about the lives of people in New York, then acquires a mystery hook, which only gradually tightens its hold around the reader and the main characters. The answer to the mystery is always unexpected — in this case, because it seems that whoever murdered Scudder's client's wife must have had a personal vendetta against the client. Scudder gradually teases out the detail of the true motives of the criminal, then (as often happens in such stories) nearly becomes a victim himself.

\*\* **A TRAMP ABROAD** by Mark Twain (1880; Chatto & Windus; 338 pp.)

This purports to be report of the trip Mark Twain and a group of friends took around Europe in the mid nineteenth century. However, Twain keeps adding shaggy dog stories to his narratives, at first about the places he visits, but then about the adventures of the group. So it all proves to be fiction, but I suspect still gives a good idea of a Germany (in particular) as a still untamed land, still medieval. A very nineteenth-century style of humour; not for the impatient.

\* **TIME PAST** by Maxine McArthur (2002; Bantam 1-86325-284-3; 554 pp.; \$A16.95)

I read *Time Past* to its end, but found the experience decreasingly enjoyable as I crawled through its 554 pages. This is a clear case of an unnecessary sequel. The time puzzle that Halley seeks to solve becomes less and less interesting as the novel proceeds; I didn't understand the Big Revelation when it came. Events that could have been very interesting — the time trip back to a year in our immediate future — prove to be a sideshow. The author has sharp things to say about the near future, but has run out of things to say about her far-future deep space station. When Halley arrives back home, she finds it pretty stale and unwelcoming. Maxine McArthur obviously has much promise as a writer, but only when she moves into some other science-fictional territory.

\* **HIDING MY CANDY** by The Lady Chablis, and Theodore Bouloukos (1996; Pocket Books 0-671-52094-6; 208 pp.; \$US22/\$A40)

The Lady Chablis was the most entertaining character in both the book and film of *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. The success of John Berendt's book gave the Lady Chablis wide scope for what she/he does best — self-publicity. And that's about all that's in this as-told-to 'autobiography': a few good stories, and some insight into growing up black and gay in the southern states of the USA, but when it comes to real insights about what can only be called a colourful life — nothing.

\*\* **THE BURNING SECRET AND OTHER STORIES** by Stefan Zweig (1981; Penguin 0-14-011638-9; 250 pp.; £3.99/\$A11.99)

Penguin had this collection in print for many years as *The Royal Game*. In 1988, Andrew Birkin made a movie of *The Burning Secret*, based on one of the stories in this book, so Penguin reissued the book under that title. The film, which starred Faye Dunaway, Klaus Maria Brandauer and Ian Richardson, was not released in Australia. (With a cast like that, it should surely be rereleased on DVD.) The story 'The Burning Secret', like all the stories in this volume, is a rich melodrama of the kind that Stefan Zweig wrote so well. A more interesting story, however, about obsessive chess players, is 'The Royal Game', as is 'Letter from an Unknown Woman', about extreme sexual obsession. It was made into a movie by Max Ophuls in 1948, and still shows occasionally on late-night TV.

\*\* **FOURSIGHT** edited by Peter Crowther (2000; Gollancz 0-57506-870-1; 216 pp.; £16.99/\$A48.95)

\*\* **FUTURES** edited by Peter Crowther (2001; Gollancz 0-575-070234; 320 pp.; £12.99/\$A39.95)

\*\* **INFINITIES** edited by Peter Crowther (2002; Gollancz 0-575-07355-1; 358 pp.; £12.99/\$A39.95)

My long review (which began as a Nova Mob talk) of these collections, each of four novellas, appeared in *Cosmic Donut* 35. I've been told since that Peter Crowther, a major promoter of the novella form, published each story separately with his firm, PS Publishing, then collected them in these anthologies as well as in Ace Double-style paperbacks, each of which includes two novellas. To me, that's a major revival of the novella form, for which Crowther cannot be thanked enough. Each of these anthologies contains brilliant stories as well as clinkers. From *Foursight*, I recommend 'Leningrad Nights' by Graham Joyce, 'How the Other Half Lives' by James Lovegrove, and 'The Vaccinator' (for light relief) by Michael Marshall Smith. From *Infinites* I recommend 'Diamond Dogs' by Alastair Reynolds and 'Park Polar' by Adam Roberts, and the major stories in *Futures* are 'Making History' by Paul J. McAuley and 'Tendeléó's Story' by Ian McDonald. McDonald's story, covering the territory of his novel *Chaga*, but from the African viewpoint, is the most interesting story in these books.

\*\* **THE BLOOD DOCTOR** by Barbara Vine (2002; Penguin Viking 0-670-91275-1; 389 pp.; \$A29.95)

Perhaps the only mystery novel I've read that has the same feeling as *The Blood Doctor* is *The Daughter of Time* by Josephine Tey. In that book, Tey allowed her detective, ill in hospital, to reconsider the Shakespearean

case against Richard II. In *The Blood Doctor*, the main characters seek the truth about a highly decorated nineteenth-century ancestor, a doctor in Scotland and England. As the characters assemble the historical evidence, the 'blood doctor' of the title is slowly shown as a living and terrifying character, the perpetrator of a truly disturbing crime. This is the most interesting 'Barbara Vine' novel for some time.

\*\* **THE SKY WARDEN AND THE SUN** by Sean Williams (2002; HarperCollins Voyager 0-7322-6996-2; 433 pp.; \$A27.95)

Usually, as you know, I cannot enjoy heroic fantasy trilogies because (a) the main characters are boring, (b) their narratives are boring, usually with the pace of a leisurely Sunday afternoon stroll, and (c) their worlds are boring, usually pale carbon copies of pale carbon copies of Middle Earth. Sean Williams' world is interesting — a harsh equivalent of the South Australian back country, which is desert and semi-desert. His characters are interesting — Sal and Shilly, injured during the journey, tag along with Skender, the slightly silly son of the head of the Haunted City, and the three of them have some untrustworthy adults to deal with. The narrative in *Sky Warden* zooms along at a great pace, taking Sal and Shilly away from the coast, deep inland, constantly facing human as well as supernatural dangers. This is one of the few mid-trilogy novels worth reading for its own sake.

\* **THE FALLS** by Ian Rankin (2001; Orion 0-75283-861-X; 399 pp.; £10.99/\$A27.95)

Recent replays on ABC-TV of *Black and Blue* and *The Hanging Garden* (but not the others, whose rights are held here by the cable channel UK-TV, but we're not connected to cable TV) reminded me of how complex, perceptive and sardonic are early 'Rebus' mysteries by Ian Rankin are. These qualities have almost disappeared in *The Falls*, Rankin's second most recent novel in the series. A dull mystery with a predictable ending takes at least 200 pages too long to be unravelled. Why bother, Mr Rankin?

\*\* **THE SIDMOUTH LETTERS** by Jane Gardam (1980; Abacus 0-349-11408-0; 148 pp.; \$A16.35)

I keep saying that Jane Gardam is Britain's best writer of closely observed, succinct short stories, but nobody listens. Every Gardam volume contains at least one masterpiece. *The Sidmouth Letters* has 'The Tribute', which should be in every collection of Great British Stories. Three ladies, once grand dames, now down on their luck, meet over morning tea to commemorate 'poor Dench', the nanny who worked for each of them, seemingly without pay or much thanks in her lifetime. Their contempt for Dench nearly equals their self-pity about their own fates. Only the arrival of an unexpected stranger at their table puts into perspective all their grumblings and self-justification. The surprise ending is delicious. 'For He Heard the Loud Bassoon' is also a miniature miracle of a story about one man's obsessions and self-deception. 'The Sidmouth Letters' is a fine tribute to Jane Austen and Austenologists. 'A Spot of Gothic' is one of those rural ghost stories that Gardam does so well — the kind of story where you can't be sure there's a ghost at all until the last line.

\*\* **UNITED STATES: ESSAYS 1952–1992** by Gore Vidal (1993; Andre Deutsch 0-233-98832-7; 1295 pp.; £25/\$A59.95)

This giant book demands a Major Review, which I

don't have time to give it. (Such a review would best be done by quoting Vidal's sharpest *bon mots*. Since almost every page includes a cracker, such a list would add up to hundreds of pages.) Collectively, the essays in *United States* have three main propositions: that, in building a Roman-style empire since 1900, the USA has destroyed its pretensions to democracy, impoverished a high percentage of its population, and become a pain in the arse for the rest of the world; that the main method of enslaving or annoying ordinary Americans has been to use the country's law-enforcement facilities to put in jail people whose morals offend those in power ('victimless crime'), instead of prosecuting the true criminals, who run much of the country's economic activity; and that Americans should (a) read instead of watching TV or movies, and (b) should read for pleasure instead of reading authors such as Thomas Pynchon who (according to Vidal) write books to be taught in university not read for pleasure. Gore Vidal obviously counts SF, fantasy and children's literature as reading pleasures: *United States* includes long essays on 'The Oz Books', 'E. Nesbit's Magic', 'Tarzan Revisited' and 'Lessing's Science Fiction'. He mentions Le Guin favourably, but has not yet written a long essay on her work.

\* **BETTER TO HAVE LOVED: THE LIFE OF JUDITH MERRIL** by Judith Merrill and Emily Pohl-Weary (2002; Between the Lines 1-896357-57-1; 282 pp.)

Thanks to Dick Jenssen for giving me this book, as I might not have tracked it down otherwise. Seemingly the long-anticipated autobiography of Judith Merrill, who died in 1997, it turns out to be a difficult book to consider. It includes autobiographical fragments by Judith Merrill, probably the most influential woman in the science fiction world since the 1930s, but those fragments don't tell us what we would like to know (how much did Merrill contribute to Walter Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, his only complete novel? what role did Merrill have in the English and American New Wave movements? what did she actually accomplish after she moved to Canada, apart from her work in the cooperative movement?), and some of the letters and other pieces gathered by editor Emily Pohl-Weary reveal some things we are just a bit embarrassed to find out. Merrill's tribute to Ted Sturgeon adds greatly to our understanding of that man as a writer and teacher, but her memories of Fred Pohl gives us little idea of why they got together in the first place. Merrill really does appear to have believed that 'all you need is love', whereas what we remember best of her is the fights she was in, including those she won. I'll never forget the pleasure of discovering her 'Best Of' collections in secondhand shops in the early sixties, and being grateful that somebody Out There had so much more astute editorial skills than the dumbclucks who edited the other anthologies. But she doesn't tell us how she won the battles she must have fought to ensure those anthologies were published. *Better to Have Loved* will leave readers feeling exasperated, demanding that somebody should write a detailed biography of Judith Merrill.

\*\* **BEARBRASS: IMAGINING EARLY MELBOURNE** by Robyn Annear (1995; Mandarin 1-86330-418-5; 290 pp.; \$A17.95)

Robyn Annear made herself famous around Melbourne for a few minutes when she described herself,

on the half-title page of this book, as ‘a typist’ who ‘lives in country Victoria with somebody else’s husband’. She’s a lively historian of early Melbourne (one of whose early names was ‘Bearbrass’, although it could easily have been called ‘Batmania’, after John Batman, one of its founders), but I kept hoping that the book would show some real depth of insight. Annear is good at showing how Melbourne developed rapidly from a few houses beside the Yarra River when it was settled in 1835, to a bustling frontier town during the 1840s, busily commercial but still made up of streets that were dust in summer and deep mud in winter, to a town that in 1850 could declare its independence from New South Wales, be fully planned if hardly built upon, and claim to be a riproaring kind of place with a real future. Annear skillfully shows a group of people, far from any other outposts of Empire (500 miles from Sydney in one direction or Hobart in the other direction), who set out to build a living town, with rules, town governance, shops, houses and even the beginnings of interesting entertainment, all in 14 years. Some of these people, such as Batman and Fawkner, come to life, but mainly this is pop history of the past, the kind of book that would set me off reading more deeply about early Melbourne if I only had the time.

\*\* **MANY MASKS: A LIFE OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT** by **Brendan Gill**

(1987; Heinemann 0-434-29274-5; 544 pp.; £9.95)

I read this book because it was next in my reading system, but it proved to be one of the most entertaining books of the year. I’d always known that Frank Lloyd Wright was a bit of a lad, but Brendan Gill shows him as the ‘snake-oil salesman’ of all time, perhaps the most entertaining and irritating American of the twentieth century after Orson Welles. Wright had almost limitless energy and ego, and his gift of the gab regularly enabled him to persuade rich people to spend millions of dollars more than they meant to on houses that were always on the point of not being built. Wright’s private life was a mess, and occasionally a tragedy (a house servant burnt down the first Taliesin, killing the servant and Wright’s second wife), and he always owed millions of dollars more than he earned, but he floated above all such considerations. He knew he was a genius, and everybody agreed with him. He even maintained enough self-confidence to survive a financially barren Depression and World War II, and restart his career at the age of seventy with his most famous house, ‘Fallingwater’, and his most famous public building, the Guggenheim Museum in New York. This book has lots of pictures, but better still, it rattles along with many outrageously funny stories about a man who lived the truth that there is no success like excess.

\* **THE SCIENCE FICTION OF CORDWAINER SMITH** by **Karen L. Hellekson**

(2001; McFarland 0-7864-1149-X; 158 pp.; \$US28.50/\$A60)

I’m supposed to review this book for another publication, so I won’t say much here. Let’s just say that one of SF’s few truly great writers, Cordwainer Smith, is badly served here by a writer who believes that telling us lots and bits and pieces about a writer’s work somehow automatically gives us an insight into that work’s genius. Not here.

\*\* **No. 472 CHEYNE WALK: CARNACKI: THE UNTOLD STORIES** by **A. F. Kidd and Rick Kennett** (2002; Ash-Tree Press 1-55310-037-9; 235 pp.)

Rick Kennett has already described the genesis of this book in his article ‘Finding Carnacki the Ghost-finder’ (*SFC* 78). The finished product is a beautiful piece of bookcraft by Ash-Tree Press, and within limits, a satisfying book of short fiction. The limits are those imposed by the author admired and emulated by Kidd and Kennett — William Hope Hodgson. The only way I can describe Hodgson, like H. P. Lovecraft, is as a writer who never quite got his rocks off. Carnacki the ghost-finder tells tales of horrifying things that go bump (or worse) in the night, but Carnacki’s job is to contain them, send them back, never to find out what they really are or contend with them or the world they come from. The hero of a Hodgson-style story never quite fights the horrors of the night or beats them; he merely sends them back into the stygian darkness. Kidd and Kennett capture this theme of unfulfillment brilliantly in eleven of the twelve stories. In ‘The Keeper of the Minter Light’, Kennett harnesses his own natural talent, allowing his hero to break the boundaries of the Hodgson world and penetrate the barrier that divides our world from the supernatural world. The result is one of the best fantasy stories written in Australia.

\*\* **TRANSCENSION** by **Damien Broderick**

(2002; Tor 0-675-30369-8; 348 pp.; \$US25.95/\$A49.95)

I hardly need to add to the reviews of this book you can find in *SFC* 78, except to add my congratulations to Damien Broderick for placing the emphasis of the novel on its characters. The Big Effects are at the end of the novel, after the real drama has finished. The novel tells two stories, one obviously set in our far future and the other, the Valley, seemingly in a nineteenth-century past. Both actually coexist. Amanda from one society invades the sheltered, puritanical Valley society. Her escapades cause much bother to Mathewmark and his family in the Valley. Mohammed Abdel-Malik attempts to provide a bridge between the two societies. The characters make congenial and lively company, and dramatise the book’s main themes without any need for those closing Big Effects. It seems odd to say it of a writer who has been publishing steadily for 40 years, but Damien Broderick is in 2003 Australia’s Writer to Watch. (He has just picked up the Aurealis Award for Best Australian SF Novel of the year.)

\* **EVIL EARTHS** edited by **Brian Aldiss**

(1975; Avon 0-380-44636-7; 318 pp.; \$US2.50)

This is one of the anthologies of ‘Golden Age’ (1940s and 1950s) SF that Brian Aldiss edited in the 1970s. Unfortunately, the premise of this particular volume — stories about environmental concerns — is a 1970s premise, and Aldiss tries to pack some very ordinary stories into the ‘evil earths’ bag. There are no unexpected gems, and there is one unexpected stinker (Henry Kuttner’s novel-length ‘The Time Trap’, a real reputation-spoiler). The successful stories are ones we already know and love: William Tenn’s ‘Down Among the Dead Men’, Aldiss’s own ‘Heresies of the Huge God’, still as refreshingly grim as when it was first published, and John W. Campbell’s immortal ‘Night’ (from 1935).

\*\* **LIARS IN LOVE** by Richard Yates  
(1982; Dell Delta 0-440-54697-4; 272 pp.; \$US6.95/  
\$A11.95)

These long stories add up to a bit of an oddity — first published from 1978 to 1981, they read as if they were written in the 1940s or early 1950s, and most of them deal with the years before World War II. Not that this diminishes from their quality, but I did have a constant feeling of temporal double vision as I read them. Nearly all of them deal with the mistakes made by young people. 'Oh Joseph, I'm So Tired' tells of a mother from hell trying to survive in New York during the Depression, and the child dragged around, trying to understand what Mother is up to. 'Liars in Love' tells of a young man in London, caught off guard by a fragile love offered by a whore met by mistake on a rainy night. The title of the last story, 'Saying Goodbye to Sally', sums up the rueful tone of the stories. If the tone of the stories were a bit sharper, if the method a bit more rigorous, Yates might be more famous than he is. But I might not have enjoyed the stories as much as I did.

\*\* **THE SEPARATION** by Christopher Priest  
(2002; Scribner 0-7432-2033-1; 464 pp.; £10.99/  
\$A27.95)

I've read this novel only once. This puts me at a disadvantage compared to the person who has read it twice, or many times. This I need to do in order to write the long review I've been asked to write. In the meantime, here's an impression, not a review. Christopher Priest writes in a very plain style that is easy to read. The ease of reading his books hides the fact the author does strange things to the perceptions of the reader who is being lulled into the belief he or she is reading a straightforward narrative. However, a character who appears to be the story-teller at the beginning disappears by the end of the novel, a pair of twin brothers who live in one version of the years 1936 until 2002 appear to swap parallel histories with an equivalent pair of twins, but are not actually the agents of difference between these histories, although both sets of twins take part in critical events in their histories. Priest's cavalier skill is in making all this seemingly quite clear until the reader reaches the end of the novel and cannot quite work out which universe is which. The point of these proceedings is not entirely to prove how clever the author is, for he gradually develops an original, serious thesis about Britain's conduct during World War II.

\*\* **LAST ORDERS** by Graham Swift  
(1996; Picador 0-330-48967-4; 295 pp.; £6.99/\$A21)

Scholars will derive any number of theses and papers on the similarities and differences between Swift's novel of *Last Orders* and the recent Fred Schepisi film. It's a tribute to Schepisi that he has been able to put on film most of the emotional currents that flow through the book. Indeed, it almost needs a film to make sense of the crosscuts in time and experience that make up the book — the intertwined lives of the four men who carry Jack Dodds's ashes to the sea to be scattered, the dead man who inspires such devotion, and Amy, Jack's widow, who is the real centre of the novel. Gradually the reader sees the total pattern of these pieces of conversation, both past and present, and the novel does become a satisfactory whole by its end.

\* **GRIDIRON** by Philip Kerr  
(1995; Chatto & Windus 0-7011-6503-0; 372 pp.;  
\$A19.95)

This near future technology horror novel has such a great big beautiful cliché at its heart that the author even tells what it is. Yes, the superbuilding in which the characters find themselves is the equivalent of HAL in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Gridiron, the ultimate smart building, decides that humans are its enemy. It locks the doors and starts exterminating them. Since this is the eve of the official launch of the building, its designers and techs are the people trapped inside them. Will they beat the building? Will any of them escape alive? This is not subtle stuff, and it's fun because many of the technological gizmos that Gridiron uses probably exist already. All that's missing is the AI to launch them against humans.

\* **BOLD AS LOVE: A NEAR FUTURE FANTASY**  
by Gwyneth Jones  
(2001; Gollancz 0-575-07031-5; 308 pp.; £10.99/  
\$A29.95)

I counted myself as a Gwyneth Jones fan after reading two of her YA novels published under the name of 'Anne Halam'. I was looking forward reading *Bold As Love*. The characters, members of rather scruffy rock bands, seem interesting, and the near-future Britain, disintegrating into its constituent parts as people switch off technology and turn off society, leaves some room for speculation. But by the middle of the book, nothing much in it makes sense. The three main characters, Fiorinda, Ax and Sage, hold some interest. But then we are asked to believe that Ax is given political power in England, but the rest of society, nice suburban Britain, is still operating pretty much as normal. We are also asked to believe that members of bands based on a rivalry between thrash metal and the Grateful Dead would retain any popularity or interest in an early-twenty-first-century world. Hip hoppers and rappers could probably stage a political rally, but not these Deadheads. So is Jones's world a projection of a 1970s world, not our world? Maybe. But even in such an alternative future, why is Ax, who seems incapable of organising his way out of a paper bag, made Dictator of England? Just what is happening in England apart from this tiny circle of friends and rivals? The book collapses into a vortex of unlikely, even unimaginable premises, which means that by the end of *Bold As Love* (the first of a trilogy) I lost all interest in the main characters as well. I have no idea why *Bold As Love* was nominated for the Arthur Clarke Award, let alone why it won.

\*\* **SOUL/MATE** by Rosamond Smith  
(1990; New English Library 0-45055130-X; 281 pp.)

It's very hard to believe that crime and mystery buffs did not pick 'Rosamond Smith' as a pseudonym of Joyce Carol Oates before this fact was revealed a few years ago. Like Ruth Rendell, her closest equivalent, Smith does not reveal the answers to mysteries, but explores the anatomy of crimes and the minds of criminals. In *Soul/Mate*, we see much of the story through the viewpoint of the criminal, Colin Asch, an attractive liar who ingratiates himself into families, then commits murders seemingly without retribution. We see the other half of the story through the eyes of Dorothea Deverell, a well-meaning, attractive yet lonely academic who is isolated enough to become

entangled with Asch's obsessions. The enormous skill of the unfolding revelation of character and action surely reveals that its author must be one of America's leading novelists.

\*\* **CHAGA** by Ian McDonald  
(1995; Gollancz 0-575-06052-2; 413 pp.; £16.99/  
\$A49.95)

I liked the novella 'Tendeléo's Story' (*Futures*) so much that I wanted to read McDonald's novel *Chaga*. Some time during the last couple of years I had sold or given away my copy of the novel without reading it, so I had to borrow it from Alan Stewart. (Thanks, Alan.) That'll teach me to get rid of any SF novel, no matter how unlikely it is at the time that I will get around to reading it. Both the novella and the novel are much more interesting than anything else I've read by Ian McDonald. Both tell of the mysterious alien flora that drops in pods on a number of landing spots situated across tropical Africa, Asia and South America. The flora spreads outwards from the spots, converting all terrestrial life into an alien equivalent. The UN takes over Africa, and makes vast number of people into refugees by moving them from the path of the expanding circles. In both stories, the real subject of the story is Africans' lives destroyed and fractured by becoming refugees. In 'Tendeléo's Story', the protagonist is an African girl (then woman) Tendeléo. In *Chaga*, Gaby McAslan, an Irish network journalist, is the hero. She covers the spread of Chaga, then seeks a way to enter the alien areas. To me, Tendeléo rings true as a character, but Gaby seems too much like a romanticised superwoman (who of course falls for a romanticised superman, Dr Shepard, a UN administrator). For its landscapes and visions, *Chaga* is as enjoyable an SF romp as any I've read in recent years.

\* **NO HEROICS, PLEASE: UNCOLLECTED WRITINGS**

by Raymond Carver edited by William L. Stull  
(1991; Harvill/HarperCollins 0-00-271253-9; 239 pp.;  
£7.99/\$A19.95)

During the brief Carver boom of the late eighties, several collections such as this one were scraped together. Perhaps these writings of Raymond Carver had remained uncollected because most of them aren't very interesting. Although Carver wrote well about writing, his reviews collected here are not very skilled, and the five stories here could well have remained in a desk drawer. I always enjoy reading Carver; hence my disappointment at reading a book showing that he wasn't always at his best.

\*\* **THE BABES IN THE WOODS** by Ruth Rendell  
(2002; Hutchinson 0-09-179456-0; 323 pp.; \$A29.95)

A few years ago, Ruth Rendell seemed to become bored by Inspector Wexford. Something horrible happened to the TV series, and it finished, and the penultimate Wexford novel was badly constructed and unsurprising. All the more reason to welcome back Wexford and Kingsmartin, and discover that it's the place, people and weather that fascinate Rendell, rather than its murders. The ending to this book was not very surprising when it arrived, but I was still left with the feeling of travelling in good company for 323 pages.

\*\* **ALL OF US: THE COLLECTED POEMS**  
by Raymond Carver, edited by William L. Stull  
(1996; Harvill 1-86046-168-9; 386 pp.; £20/\$A35)

This was the collection we Carver fans relished receiving when it appeared in 1996. So much so that I put off the pleasure of reading it until 2002. Nothing in the short stories prepared me for the power of the poems. Seemingly written in plain verse, without rhyme or much rhythm, they slowly open out their pleasures to you while you are reading them. All but a few early poems are rich in the rhythm of surprise. Carver will start with an ordinary event, then abruptly stand it on its head so that it looks extraordinary. But it's the mind observing the 'ordinary' that's extraordinary, a mind constantly seeing visions in the patterns of existence where others would merely see rocks in the road. Critics have tended to concentrate on the 'subject matter' of Carver's poems, particularly the poems and stories that arise from his long battle with alcohol, quite failing to see that even the blackest of subject matter is for Carver a path to magic insight.

\* **THE STORM WEAVER AND THE SAND**  
by Sean Williams  
(2002; HarperCollins Voyager 0-7322-6998-2; 438 pp.;  
\$A29)

I wanted so much for *The Storm Weaver and the Sand* to make a satisfying conclusion to 'the Change trilogy' (which the publisher now calls it) that I gritted my teeth as the hundreds of pages rolled on, and waited, and waited. I got to the end of the book, and the trilogy, and said 'bother!' After being captured by the people who run this far-future world, the three main characters, Sal, Shilly and Skender, sit around and wait for decisions to be made about their future. Various people find out who their mothers or fathers or other relatives are, but there is no Big Revelation, no Great Truth Discovered About the World. Why else would one wade through 1200 pages of a trilogy? My feeling is that Sean Williams felt under pressure to write the third book of the trilogy long before he should have. The narrative works wonderfully until the end of Book 2 (*The Sky Warden and the Sun*), then collapses like a soufflé. If only the last book had been allowed the time to cook properly in the author's mind before being written. (The Aurealis judges of the Best Fantasy Novel disagree with me; they've just given this book, rather than the middle book of the trilogy, the top prize in its field.)

☞ **PEBBLE IN THE SKY** by Isaac Asimov  
(1950; Galaxy Novel No. 14; 153 pp.; 35c)

For years I avoided reading this book because it is always described as Asimov's 'first novel'. But of course it is only his first novel to be published for the first time as a book. He had already written all the 'Foundation' stories when *Pebble in the Sky* appeared, and had written as serials most of his best books, such as *The Naked Sun* and *The Caves of Steel*. All appeared later as books as it became obvious there was a market for SF among 'real' readers. So I don't quite know how to place *Pebble in the Sky*, which comes across as a pallid footnote to many of the stories that preceded it. It has one good sentence, its first: 'Two minutes before he disappeared forever from the face of the Earth he knew, Joseph Schwartz strolled along the pleasant streets of suburban Chicago quoting Browning to himself.' When Schwartz arrives in the far future, his adventures become progressively less interesting. In the 1953 Galaxy Novel edition, the book is 153 pages long. I was tapping my foot and jiggling in my seat with boredom by about

page 50, and it goes downhill from there.

- \* **AURORA: NEW CANADIAN WRITING 1979**  
edited by Morris Wolfe  
(1979; Doubleday Canada 0-385-14610-8; 237 pp.; \$Can7.95)

Terry Green sent me a copy of this volume of *Aurora* in 1979 when one of his early stories appeared in it. Terry has written much better stories since then, but I was glad to get around to reading the anthology 23 years late. I presume that this issue of *Aurora* remains famous in Canada because it is the first appearance of W. P. Kinsella's Shoeless Joe and the man who resurrected him by building him a baseball field in which to play. 'Shoeless Joe Jackson Comes to Iowa' is only 14 pages long, but it later became a novel and then the film *Field of Dreams*. Other fine stories that presumably have remained famous in Canada are Anne Collins' 'First Flight', David Blostein's 'The Doulton Man' (surely this was picked up for the Best Fantasy anthologies of 1979?) and Jim Christy's 'My Fate'. Terry Green's story is 'Of Children in the Foliage', and Sharon Barbour has an interesting piece called 'Billy the Kid Is Dead', and Doug Barbour has two poems.

- \* **DIFFERENT SEASONS by Stephen King**  
(1982; Futura 0-7088-2360-2; 560 pp.; £4.99)

During his talk to the Nova Mob in early 2002 about Stephen King, Ian Mond said that some of King's best work is contained in his novellas and short novels. *Different Seasons* contains four such pieces, plus Stephen King's Afterword. It took me a while to find a copy in a secondhand bookshop, and I was anticipating a reading feast. I was very disappointed. The novella 'Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption', for instance, is very much less interesting than *The Shawshank Redemption*, the movie that is based on it. I haven't seen the movie *Stand By Me*, but I can't believe that it is more diffuse and disorganised than 'The Body', the short novel upon which it is based. The whole time I was reading the story, I kept wanting to edit this elegy to the last days of childhood, and shape it so that its potential was released. Perhaps the script writers did this. 'Apt Pupil' is again much less effective than it should be. A boy gains altogether too much power over an old man escaping from his past; King overwrites and destroys many of his own effects. The only effective story in the volume, 'The Breathing Method', is the only one that has not been made into a film. A magnificent fantasy superstructure is used to enclose a startling little fable that works cinematically in a way the other stories don't. Does nobody at publishing houses have the courage to put up his hand to edit Stephen King?

- ☞ **DEAD AIR by Iain Banks**  
(2002; Little, Brown 0-316-86054-9; 408 pp.; £16.99/\$A45)

If *The Company* was a stinker, *Dead Air* is even worse. What has happened to Iain Banks? Page after page of this novel is nothing but a chaotic rant. The story itself, which has some suspenseful moments, amounts to about 50 pages of the book. And the ending is really saccharine. Won't somebody at Little, Brown tell Banks to take a holiday, stop ingesting strange substances, or simply reread his own work?

- \*\* **CRADLE WILL ROCK: THE MOVIE AND THE MOMENT**

by Tim Robbins, Eric Darton, Nancy Stearns Bercaw and Robert Tracy  
(2000; Newmarket Press 1-55704-399-X; 140 pp.; \$US32.95/\$A70)

*Cradle Will Rock* is the best recent film entirely unreleased in Australia. I don't know whether or not it had a theatrical release in America; Dick Jenssen imported it on DVD as soon as he could. A labour of love by Tim Robbins, Susan Sarandon, and a brilliant cast, including John Cusack, Joan Cusack, John Turturro, Emily Watson (in one of her first roles), and Steve Martin, it seems to have fallen through all the holes in the movie industry. Fortunately, Tim Robbins and co. kept detailed photographic and audio records of the making of the film, which are brought together in this beautiful coffee-table book that reads as well as it looks. *Cradle Will Rock* tells of the attempt to stage a musical of that name during the heyday of the Works Progress Administration's Federal Theatre Project in the middle of Depression in New York. By the time the production was rehearsed, the Theatre Project was closed down under pressure from the House Unamerican Activities Committee (all those commernist actors) and the law was brought in to ban *Cradle Will Rock* from being performed. The last 20 minutes of the film tells of the way the cast got around the ban; and that one-off performance itself had to be filmed in real time so that the excitement of the original occasion could be brought to life! See the film somehow; order the book from somewhere.

- \*\* **FIRES: ESSAYS, POEMS, STORIES**  
by Raymond Carver

(1985; Picador 0-330-29389-3; 204 pp.; \$A10.95)

All the poems in this collection can now be found in *All Of Us*, but five of the stories and the four essays can only be found here. The essays 'My Father's Life' (first published as a contribution to *Granta: Autobiography*), 'On Writing', 'Fires' and 'John Gardner: The Writer as Teacher' are so inspirational that they nearly sent me back to trying to write fiction. For Carver, writing was a way of saving him from almost every discouraging aspect of his life; even so, he realises, when asked what has had the most influence on his writing life, 'nothing . . . could possibly be as important to me, could make as much difference, as the fact that I had two children.' The other major influence was novelist and writing teacher, John Gardner, who saw the potential worth of Carver's early work and insisted that he could become a success. Carver's tribute to his father is one of the great American essays.

- \*\* **CONSIDER PHLEBAS by Iain M. Banks**  
(1987; Macmillan 0-333-44138-9; 471 pp.; £19.95/\$A26.95)

After suffocating in *Dead Air*, I went back to Iain M. Banks' first science fiction novel, *Consider Phlebas*. I didn't get past page 75 when I first tried reading it, but this time I found myself flying along with Banks's amoral hero, Bora Horza Gobuchal, as he is rescued from certain death on page 15, escapes from a mercenary raid that kills lots of fellow crew members, nearly dies at the hands of a vile, very funny tinpot dictator, then . . . And that takes us to about halfway through the book. This is Cinemascope adventure, furious and lunatic, written the way *Star Wars* should have been

filmed but wasn't. It has so many mighty leaps and bounds that the ending is a bit of a shock, but at least it doesn't leave the way open for a sequel.

\*\* **THE PIED PIPERS: INTERVIEWS WITH THE INFLUENTIAL CREATORS OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE**

interviews by Julian Wintle and Emma Fisher (1974; Paddington Press 0-8467-0038-7; 320 pp.)

I'd be interested to know what, if anything, historians and critics of children's literature in the UK think of this book. Published in 1974, it appeared just as the mighty wave of Children's Lit was about to break all over the place. It arrived a bit before most of the other major books in the field, which gives Wintle and Fisher the advantage of interviewing many illustrators and authors who died during the 1970s and 1980s. The disadvantage of this advantage is that some of the older authors prove themselves to be right old sprats, embodying the tone of conservative moralism that Children's Lit has tried to dispel over the last twenty years. Richard Adams says: 'I believe there are fixed moral values from the time of Plato onwards, and that right and wrong have been revealed to us for all time by Our Lord Jesus Christ.' (I never could read past page 20 of either *Watership Down* or *Shardik*.) Many of the authors confess to being caught unawares by the social revolution of the late sixties and early seventies. Other authors were already as hair-raisingly crazy as they remained (Alan Garner and Roald Dahl), and some of the illustrator/authors say some quite wise things. Edward Ardizzone makes this distinction: 'the born illustrator doesn't draw from life; he draws from knowledge, which he picks up everywhere' (p. 46). The people interviewed are: Maurice Sendak, Edward Ardizzone, Charles Keeping, Richard Scarry, Laurent de Brunhoff, Charlotte Zolotow, Roald Dahl, Dr Seuss, E. B. White, Richard Adams, Nicholas Stuart Gray, Joan Aiken, Scott O'Dell, Rosemary Sutcliff, Leon Garfield, Lloyd Alexander, Alan Garner, John Rowe Townsend, Madeleine L'Engle, K. M. Peyton, Lucy Boston, Rumer Godden (who hated the film of *Black Narcissus* and confesses to fudging the ending of *An Episode of Sparrows*), Maia Wojciechowska, and Judy Blume.

\* **LIGHT** by M. John Harrison (2002; Gollancz 0-575-07025-0; 320 pp.; £17.99/\$A49.95)

Well, you lot might get excited about *Light*, but I was struggling to finish it. The trouble with a Big Metaphor is that it must have some Big Objective Correlative (as T. S. Eliot used to say) that has a precise physical meaning to match the abstract meaning of the metaphor. In the end, the bloody big source of light means nothing, because it is supposed to mean everything to all the characters in three different stories. I like much of Harrison's writing, but find many of the proceedings and much of the language in this novel vague, if not risible. I would be very disappointed if a book like this beat *The Separation* in the major British awards this year.

\*\* **THE CRYSTAL WORLD** by J. G. Ballard (1966 (this edition 1976); Avon Equinox 0-380-00758-4; 160 pp.; \$US2.25)

I read *The Crystal World* straight after *Light*, and it really put a smile on my lips. Here's Ballard 'doing metaphors' just right, all those years ago. Every menacing

gesture and strange adventure in the world where everything turns crystalline is matched by believable (if Gothic) human behaviour. Ballard distances us from the action through the intensity of his language, but the same unwavering intensity draws us into his total pattern. And Ballard's sentences are delicious compared with Harrison's.

\* **OPERATION ARES** by Gene Wolfe (1970; Berkley Medallion 425-01858-X; 208 pp.; \$US0.75/\$A0.90)

There was a time in American publishing when promising new authors were allowed their apprenticeship novels. *Operation Ares* was Gene Wolfe's. It doesn't work; the plot, about a future war between humans living on Earth and those in space, is all over the place and quite forgettable; but Wolfe's initial strength was his creation of interesting characters. Not interesting enough to save the novel, but they did have an independent life that one can't find in the novel as a whole. Fortunately for Wolfe's career, his next novel was *The Fifth Head of Cerberus*. (Yes, I have had the book on my shelf since paperbacks cost 75 cents each. No book will be thrown out of this house until it has been read and judged unworthy.)

\*\* **SIRENS AND OTHER DEMON LOVERS** edited by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling (1998; HarperPrism 0-06-105372-4; 304 pp.; \$US14/\$A22.95)

2002; Eos 0-06-105782-7; 404 pp.; \$US7.99/\$A19.95) I'd bought this collection in the American trade paperback edition when it first appeared, but finally got around to reading it when local HarperCollins released the mass market paperback in Australia. This collection is worth hunting out, and shows that Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling are still America's most formidable anthologists. *Sirens and Other Demon Lovers* begins with some fairly conventional stories featuring some fairly conventional demon lovers. As Ellen Datlow often does, she encourages her authors to think way outside the bounds of convention. Authors in the collection who take up the challenge include Garry Kilworth ('Mirrors') and Pat Murphy ('Attachments'), whose stories feature hauntings way outside clichéland. 'Attachments' is a story about people who are 'haunted' by each other because they are joined to each other, but in love with each other's wives. No tricks here, just story-telling of world-class quality. I liked 'The Eye of the Storm' so much, for its sheer enjoyment of life's possibilities, that I ordered Kelly Eskridge's recent novel, and Mark W. Tiedemann's 'Private Words' is a dark parable that reminded me of Christopher Priest's best short fiction.

\*\* **WONDERLAND** by Joyce Carol Oates (1971; Vanguard 8149-0659-1; 512 pp.; \$US7.95)

I'm probably wasting my time and yours by recommending this novel. It was published in hardback in 1971, and I bought it in a remainder basement in 1977 for \$1.95. In 1971, Joyce Carol Oates was already the best novelist in America, but it took me until now to discover this. *Wonderland* is so outrageously ambitious that it should be known as one of the major English-language novels of the century, but I suspect it's been out of print for many years. *Wonderland's* language seems naturalistic, and its manner is frenetic, yet Oates's ambition is to render a spiritual state: the novel's main character is a man who grows up without

a personality. Orphaned by his father (who killed his mother and siblings, nearly killed him, then shot himself), Jesse launches out into the world, amply equipped to survive, but not somehow to exist. He is constantly betrayed by parent figures, by all those people to whom he might have attached himself and enabled him to find out who he is. In this, he resembles John Sladek's little robot Roderick in *Roderick* and *Roderick at Random*. Oates's specialty is ferocious rhetoric: America itself buffets Jesse and forces him to turn into the strange creature he becomes by the end of the book. Yet Oates's rhetoric hides cool analysis, rather in the way Sladek's comic infernos do. *Wonderland* is quite original, with some of the most enjoyable passages of prose and memorably monstrous characters in American fiction.

\*\* **WHEN THE SACRED GINMILL CLOSES**  
by Lawrence Block

(1986; Orion 0-75283-699-4; 263 pp.; £5.99/\$A16.95)  
There's a plot in this book. It involves a memorable robbery in the first few pages of the book, and lots of visiting of bars as part of the investigation, which leads Matt Scudder to realise how much he depends on bars and what you drink there, and how much he needs to kick alcohol. A melancholy novel, whose real subject is the Dave Van Ronk song that gives the book its title ('And so we've had another night/Of poetry and poses/And each man knows he'll be alone/When the sacred ginmill closes') more than the capers of the crooks. In the next novel in the Matt Scudder series, *Out on the Cutting Edge*, Scudder has kicked the grog and is deep in his love-hate relationship with Alcoholics Anonymous, so there remains a missing novel in the series about the leaving of the bottle. (According to Ted White, he, Dave Van Ronk and Lawrence Block were part of a kind of subfandom in New York in the sixties. Dave Van Ronk died recently. Ted White is 65 and has diabetes. I trust that Lawrence Block remains in good health.)

\* **WILD SURMISE** by Dorothy Porter  
2002; Picador 0-330-36380-8; 293 pp.; \$A22)

Several years ago, Dorothy Porter sold (it was reported) over 100,000 copies of *The Monkey's Mask*, a detective novel in verse that was later made into a film. When *Wild Surmise* was released, the forward publicity made it sound like an SF novel in verse. It's in verse, some of it good, and much of it fairly pedestrian, but it is not SF. It is about a lady astrobiologist who, while her husband is dying, falls in love with a lady astronomer. These torrid emotional storms are described in metaphors taken from the main characters' interest in the moons of Jupiter, especially Europa. Nobody in the novel sets off for Jupiter, or even considers taking such a trip. A pity. The book, which has beautiful cover, would have been much more interesting if it had proved to the teeniest bit science fictional.

\*\* **HOPE TO DIE** by Lawrence Block  
(2001; Orion 0-75284-817-8; 340 pp.; £5.99/\$A17.95)

*Hope to Die* comes from much later in Scudder's career than *When the Sacred Ginmill Closes*. Scudder has licked the grog, is happily married, and has come close to retiring altogether from his own special brand of detecting. He is drawn into helping solve what looks like a double murder committed by thieves, and finds himself stalking, and being stalked by a serial murderer. Serial murderers are hardly the stuff of

Lawrence Block novels, but this one is rather original, if in the end unbelievable.

\*\* **THE SIZE OF THOUGHTS: ESSAYS AND OTHER LUMBER** by Nicholson Baker  
(1996; Vintage 0-09-957971-5; 355 pp.; \$A16.95)

The literary persona of Nicholson Baker reminds me a bit of the character played by Christian Bail in *American Psycho*, the movie: just a bit too gleamingly witty and New York to be believable, but you love him when he natters. At his worst, Baker is nearly as incomprehensible as John Clute on a bad day; at his best, he says the right thing the right way but takes a few too many words to say it. I like his essays for their nice philosophical plays on concepts like 'The Size of Thoughts' and 'Rarity', unexpected forays into the history of technology, especially his brilliant outline of the story of 'The Projector', and really useful guides, such as 'The History of Punctuation'. The essay that makes this book a necessary part of the library rather than merely a nice accessory is 'Discards', which tells of Baker's investigation of the extent of the vandalism that has been wrought by libraries discarding their card catalogues and resorting to computer catalogues. If you want to know the extent to which the sum of our knowledge is being degraded by this practice, read this book. (In a later essay, presumably still to be published in book form, Baker says similar things about libraries' attempts to throw out old newspapers and magazines. Baker himself is spending all his spare cash filling a vast empty warehouse with collections of paper publications that have been dumped by institutions.) Nearly one-third of *The Size of Thoughts* is devoted to an essay on 'Lumber', which shows much learning, but not much light. Baker needs taming, not by an editor but by a smart-arse detector.

\*\* **HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE** by J. K. Rowling  
(1997; Bloomsbury 0-7475-5819-1; 223 pp.; \$A15.95)

Insofar as 2003 has any shining rays to it, one of those rays has to be the afternoon I first saw the film of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, which eventually led me to reading the book. I think I would have rather enjoyed reading the novel even if the film had never been produced, but the film does seem even more alive than the book. This is so much the sort of children's novel I wanted to read when I was a child (and occasionally Enid Blyton delivered the goodies). Invention, humour, grand adventures, likable characters — what more could one want?

\*\* **KITTYHAWK DOWN** by Garry Disher  
(2003; Allen & Unwin 1-86508-981-8; 275 pp.; \$A19.95)

Garry Disher in popular mode is Australia's best writer. After a series of novels about Wyatt, ace thief who is forever being betrayed by confederates, Disher has written the second novel about Detective Inspector Hal Challis, whose remorseless yet melancholy personality reminds me much of Wyatt's. Being on the right side of the law does not prevent Challis from making some stupid (and even near-criminal) mistakes from time to time, and he usually doesn't like what he finds when he solves the crime. The real star of *Kittyhawk Down* is the southern end of the Mornington Peninsula, which Disher seems to know inch by inch. A combination of sand, tea-tree, beach and rough, weird, hoonish, mad, dirt-poor and over-rich people, the area is bristling with action. Without even the

benefit of a serial murderer, this novel has a high death rate. I began to wonder if anybody would escape alive.

\*\* **MAPS: THE UNCOLLECTED JOHN SLADEK**

edited by David Langford

(2002; Big Engine 1-903468-08-6; 359 pp.; £9.99/\$A29.95)

Thanks to Dave Langford for sending me *Maps*, which he edits and introduces. Slow Glass Books is not stocking Big Engine Books at the moment, so I was glad to see this book about which I had heard so much. The collected pieces in *Maps* add up to a highly entertaining and satisfying mixture, but I still had the feeling at the end that I not read a great deal of fiction. Sladek mistrusted fiction; all his instincts caused him to subvert the methods and assumptions of fiction. Almost every fictional style is parodied — and then, when you think that Sladek has explored all possibilities, Langford introduces the pieces Sladek wrote with Disch.

There is something genuinely manic in the Disch personality that gives a special foetid flavour to the Sladek/Disch stories, which have titles such as 'Sweetly Sings the Chocolate Budgie' and 'The Incredible Giant Hot Dog'. It's hard to pick favourites among the stories in *Maps*: 'Love Among the Xoids' seemed to work best as a conventional short story, but the detective stories, such as 'By an Unknown Hand', should be better known as major contributions to their field. I'm glad that Dave Langford's detecting skills have unearthed so many strange fruits; perhaps I should have rationed my eating of them.

(Another death in the family: an email in 3 April says that Big Engine has gone belly up. Now where will I get a copy of Dave Langford's *The Leaky Establishment?*)

— Bruce Gillespie, 31 March 2003

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## Favourite Novels Read for the First Time in 2002

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|---|---|
| 1 <i>Beware of Pity (Ungeduld des Herzens)</i><br>Stefan Zweig (1938) | 5 <i>The Other Wind</i><br>Ursula K. Le Guin (2001)             |
| 2 <i>The Separation</i><br>Christopher Priest (2002)                  | 6 <i>The Blood Doctor</i><br>Barbara Vine (2002)                |
| 3 <i>Soul/Mate</i><br>Rosamond Smith (1990)                           | 7 <i>Chaga</i><br>Ian McDonald (1995)                           |
| 4 <i>The Telling</i><br>Ursula K. Le Guin (2000)                      | 8 <i>A Walk Among the Tombstones</i><br>Lawrence Sanders (1992) |

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## Favourite Books Read for the First Time in 2002

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| 1 <i>All of Us: The Collected Poems</i><br>Raymond Carver (1996)         | Ursula K. Le Guin (2000)  |
| 2 <i>United States: Essays 1952–1992</i><br>Gore Vidal (1993)            | 11 <i>The Other Wind</i><br>Ursula K. Le Guin (2001)  |
| 3 <i>New and Selected Poems</i><br>Stephen Dunn (1994)                   | 12 <i>The Blood Doctor</i><br>Barbara Vine (2002)   |
| 4 <i>Stories and Legends</i><br>Stefan Zweig (1927/1937/1955)            | 13 <i>Walkin' After Midnight: A Journey to the Heart of Nashville</i><br>Lauren St John (2000)                    |
| 5 <i>Beware of Pity (Ungeduld des Herzens)</i><br>Stefan Zweig (1938)    | 14 <i>Stet: An Editor's Life</i><br>Diana Athill (2000)   |
| 6 <i>Many Masks: A Life of Frank Lloyd Wright</i><br>Brendan Gill (1987) | 15 <i>Where Does the Weirdness Go?</i><br>David Linley (1996)   |
| 7 <i>The Separation</i><br>Christopher Priest (2002)                     | 16 <i>Three Roads to Quantum Theory: A New Understanding of Space, Time and the Universe</i><br>Lee Smolin (2000) |
| 8 <i>Soul/Mate</i><br>Rosamond Smith (1990)                              | 17 <i>Chaga</i><br>Ian McDonald (1995)  |
| 9 <i>The Sidmouth Letters</i><br>Jane Gardam (1980)                      | 18 <i>A Walk Among the Tombstones</i><br>Lawrence Sanders (1992)  |
| 10 <i>The Telling</i>  | 19 <i>The Burning Secret and Other Stories</i>  |

- Stefan Zweig (1981)  
**20** *Foursight*  
 ed. Peter Crowther (2000)  
**21** *Futures*  
 ed. Peter Crowther (2001)  
**22** *Infinites*  
 ed. Peter Crowther (2002)

- 23** *Liars in Love*  
 Richard Yates (1982)  
**24** *Thank God for the Atom Bomb and Other Essays*  
 Paul Fussell (1988)  
**25** *Last Orders*  
 (Graham Swift) (1996)

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## Favourite Short Stories Read for the First Time in 2002

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| <p><b>1</b> 'The Tribute'<br/>       Jane Gardam (<i>The Sidmouth Letters</i>)<br/> <b>2</b> 'The Buried Candelabrum'<br/>       Stefan Zweig (<i>Stories and Legends</i>)<br/> <b>3</b> 'Leningrad Nights'<br/>       Graham Joyce (<i>Foursight</i>)<br/> <b>4</b> 'Tendeléo's Story'<br/>       Ian McDonald (<i>Futures</i>)<br/> <b>5</b> 'The Royal Game'<br/>       Stefan Zweig (<i>The Burning Secret and Other Stories</i>)<br/> <b>6</b> 'How the Other Half Lives'<br/>       James Lovegrove (<i>Foursight</i>)<br/> <b>7</b> 'Diamond Dogs'<br/>       Alastair Reynolds (<i>Infinites</i>)<br/> <b>8</b> 'The Doulton Man'<br/>       David Blostein (<i>Aurora: New Canadian Writing 1979</i>)</p> | <p><b>9</b> 'Oh Joseph, I'm So Tired'<br/>       Richard Yates (<i>Liars in Love</i>)<br/> <b>10</b> 'Liars in Love'<br/>       Richard Yates (<i>Liars in Love</i>)<br/> <b>11</b> 'For He Heard the Cold Bassoon'<br/>       Jane Gardam (<i>The Sidmouth Letters</i>)<br/> <b>12</b> 'The Keeper of the Minter Light'<br/>       Rick Kennett (<i>No. 472 Cheyne Walk: Carnacki: The Untold Stories</i>)<br/> <b>13</b> 'A Spot of Gothic'<br/>       Jane Gardam (<i>The Sidmouth Letters</i>)<br/> <b>14</b> 'Tea'<br/>       Jack Dann (<i>Jubilee</i>)<br/> <b>15</b> 'Shoeless Joe Jackson Comes to Iowa'<br/>       W. P. Kinsella (<i>Aurora: New Canadian Writing 1979</i>)</p> |
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## Favourite Films Seen for the First Time in 2002

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| <p><b>1</b> <i>Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon</i><br/>       directed by Ang Lee (2000)<br/> <b>2</b> <i>State and Main</i><br/>       David Mamet (2000)<br/> <b>3</b> <i>The Godfather Part 2</i><br/>       Francis Ford Coppola (1974)<br/> <b>4</b> <i>The Godfather Part 3</i><br/>       Francis Ford Coppola (1990)<br/> <b>5</b> <i>The Four Feathers</i><br/>       Zoltan Korda (1939)<br/> <b>6</b> <i>Minority Report</i><br/>       Steven Spielberg (2001)<br/> <b>7</b> <i>The Pajama Game</i><br/>       George Abbott and Stanley Donen (1957)<br/> <b>8</b> <i>The Gypsy Moths</i><br/>       John Frankenheimer (1969)<br/> <b>9</b> <i>Open Your Eyes (Abre los ojos)</i><br/>       Alejandro Amenabar (1997)<br/> <b>10</b> <i>Following</i><br/>       Christopher Nolan<br/> <b>11</b> <i>High Noon</i><br/>       Fred Zinneman (1952)</p> | <p><b>12</b> <i>Stir of Echoes</i><br/>       David Koepp (1999)<br/> <b>13</b> <i>The Time Machine</i><br/>       George Pal (1960)<br/> <b>14</b> <i>The Devil's Backbone (El espinaza del diablo)</i><br/>       Guillermo del Toro (2002)<br/> <b>15</b> <i>Insomnia</i><br/>       Christopher Nolan (2002)<br/> <b>16</b> <i>Happiness</i><br/>       Todd Solondz (1998)<br/> <b>17</b> <i>Zulu</i><br/>       Cy Endfield (1964)<br/> <b>18</b> <i>Down from the Mountain</i><br/>       Nick Doob, Chris Hegeudus and D. A. Pennebaker (2001)<br/> <b>19</b> <i>Victor Victoria</i><br/>       Blake Edwards (1982)<br/> <b>20</b> <i>Victor Victoria</i><br/>       Blake Edwards, Matthew Diamond and Goro Kobayashi (2000)</p> |
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