MYTHPRINT

The Monthly Bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society

Vol. 43 No. 4 April 2006 Whole No. 289

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Table of Contents

Illustrations

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Editorial Address: (Send materials for publication, letters, comments, etc.)
Eleanor M. Farrell, Editor
[redacted]
E-mail: [redacted]

Subscriptions & Back Order Information: See inside back cover

Mythopoeic Society Information:
Edith Crowe, Corresponding Secretary
[redacted]
E-mail: [redacted]
Web site: *www.mythsoc.org*

DEADLINES for receiving material for each issue of *Mythprint* are the 1st of the preceding month (eg, June 1st for the July issue).

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Mythcon 37 Announcement

August 4–7, 2006
University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK

Theme: The Map and the Territory: Maps and Landscapes in Fantasy

(with a track on Native American Fantasy/Native Americans in Fantasy)

Author Guest of Honor: Lois McMaster Bujold
Scholar Guest of Honor: Amy H. Sturgis

The Site

The Thurman J. White Forum Building on the OU campus.

Housing

The Sooner Hotel & Suites (standard hotel rooms and two-bedroom cottage suites). Breakfast, lunch, and dinner in the Commons Restaurant on-site.

Events

- Book signing and reception at the University of Oklahoma main campus bookstore.
- Annual Banquet in the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History.

Campus Amenities

- Special exhibit on Native American authors at the Western History Collections
- Special exhibit on maps in the History of Science Collection in Bizzell Library

Maps and brochures are available for self-guiding walking tours of the campus, with a focus on our wonderful sculptures, architecture, and gardens.

Transportation

Fly into Will Rogers International Airport in Oklahoma City (about 45 minutes) or the nearby hub airports at Dallas/Fort Worth (a three-hour drive by rental car).

Registration

$150 Mythopoeic Society members
$175 non-Society members
$110 students
Single day rate: $45 per day
(Children under 12 are free)

Meals and Accommodations

$53 full meal package (not including banquet)
$50 Sunday banquet

Accommodation reservations will be made directly with the hotel. Standard room rate is $53/night (up to 4 persons); suite is $88/night (up to 6 persons).

Checks or money orders for registration and meals should be made payable to "Burning Hill Farm." You may register through the Society's web site, using our Paypal shopping cart feature. Check the Mythopoeic Society web site for details, updates, and links.

[redacted]

To receive a flyer and registration form, ask questions, or obtain more information about the conference, contact:

Burning Hill Farm, Inc.
c/o Janet Brennan Croft
[redacted]
e-mail [redacted]

Music: *Lord of the Rings* Symphony CD

JONATHAN PETERS, "Symphony No. 1: Journey of the Ring." Order CD from: [redacted]

When Howard Shore put together a concert program of his music from Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* films, he called it a symphony. Jonathan Peters, a composer and piano teacher from Orange County, California, also calls his 57-minute work a symphony. But like Shore's work it has none of the development or counterpoint you expect from a symphony with Beethoven's or Sibelius's name on it.

Instead, it's eleven small (3-7 minutes each) musical depictions of scenes from—well, scenes from a movie of *The Lord of the Rings*. Anyone who puts his piece on Shelob's Lair in Part 3, *after* one that he misspells "Minas Tirath," must have been watching Jackson more than reading Tolkien. Like Shore, he labels his Shire piece "Concerning Hobbits." Peters' Battle of the Pelennor Fields ends with more triumph than his destruction of the Ring. Peters has a film composer's sensibility: even his scene-painting movements are episodic story-telling pieces, and he can begin and cut off abruptly: "A Journey in the Dark" begins with a flurry that I suppose is the Fellowship running away from the Watcher in the Water, and the slamming of the Westgate, emphasized more by Tolkien than Jackson, is absent from Peters.

But I think I'd enjoy the film that would go with Peters' score more than I did the films that went with Shore's score. It's much less pretentious, for one thing. Peters has a prodigal thematic imagination, orchestrates thinly and cleanly, and above all he is succinct. He doesn't repeat himself, jack up tension through cheap sequencing, or continue after he has failed of invention. There is no exhaustion here as is found in the later parts of Shore's work. The action scenes are sometimes challenging: Peters' Moria and Pelennor Fields churn a bit, but his Helm's Deep and Mount Doom are well balanced between contemplation and activity.

Though Peters, like Shore, uses a Celtic-style dance in his depiction of hobbits (ouch!), his at least sounds like a country dance and not like Shore's Celtic lounge music. Peters' Rivendell is a placid pastoral over a gently rocking rhythm akin to Philip Glass. Otherwise for the Elves and other scenes of ethereal beauty, Peters is partial to harps and other plucked strings that avoid the steaminess that many composers associate with Lothlórien. Peters' versatility is shown by his ability to make the same pizzicato strings in Shelob's Lair sound appropriately creepy. The hollow trombone smear that goes along with it is wonderfully sinister.

I name these instruments, but as far as I can tell this recording was created entirely through electronics. This is an art that has advanced greatly since the days of *Switched-On Bach*. Many of the instruments sound indistinguishable from the real acoustic thing, and only an occasional painful hint of the tinny sound of the good old Hammond organ really gives it away.

A couple points are unintentionally comic. What Tolkien describes as "faint knocks" in the deeps of Moria sound like somebody banging on a large aluminum baking pan. Couldn't Peters have sampled something like the anvils from the Solti recording of Wagner's *Ring*? And the ride of the Rohirrim is accompanied by a dotted timpani rhythm that owes way too much to Elmer Bernstein and makes it sound more like the Ride of the Marlboro Men.

But those are minor if embarrassing flaws. In general I enjoyed my visit to Jonathan Peters' sound-world of *The Lord of the Rings*, and I encourage you to share the experience.

Reviewed by David Bratman

Literary Essay: Love Among the Monsters

The paranormal romance subgenre, although it has been marketed as a distinct category for little more than a decade, has a venerable ancestry. Many classical myths involve love affairs between human and superhuman beings, notably the story of Cupid and Psyche. This myth's lineal descendant, "Beauty and the Beast," provides a model for innumerable novels, as do other fairy tales involving spells and magical creatures, such as "Cinderella," "Rapunzel," "Snow White," "Snow White and Rose Red" (with a bear who is actually a transformed man), and "The Frog Prince," among others, as well as literary fairy tales such as Andersen's "The Little Mermaid." Many folk ballads, such as "Tam Lin," also combine love stories and otherworldly themes. Supernatural horror and romance have coexisted in the novel at least since the origins of the Gothic in the late eighteenth century (most of those works explained away their apparently supernatural events, but not all did). The twentieth century saw notable crossovers between romance and the supernatural in plays and movies such as *Death Takes a Holiday* and *Bell, Book, and Candle.* Thorne Smith, author of the humorous ghost novel *Topper*, also wrote *The Passionate Witch*, a novel that, with the character of the witch noticeably softened, became the film *I Married a Witch*, which in turn led to the television series *Bewitched. The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*, if published today, would certainly be marketed as paranormal romance. The revival of the Gothic romance as a distinct subgenre thrived in the 1960s, with innumerable paperback novels modeled on such classics as *Jane Eyre* and Daphne DuMaurier's *Rebecca.* Although most of those featured non-supernatural menaces, some contained genuine hauntings. The early works of bestselling suspense author Barbara Michaels frequently combined the supernatural with romance. The paperback series publisher Silhouette produced a long-running line of Gothic-style romances, Silhouette Shadows, that occasionally included supernatural creatures as either villains or heroes. Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's *Hotel Transylvania*, the debut of her ancient vampire Saint-Germain, was dominated by an intensely sensual love story.

In short, fiction of the kind now called paranormal romance is far from new. The innovation consists of labeling these stories as a distinct subgenre and marketing category. Before the 1990s, a book that combined a ghost or a displaced Greek god with a romantic happy ending would be classified as a ghost story or fantasy with a love story subplot. If marketed as a romance, such a novel would be regarded as a cross-genre experiment, not a member of a defined category. In paranormal romance, conversely, the romance plot predominates, although the fantasy or supernatural element may be almost as important as in a true cross-genre novel (but it need not be, since a story containing a relatively minor supernatural element such as a fortunetelling prediction that comes true or a heroine's touch of precognition is also considered a member of this subgenre). Few romance fans today who do not remember the book's publication could imagine how innovative Lori Herter's undeservedly neglected *Obsession* seemed when it appeared on the bookstore shelves in 1991. A classic "clinch" pose dominated its cover, but the man wore a Bela-Lugosi-style cape, and a discreet bat adorned the upper corner of the illustration. A love story with a vampire hero, which unabashedly declared itself a romance! Vampire romance quickly became a wildly popular subgenre, followed by the recognition (and marketing) of paranormal romance as encompassing any love story that includes elements of fantasy or the supernatural.

In the past few years, as cross-genre novels receive a friendlier reception by many publishers (thanks in part, perhaps, to innovative works released by small presses and e-publishers, who recognized the reading public's hunger for the kind of fiction that larger companies often viewed with suspicion), paranormal romance is often blended with other genres, such as mystery, humor, and chick lit. The acceptance and current popularity of this kind of romance benefits writers as well as readers. An author who has written (or wanted to write) fiction of this type all along now has a label to pin on it, rather than having to win over publishers unsure of how to market the book and bookstore managers at a loss on where to shelve it. On the negative side, of course, a subgenre that achieves a discrete identity can harden into formula and fall victim to clichè. The field of paranormal romance is no less subject to Sturgeon's ninety-percent rule than any other genre—but no more, either.

These books fall roughly into two groups, stories in which either hero or heroine (or sometimes, though more rarely, both) is supernatural or otherwise nonhuman and those in which hero and heroine together must deal with the external threat of a supernatural phenomenon. The two novels reviewed here give examples of each. I recommend both of them as thoughtful, well-written, and emotionally engaging.

ANN LAWRENCE, *Do You Believe?* New York: Tor, 2005. ISBN 0-765-34888-8, pb, 369 pp., $6.99.

One of the books in Tor's recently inaugurated paranormal romance line, *Do You Believe?* qualifies as almost a true romance-horror crossover, with both elements equally prominent. It falls into the category of hero and heroine working together to vanquish a paranormal menace. Rose Early travels to England in search of her sister Joan, who has stopped answering e-mail after sending several disturbing messages. Joan has left an unfinished project behind, a photographic book on English church art. She has also left a copy of a horror novel, *Do You Believe in Evil?*, festooned with marginal notes, even though she normally disdains popular fiction. Rose tracks down the novel's author, Vic Drummond, who lives in the village from which Joan vanished. They fall in love while investigating Joan's disappearance and the palpable force of apparently supernatural malevolence that seems to haunt the village church.

The reader gets glimpses of other characters' viewpoints, making it clear that some of the leading residents of the town do indeed have secrets to hide. Whether genuine supernatural evil is at work, however, does not become clear until late in the story. In keeping with the Gothic tradition, Rose remains suspicious of Vic's motives for many chapters, before she finally accepts him as trustworthy. Along the way, his occasional lies and evasions make her distrust plausible. The title of the book comes to refer to belief in love as well as evil. The growing passion and affection between Rose and Vic are portrayed in richly textured, sensual terms. Lawrence writes three-dimensional, vividly individualized sex scenes. Toward the end of the book, though, I started skimming over many of them, because by that point they tend to interrupt rather than advance the story, except for a few that dramatize the malign influence of the evil entity or the desperate passion shared by the lovers before charging into battle against it. On the whole, *Do You Believe?* strikes me as effective in both horror and romance terms. But I did find the climactic revelation of the true nature of the evil somewhat of a letdown. The motives of the person or persons responsible are not made sufficiently clear. The implied promise of a web

of conspiracy underlying the surface relationships of the village and stretching back over generations is not quite fulfilled. Therefore, I feel the horror subplot is not resolved as satisfactorily as the romance subplot. Until the final confrontation, however, both elements remain well balanced.

STEPHENIE MEYER, *Twilight.* New York: Little, Brown, 2005. ISBN 0-316-16017-2, hc, 498 pp., $17.99.

A vampire romance for young readers, *Twilight* is told in the first person by Bella, a seventeen-year-old girl who moves from her mother's home in Phoenix to live with her father in a small town in the state of Washington. Although she has made this decision of her own free will for her mother's benefit, Bella feels unhappy at being displaced from her familiar big-city environment in the sunny Southwest. Soon, however, she meets the alluring yet intimidating Edward Cullen, a member of a mysterious family viewed with superstitious distrust by the local Native Americans. Edward's initial attitude of inexplicable hostility toward her quickly shifts to intense attraction. Thanks to the dust jacket blurb, the reader knows Edward and his adopted siblings are vampires, but of course Bella takes a while to come to this incredible conclusion. In her search for the truth about the boy who fascinates her, she avoids both of the annoying extremes to which protagonists of such fiction are apt to go—either prematurely and credulously jumping to the conclusion that supernatural forces are at work or denying the obvious long after he or she has seen ample evidence of the otherworldly. Bella's world-view evolves at a believable pace, and the persistence of her love for Edward despite growing awareness that he is something more than human comes across as equally believable. Her struggle to fit in with her new classmates, in the midst of less mundane concerns, lends psychological realism to her situation. The author renders a fresh view of the familiar vampire template, with a vividly convincing picture of these creatures' enchanting and, to a slightly lesser extent, frightening qualities. I also enjoyed Bella's appealing narrative voice, along with her wry consciousness of her flaws (such as extreme clumsiness, which becomes an important plot point).

As for the balance between romance and fantasy elements, this novel falls into the paranormal romance category rather than horror-romance crossover as exemplified by *Do You Believe?* Meyer's plot remains almost entirely relationship-driven until the last few chapters. The external threat that invades at that point appears to come out of nowhere, serving the author's convenience rather than the book's narrative structure. An unexpected revelation of the antagonist's secret past connection with Edward's family, however, somewhat mitigates this feeling of disconnection between the romance and horror-suspense threads. On the relationship level, Bella and Edward attain a satisfying resolution without seeming to have achieved it too easily.

Reviewed by Margaret L. Carter

Correction

The review of Lois McMasters Bujold's *The Hallowed Hunt,* published in the March issue of *Mythprint,* actually written by Pauline J. Alama, but mistakenly attributed to Lois Hinckley. The editor would like to apologize to both reviewers whose contributions to the newsletter are greatly appreciated. Hinckley's actual review, of Cory Doctorow's *Eastern Standard Tribe,* is published in this issue of *Mythprint.*

Activity Calendar

Marion VanLoo
Membership & Discussion Group Secretary
[redacted]

Prospective Groups

CALIFORNIA

[redacted]: *LOTHLORIEN*
Linda Sundstrom, [redacted].

CONNECTICUT

[redacted]: *FANTASTIC WORLDS*
Bill Pierce, E-mail: [redacted]
Web: [redacted]

FLORIDA

[redacted]: *HOBBITON*
Paul S. Ritz, [redacted].

[redacted]: *ERYN GALEN*
B.L. McCauley, [redacted]. E-mail: [redacted]

INDIANA

[redacted]: *CERIN AMROTH*
Ellen Denham, E-mail: [redacted]
Web: [redacted]

Chartered Groups

CALIFORNIA

[redacted] *MYDGARD*
Lee Speth, [redacted]

April: *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne

San Francisco Bay Area: KHAZAD-DÛM
Amy Wisniewski & Edith Crowe, [redacted]
E-mail: [redacted]
Web: [redacted]
April: *Son of a Witch* by Gregory Maguire
May: *Hallowed Hunt* by Lois McMaster Bujold
June: *Many Dimensions* by Charles Williams

COLORADO

[redacted] *FANUIDHOL ("CLOUDY HEAD")*
Patricia Yarrow, [redacted]. E-mail: [redacted]
Web: [redacted]

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

[redacted] *KNOSSOS*
Mimi Stevens, [redacted] E-mail: [redacted]

HAWAII

[redacted]: *SAMMATH NAUR*
Steve Brown, Box [redacted]. E-mail: [redacted]
Web: [redacted]
April: *Blind Lake* by Robert Wilson
May: *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel
June: *The Planets* by Dava Sobel (with Planetarium show following)
August: *Speed of Light* by Elizabeth Moon

ILLINOIS

[redacted]: *THE FAR WESTFARTHING SMIAL*
Mike Foster, [redacted]. E-mail: [redacted]
April: *The Silmarillion* by J.R.R. Tolkien, Ch. 7 & 8

IOWA

[redacted]: *ALFHEIM*
Doug Rossman, [redacted], E-mail: [redacted]

LOUISIANA

[redacted]: *ROKE*
Sally Budd, [redacted]

MICHIGAN

[redacted] *GALADHREMMIN-ENNORATH*
Dave & Grace Lovelace, [redacted]

MINNESOTA

[redacted] *RIVENDELL*
David Lenander, [redacted]

[redacted]
Web: [redacted]
April: Meeting at Minicon

NEVADA

[redacted] *Crickhollow*
Joanne Burnett, [redacted]
[redacted]. E-mail: [redacted]
Web: [redacted]
April: *Son of A Witch* by Gregory Maguire
May: *The Historian* by Elizabeth Kostova
June: *Soldier of the Mists* by Gene Wolfe
July: *Glory Road* by Robert Heinlein

NEW YORK

[redacted] *Heren Istarion*
(The New York Tolkien Society)
Anthony Burdge & Jessica Burke, The New York Tolkien Society, [redacted]
[redacted]. E-mail: [redacted]
Web: [redacted]

OREGON

[redacted]
Donovan Mattole, [redacted]
[redacted]
Web: [redacted]
April: *Merlin* by Stephen Lawhead
May: *Arthur* by Stephen Lawhead
June: *The Four Loves* by C.S. Lewis

PENNSYLVANIA

[redacted] *C.S. Lewis and Friends*
Neil Gussman, [redacted]
[redacted]. E-mail: [redacted]

SOUTH CAROLINA

[redacted] *The Columbia C.S. Lewis Society*
Nina Fowler, [redacted]
E-mail: [redacted]

WASHINGTON

[redacted] *Mithlond*
Matthew Winslow, [redacted]
[redacted]
Web: [redacted]

WISCONSIN

[redacted] *The Burrahobbits*
Jeffrey & Jan Long, [redacted]
[redacted]

Special Interest Group

The Elvish Linguistic Fellowship
Carl Hostetter, [redacted]
[redacted]
Newsletter, *Vinyar Tengwar*. Journal, *Parma Eldalamberon*: Christopher Gilson, [redacted]
[redacted]

Correspondence Groups

Butterbur's Woodshed (general fantasy)
Diane Joy Baker, [redacted]
[redacted]
Correspondence circular with set topic. Web: [redacted]
May: 2006 MFA Adult nominees
July: Mazes and Gardens of Fantasy

Once Upon A Time (children's fantasy)
Laura Krentz, [redacted]
[redacted]
Correspondence circular. Web: [redacted]
[redacted]

Online Discussion Groups

Mythsoc E-List
Society activities and general book-related discussion.
Sign up: [redacted] or contact Joan Marie Verba: [redacted]

Coinherence
Online discussion of Charles Williams
David Davis: E-mail: [redacted]

Book Reviews

TERRY DEARY, *The Fire Thief.* New York: Kingfisher Books (Houghton Mifflin), 2005. ISBN 0753458187, hc, 256 pp., $9.95.

This book got such strange reviews in both Kirkus and the Amazon website that I felt obliged to read it. The good news is that it isn't as bad as the Kirkus review suggested. The bad news is that it's an aggravating book. I think the author was trying for a cross between Daniel Pinkwater and Lemony Snicket, with a little Sid Fleischman thrown in. The result is a very odd fantasy taking place in 1858, blending a 19th century con man with a Greek Titan [Prometheus, to explain the title] to create utter havoc. The portrayal of mythology is flippant. The portrayal of everyone else is also pretty flippant, though, so at least the author was consistent. I assume that the story takes place in England, since Charles Dickens is an uncredited background character, but that's never really established. The story takes place in New Eden, a town name that sounds much more American, except for the parts that take place on Olympus or on the rock where Prometheus was bound and punished. The basic story seems to be about Prometheus trying to find one truly heroic man, to prove to Zeus that he wasn't entirely wrong to give the gift of fire to those shivering cavemen. Since this story is never fully resolved, that part becomes very frustrating to the reader. The various side stories are resolved, but not the supposed main story that started the whole thing.

The writer uses a device involving lots of footnotes that eventually become annoying. Very few of them are anything more than distractions from the plot. At other points, the author deliberately confuses the reader, and then pokes fun at the reader for being confused. Not a way to win fans.... The short section on mythology at the back of the book is useful if *The Fire Thief* is being read by someone who has never encountered a Greek Myth, except perhaps in a dark alley.

The story is told from the viewpoint of a young boy, the sidekick of the con man, who hopes to someday be a writer, and is using us, the readers, to practice on. He needs the practice. I checked our library catalog, and the only other book we have by Terry Deary came out over 20 years ago, *The Custard Kid.* In the interim he has been writing a series called **Horrible Histories**, which may be where he developed his current writing style.

Reviewed by Nick Smith

CORY DOCTOROW, *Eastern Standard Tribe.* New York: Tom Doherty and Associates, 2005, ISBN 0-786-31045-7, tp, 224 pp., $12.95.

Drawn by the title of this book, I volunteered to review it. Finding it an urban tech fantasy such as I associate with William Gibson, I wavered. After all, I don't own a cell phone or an iPod and I barely comprehend music swapping, one focus of this story. After two paragraphs I was hooked and read it straight through—an experience shared by other readers, judging by the reviews quoted on the cover.

The second paragraph begins with this sentence: "The explanation, like all good propaganda, is stirring and stilted, and not particularly accurate, and gummy as the hook from a top 40s song...." The sentence is a fair sample of the cold-bath wakeup calls that pepper the flow of this provocative, accurate, funny and appalling portrait of the cyber world we're entering—if, indeed, we're not already in its slippery maw.

A self-styled morality play, *E.S.T.* unreels in two alternating voices: an "I" who is sitting in his boxer shorts on the roof of a sanatorium near Boston, and a third personal "Art Berry," central

player, User Experience specialist and industrial saboteur. Art's story is told in traditional past tense, while the "I" speaks from Art's future in a present time which gazes retrospectively at Art's progress. For the reader, time begins to wrinkle and fold on itself in an eerie approximation of what the instant wireless communication of the book's premise does to our sense of place.

The book begins by making a distinction between Eastern and Western medicine—observation of the body in action *vs.* dissection of it (see second paragraph above). The book's two voices allow readers to experience both approaches in regards to Art's story. As Art and his fellows live, move, invent and react, we get to observe the body of humanity, and commentary from "I" in the sanatorium dissects some of what Art's story is 'about'. One of Art's challenges is the mutually exclusive options of being happy and being smart. Another is the clash between our new found ability to be in touch with everyone else 24/7 and the old-as-animate-life-on-earth necessity for sleep. As the title suggests, "[T]he world is slowly splintering into tribes held together by a common time zone, less than family and more than nations" (from back cover blurb).

Doctorow's *E.S.T.* is a comedy of headlong pace, mind-stretching language, sharp and alarming perceptions. It is also the most idea-provoking story I've downloaded by eye for some time. You may not be able to put it down.

Reviewed by Lois V. Hinckley

REGINA DOMAN, *The Shadow of the Bear.* Bathgate, ND: Bethlehem Books, 2002. ISBN 1883937760, tp, 280 pp., $11.95.

Author Regina Doman has re-worked the venerable "Snow White and Rose Red" fairy tale, one of the Grimm Brothers' most memorable, into a cracking good suspense yarn for young adults, and the young at heart of all ages.

Blanche and Rose Brier are a *Sense-and-Sensibility* pair of teenagers newly arrived, with their widowed mother, in New York City after the untimely death of their father. While devoted to one another and their mother, an Emergency Room nurse, the girls couldn't be more unalike. Blanche is cautious, reserved, and skeptical. The younger Rose, meanwhile, an impulsive redhead, is trusting, romantic and enthusiastic to the point of recklessness—or so it seems to her mother-hen-like older sister. Coming as the girls do from a rural, home-schooled environment, the City often seems huge and scary and difficult to navigate—a suitable modern stand-in for the "dark forest" of the Grimm Brothers' dark imagination. Blanche especially struggles with chronic anxiety, and cannot even find comfort in school, a bland Catholic high school gutted of all its erstwhile beauty and a good deal of its intellectual rigor. The quiet Blanche finds herself frequently bullied by a clique of "popular" kids, among whom is a young man of dubious character whose eye is always on Rose.

The Brier family's isolated existence is suddenly thrown open to a bit of excitement, coupled (or so Blanche feels) with a whiff of danger when their mother is assisted on their winter-icy doorstep by a mysterious young stranger who calls himself "Bear". Bear's alarming appearance—he sports dirty dreadlocks and is apparently homeless—inspires sympathy and pity from Rose and her mother, but Blanche fears he may be a thief or a drug-dealer; she is more than uneasy when her mother invites Bear inside for something to eat and a bit of medical attention for his frostbitten feet.

In the warmth of the Brier living room, however, the formidable Bear finally begins to take

on more human dimensions, and he is revealed as a well-educated, even gentlemanly young man with a mysterious past, the secrets of which the girls (along with the reader) soon become bent on discovering: Why is a gifted young man like Bear out on the streets? Why did he spend time in a juvenile prison? Why do the kids in the high school insist he's a drug-dealer? And what do all these secrets have to do with the brutal murder of a priest several years before?

These questions are answered by Doman in a suspenseful manner, complete with a very nice bit of romance and a thrilling climax in an abandoned church. What was especially fine, for this reader, is that the hearty storytelling is served up with a challenging sauce of potentially difficult themes, skillfully handled, dealing with problems that all young people must face to one degree or another: death and grief; the tension between caution and hope (being "wise as a serpent" and "innocent as a dove"); the tension between reality and appearance, and the danger of rash judgment; the frequent clash between popularity and principles; whether art is about Form or Truth, or both.

The heart of all mystery and fantasy stories-and *The Shadow of the Bear* is a bit of both—is the sense that something mysterious and important is going on beneath the mundane surfaces of life. Or, as Rose comments at one point, "Have you ever felt that there was something going on in life that not everyone was aware of?"

Reviewed by Debra Murphy

DOROTHY L. SAYERS, *The Travelling Rug.* Altadena, CA: Mythopoeic Press, 2005. ISBN 1-887726-10-1, 114 pp., tp, $10.00.

A previously unpublished short story by Dorothy L. Sayers is treat enough for her fans—particularly when it introduces a new detective, and a female one at that. As is its wont, the Mythopoeic Press has not just unearthed this little gem but surrounded it with a wealth of scholarly and explanatory apparatus, analysis and other odds and ends to delight the scholar or merely the dedicated reader. Joe R. Christopher—not only an Inklings scholar but also a long-time fan of the mystery genre—provides a short but pithy introduction. Beginning with an impressively succinct background on Sayers and her interest in detective fiction, Christopher speculates on why the author might have been moved to create her working class-detectives—Montague Egg, commercial traveler (protagonist of several published stories) and the previously unknown Miss Jane Eurydice Judkin. There is little to be said about the possible significance of and motivations for such a choice that Dr. Christopher hasn't managed to squeeze into his thirteen-page introduction (including copious informative footnotes); nor do the elements of Bunter and Miss Climpson that one detects in Judkin escape his notice. He also provides "A Checklist of Dorothy L. Sayers's Short Mystery Fiction" with descriptive annotations. In addition to a précis of the subject of each tale, Christopher often includes references to other stories, historical context, influences, and such fascinating asides as which ones were initially rejected for publication for being "too gruesome." (How times have changed.)

The actual text of "The Travelling Rug" is thirty-eight pages, although that includes extensive annotations by Janet Brennan Croft. In the interests of full disclosure, let it be said that this reviewer has a bit of a bias against having too much explained to her and an often irritating preference for figuring things out on her own. Therefore she fears that those accustomed to reading a substantial amount of British fiction, particularly of the 1920s or 1930s, may find

some of the definitions unnecessary (such as dish-cover or mahogany) or obtrusive. No doubt others will gladly devour every one, however. Many are translations from British to American usage (now I really understand what "chronic" means in the former); including words that have been rendered obscure by the inevitable march of history, like "meat-safe" or "napoo." The most intriguing annotations are those that give historical or literary context, such as the impressively succinct but informative explanations of the functions and hierarchy of domestic servants in that time and place. Croft also provides a bibliography of the sources used for her annotations—a great service for those who want to explore the historical and cultural context in more detail.

"The Travelling Rug" is an example of a "supernatural-explained" mystery. Christopher notes this and describes some variations on this theme by other authors of the era. Although there is limited room for character development in a short story, those other than Judkin suffer in comparison to the average Peter Wimsey story. For example, veteran mystery readers will probably be immediately suspicious of the person who turns out to be the culprit, even if they don't pick up all the fair-play clues as to how everything was done. To be fair, with virtually no available context in other writings of Sayers, it's impossible to know how "finished" the author considered the story to be.

Nonetheless, the story is intriguing for many reasons, not the least of which is its first-person narration. Without re-reading all of Sayers's mystery stories—which this book has made me long to do—I can't be sure if this voice is unique in her fiction. It is certainly rare at best. One gets the impression that Judkin is not only an intelligent young woman, but one exceptionally well-supplied with common sense. She is also quite a good judge of character, with sufficient understanding of what might call her sociopolitical context to know when to keep this knowledge to herself. As Christopher notes, our protagonist was clearly designed to be a new series detective. This story was the second of "The Situations of Judkin" (the first to be worth relating as a mystery). It's a shame that Sayers never wrote more about Judkin. The character of a young female required by economic necessity to work for people less intelligent or capable than herself might have provided quite an insight into the author.

The Travelling Rug also includes a facsimile of the manuscript and a first draft of one of the scenes. It's a must-have for Sayers fans because of Judkin's unique voice. Those interested in mystery fiction of this era would also find it illuminating for the interpretive and bibliographic material provided by Christopher and Croft, much of which will be helpful in understanding similar works of the period.

Reviewed by Edith Crowe

GENE WOLFE, *Innocents Aboard: New Fantasy Stories.* New York: Orb (Tom Doherty Associates), 2004. ISBN 0-765-30791-X, tp, 304 pp., $14.95.

Having focused our attention for many years now on the vast narrative structure of his "Sun" books, it's been easy to lose sight of how much Gene Wolfe has always been a master of the short form. His talent thrives on conciseness and understatement, carefully choosing each and every word as the *mot juste*, with enough left unsaid but strongly suggested to make each story seem to contain as vast and rich an inner world as any novel. This collection brings together stories written between 1988 and 2001, all of them in the fantasy genre rather than science fiction.

That they are all "fantasy" doesn't, of course,

mean that they are all similar in tone or subject matter. A little over half of them could be loosely classified as "horror". Some are classic horror more or less in the M.R. James tradition ("The Friendship Light", "The Monday Man", "The Walking Sticks"). Others are more varied in mood, while maintaining the edginess of dark fantasy. In "The Tree Is My Hat" a somewhat standard horror-movie plot about sorcerous doings on a Polynesian island dovetails eerily with the main character's own private past. "Houston, 1943" is, according to Wolfe, set in his own childhood home, though seen through a demonic dream filter. "The Lost Pilgrim" is about a time-travel experiment gone dreadfully wrong, featuring Jason and the Argonauts. "A Traveller in Desert Lands" is set in Clark Ashton Smith's world of Zothique. The Gospel story of the Gadarene swine is brought to an unexpected conclusion in the Gran Chaco region of Argentina in "The Eleventh City." A less direct Biblical allusion provides the core plot element of "Copperhead."

Two of the ghost stories are subtle reflections on the afterlife and judgment: "A Fish Story," where the protagonist shies away from the implications of his experience, and "How the Bishop Came to Innisfree" which, despite its dark context, is actually a Christmas story with an offer of hope. The rest of the collection is given over to very different styles of imaginative fiction. "The Legend of Xi Cygnus" (inspired by a dream) and "The Sailor Who Sailed After the Sun" use the language of myth and folktale, simple on the surface but rich with many levels of resonance. "Pocketsful of Diamonds", with its carnival imagery and end-of-childhood atmosphere, is faintly reminiscent of Bradbury. "The Night Chough" is an independent adventure of Oreb, Silk's pet bird in the "Long Sun" books, and features some minor characters from that series. The one explicitly humorous tale here is "Under Hill," an Arthurian quest fantasy stylistically complicated by the fact that the princess to be rescued is Chinese, and almost derailed by the gratuitous intrusion of a science-fictional theme (which the main characters neatly dispose of at the end). And, as unquestionable highlights among these offerings, we have three delightful religious fantasies about entertaining angels unawares ("The Waif," "The Wrapper," and "Queen"—the last, especially, is an exquisite piece that would have been worthy of Chesterton or C.S. Lewis).

For me, the most affecting and memorable item in the collection is certainly "The Old Woman Whose Rolling Pin Is the Sun." Presented as a "just so story" told to a child, it manages, in its few pages, to convey all the power of mythopoeia while recognising (most poignantly) its limitations. Also very impressive, though less direct in its impact, is "Slow Children at Play" which, through a strangely numinous vision, illustrates the thrill and the danger that arise from the meeting of the mortal and divine worlds.

Innocents Aboard reveals a fantasist at the peak of his creative powers. Those who enjoy Wolfe's writing will find some of his best work in these pages.

Reviewed by Alexei Kondratiev

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. To promote these interests, the Society publishes three magazines, maintains a World Wide Web site, and sponsors the annual Mythopoeic Conference and awards for fiction and scholarship, as well as local and written discussion groups.

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