

MYTHOPRINT

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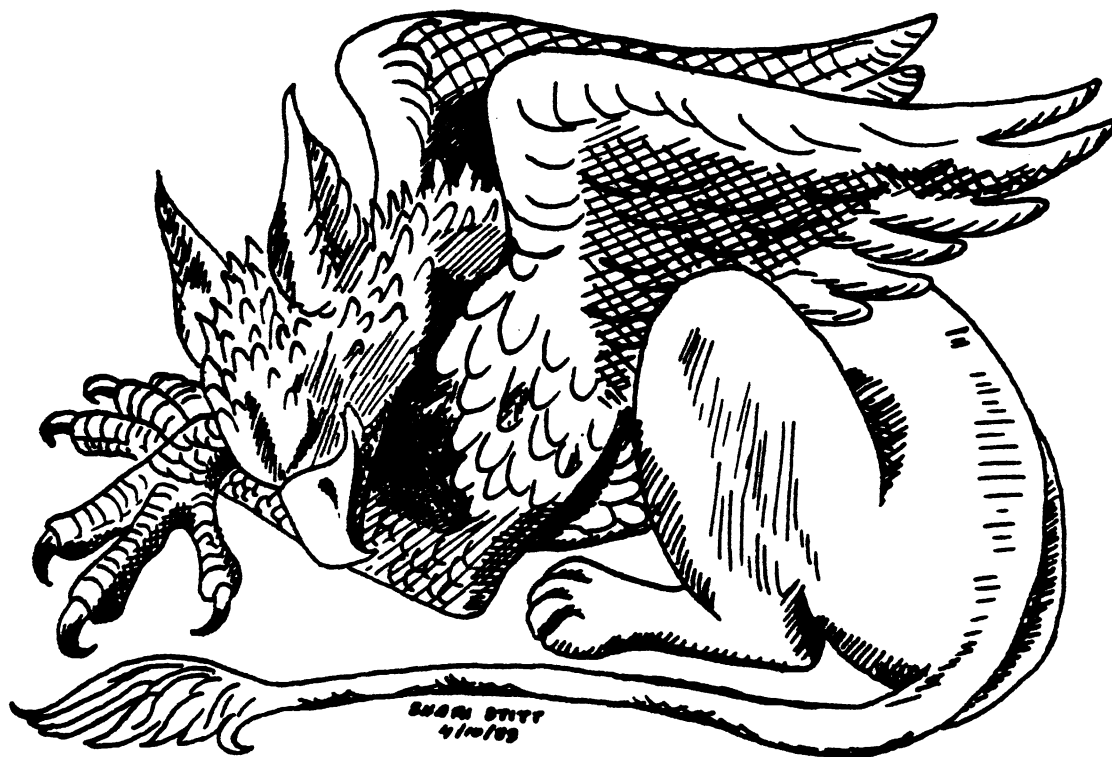


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The Musical Prose of Charles de Lint

by Paul Edwin Zimmer
Part One

Charles de Lint, Guest of Honor at Mythcon XVII this summer, is a musician and poet, as well as a teller of tales: he writes in a dialect of song.

As Charles R. Saunders puts it in his introduction to de Lint's chapbook A Pattern of Silver Strings: "Music is the focus of the life of Charles de Lint. He manages a record store; he is the heart of a Celtic folk band called Wicken-tree; and he can play some ten or eleven different instruments ... It is not surprising that [his] prose ... finds its focus in music."

In the late seventies, de Lint and Saunders organized a small-press venture, Triskell Press, which in 1978 published a magazine of heroic fantasy, Dragonbane, and in the next year a magazine of high fantasy, Beyond the Fields We Know. (Also in 1979, my own novelette, Woman of the Elfmounds, was published as the first of a series of Triskell Press Chap-books, thus leading to my own slight acquaintance with Charles.) The two magazines were combined as Dragonfields in 1980; only two issues have appeared since. This publishing venture, I fear, has been costly, but Charles is devoted to a certain type of fantasy, and has worked hard to promote it.

His own written work can be viewed most conveniently by dividing it into two main cycles: one is the "Mid-World" or "Middle Kingdom" stories, consisting of The Riddle of the Wren and the various stories of Cerin Harper and the Grey Rose; the other is the contemporary urban fantasies Moonheart and Mulengro.

The Mid-Worlds lie between the realm of the Bright Gods, who are called the Tuathan, and the Dark Gods, the Daketh. An ancient covenant limits and balances both sets of gods: if one of the Tuathan walks in the Mid-Worlds, one of the Daketh is also freed -- and so on. But the Mid-Worlds have not only their own gods, the Grey Gods, but a bewildering host of wonderous and magical folk.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

CHARLES DE LINT - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Of these folk, the most important (and, I think, dearest to Charles' heart) is Cerin Songweaver, keeper of the Harp of the Grey Rose.

For those of us not fortunate enough to subscribe to the obscure semi-professional magazines where Charles' earliest work appeared, our first taste of the Mid-Worlds was "The Fane of the Grey Rose", which appeared in the fourth Swords Against Darkness anthology, edited by Andrew Offutt in 1979. This is the very beginning of the story of Cerin Songweaver: a young orphan in a quiet village encounters the mysterious, beautiful maid who wears in her hair a living rose-blossom, grey as twilight, with the dew always fresh on its petals. When the dark power that pursues her carries her away, the boy follows. With the aid of Hickathrift, a bear who is a Loremaster from Wistlore, he journeys to ruined Banlore to face Yarak, of the First-Born of the Daketh ...

This novelette was a cut-down version of the first three chapters of the novel finally printed last year as The Harp of the Grey Rose. In 1979, Triskell Press put out a small portfolio of six drawings from The Harp, by Donna Gordon, and here were pictures of the maid known as the Grey Rose, of Cerin and Hickathrift -- but here too were others. Who was Calman Stonestream? Who was the Dark Queen? And where was this great underground hall, labelled "Deepdelve"? I had to wait six years for the answers.

But while I waited, there were more stories of Cerin Songweaver, in the Triskell Press Chapbook series, published in limited editions of one hundred copies. I was fortunate to acquire them, for the books were not sold, and only sent out as complimentary copies. Some copies may surface as collector's items, but I hope they will eventually be reprinted.

In the first chapbook, The Oak King's Daughter, Cerin -- now far older and wiser, skilled in magic, and far famed as the Songweaver, falls in love with Meran, the daughter of Ogwen the Oak King, and must face the menace of the Willowlord. Meran's Tree is struck by lightning in the sequel, In Mask and Motley, an equivalent to the Orpheus story -- but, to

quote Jane Yolen's introduction, "he gives us not pale echoes of ... great stories but ... his own resonant tales". Note I did not call it a retelling!

Two more chapbooks, A Pattern of Silver Strings and Glass Eyes and Cotton Strings, both follow In Mask and Motley, but I am not sure that the two can be put in sequence from internal evidence alone. Pattern, published first, is more obviously and directly related: Cerin vanishes; Meran, now freed by her tree's death, must seek him. Glass Eyes is only incidentally a Songweaver story: on a trip to town, Cerin and Meran encounter a maker of magical cloth dolls. Although Cerin's harp-magic is important to the story, the real center of the drama is on the dollmaker Nonie and the goblin doll Gally Grim.

There is one other story published in the Chapbook series which appears to be a Mid-Worlds story: The Moon is a Meadow, the tale of the moonmage Tam Tinkern and his winged lover Mara. In the introduction, Galad Elflandsson calls it "a tale ... told in honour of the braw and bonnie lass who shares her life and love with him ... MaryAnn, the Lady Meran." All of the chapbooks are dedicated "to MaryAnn"; Charles' more recent novel Moonheart is dedicated "for MaryAnn who helps it happen."

None of these fine stories in the Chapbook series are generally available; but I hope that Charles will eventually put them together as a collection, or that some editor will discover them and snap them up. They deserve a wider audience.

The Riddle of the Wren, Charles' first novel from Ace Books, is also set in the Mid-Worlds, and explores them a little more widely than any of the others: the heroine, Minda, travels through several worlds, encountering the tinkern, the wyslings, the mys-hudol (talking beasts), the High Erls, and others. I was surprised she did not encounter the Songweaver, Cerin himself!

(Continued next month -- with discussions of Moonheart and Mulengro, and a checklist of de Lint's works -- ed.)

REVIEW

Mythago Wood, by Robert Holdstock. Arbor House hc, \$14.95, 252 p. Berkley pb due in June. Reviewed by David Bratman.

"How far can a bear walk into the woods?", runs the old joke. And the answer is, "Only halfway; after that he's walking out." Mythago Wood is a fantasy novel that proves that you can sometimes walk a lot farther than halfway into the woods.

This comment is not intended to give you the impression that the book is in any way a lighthearted story. It isn't. This is an intense, serious, even somber novel. Although it deals with mythic archetypes, and tells of a magical quest, it owes nothing to the standard fantasy model in which such things normally operate. It comes more from the Gothic tradition of dark, mysterious places and strange lights in the night. This is a striking fantasy, an unusual fantasy, a creepy fantasy. I read it, but I'm not sure if I understood it, and I actually don't know whether I liked it or not.

The central character is Ryhope Wood, a English forest a few miles across, that is much bigger on the inside than the outside. Despite its small size, you can travel in it for days or weeks and not penetrate its innermost core. Steve Huxley's father made a life's obsession out of exploring the wood; at the time the story opens, the father is dead, and Steve's brother is being drawn in, eventually to disappear there. In the third and final part of the book, Steve and a companion explore the wood themselves, searching for his brother, and also for someone else:

People come out of the forest as well as go in. Steve's father named them "mythagos": myth images, idealized hero figures that take on flesh and blood to fit the spirit of the day, and come out of primal forests all over England, in different places and often more than once, passing into legend as Arthur, Robin Hood, and other heroes. This theory is a bit fuzzy, and is in any case presented mostly in an expository lump in the first part of the book. The mythago who actually makes the most appearances in the novel is a

MYTHAGO WOOD REVIEW - CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

beautiful and mysterious woman named Guiwenneth, who in her several incarnations is loved by all three Huxley men. She is what Steve is really hoping to find on his quest.

Ryhope Wood is more like Mirkwood than most other fantasy forests. It's dark and brooding, difficult to travel through, easy to get lost in, and you never know what you're going to find hanging around in there. Everything in it seems (figuratively, and sometimes literally) to be made of leaf mould -- even visitors, who return from long treks in the wood permeated with a damp and composty smell. The magic air to the place is so powerful that you wonder how its strange qualities could have been ignored for so long in modern England. Steve, preparing for a long trip in the wood, packs lots of camping gear, an action that reminded me of the similar preparation made by Hugh in Le Guin's The Beginning Place, and which seems equally inappropriate: the magic land is going to let you survive or not, regardless of the modern tools you bring with you.

Mythago Wood is not an ordinary fantasy novel. Sometimes it is so thick with Ryhope Wood's palpable air that you can barely see through to the fact that, on simpler levels like plot and characterization, it doesn't always make sense. But, flaws aside, it's a distinctive and memorable novel. You might want, after all, to take some camping gear along before starting to read it. How far can you walk into the woods?

~~~~~

"If the million are reading and speaking slipshod English while only the thinkers write purely, a gap is widening between ordinary men and those on the mountain-tops of thought. If the poets come to appear pedantic and precious the poets will be derided, but the people will be cut off from their message, and will not be the better for that."

-- Lord Dunsany (1928)

Deadline for the Activity Calendar is the first of the month preceeding the month of publication, i.e. June issue information will be due the 1st of May. July information will be due the 1st of June. Thank you.

**SECRETARY FOR DISCUSSION GROUPS** (Please write to him about forming groups, or if you have any questions):

Scott Norton  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## Discussion Group Meetings

### CALIFORNIA: North

#### AVALON

Laurine White, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] PH: [REDACTED]

#### KHAZAD-DUM

Pat Witham, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] PH: [REDACTED]

\*May 3, 1986 (Saturday) 7 PM

The Ice is Coming, The Dark Bright Water, and Journey Behind the Wind, by Patricia Wrightson. At Pat Witham's (see above). Potluck Dinner!

\*June 1, 1986 (Sunday) 1 PM

Always Coming Home by Ursula K. LeGuin At Frankie Jemison's, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] PH: [REDACTED]

\*July 13, 1986 (Sunday) 1 PM

Any version of Poetic and Prose Eddas. At Harold & Lisa Harrigan's, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] PH: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### CALIFORNIA: South

[REDACTED] MY  
Dolores Speth, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

\*May 17, 1986 (Saturday)  
Moonheart by Char Speths' (see above)

[REDACTED] CAIR PARAV  
John Mulvey, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA/VA

[REDACTED]  
Wendell Wagner, Jr.  
Apt. [REDACTED]

PH: [REDACTED]

\*May 16, 1986 (Friday)  
Russian Fairy Tales  
Aleksandr Afanas  
Wagner's (see above)

\*June, 1986

Madeline L'Engle's  
Date & Place TBD

### HAWAII

#### SAMMATH NAU

Stephen L. Brown  
[REDACTED]

\*May 3, 1986 (Saturday)  
Maui the Demigod by [REDACTED]

\*June 7, 1986 (Saturday)  
Topic: Atlantis

All meetings start  
located at: Ken B  
[REDACTED]





# CALENDAR

MYDGARD

PH: [REDACTED]  
(Saturday) 7:30 PM  
Charles de Lint at the  
(e).  
WFL.

PH: [REDACTED]

/MARYLAND

KNOSSOS

(Saturday) 8 PM  
ales, collected by  
as'ev. At Wendell  
(ve).

s Time Trilogy

JR

PH: [REDACTED]  
(Saturday)  
by Goldsberry.  
(Saturday)

rt at 2 PM and are  
Burtness,

PH: [REDACTED]

## LOUISIANA

ROKE

Deborah Wilson,

PH: [REDACTED]

## MICHIGAN

GALADHREMMIN ENNORATH

Dave & Grace Lovelace,

PH: [REDACTED]

## MINNESOTA

RIVENDELL

David Lenander,

PH: [REDACTED]

\*May 17, 1986 (Saturday) 1:30 PM

The Gormenghast Books by Mervyn Peake.

\*June, 1986

Moonheart by Charles DeLint.

All meetings are tentative and may take  
place in Rm 355,

## NEW YORK/NEW JERSEY

Rómenna

Margaret Purdy,

PH: [REDACTED]

## OHIO

THE PRANCING PONY

Eileen Ribbler,

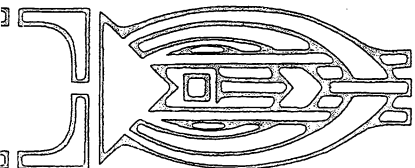
PH: [REDACTED]

## VIRGINIA

SPARE OOM

Veida & Steve Wissler,

PH: [REDACTED]



# NEWS NOTES

Ladyhawke (the movie) and Fantasy Review (the magazine) have been placed on the final ballot of the Hugo Awards, in the categories of Best Dramatic Production and Best Semi-Professional Magazine of 1985 in the sf/fantasy field, respectively. Guy Gavriel Kay, author of The Summer Tree, and Tad Williams, author of Tailchaser's Song, are both nominees for the John W. Campbell Award for best new author of 1984-85. The Hugos and Campbell are nominated and voted by members of the World Science Fiction Convention, and will be presented at Atlanta in September.

BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS

Charles de Lint, Mythcon XVII's author Guest of Honor, has two books coming out from Ace in the near future. The titles are Yarrow: An Autumn Tale and Greenmantle.

Also in the "sometime soon" department: Gathering of Heroes by Paul Edwin Zimmer, a new book set in the same universe as his Dark Border diptych, from Berkley Books (Paul also wrote the appreciation of de Lint's work that begins in this issue); Fool's Run by Patricia A. McKillip, a science fiction novel from Popular Library/Questar; The Kingdom of Ys by Poul Anderson, a trilogy from Baen Books; The Falling Woman by Pat Murphy, a contemporary fantasy from Tor Books.

The Hall of the Mountain King by Judith Tarr will be a Bluejay hardcover issue in July, \$15.95. They will also be publishing The Last Knight of Albion by Peter Hanratty as a trade pb in June, \$8.95.

FILMS FILMS FILMS FILMS FILMS FILMS FILMS FILMS FILMS FILMS

The preview slides of Labyrinth look very interesting. The film is being directed by Jim Henson, with world design by Brian Froud; the executive producer is George Lucas. It has some live actors; David Bowie, who plays the goblin king, is the most famous. The rest of the world consists of Henson's creatures. As in Dark Crystal (to which it will undoubtedly be compared), some creatures are beautiful and some ugly, and the degree of ugliness has little to do with moral persuasion. The very striking sets include one which is a

**NEWS NOTES - CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE**

deliberate take-off of an Escher painting (in the presentation they showed us the painting and then the set -- quite impressive.) Labyrinth is due out around May 25th. If you like fantasy films, it is a must see -- LDH.

P.S. I have also seen a presentation on Howard the Duck, also executively produced by George Lucas. This one is live action, filmed in the San Francisco Bay Area (look for lots of Lucasfilm people as extras). Even the duck is a midget in a duck suit, although it did look reasonable. The film is being produced/written by Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz, with Gloria doing most of it. They have done much work for Steven Spielberg, including scripting Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom. The Duck is due out in August -- LDH.

**CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS CONS**

\* Denotes a new or significantly updated listing

COSTUME-CON 4, May 23-26, 1986. At the [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] For the person who loves costuming.  
Membership: \$25 until May 15, 1986. Write: SCI-FI, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

ALTI-EGOS '86, May 23-26, 1986. [REDACTED] Includes a  
Programming track worth 3 credits in Library Science.  
Membership: \$25 now; \$35 at the door. \$10 supporting. Make  
checks payable to Sword & Shield. Write: Alti-Egos '86, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

LEPRECON 12, May 29 - June 1, 1986. At the [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] GOH: Donald & Elsie Wollheim.  
Membership: \$17 until May 1; \$20 after May 1. Write: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

WESTERCON 39, July 3-6, 1986. At the [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] GOH: David Brin. Membership: \$35 until May  
31, 1986. Supporting: \$10 forever. Write: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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# REVIEWS

Magic Kingdom for Sale -- Sold!, by Terry Brooks. Del Rey hc, \$16.95, 324 p. Reviewed by Danny Low.

Ben Holiday buys a magic kingdom sight unseen from the Christmas catalog of a department store. When he goes to claim it, he discovers that the usual precautions about buying land sight unseen also apply to magic kingdoms. The treasury is empty, the king's champion is AWOL, the land is dying, and the demons of the netherworld are about to invade.

The idea of buying a magic kingdom from a catalog is very cute, and Brooks could have presented the story tongue-in-cheek. Instead, he has written it seriously, but he does try to preserve some of the humor inherent in the idea by surrounding Holiday with clownish loyal followers. This could have worked well with a little restraint. Unfortunately, the slapstick nature of some of Holiday's loyal retainers makes a jarring contrast to his own earnest intent to be a proper king. However, Brooks does solve the basic problem of the story. Holiday has little power, authority, or even the most basic knowledge of his kingdom, and very little time to prepare for the war against the demons. The reader knows that Holiday will succeed; the author's challenge is to make the success credible. While sequels are clearly intended, the ending is not a cliffhanger.

Brooks has worked out a detailed, imaginative, and logical explanation of how the kingdom came to be put up for sale in the first place. All in all, this is a good story written around an original but minor idea. Magic Kingdom for Sale -- Sold! is not a major work of fantasy literature, but it is a very enjoyable book.



The Moon and the Face, by Patricia A. McKillip. Atheneum Argo hc, \$10.95, 146 p. Reviewed by Melanie A. Rawls.

The Moon and the Face is the sequel to McKillip's young adult science fiction novel Moon-Flash (Berkley pb, \$2.75). In Moon-Flash, young Kyreol and Terje of the hidden Riverworld journey over the falls and down river, and so to Domecity, a journey Kyreol's mother had taken years before and from which she never returned. Kyreol and Terje learn that Riverworld is but a section of the larger world, but a section particularly valued because its peaceful inhabitants have the ability to dream truth.

Kyreol's mother, Nara, has become head of Domecity's ethnologists, and trains people to secretly enter and observe the Riverworld with the stricture that it not be disturbed: the high tech culture of the spacefaring Dome people might destroy the simplicity which allows the inhabitants of the Riverworld to Dream.

In The Moon and the Face, Terje has elected to return to the Riverworld as one of those secret observers. Kyreol, who wants only to go on, has also trained as an ethnologist, but will be visiting alien cultures on other worlds.

Neither journey goes as planned. Kyreol's spaceship meets with an accident, and she finds herself stranded on an abandoned moon in the company of a seven-foot alien. And Terje is recognized by Kyreol's father, Icrane, the Healer of the Riverworld. Icrane is dying but has chosen no successor. When he calls to Terje out of darkness and dreams, Terje fears that the Riverworld is further endangered by his presence. How Kyreol and Terje meet these challenges is the substance of the book.

Both Moon-Flash and The Moon and the Face have the simplicity of style and plot suitable to younger readers, and adults may be put off by this. But I found both stories to be of high quality. The characters are likable and the settings are alive. The issues, especially the issue of the impact high tech cultures have on simpler ones, are significant. There are no villains in this book -- no Domecity

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

THE MOON AND THE FACE REVIEW - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

people panting to exploit the people of Riverworld. But they are well-meaning people who may do harm in trying to do good; and this problem is relevant to us.

As usual, McKillip displays her talent for selecting just the right descriptive detail to make a scene come memorably alive. And her quirky sense of humor is evident. For example, Kyreol's unusual alien is as shy and nervous of her as she is of it; and their attempts to communicate are of the sort that make you smile and re-read the passage.

My guess is that there will be another book in this series. If so, I'll be buying that one, too.

\*\*\*\*\*

NEWS NOTES - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

\* TIMECON '86, July 25-27, 1986. At the [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Membership: \$30 until July 1, 1986; \$35 at the door. Write: [REDACTED]

MYTHCON XVII, Aug. 8-11, 1986. At the [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] GOH: Charles de Lint and Judith Kollmann. Theme: "Daughters of Beatrice: Women in Fantasy". Membership: \$20, registration only until May 15, 1986. \$125 package for 3 nights lodging, 9 meals, and registration. Write: c/o Peter Lowentrout, MacIntosh Humanities Bldg., Room 619, [REDACTED]

CONFEDERATION, Aug. 28 - Sep. 1, 1986. [REDACTED] The 44th WORLD CON. GOH: Ray Bradbury. Membership: Attending \$55 until Feb. 15, 1986; Supporting \$25. Write: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

EARTHCON VI, Sept 19 - 21, 1986. At the Holiday Inn - Independence, [REDACTED] GOH: Gordon R. Dickson. Special GOH: C.J. Cherryh. Membership: \$15 until May 31, 1986; \$18 until Aug. 31, 1986. Write: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Mythprint is the monthly bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society, a nonprofit educational organization devoted to the study, discussion, and enjoyment of myth and fantasy literature, especially the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and Charles Williams.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

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c/o Lee Speth, [REDACTED]

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The Mythopoeic Society also publishes Mythlore, a quarterly journal of Tolkien, Lewis, Williams, General Fantasy and Mythic Studies (subscription is \$12 per year and should also be sent to Lee Speth); and Mythellany, an annual of fiction, poetry, & whatnot (write Lee Speth for availability & price)

### SUBMISSIONS

Reviews, discussion reports, news items, letters, and other submissions are always welcome. We're glad to retype material into our computer, so any readable form is accepted.

Artwork is also always wanted, especially cover art! The maximum cover art size is 6 inches high by 6 1/2 wide, but we can reduce or enlarge.

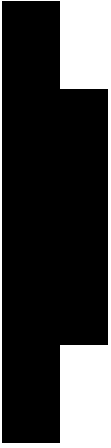
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