

# N'APA 243

## November 2019



# The Official Organ

## #243

**Next deadline: January 15, 2020**

The official collator is George Phillies - [phillies@4liberty.net](mailto:phillies@4liberty.net).

The official preparer is Jefferson P. Swycaffer - [abontides@gmail.com](mailto:abontides@gmail.com)

**Procedure: Please Read:**

George Phillies will collate and mail, but submissions should be sent to the preparer, Jefferson Swycaffer. No harm is done if submissions get sent to George, but the process should be to send them to Jefferson.

N'APA is the Amateur Press Alliance for members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F). As it is distributed in PDF format, there are no dues or postage fees. It is open to all members of the N3F. If there are members interested in joining who have no computer access, special arrangements may be possible. People who only want to read are welcome to ask to be added to the email list. Check with the official collator, who is George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609; [phillies@4liberty.net](mailto:phillies@4liberty.net); 508 754 1859; and on facebook. To join this APA, contact George.

We occasionally send a copy of N'APA to the accessible (email address needed) N3F membership, in the hope that some of you will join N'APA. Please join now!

Currently the frequency is every other month, with the deadline being on the fifteenth day of odd-numbered months. The mailing will normally be collated in due time, as the collator is retired and the preparer has a full-time job. Publication is always totally regular, though some readers question my interpretations of "is", "always", "totally", and "regular". N'APA has been in existence since 1959, but has transitioned from being a paper APA to an electronic one.

### **In this issue:**

Front Cover: "Downtown" - Jose Sanchez

The Official Organ #243

Ye Murthered Master Mage, by George Phillies - 4

Archive Midwinter, by Jefferson P. Swycaffer - 4

Synergy, by John Thiel - 11

The Contents of a Good Life, by Will Mayo - 9

Super thanks to Jose Sanchez, who sent bunches (!) of works of art for use as covers, some really super spiffing material!



Ye Murthered  
Master Mage  
for N'APA 243

George Phillies  
48 Hancock Hill Drive  
Worcester MA 01609  
September 4, 2019

Oh, the Horns of Hattin opening. I have played against it. a4. h4. Ra3. Rh3. Rad3. Rhe3. The opening faces a modest challenge, namely at move 3 the black BxR and at move 4 BxR. My apponent assumed I would be too busy rescuing my first bishop by retrograding it, so he could safely move out the second rook on move 4. Wrong. He did get one of my rooks, namely PxB, leaving him with doubled pawns on the a file. I was not sophisticated enough to consider whether letting him get doubled pawns on the h file was worth a bishop sacrifice; it kind of garantees he loses both of those pawns eventually.

Front Cover: Jose, that's a remarkable creature. It is certainly unearthly. I vaguely see a flightless bird.

Synergy 18: John, that's a fine opening image. I don't recognize the Reverend. Modern special effects are by the standards of past generations amzing. For the very first Superman movie, back in 1950 or so, for the flying scenes they had to use cartoons. The tale of the cheater is quite amusing. The gods kept their promise, but it was ambiguous. I don't watch enough TV or whatever to recognize your four images; your Synergy closing illo was highly appropriate.

Contents of a good life: Will, that's a beautiful cover. Quaint ideas about good housekeeping. Interesting that your father heard Armstrong accurately. Thank you for your short reviews. I was not aware of the Astor book. Is it at all like Stapledon's First and Last Men? The tale of the early Jazz musicians is certainly different. Devil's music? I can believe someone would say that.

There is an old F&SF I think tale of the astronomer who makes deal with a devil, completely keeps his half of the deal, and the devil discovers that it is his turn to suffer misfortune. The astonomer wants an infinite lifetime of studying stellar objects, the devil being kept busy supplying instruments, recording

data...and not being able to execute his fiendish plans.

Archive Midwinter. Thanks for your thoughts on my superhero novel. It is actually finished and coming up on Smashwords and Amazon. The paperback is out now. The ebook is on preorder for a November 15 release date.

Yes, indeed, Asimov wrote almost pure dialogue. Books back then were much shorter than they are now. Observe that the Hugo cutoff for novel lengths is a miniscule 40,000 words. My novels are four times that, and by the standards of Weber or Clancy they are short. The Neffy cutoff line for novels is 100,000 words.

Notes from a Galaxy Far Far Away: Those are indeed impressive sculptures. Outdoors? Are they permanent, or was this an exhibition? My outdoors is currently preparing the property for winter, which prep work goes on forever, This year semed to be much slower than some years past. Perhaps it was that we had very heavy rains in the spring, so that the undergrowth in the gardens was very thick.

I have not watched many movies in recent decades. I did rewatch a film I much liked, 40 years ago. This was The Little Girl Who Lives Down the Lane. It's a suspense/horror/romance film, with the acting burden being carried by Jodie Foster, who was 13 at the time. The film is tamer than the book, in that she murders fewer people over the course of events. There are two cuts to the film, the American International cut, which was the one I saw more than 40 years ago, and the European cut, with the nude scene using a skin double, followed by the entirely romantic bedroom scene.

The Silver State Age: Thanks for your review of The Poppy War. The Chinese War of the Resistance was a horrific affair, of which many Americans know very little. If you could be persuaded to send more book reviews to The N3F Review of Books they would be most appreciated. That goes for the rest of you, too. Good point on the reemergence of good Christian fiction. For some time it was an entirely separate subgenre that you never heard about. The author I needed to search to recall was Frank Peretti, who was a good writer who was careful to make his bad people truly evil. To the folks you mention note also Vox Day and his

Castalia House press. Day's politics, well, are best not considered here.

So far as taxes are concerned, allegedly the last set of tax cuts save a family of four at the median income about \$2500 a year in taxes. However, this is politics; to my eye American politics has completely taken leave of its senses, so that I am more and more ignoring it.

As a general rule, I do my own taxes with computer support. I did once upon a time have an excellent preparer, but she quit. Her income did not justify the certification expenses, which kept getting larger and larger. I then started going my own taxes, with computer support. I am a firm believer in keeping this as simple as possible with respect to deductions. That minimizes my chances of having to argue with the IRS or the DoR.

Best of luck dealing with Social Security.

The openings of my two next novels.

### **Opening of Book 3 of Eclipse, this being Stand Against the Light:**

#### **Chapter One**

"Eclipse," Star asked. "Could we talk? Strictly privately? Someplace else on the island?"

"Sure," she answered. She looked around. No one else was in earshot. "So soon as I finish these dishes." There was no substitute, she thought, for hot running water. Comet flying large blocks of ice from Antarctica, and letting Star melt them with gentle plasma bursts, at least meant that you could be positive the water was completely pure. "Almost done."

"It's real nice of you to do that," he said. "I could help."

"You did all the cooking," Eclipse answered. "Aurora's telekinesis, and Cloud suspending gravity, got them almost clean, and dumped the waste water into the ocean. I'm just getting them to sparkling clean. OK, done."

"If you want to walk?" Star asked. "You said you were really worn out from zorching the Andesians."

"I'd rather not drop down to Smash Planet levels for a few days," Eclipse said. "But short around-the-world hops are no great trade. Shall we?" He nodded. They faded into a blue haze, the tinkle of little bells ringing around them.

"Here we are," Eclipse continued. "South end of the island, a couple miles between us and them. So what is it?" She asked.

"I had another idea about time travel," he said. "This time I spent a couple days thinking about it, looking for loopholes, just like you and Comet said. There is one, but it's really weird. Though it tells where to look for time pirates. But I'm sick of Cloud dissing me every time I suggest something, so I thought I'd just tell you about it. I could tell Comet, but half the time she's so gloomy that she hardly hears me. Not that I blame her for being gloomy. And she works really well to hide it."

"Heinlein Act divorcing your parents is really rough. It's even worse than what happened to me." Eclipse shook her head. "We're exactly here so we can sit down on those rocks and you can tell me about your idea. I liked your last idea. I just don't know what to do with it."

"It's about time travel," Star said. "No, I'm not suggesting you should do it. You explained. You go back in time, and you supply the power to rebuild everything in your light cone — whatever a light cone is, I didn't follow that — from the past until now. That way, you come back to the present and everything has been rebuilt, so there's no trace you did time travel. You go back sixty million years, save the maiasauric civilization, and when you get here the world is full of dinosaurs who think. There's no trace there were ever people." Eclipse nodded agreeably.

"So my idea," Star said, "perhaps there's another type of time travel. A low-power type. The limit is, instead of fixing everything, you leave traces behind of what used to be true. So someone goes back, keeps the maiasurs from becoming intelligent, and when she returns to the present there are still traces of the maiasaur civilization. There just aren't any fossils of big-brained maiasurs."

“Okay, I guess. And how does that describe us?” Eclipse reminded herself that Star was more or less as smart as either of his sisters, just very differently focused. Where was he going with this?

“This right here is the real world. The place we came from, whatever, is the place that has the time pirates,” Star said. “They pick up the world timeline, move it back or forth in time, set up a civilization and wreck it, and then do it again. So Sarnath and Perpetua and all those other places all did happen three thousand years ago. Except after each of them disappeared, the pirates went back six thousand years, spent three thousand years building up the next one, say Sarnath, then Sarnath got smashed, then the whole timeline got moved again and again and again. All the stars are in the right place because it’s still today. Except in moving the earth back-and-forth in time, the time pirates got careless, so the earth is off by six thousand years and has our north pole pointing at Thuban when it should be pointing at the baby unicorn’s horn, the way it is here.”

Eclipse took a very deep breath. Catching the time pirates here would be really hard, if they were actually camped out back in the American Republic. “What you’re saying is, someone has this sloppy time travel, they go back five or ten millennia, restart everything, let Sarnath or the Goetic Knights or whoever appear, wipe out that civilization because we know all those old civilizations were wiped out, go back again and restart the timeline, and when they’re done they reach the present except there are all these messes they didn’t clean up right when they reset time.

Star shook his head enthusiastically. “That’s it,” he said. “You see what my idea is. But if I told Cloud about it, we get into an argument about whether they were picking up the timeline, or traveling back in time, or something more complicated, when we have no idea how they did it. I’m stopping with ‘what if the time pirates are there, not here, and this world is what happens if there are no time pirates’.”

“Yeah,” Eclipse said, “Cloud is a bit down on any ideas other than his own. That wouldn’t be so bad if the three of you weren’t all so good at coming up with good ideas, and he isn’t.”

“Okay,” Star said, “maybe sawing the Transistor Tower in half was a bit enthusiastic, but it really worked.”

“It sure did,” Eclipse said. “I’m still afraid I get to go back there again and blow up another mountain.. I mean, Aurora and I did look. That city we flattened was entirely full with aliens and human beings whose minds they’d totally deleted and replaced with mentalic software. We killed almost no people when we beat the Andesians. Next time, it may be that a lot of people get to die. Worse, I’m Athena’s Spear and Shield. One of those people who gets to die is probably me.”

Star looked at the ground “I don’t know what to say,” he finally managed. “And you seem so content. If I knew I were going to die, I’d be so frightened and depressed I’d hardly be able to think.”

“I’ve had practice,” Eclipse said. “I really ought to tell you guys what happened to the Namestone. Comet figured it out. It was a horribly evil thing, pretending to be good.”

“If Comet’s not mad at you for whatever you did about it, I shouldn’t be either.” Star nodded. “She’s as gifttrue as you can get. Perhaps we should go back now, and see what people think of the house kits I found?”

“Sounds good to me,” Eclipse agreed. “In a couple of hours, we get to take that pile of money to the fellow who wants to sell this island. It was truly super that Aurora found him. Otherwise, building a base here would be risky.”

## Of Breaking Waves

Volume 4 of The Girl Who Saved the World.

### Chapter 1 Eclipse

Very gradually I swam back to consciousness. I was lying on my stomach, my head resting on one arm, The background sound was heavy rain, beating on the roofs, pouring into gutters, rushing through downspouts, splishing and splashing across the ground. I was lying on rough-finished lumber. No,

it was the plastic composite Pickering's world uses for decks and porches.

Where was I? I was cold as all get-out. At least my padded coat hadn't gotten soaked. I forced myself to open my eyes. It was dark, the dark of a darkling afternoon under slate-dark clouds.

I'd died, hadn't I, facing the Star Demons? No, there'd been something afterwards, the people who lived at the bottom of the Well of Infinity. They told me how to return here. They'd warned: The return trip was so terrible that I'd need a while before I remembered it.

Without thinking, I checked my Medico rules engine. The dead-black glyphs were now pure white. Somehow my body had been put back together. I'd overloaded. I must have had chills to the edge of having convulsions. I hadn't torn any muscles or shredded any ligaments, but I'd come fairly close. That was the bad part of bodybuilding. If I had muscle spasms, I could seriously wreck myself up. The matching good part of all that weight lifting was that I had all those muscles, so I hadn't dropped into hypothermia and died.

I tried to roll over. Muscles screamed in protest. Where was I? Close enough to a house wall that I was still dry, no matter the rain outside. Out from the house were thick woods. OK, I recognized them. This was the base that Comet and friends built--ok, I helped a bit. Coming here made perfect sense. No one on Pickering's world knew where we were. Ignoring the pain, I rolled on my side and sat up, pulling my knees into my chest. The world tipped left and right...no, the effort had left me dizzy. I had to wait before I could push against a wall, walk myself upright, and stagger to a door.

Kitchen door. No lights inside. I rang the doorbell, then knocked once and again. No answer. I wasn't up to doing a mindscan. Null links? My null links to the three Wells children were dead silent. They weren't here. They weren't anywhere. Had they died? They might have, while I was, well, not dead, but someplace else. They might be in another universe. I finally thought to try the door latch. Unlocked. The door swung open. I didn't quite fall on my face again.

A note lay on the breakfast room table, weighted by a tea mug.

"Eclipse," it began. "We were sure you died killing the Star Demons. You were indeed Athena's Spear and Shield, just as the Wizard of Mars had said. We found how to beat the Tibet Doom. Maybe I should say you already found it, many attacks at the same time, and we got it to work for us. We saved Tibet. We agreed to fly back. I insisted we leave this note for you to read, just in case we were wrong. If you are alive, I realize the flight back is a real killer for you. I don't know how to fix that. You could stay here forever. The house should run on automatic, at least for a while. We're gone. The house is yours, if you want it. We all miss you. Sincerely, Comet."

There followed a note from Cloud, in High Goetic. He didn't know it very well, but the message was clear. He was telling me where all the money was hidden, in a language no one here and now could possibly know how to read. After all, Goetica Arcana hadn't happened yet. I compared dates on the note and the wall clock--weird that Pickering's world's electrical clocks display date as well as time. They'd been gone three days, while I'd been not-exactly-dead. They'd be home by now.

Archive Midwinter  
a zine for N'APA 242

by Jefferson P. Swycaffer  
P.O. Box 15373  
San Diego CA 92175

(619) 303-1855  
abontides@gmail.com  
jpswycaffer.com

21 July 2019

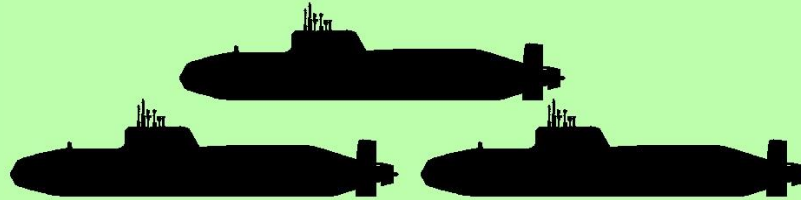
#### Comments:

**Jose Sanchez:** Cover: Lovely! Surreal! A touch of Addams Family, and a big hit of LSD!

**George Phillies:** I'd not heard of Harry Turtledove's "Alpha and Omega" before; it sounds like just my cuppa! I'll track it down forthwith!

Your superhero fiction continues to astonish. Your "entropy level" is among the highest I've ever seen – swishing around the Solar System via individual flight! – and yet you soften it with personal touches – people getting cold and asking for blankets – so the overwhelming level of personal power doesn't destroy the drama nor put the characters beyond the readers' ability to empathize and to care. This is a very tricky parlay!

**John Thiel:** I think Nihilism is a little like Solipsism: it's pretty obviously true – but it's so unproductive – it's absolutely unproductive! – that one quickly sets it aside and adopts a more fruitful personal working philosophy. Nothing is real, and nothing is true. Fine. Let's footnote that, and then figure out what to have for



dinner. Bishop Berkeley argued for reality by kicking a rock. I argue that kicking rocks hurts, and things that hurt are kinda best avoided. I don't want a personal philosophy that brings me pain.

I don't want to go as far as Martin Gardner went, who adopted religious faith, on the grounds of credo consolans: the belief made him feel better. I just can't follow that, because, for me, "belief" is evidence-based, not outcome-based. Even if it were proven that religious belief has a strong benefit on people's personal lives – they live longer, were happier, etc. – I couldn't "believe." It's one of those things some people just can't make themselves do.

However, "suspension of disbelief" is a very powerful tool, and I have no objection to it at all. I employ it to a certain judicious degree. I don't believe in Zeus, Hera, Athena, Apollo, and Diana, but it doesn't do any harm to invoke their names and ask for their help when life is scary. It's kind of fun.

Art has some of the same benefits. It's fun, and it feels good to finish a picture or a story. There is a sense of comfort and pleasure, and that justifies the effort. Also, my sister (at least) reads what I write, and so I know I've had at least that much effect on the universe.

rct me, aye, there is a lot of churchly opposition to science fiction and fantasy, and that's a shame. To be fair, a big part of

science fiction lies in questioning established belief systems, whereas a big part of church-based faith is in not questioning belief systems.

(For years, I used to go around and ask religious faithful a hypothetical question: "What if Jesus had succumbed to the temptation on the tower?" Most people refused to answer. They just brushed it off. "That couldn't have happened," or "That's a foolish question" or even "That's a very offensive question." But one day, I actually met a minister who was willing to engage in it. He said, "Wow, that's a toughie. I guess Jesus would have become Emperor over all the earth – and he'd probably have been a good one. World peace, prosperity, no hunger, no crime... Of course, on the day he dies, we are all doomed and everyone ends up in hell..." I thought this was a spiffing answer, but I thought it was even better that the guy was willing to think about the matter in a critical way. Alas, the churchly community is divided on the role of "reason" as it relates to faith. Nearly all the faithful give lip-service to reason, but too many actually discourage its use.)

A friend of mine is writing a Christian-based fantasy novel. She's afraid that her Christian friends won't like it because of the fantasy...and her fantasy fan friends won't like it because of the Christianity! (In my opinion, her balance is elegant, neither concept overwhelming the other.)

Fun story by Jeffrey Redmond! Attempting to cheat the gods is, by and large, a really bad idea! And interesting observation by Will Mayo on the nature of sleep. I agree, and have the very same experience: my dreams are (alas!) a whole lot better than my "real life."

(When Robin Williams released the album entitled "Reality, What a Concept," I misread what was written, and thought it was "Reality, what a Conceit." I like the latter slogan better!)

**Will Mayo:** What a nifty opening image! A beautiful home, filled with lovely works of art – marred by trash and destruction! A very thoughtful – and disturbing! -- contraposition!

I always liked that song, "Spinning Wheel." Another song with a somewhat similar moral is "Clouds," especially the line, "I've looked at life from both sides now."

Very pretty picture of Carroll Creek!

I don't know if "The Opening of the Silence" was in your own voice or that of a fictional narrator, but I'd wager that everyone here, reading this, has done a lot more good than harm in this world. Civilization is a positive-sum game – otherwise we'd still be naked and eating only food we gather with our own two hands.

re Neil Armstrong, nah. He, himself, left out the "a." You can even hear, in his hesitation, that he was aware of it and was cheesed with himself. Shrug. It's a nifty quote, even the way he said it. (It might even be slightly better without the unnecessary "a!")

re reading "from the beginning," I had a co-worker who was reading every book known to exist – in chronological order. He'd read what is known of Assyrian and Babylonian literature, and had gotten along into the ancient Greeks, starting with the oldest. It's an interesting and methodical approach. Of course, he won't live long enough to finish Roman literature, and won't ever even start reading the English classics. But he has a sense of perspective that we, reading hop-scotch through history, cannot enjoy.

re George MacDonald's Lilith, I think I agree with you! I'd far rather read the book you describe than the book that MacDonald actually wrote!

The Narnia books are jolly fun! Clever, and thoughtful, and mostly pleasant. I've read them twice, once in the canonical order



and once is the internal chronological order. To be honest, the canonical order is actually better.

Lovely photo of the fountain!

**Lorien Rivendell:** Always happy to read your N'APA contributions. I can certainly understand that you're sometimes too busy – and hiking and geocaching is a lovely way to spend an afternoon!

What astonishing photos of large works of fannish outdoors art! The starship Enterprise is truly amazing! Three cheers for the creators and sponsors!

re John Thiel, I mostly agree. My email address is something I distribute freely and widely, but my actual physical home address is something I try not to let most people have. I know people who have suffered from stalkers, and it's something I'd be very afraid of. I also know people who have been attacked in email and social media – a friend of mine said something against a very popular musical performer, and got round-the-clock hate-filled phone calls. Had to disconnect their phone entirely and get a whole new number. But that's nowhere near as bad as having creeps standing in front of your door holding up hate-filled signs.

**Kevin Trainor:** Glad to hear unpacking is progressing not entirely according to the laws of chaos; sorry to hear your health isn't what it ought to be; and mighty darn sorry to hear the Social Security bureaucracy is hassling you. Don't let 'em grind you down...

Tell us more about War and Peace, please! I've always kinda wanted to read it...and kinda dreaded it. (I never dared start Moby Dick for the same reason: it's no small undertaking!)

You said, "I just can't get too excited over things I don't have much impact on..." I can certainly empathize. There are a lot of things I get grievously excited about, and yet they are light-years

beyond any real effect I could ever actually have. The reason I can't "turn it off" is that those same things have a very major effect on me. I can't turn a blind eye or a deaf ear, when all I see and hear are alarm bells and flashing red lights. I almost wish I could tune it all out...but would I not then be at risk of living in a fool's paradise? I suppose a balance of moderation in this is (as it is in nearly all things) the best approach.

I will try to find your stuff on Amazon! Congratulations for publishing there. It may not be the New York Times Best-Seller's List, but anything is better than nothing!

**Follow-Up:** I did some research, and apparently, there are at least some sources that claim Neil Armstrong admitted flubbing his famous "One small step" line. However, I can't find anything that definitely attributes this, only "informed sources," and we all know what those are worth.

It does pave the way for a real dumb joke: "That's one stall smep for man, one liant jeep for mankind." Hey, I spake a moonerism!

### A Couple of Bad Books

I'm not going to give title or author's name, just out of consideration, although I have posted reviews on Amazon pointing out these rather profound flaws.

Book 1 is set in the real world, modern times. A major plot element involves the protagonist (a high-school aged girl) discovering an antique diary, and becoming involved with what was written in it, by a girl her own same age – in A.D. 1680. The concept is endearing and the emotional connection the modern girl feels for her centuries-dead counterpart is developed elegantly. However...

The author totally fails to convey a sense of antiquity in the actual text of the diary! The entries, quoted verbatim, are in modern American idiom! The language could not have been written in 1680! The language, the grammar, the style, are all purely modern and contemporary! There are also numerous painful anachronisms, as when the diarist writes how she feels "mesmerized," a terrible choice of words, given that Franz Mesmer wouldn't be born for another sixty years!

Now, I don't believe the diary entries should have been written in actual Elizabethan/Jacobean lingo, dripping with thees and thous, and filled with the rather dubious spelling ("speling") of the era. That would be too much, and would distract the reader. But the author should have given an impression of antiquity, stylistically, by employing a grammar and word-choice that indicated the era. This is not hard to do! Read a little from books actually written back then, and the style becomes quite easy to imitate.

The author in this case didn't even bother, and that absolutely ruined the reading experience for me.

Book II is set....I don't know where! The author never gives us a location, an era, or even a world! It feels modern – there are telephones mentioned, but never cars. A candy store is an important setting. There is a city, and it has a "craftsman's quarter." There are locks and lockpicks and combination safes; there's "cat food" for the cats. Again, there's a telephone.

But the city is never named, nor is the country. Money, when mentioned, is in a made-up denomination – "Darems." What the dickens? So it isn't earth? Just some close parallel?

Here, while the author describes the city in some detail, there is no "introduction" of the world to the author. There's no concrete sense of place. It's all vague and unsettled and leaves the reader wondering what's going on.

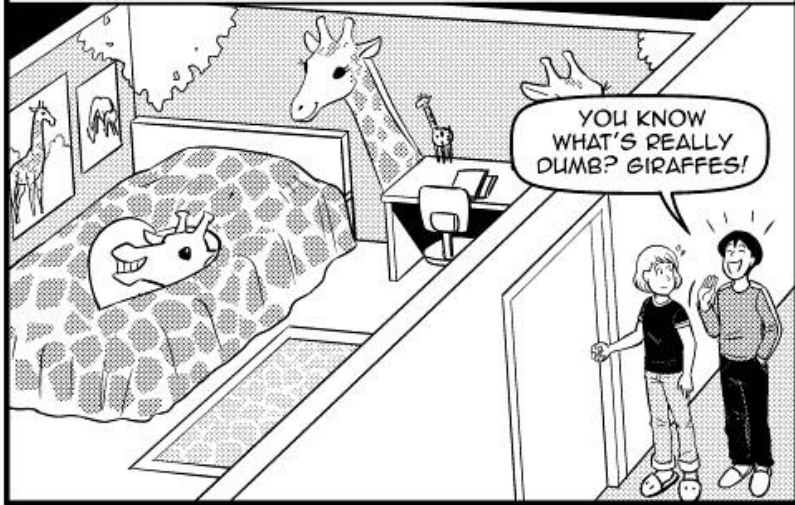
Add to that relatively minor sin the fact that the protagonist is a nasty piece of work, a psychopathic and sociopathic murderer-for-hire who is unlikeably and cowardly, and the book becomes very difficult to read with any enjoyment.

Another sin: the author doesn't tell us until chapter three whether the protagonist is a man or a woman, and doesn't tell us until chapter five that the protagonist has a special magical superpower.

(Having such a superpower only makes the character more cowardly, taking on pay-for-murder jobs against ordinary people – unfaithful husbands, debtors, business rivals, etc. Such people might deserve a good scolding – but murder?)

These two books were not stinking awful. They were actually fairly good, as page-turners go. They entertained the reader and kept the reader's interest. But they both suffered from serious structural flaws, and I know a very great many authors who could have done a much, much better job.

BUT EVEN THE CUTEST BOY WILL EVENTUALLY SAY SOMETHING  
REALLY STUPID.



# *SYNERGY* NOVEMBER 2019



**N'APA 243rd MAILING**



Happy to see a full roster in this mailing; hope it keeps up. This is John Thiel, 30 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904, email [kinethiel@mymetronet.net](mailto:kinethiel@mymetronet.net) . (This mailing is the 242<sup>nd</sup> mailing; I forget that the members are probably visualizing me looking at this one as I write it and will not see that I am visualizing looking over the last mailing as I write, but I can't be actually looking at the last mailing as I type up this one because I don't have that complicated a screen. I'd try setting up a screen like that and get various results.)

## EDITORIAL



### **What Can Man Accomplish (If Anything)?**

There's a lot of talk about mankind going on these days; sometimes it's mankind this, mankind that, and mankind the other thing. The first I've seen of such talk was in science fiction, which has frequently had fiction and editorializing about how man was coming along. I wondered what had inspired such talk and found that during the Renaissance there was much discussion of what man was like. But apparently it was not so much the

talk, if at all, in earlier times—they were not discussing the whole human race in any work of philosophical speculation prior to that Renaissance. Only religion was discussing mankind's lot on Earth, and we ought to give religion credit for taking such a cosmic view, regardless of what we think of their decisions about things. Now it seems that science is doing the talking, religion having fallen into reliance on prior speculations. Possibly science was motivated by this lapse into taking over where religion had left off, gaining practice by all the conflicts they had gotten into with organized religion.

Poet E.E. Cummings seems to have the scientific view in his poems when he writes "Pity this busy monster manunkind not—progress is a comfortable disease" and "when man determined to destroy himself, he took the which of where, and finding only why, smashed it into because". Less pessimistically, there is a lot of talk about the accomplishments of man, pointing out the wonders of civilization and technology and saying "What man can imagine, man can accomplish". (Religion, though, is calling that "vanity" and "the pride of the gods".)

Surely there have been fantastic materialistic accomplishments, but one wonders with all this destructive warfare what mankind has accomplished spiritually, morally and humanistically. There is some striving after self-improvement, which is trying to improve the accomplisher rather than the accomplishment. THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING, HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE, and other such writings seek a way for improvement of one's chances for achievement. But even if successful at improving our individual selves, in this world which surrounds us we find that we may not be equal to our materialistic progress. One of our technological achievements is the atomic bomb, with an absolute destructive diameter of one mile and a danger area of at least three miles. That doesn't bode well for mankind—it's mass destruction rather than progress. And perhaps due to the scientific approach, nihilism is apparently prevailing among the philosophies of the present age.

It may be that the only thing to do about this is to set oneself apart from the mass consciousness of mankind and consider our own worth and potentialities as beings. That might be a difficult consideration to discuss and communicate, but I don't mean *totally* apart. I think we are considering ourselves too much in terms of others and in social constructs and thinking too much about how we relate to others. We should give more independent consideration to ourselves.

There should actually be some of both views. And I take that into account when I do such things as doing a fanzine.

# Mailing Comments

**Archive Midwinter:** Your description of police methods in flushing out thieves sounds like extermination methods for lice.

A big disappointment to me when I saw the Empire and Foundation series and learned THE STARS LIKE DUST was one of them. I had expected heavier and more thoughtful reading material from the big sound the Foundation books had. The novel doesn't fulfill these expectations.

**Notes From a Galaxy Far, Far Away:** Noting that you have an apparently medievalist alternate name, I'm wondering about your days with the Medieval Society. Do you ever discuss this?

First picture the modern art figures appear to be in quicksand, then the second gives a "You were right!" impression more or less showing that's what it was.

**The Silver State Age:** Did you see anything of the run on Area 51?



Speaking of that last to Kevin Trainor, there's a photo of Area 51. As Jeffrey Redmond points out, there's definitely a lot going on out there, whatever it is.

*Anything else? Well, I said I would try to make this as much like a regular fanzine as I could, and having the writings of other people in it is doing that. Here's one from my files:*

### **CARTOON CONFERENCE by Gerald F. Heyder**

Once upon a time in Hollywood many years ago, all the legendary cartoon characters assembled for a conference regarding their relationship with the movie moguls who benefited financially from their performances on screen. Following is a transcript of that encounter:

Bugs Bunny: "Let's get this meeting underway, so what's up, Doc?"

Porky Pig: "I'm sick and tired of being portrayed as a pork sausage with a pretty face on screen and the movie big shots capitalize financially and all I get is a spot in front of the camera and that's all!"

Daffy Duck: "I totally agree, Porky. I've been contemplating pulling out half my feathers and then file for disability compensation as humans do!"

Elmer Fudd: "I'm fed up with being seen as a hayseed farmer lugging around a shotgun, whose sole purpose in life is to blow away a rabbit eating carrots from my garden. I've got hay to mow and cows to feed and milk, *etc., etc., etc.!*"

Woody Woodpecker: "My beak is getting splinters from all those trees I keep boring holes into simply because moviemakers want to portray me as being a bird with lumberjack ability and no brains to do anything else!"

Popeye: "I am so sick and tired of tooting a corn cob pipe and eating spinach while Wimpy gorges himself on hamburgers, I could scream. Besides, as a sailor I get seasick anyway."

Mickey Mouse: "I want a divorce! I can't take it any more with Minnie always henpecking me to do this, to do that, and everything else. I'm a nervous wreck. I wish Walt Disney would have created me to be a bachelor!"

Dumbo: "I'm disgusted with working for peanuts! All the shells from the peanuts I've eaten could build a house. I wish they would feed me a porterhouse steak with mashed potatoes and gravy, mixed veggies and a cherry pie! Yummy, yummy, yummy for my tummy!"

Bugs Bunny: "I think I've heard enough. I get the picture. I believe the consensus is



unanimous. We should all go on strike! We will deliver our grievances through the proper channels and see what happens. Meeting adjourned!”

And so it came to pass, that said list of grievances were put forth to the Hollywood powers that be, but their demands were rejected and sneered at. Our animated stars were informed that they all could be replaced by up-and-coming Hollywood hopefuls seeking stardom of their own. Sad to say, such is life whether real or animated! Goobiddy, Goobiddy, Goobiddy, that’s all, folks!!!





## *Miscommunications by Jeffrey Redmond*

***An innocent on a warfare-torn planet. Like to meet his eternal spirit?***

From the ancient Er-Dan manuscripts (Codex 11257), as translated by Ed-Mon

On the planet of the three moons, on the Western Continent, a young military veteran, Ol-Bart, was honorably discharged from the seafaring naval forces. He had traveled all over the planet, and he was quietly very proud of his service and of his achievements. He returned home, and he soon after began working for his father in the coastal town carpentry place. He was also a dutiful son to his mother, and he helped her with the housework as well. Ol-Bart had little in material possessions or wealth, and he was basically poor and humble in manners and appearance. He was kind and gentle, and he never argued or fought with anyone. But he had no friends, and others thought him to be distant and unfriendly. The real reason that he did not communicate well, however, was that he was shy and completely lacking in any self-confidence.

Ol-Bart's former flotilla commodore encouraged him to assimilate all that he could back into civilian life, and, especially, to meet and marry a young female of his choice. This the commodore himself had done, and Ol-Bart did indeed want to meet a young female also. For Ol-Bart she was Bon-Ora, the attractive daughter of their neighbor family, and she had always liked him and his mild-mannered ways from when they were very small. She would smile and wave at him, and she began to dress more provocatively to allow him a better view of her and her potential future reproductivity. She would even behave more provocatively around other males, so that he could see her and her interest in males, in order to hint so overtly for him to approach her as well. But Ol-Bart did not really understand about this in her, and Bon-Ora was soon confused by his seeming lack of interest in return.

Ol-Bart believed she was very desirable, and well worthwhile, but also that she was way too splendid a female for someone such as himself. She probably was not really interested in him as such, but only friendly and teasing at him, with her obvious manner and behavior, and she liked all of those other males much better than him anyways, he concluded.

In time, Bon-Ora was visited and courted by the son of the local magistrate. He had wealth and had bribed another male to serve in the military conscription for him. Bon-Ora enjoyed this young wealthy male's attentions, and especially the envy of the other females from this. And, still later on, another young male, the local sports hero of the regional games, took an interest in her. He had been exempted from military service due to his being considered such an important civilian. These two males, however, got into a physical confrontation over Bon-Ora, and they had to be separated from badly harming each other by their families. Bon-Ora was then the talk of the coastal town after this, and she basked in the prestige of being so desirable. She had a choice of mates, one with wealth and one with fame, or one with security and one with physical prowess. The former had expensive clothes, while the latter was much more handsome with his bulging muscles.

Her wedding in the seas temple to the athlete was well-attended by most everyone in the community, but Ol-Bart himself did not go. He remained in the carpentry shop, finishing a set of furniture that he had wanted to give her as a wedding gift. But he had hoped and dreamed that he would be the groom instead. The magistrate's son went, if only to show off his being newly engaged to another young female, who was greatly impressed with his wealth.

Ol-Bart remained the town carpenter, and a very good one, for the rest of his seasons. He never married or had any offspring of his own, and after his parents died he lived by himself. Bon-Ora gave birth in the seas temple to two offspring, helped by the priestesses and the admiration of all of the assembled friends and neighbors. Her beautiful and naked body would then convulse, and she would produce the naked little miracles of life, to the awe and joy of everyone there. But Ol-Bart never attended these two ceremonies either, though, of course, he always wished her offspring could have been by him.

In further seasons, Bon-Ora's son became very interested in boats, and the fishers came to Ol-Bart to take the young male on as an apprentice. His father, Bon-Ora's husband, had died of a disease, and his widowed mother then needed the extra income,

the fishers explained. Ol-Bart was extremely reluctant at first to do this, but he could not really express any real reason to them for refusing. So he then had an assistant and the two of them kept the boats repaired, the houses furnished, and the seas temple beautifully redecorated, all very well indeed. And this went on, well and good, for a great many seasons afterwards.

When his final season came, the aged Ol-Bart called for the lawspeaker to draw up his final will, and this was done correctly. Hardly anyone came to Ol-Bart's funeral, but the priestesses had his pyre ceremony, and they danced naked around the burning to send his spirit to the sea deities, anyways. The lawspeaker then went to the poor widow Bon-Ora, and he then surprised her with what he had to tell her. Ol-Bart gave the carpentry shop and tools to her son, his house went to her daughter, and all of his other possessions went to her. The proud Bon-Ora was especially surprised at a complete set of perfectly made and beautifully decorated furniture, which had been stored away secretly for a lifetime and had never been used. She had never realized that Ol-Bart had ever been interested in or fond of her. He had never mentioned her ever to her son, and Ol-Bart had never visited her or even spoken about her to anyone in the coastal town.

From then on Bon-Ora went often to the seas temple in order to offer prayers for Ol-Bart's spirit, and she implored her offspring to do likewise. Her daughter soon after married the grandson of the old magistrate, and he and his wealth moved in with her into her new home. Bon-Ora's son married the lovely granddaughter of the old flotilla commodore, and he continued to keep everyone's carpentry needs well fulfilled and satisfied. And long after Bon-Ora died, the offspring and grand offspring continued to visit the impressive temple to pray for, among others, Ol-Bart's eternal spirit. It was wished for to dwell in perfect peace and harmony, for perpetuity, with the omnipotent deities of the fresh water seas.

And, in all probability, it did just that.



**If—Whirls of Science Fiction**



And so we come to the conclusion of another issue of Synergy, the fanzine that desires the fusion of life forces and the harmonious unity of men and women in an evolutionary advancement. Yes, that's what synergy would be. The relevance of the story above to the title would be that the people in it did not have synergy but instead had about the opposite of it—which has sometimes been found to end in the sudden appearance of its opposite and its rapid-fire progress in establishing itself. Much discussion of synergy may be found in the Private Papers of Theodore Sturgeon, may he find the eternal togetherness he so much desired. If synergy has not been advanced by what is written in these pages, it's all right—everything is all right from the point of view had by those who utilize synergy. Imagine the expressions on the faces of your friends if you acquire a synergy package and open it up and show the acquisition to them. They would not actually have expressions, in all possibility.



**Ende of Issue**

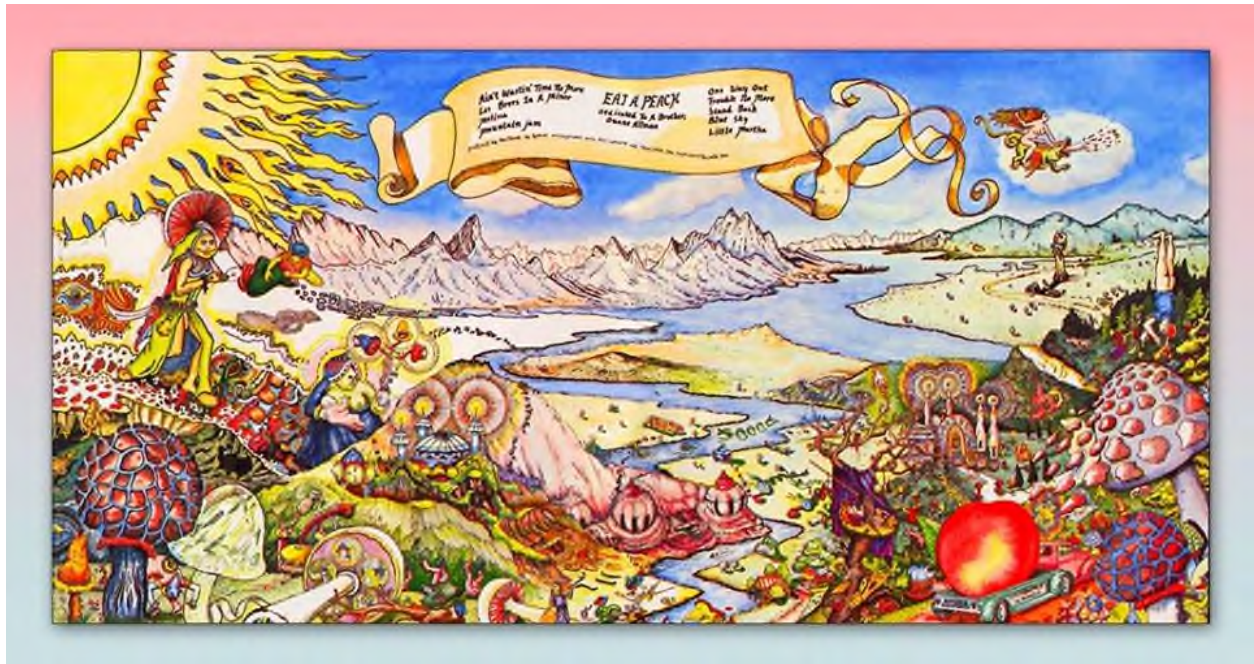
# *The Contents of a Good Life*



*NAPA Mailing*

*September 2019*

The APAZINE of Will Mayo, Apartment 9B, 750  
Carroll Parkway, Frederick, Maryland 21702. Email  
[wsmayo@yahoo.com](mailto:wsmayo@yahoo.com) .



Some writings:

Alone in a cosmic wonderland I let my thoughts wander from night to day. A cat comes my way, as well as the muse of the moment. I write and for a second I dance in a million starlit eyes. All my own once again.

What a strange planet we call home. The president of my country raves about witch hunts as he throws another starving family out on the streets, while billionaires refuse to give up a cent to help out the country and the world. And one man's car sent out in space to the tune of millions of dollars continues to circle our sun. I know not what to make of these strange occurrences. The world outside my door is a stranger to me. I just pet my cat and pen another word. Hoping for the best.

Growing up in the 60s and 70s in the conservative and tradition-bound American South, I had little in the way of friends and even my own family found me more than a little strange compared to their more normal kinfolk. In such a time and place I found my sense of belonging in what like me was the out of the ordinary. Comic books and novels and TV shows and movies filled with images of the occult, the supernatural and the extraordinary filled my nights and days while rock and roll music formed the background for all my years. I return now more and more to such days as I sit here, a man in his late 50s with little in the way of company but a great deal on his mind. I would suppose that for all of us life is a journey of coming full circle back to where we've been in a time and place of our own choosing. I make mine here and as the old song goes, "May The Circle Be Unbroken". In these words I am at last complete.

When I was a little bit younger than I am now I took special significance in certain days. Birthdays felt awfully special to me as did holidays. Ages too had their own significance as I celebrated turning thirteen and then sixteen and afterwards twenty-one and thirty and fifty. Times like those I felt like the king of the heap. And when this century began I swore that it would usher in a new age of wonders. Heavens and nirvanas filled my imagination that New Years of decades ago. Imagine then my horror when wars soldiered on and man continued to murder man in the name of one god or another. So much for that age of wonders.

As for now, I take special pride in just today. Yes, right here and now. Believe me, there's nothing like being alive in the now. The next year, the new age can wait. I, for one, will always have today.

"Goddammit, you've got to be kind," Vonnegut said. "You've got to be kind." But it was too late. His train had left the station.

To each man his season in hell. To each man his season in heaven. All part and parcel of the life. To give, to take, to love and to make love, and to be



spurned in turn. There is enough religion in this. There is enough god. There is enough holiness. As we set out to instill one more day...

In time, all these books I read, all the biographies of figures great and obscure, books on life and books on death and books on strange historical events, merge in my head into the great one book of all time, and then further condense into a few simple syllables, "Just to be!" Oh, yes...

Shortly after the beginning of the last century, priests, psychologists and artists in their own right descended into prisons, insane asylums and bums on the street to see what they could find. Imagine their surprise when they found talent, unencumbered by money or education, to rival their own. Adolf Wolfi, for one, created operas and librettos without any musical background of his own in a ledger in his room at the asylum long ago. And then there was Henry Darger who, alone, in his room, told of battles between strange androgynous figures in his notebooks of another day long before the transgender revolution of decades to come. While Hannes Bok in his shack by the sea and increasingly obsessed with the occult created with crayon on discarded paper the cover images for fantasy magazines of the day.

In time these strange men (and strange women, for plenty of them would emerge as well) would come to be known as outsider artists, talent well beyond that of the mainstream, and would come to be valued by museums and publishers worldwide. Some of their work worth millions of dollars.

Now, nearly a century after those figures came to be known in the world, I and millions of others (can it possibly be a billion?) read and write and create the art in all our solitary rooms in all our distant lands connected only by the fragility of wires and satellite dishes and our computer screens. Who knows what wonders will emerge from this hive mind?

Those new quantum computers seem a marvel to behold. Rather than relying on two units of information, 1 and 0, as normal everyday computers do, these newfangled machines involve a trifold unit of information, that is to say, 0 and

I and both 0 and 1 at the same time...thereby multiplying what a computer can do by many times the rate and power of the computing power of traditional information processing units.

And where does the added power of the new information giving machines come from? Well, if you believe those who dabble in physics it all comes in small bits and blips of energy transported from other universes, used to create a greater whole of processing ability in our own universe.

And if it is indeed possible to transport both energy and information from other universes' computers, might it not one day be possible to transport matter? Might it not indeed one day be possible to transport a man?  $E=mc^2$ , goes Einstein's idiom. Energy equals matter times the speed of light squared. And, according to the laws of thermodynamics, energy can neither be lost nor gained. It can only be transformed. For every give and take from their universe to ours something must likewise be given from ours to theirs. And in some theorists' eyes that might well involve the transmutation of spirits. Alchemy in other words.

I know nothing of these things. I merely let my finger roam along the keyboard and am transformed...

## REVIEWS

**Neil Gaiman's STARDUST.** What a superb book this is that I have just read! Full of witches and goblins and trolls and fairy princesses, not to mention a flying ship among the clouds. All as one young man seeks a fallen star in the land of Faerie in order to find his true love. A fairy tale for grownups, as the author puts it. And I guarantee you'll have a wild ride with this one. Read and enjoy.

**James Dennis Casey IV's OWLS IN HOT RODS WITH PINK ELEPHANTS AND DEAD BATS.** Mr. Casey here, the author of this fine collection of poetry, is a southern hillbilly poet by way of Louisiana and Mississippi currently residing in Illinois who has a lot to offer this world of ours. And what a wild ride his current book of poetry is! Full of a

hallucinatory landscape filled with serial killer owls, collecting dead bats along the way, along with an occasional dragon and a stripper or two. Inspired by hard times, good times, good and bad whiskey and let us not forget those mushrooms. I leave you with these words from his final poem:

FIND YOUR TRIBE

Let the dream of the backwater  
Roads and good times carry you  
Leave rotting bodies behind and  
Let yours get all banged up too  
Write your words in stone and  
Let your wings carry you home.

Overall, I don't think I've read anything this wild or carefree in nearly forty years. It was a nice ride.

**James Dennis Casey IV's METAPHORICALLY ESOTERIC.** Having read the later books of poetry by James D. Casey IV, I finally got around to reading his debut collection. And believe me, it was worth the read. Filled with cosmic visions, a coming of age story, countless battles with the blues, a fight down Bourbon Street in New Orleans with a man in a dress, an old swamp house haunted by the living and the dead alike, and the musings of a self-styled madman philosopher, it was worth every page and every nickel.

I read every poem several times to savor the lines and am perhaps most taken with these lines from his poem "Philosophy Of Pessimism":

...push the sky away  
On a midnight street  
Hoping the crows  
And clowns  
Don't sabotage the night...  
  
...We're all just savages  
On a long distance trip

That will lose  
Your mind...

Please if you have any money at all buy this book. You'll find it well worth your time.

**Oscar Wilde's PEN, PENCIL AND POISON.** And so, in this remarkable account, Oscar Wilde tells the account of Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, a friend to William Blake and Charles Dickens and others in the early 1800s. A man, too, who was a connoisseur of all the fine arts. A man who was more than at home in the paintings and the history of ancient times than of the present. A gentleman, for want of a better word. And yet, too, a murderer through and through.

Yes, a murderer. This Wainewright, so Wilde tells us, poisoned his uncle, his mother-in-law, his sister-in-law, and others in and out of his native England before being discovered by the insurers he sought to defraud with his murders. All in all, these were, of course, capital offenses at that time.

But we should not be so quick to judge a man's art by his crime, so Oscar Wilde reminds us. This Wainewright had, after all, raised himself up to be a gentleman. And it seems that the court in Wainewright's time agreed with this assessment. They sent him off into exile in the far off South Seas where Wainewright, after a few halfhearted poisonings, spent his final years painting beautiful yet tragic paintings tinged with the color green. Yes, green, the color of rot, the color, so Wilde says, of decadence. Until at last the murderer died there in exile in 1852 in the company of his sole companion, his cat. As near and dear a companion as my own cat is to me.

I enjoyed this story by Mr. Wilde immensely. Most especially because every word he writes is true. Yes, every single one. Hey, would I lie to you? Trust me. This is one good tale.

*Down the Alley of Dreams*

*Who knows what lies down this broken alley of dreams?*

*At every crossing, there is a heartache.*

*Bums whistle at you  
and ask you what time it is.*

*"I don't know", you say,  
"I'm just waiting on the ride to nowhere".*

*Ahead, the rubble turns to grass.*

*Ahead, the broken dreams die.*

*But on this alley dreams survive.*

*For a while anyway.*

### *Through the Broken Places*

*As we walk through the broken places of our minds*

*some find meaning in words*

*and some find meaning in prayer.*

*No matter. We all journey forward.*

*We journey from darkness into light*

*and then into darkness again.*

*The sound of our footsteps can be deafening.*

*Until the final step forward.*

*Until the closing door.*

*Like your last words to me.*

*Was it yesterday?*

*Or was it today?*

*It hardly matters.*



*We walk toward that door  
together and apart.*

**Mailing:** John Thiel. I liked your editorial in Synergy about nihilist writers and all their complaints. Well, I can't speak for the others but, me, I try to keep an even hand on the wheel and not let things get to me. Years ago—I'm thinking years back, back in the 90s, for instance—I let the whole arts scene go to my head and I suffered, my writing suffered, and others ended up suffering as well. It caused a whole mess of trouble and for a while afterwards—a few years anyway—I didn't write at all. For a while there, I thought I'd given up writing entirely. Then, alone here in my apartment, finally, I got humble and poured out my heart and soul on Facebook. Began telling poems and stories again. Editors came along. I met up with people on the Internet including yourself and began to get published again. At times, I have to shake myself. "Is this too good to be true?" and "Will any of it last?" I guess the answer is that, no, nothing really lasts in this world including you and me. We just keep rolling with the punches, telling good tales and bad, and along the way, the now, telling is everything. I just cannot tell you how precious that now is. Nothing at all can chase it away. As surely as I write you these words right here and now.