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Editor and bureau head is John Thiel, 30 N. 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904, email [kinethiel@mymetronet.net](mailto:kinethiel@mymetronet.net) for contact with the editor or the magazine.

## STAFF



**Jefferson Swycaffer, PO Box 15373, San Diego, CA 92175-5373, [abontides@gmail.com](mailto:abontides@gmail.com)**

**Jeffrey Redmond, 1335 Beechwood NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505-3830, [redmondjeff@hotmail.com](mailto:redmondjeff@hotmail.com)**

**Jon Swartz, 12115 Missel Thrush Court, Austin, Texas 78750, [jon\\_swartz@hotmail.com](mailto:jon_swartz@hotmail.com)**

**Heath Row, 4367 Globe Avenue, Culver City, California 90230, [Kalel@well.com](mailto:Kalel@well.com)**

**John Polselli, 204 Chestnut Hill Road, Chepachet, Rhode Island 02814**

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**IONOSPHERE EXPLORER**

# Editorial



## Tomorrow's World Today

There's a saying, "Today is yesterday's tomorrow" that evokes the passages of time. The term "tomorrow" often is used to mean "the future" rather than referring to a single day, and "today" is used in the same field of consideration to mean "the present" rather than just the day on which it is spoken, which might broaden the saying. When things are broadened they might lose their original significance, so one might ask if the present is the past's future if one is adhering to this saying. I'd say get it down to where we can hold onto it even if it interferes with taking a broader perspective on what we might think when studying this consideration.

As readers of science fiction, we have been thinking about "tomorrow" for quite some time; some might even look upon us as not paying enough attention to the things confronting us in our day if this matter is being discussed anywhere among literary or other factions. (And there is a lot of discussion going on nowadays about all the things science fiction has predicted, though the discussion is usually about materialistic things, especially technological ones, rather than sociological considerations such as were predicted in works like NINETEEN EIGHTY FOUR.) Perhaps the thought attending science fiction involves mulling over the past and contemplating the possible future rather than concerning ourselves with the somewhat existential "now". If so, do we lose out on anything thereby? We might be jettisoning our speculations about the future if we consider ourselves never to have arrived in any future, and relegating the preceding day to the dumps as we ignore what is no longer current if we are that much concerned with

the passage of time. Of course, we are attentive to what we are doing today but do we consider today relevant in the march of time?

What relevance all this has to anything at all is that our present production in the area of progress is interfered with by today being dissociated from what has been and what might be, in the considerations given our present situation. Yet the essence of all this consideration is Now, and we would not like our reconsiderations and speculations sundered from our existential thought. Now is when doing takes place; it should not be displaced in our minds from what we have done or might do. Of course, it might be our time of rest, but if it is, what is there to keep it from continuing to be that? A person might think, "Yesterday we rested, today we progress, tomorrow we contemplate", but we tend to erase today in assigning significance to the days as they progress. It is a period of time which lacks yesterday and has not even seen tomorrow. So the saying quoted above is a reminder that the days are really all the same and it is only our attitude which makes them otherwise.

Here is where this relates to us. Are we mulling over the past and gaping at the future without doing anything at the present time about any of the things under consideration? Again as readers of science fiction, we may now be at the epoch about which we speculated and not be doing anything about what was in our speculations.

All of this is irrelevant to anything but the matter of thought, but what we are doing here in the NFFF is thinking. Are we now inert because the past has been so torrid and the future is so much beyond our speculations?

Or, to sum it up, is the present a blank while the past is rehash and the future a speculation?

I don't like being abstract in what I'm writing, but thought and conceptualization are abstract and thought is what I'm writing about. As for action, our thinking is not presently leading to much action, perhaps because we are oppressed by the past and uncertain of the future. But the present is exactly the time for evolving something for the future. We should distinguish the present in which we all live from the already considered past and the not very considerable future. What of the present in which we all live, until we choose to consider it the past, are we to do nothing in this time except get over the past and avoid the future? Now is the time when we should try to get the things which concern us more, to be more to our liking. There is the saying, "Don't live in the past", which we should consider. There is better living and much more opportunity in the present. It is a good time to shuck our worries from the past, about

which we cannot do very much, and to conceive of better things for the present. Without our doing this, the future becomes an extension of the present, which of course should be a period of time longer than a moment and longer also than a day. You've heard of "day after day being the same old thing." Now is when we should be set to change that, considering that the endless succession of similar days amounts to being a drag. We really need an innovative future aside from technology and more like living. Technology isn't really similar to living, no matter how happy people get with iPads and smartphones. It isn't happy enough because it isn't related enough to natural living. Science fiction should not lose its contact with natural life. What an individual feels like is very important to the individual, and individuals are what make up the multitudes.

We should have with us what we have taken with us from the past, and we should be at work on making the future what we would like it to be, not simply predicting it from available data. The past has had so many mistakes that it has left us uncertain? The future is apt to have things that will terrify us and that we cannot possibly deal with? I think the present has that, and I think it is time to start dealing with things in a proper manner and work for the best, not waiting for our leaders, etc., to do so. Every individual knows what would make him happy and should take his own options, or her own options, on what to do or how to live to achieve this happiness. If many people find happiness, others will be more apt to find it, just as war thoughts lead more and more people down the course of warfare, operating with warfare logic. Make a good day of today and there will be a better tomorrow. Don't fool around with unnecessary arguments which have little actually to do with us but have just been presented to us. Free yourself from unnecessary entanglements and try to do your own personal best. Don't be caught up in the conflicts of the time.

People spoke of having "tomorrow's world today" when they were pointing out that a predicted future had arrived. So we had reached one conceptualized future. I'd add to that, "work for tomorrow's world today, and bring some of your present selves into that future." Those saying "today is yesterday's tomorrow" were pointing out that the future never arrives...not unless it partakes of the present, and there is some progression in the present.

Without the history of science fiction being retained and worked on, we are missing our past. Without the present retention and development of science fiction we've no future. And being unconscious of what's happening NOW, we have no present.

# AUTHOR INTERVIEW

## An Interview with John Van Stry

by Tamara Wilhite



I had the opportunity to interview science fiction and fantasy author John Van Stry after his latest PORTALS OF INFINITY novel came out.

**TW:** How many books are in your PORTALS TO INFINITY series now?

**JVS:** With the publishing of the latest, that brings the series up to nine books, which makes it my second longest series.

**TW:** What is the basic premise of the series?

**JVS:** The basic premise is that there are a nearly infinite number of realities that are all joined by a network of "Portals". Certain people can see these portals and travel through them. This story follows Will, who comes across one by accident (actually he's pushed) and who is later recruited to work for a god in one of these realities as his "champion".

**TW:** How is the Veilverse different?

**JVS:** The Veilverse is really about a number of Subliminal spaces that exist in contact with each other. It is possible to "push" your way through the boundaries between them, where they come into contact. Each of the spaces is really just a "shard" of another reality, not a complete reality by itself. So they are limited in size. Breck, the hero in my book, fell into the Veilverse from our reality through a temporary "hole". He's pretty much trapped there. In Portals of Infinity, each reality is a complete and full reality. It can have other planets and contains a full world. Also in Portals, you are "altered" to fit in as you step into each new reality. In the Veilverse, you are always exactly who you are—you don't change at all.

**TW:** Where does "Wives Tales" fit in all of this?

**JVS:** Wives Tales are a series of short stories that I wrote to help fill in the background for the wives of the protagonist in my VALENS LEGACY series (written under my pen name: Jan Stryvant). It's basically them sitting around one night and swapping stories of their pasts, to give greater understanding of the characters to the readers, and to fill people in on events alluded to, but not talked about in the main series.

**TW:** Does DAYS OF FUTURE PAST count as post-apocalyptic fantasy?

**JVS:** It's very much a post-apocalyptic story, but I'm not sure I'd call it a straight-up fantasy. There are definitely "fantastic" elements in it, but the story itself is rooted mostly in science fiction, with a little touch of "time travel" thrown in, in that the hero comes from several hundred years in the past. Of course he doesn't truly believe he's from the past until an event near the end of the first book. Most of the "fantastic" or "fantasy" elements of the story are explained as it progresses, but some are left to the reader to decide.

A quick note—I "borrowed" the name from the same place the people who wrote the X-man series did. If I had known about the X-man series when I wrote it, I would have titled the trilogy differently.

**TW:** The interesting thing is that these aren't your only fantasy novel series. Why are your Valens Legacy books published under Jan Stryvant instead of John Van Strý?

**JVS:** The Valens Legacy books have a strong "harem" theme to them. Sean, the hero, ends up with multiple wives as the story progresses. Also there are explicit scenes in this series, where normally I tend to FTB (Fade To Black). Many readers these days really don't appreciate it if an author writes something that is different in some significant way. To avoid getting that grief, I decided to develop a little "brand separation". I don't hide that I have a pen name, and there are a fair number of people who enjoy my works under both names. But this allows people to discriminate between the styles, for those that wish to. In my case it was definitely a wise decision.

I actually did a lot of market research before I did it, and even test launched a fairly large novel (SHADOW) to see if I could make it work. The "hero" in Shadow is very much a sociopath, though perhaps more in the "Dexter" kind of way. There were some subjects that were a lot "edgier" than ones I normally write in that story as well. It wasn't something I could have put out under my own name and expected to succeed with.

**TW:** You write science fiction as well. Your first novel, CHILDREN OF STEEL, is sci-fi. What other science fiction have you written?

**JVS:** I wrote a couple of books in the same "world" as Children of Steel: DANGER



MONEY, DIALENE, INTERREGNUM and LEAD, FOLLOW, OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES are the main ones. As SciFi goes they're fairly "hard" science fiction. The DAYS OF FUTURE PAST also has a lot of actual science fiction in it; it just has some "fantasy" aspects in it as well—which are mostly explained by the end. I'll probably return to SciFi at some point, because I've always loved writing and reading it. I currently have a Mil/Space Opera that I've been working on as well.

**TW:** Why do you think it is the fantasy novels that made you a full-time writer?

**JVS:** Fantasy has a broader appeal than SciFi does these days. It also has a much larger audience. SciFi nearly died out in the previous decade, and to be honest, a lot of what is being peddled as SciFi these days, isn't. On top of that current day trends and culture have a huge impact on just which genre people want to see more of. Further, my books aren't straight up "fantasy" by any stretch. They're "Urban Fantasy" (a very overlooked category—one that the major awards all but ignore for all that it outsells most SciFi and straight up fantasy).

Many of my stories take place in modern day society, or start there. The fantasy aspect brings in that moment of wonder and doubt. You can look around the world we live in today and wonder "What if? What if this is all true?" in the Portals of Infinity series. Will often comes "home" to Earth, our Earth, to visit family or deal with other issues. In the HAMMER COMMISSION series and the Valens Legacy series, all of the fantasy elements exist in our world—they're just hidden from us. So in some ways I'm writing about modern times, though I do avoid modern day politics completely. Valens Legacy actually "starts" on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in Reno, Nevada. There are some local events that you see in the story, on the day they took place. I used my extensive knowledge of Reno as well. I've also done the same in the Hammer Commission books, injecting real places and real things. I do a lot of research when I write my Urban Fantasies on the locals where they take place. Often going there, or writing about places I know quite well.

**TW:** I normally ask what else the author is working on, but you're churning out several books a year. And then there's your landmark lawsuit against an ebook pirate. Would you like to talk about it here?

**JVS:** I don't want to go too deeply into the lawsuit. It was long, and it was costly, and I have made posts about it on my own blog as well as the Mad Genius Club and I think the posts on the gofundme are still there. There's also a public post on my Patreon page that contains the actual court ruling. A Google search will probably turn up most of it;

however understand that the one “tech” site that covered it was biased in favor of piracy, so the journalism is a bit skewed. And in many cases, it is just plain wrong.

I’m glad that I won; the legal precedents will serve authors for decades to come. I’m also glad it’s over. It seriously cut into my writing time and productivity. The financial impact, when considering the time I wasn’t able to work, is well into six digits. But someone had to do it, and I was the only one who could afford to. None of the Big Five or any other big corporations wanted to spend the money and take the risk. Now that I’ve won of course, they’re all finally willing to continue the fight.

**TW:** Thank you for speaking with me.



**IN ACTION**

# Behind the Scenes: Artificial Intelligence Evaluation

by *Jeffrey Redmond*



*How good is a computer as a medium of intelligence? How helpful is it to us? Are they apt to replace the "human factor?"*

AI, like electricity or the steam engine, is a general purpose technology. There is no consensus on how to characterize which tasks AI tends to excel at. While projects such as AlphaZero have succeeded in generating their own knowledge from scratch, many other machine learning projects require large training datasets. Researcher Andrew Ng has suggested, as a "highly imperfect rule of thumb", that "almost anything a typical human can do with less than one second of mental thought, we can probably now or in the near future automate using AI. Moravec's paradox suggests that AI lags humans at many tasks that the human brain has specifically evolved to perform well.

Games provide a well-publicized benchmark for assessing rates of progress. AlphaGo around 2016 brought the era of classical board-game benchmarks to a close. Games of imperfect knowledge provide new challenges to AI in the area of game theory. E-sports such as StarCraft continue to provide additional public benchmarks. There are many competitions and prizes, such as the Imagenet Challenge, to promote research in artificial intelligence. The most common areas of competition include general machine intelligence, conversational behavior, data-mining, robotic cars, and robot soccer as well as conventional games.

The "imitation game" (an interpretation of the 1950 Turing test that assesses whether a computer can imitate a human) is nowadays considered too exploitable to be a meaningful benchmark. A derivative of the Turing test is the Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart (CAPTCHA). As the name implies, this helps to determine that a user is an actual person and not a computer posing as a

human.

In contrast to the standard Turing test, CAPTCHA is administered by a machine and targeted to a human as opposed to being administered by a human and targeted to a machine. A computer asks a user to complete a simple test, then generates a grade for that test. Computers are unable to solve the problem, so correct solutions are deemed to be the result of a person taking the test. A common type of CAPTCHA is the test that requires the typing of distorted letters, numbers or symbols that appear in an image undecipherable by a computer.

Proposed “universal intelligence” tests aim to compare how well machines, humans, and even non-human animals perform on problem sets that are generic as possible. At an extreme, the test suite can contain every possible problem, weighted by Kolmogorov complexity; unfortunately, these problem sets tend to be dominated by impoverished pattern-matching exercises where a tuned AI can easily exceed human performance levels.

AI is relevant to any intellectual task. Modern artificial intelligence techniques are pervasive and are too numerous to list here. Frequently, when a technique reaches mainstream use, it is no longer considered artificial intelligence; this phenomenon is described as the AI effect.

High-profile examples of AI include autonomous vehicles (such as drones and self-driving cars), medical diagnosis, creating art (such as poetry), proving mathematical theorems, playing games (such as Chess or Go), search engines (such as Google search), online assistants (such as Siri), image recognition in photographs, spam filtering, predicting flight delays, prediction of judicial decisions, targeting online advertisements, and energy storage.

With social media sites overtaking TV as a source for news for young people and news organizations increasingly reliant on social media platforms for generating distribution, major publishers now use artificial intelligence (AI) technology to post stories more effectively and generate higher volumes of traffic.

AI can also produce Deepfakes, a content-altering technology. ZDNet reports, “It presents something that did not actually occur”. Though 88% of Americans believe Deepfakes can cause more harm than good, only 47% of them believe they can be targeted. The boom of election year also opens public discourse to threats of videos of falsified politician media.

AI in healthcare is often used for classification, whether to automate initial evaluation

of a CT scan or EKG or to identify high-risk patients for population health. The breadth of applications is rapidly increasing. As an example, AI is being applied to the high-cost problem of dosage issues—where findings suggested that AI could save \$16 billion. In 2016, a ground-breaking study in California found that a mathematical formula developed with the help of AI correctly determined the accurate dose of immunosuppressant drugs to give to organ patients.

X-ray of a hand, with automatic calculation of bone age by computer software artificial intelligence, is assisting doctors. According to Bloomberg Technology, Microsoft has developed AI to help doctors find the right treatments for cancer. There is a great amount of research and drugs developed relating to cancer. In detail, there are more than eight hundred medicines and vaccines to treat cancer. This negatively affects the doctors, because there are too many options to choose from, making it more difficult to choose the right drugs for the patients.

Microsoft is working on a project to develop a machine called “Hanover”. Its goal is to memorize all the papers necessary to cancer and help predict which combinations of drugs will be most effective for each patient. One project that is being worked on at the moment is fighting myeloid leukemia, a fatal cancer where the treatment has not improved in decades. Another study was reported to have found that artificial intelligence was as good as trained doctors in identifying skin cancers. Another study is using artificial intelligence to try to monitor multiple high-risk patients, and this is done by asking each patient numerous questions based on data acquired from live doctor-to-patient interactions. One study was done with transfer learning; the machine performed a diagnosis similarly to a well-trained ophthalmologist, and could generate a decision within thirty seconds on whether or not the patient should be referred for treatment, with more than 95% accuracy.

According to CNN, a recent study by surgeons at the Children’s National Medical Center in Washington successfully demonstrated surgery with an autonomous robot. The team supervised the robot while it performed soft-tissue surgery, stitching together a pig’s bowel during open surgery, and doing so better than a human surgeon, the team claimed. IBM has created its own artificial intelligence computer, the IBM Watson, which has beaten human intelligence (at some levels). Watson has struggled to achieve success and adoption in healthcare. [Editor’s note: I typo’d the word “created” in the above to “crated” and it got a blue underline. It takes intelligence to notice that IBM perhaps wouldn’t crate its computer, and then have it notated by the writer.—JT]

Advancements in AI have contributed to the growth of the automotive industry through the creation and evolution of self-driving vehicles. As of 2016, there are over thirty companies utilizing AI into the creation of self-driving cars. A few companies involved with AI include Tesla, Google, and Apple.

Many components contribute to the functioning of self-driving cars. These vehicles incorporate systems such as braking, lane changing, collision prevention, navigation and mapping. Together, these systems, as well as high-performance computers, are integrated into one complex vehicle.

Recent developments in autonomous automobiles have made the innovation of self-driving trucks possible, though they are still in the testing phase. The UK government has passed legislation to begin testing of self-driving truck platoons in 2018. Self-driving truck platoons are a fleet of self-driving trucks following the lead of one non-self-driving truck, so the truck platoons aren't entirely autonomous yet. Meanwhile, the Daimler, a German automobile corporation, is testing the Freightliner Inspiration which is a semi-autonomous truck that will only be used on the highway.

One main factor that influences the ability for a driverless automobile to function is mapping. In general, the vehicle would be pre-programmed with a map of the area being driven. This map would include data on the approximations of street light and curb heights in order for the vehicle to be aware of its surroundings.

However, Google has been working on an algorithm with the purpose of eliminating the need for pre-programmed maps and instead, creating a device that would be able to adjust to a variety of new surroundings. Some self-driving cars are not equipped with steering wheels or brake pedals, so there has also been research focused on creating an algorithm that is capable of maintaining a safe environment for the passengers in the vehicle through awareness of speed and driving conditions.

Another factor that is influencing the ability of a driverless automobile is the safety of the passenger. To make a driverless automobile, engineers must program it to handle high-risk situations. These situations could include a head-on collision with pedestrians. The car's main goal should be to make a decision that would avoid hitting the pedestrians and saving the passengers in the car. But there is a possibility the car would need to make a decision that would put someone in danger. In other words, the car would need to decide to save the pedestrians or the passengers. The programming of the car in these situations is crucial to a successful driverless automobile.

Financial institutions have long used artificial neural network systems to detect

charges or claims outside of the norm, flagging these for human investigation. The use of AI in banking can be traced back to 1987 when Security Pacific National Bank in the US set up a Fraud Prevention Task Force to counter the unauthorized use of debit cards.

Programs like Kasisto and Moneystream are using AI in financial services.

Banks use artificial intelligence systems today to organize operations, maintain bookkeeping, invest in stocks, and manage properties. AI can react to changes overnight or when business is not taking place. In August 2001, robots beat humans in a simulated financial trading competition. AI has also reduced fraud and financial crimes by monitoring behavioral patterns of users for any abnormal changes or anomalies.

AI is increasingly being used by corporations. Jack Ma has controversially predicted that AI CEOs are thirty years away.

The use of AI machines in the market in applications such as online trading and decision making has changed major economic theories. For example, AI-based buying and selling platforms have changed the law of supply and demand in that it is now possible to easily estimate individualized demand and supply curves and thus individualized pricing.

Furthermore, AI machines reduce information asymmetry in the market and thus make markets more efficient while reducing the volume of trades. Furthermore, AI in the markets limits the consequences of behavior in the markets, again making markets more efficient. Other theories where AI has had impact include rational choice, rational expectations, game theory, Lewis turning point, portfolio optimization and counterfactual thinking. In August 2019, the AICPA introduced AI training courses for accounting professionals.

The cybersecurity arena faces significant challenges in the form of large-scale hacking attacks of different types that harm organizations of all kinds and create billions of dollars in business damage. Artificial intelligence and Natural Language Processing (NLP) has begun to be used by security companies—for example, SIEM (Security Information and Event Management) solutions. The more advanced of these solutions use AI and NLP to automatically sort the data in networks into high risk and low risk information. This enables security teams to focus on the attacks that have the potential to do real harm to the organization, and not become victims of attacks such as Denial of Service (DoS), Malware and others.

Artificial Intelligence in government consists of applications and regulation. Artificial intelligence paired with facial recognition systems may be used for mass surveillance.

This is already the case in some parts of China. An artificial intelligence has also competed in the Tama City mayoral elections in 2018.

In 2019, the tech city of Bengaluru in India is set to deploy AI managed traffic signal systems across the 387 traffic signals in the city. This system will involve use of cameras to ascertain traffic density and accordingly calculate the time needed to clear the traffic volume which will determine the signal duration for vehicular traffic across streets.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming a mainstay component of law-related professions. In some circumstances, this analytics-crunching technology is using algorithms and machine learning to do work that was previously done by entry-level lawyers.

In Electronic Discovery (eDiscovery), the industry has been focused on machine learning (predictive coding/technology assisted review), which is a subset of AI. To add to the soup of applications, Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Automated Speech Recognition (ASR) are also in vogue in the industry.

In video games, artificial intelligence is routinely used to generate dynamic purposeful behavior in non-player characters (NPCs). In addition, well-understood AI techniques are routinely used for pathfinding. Some researchers consider NPC AI in games to be a "solved problem" for most production tasks. Games with more atypical AI include the AI director of Left 4 Dead (2008) and the neuro-evolutionary training of platoons in Supreme Commander (2010).

The United States and other nations are developing AI applications for a range of military functions. The main solitary applications of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning are to enhance C2, Communications, Sensors, Integration and Interoperability. AI research is underway in the fields of intelligence collection and analysis, logistics, cyber operations, information operations, command and control, and in a variety of semi-autonomous and autonomous vehicles.

Artificial Intelligence technologies enable coordination of sensors and effectors, threat detection and identification, marking of enemy positions, target acquisition, coordination and de-confliction of distributed Joint Fires between networked combat vehicles and tanks also inside Manned and Unmanned Teams (MUM-T). AI has been incorporated into military operations in Iraq and Syria.

Worldwide annual military spending on robotics rose from US five and a tenth billion in 2010 to US seven and a half billion in 2015. Military drones capable of autonomous action are widely considered a useful asset. Many artificial intelligence researchers seek



to distance themselves from military applications of AI.

In the hospitality industry, AI-based solutions are used to reduce staff load and increase efficiency by cutting repetitive tasks frequency, trends analysis, guest interaction, and customer needs prediction. Hotel services backed by Artificial Intelligence are represented in the form of a chatbot, application, virtual voice assistant and service robots.

For financial statements audit, AI makes continuous audit possible. AI tools could analyze many sets of different information immediately. The potential benefit would be the overall audit risk will be reduced, the level of assurance will be increased and the time duration of audit will be reduced.

It is possible to use AI to predict or generalize the behavior of customers from their digital footprints in order to target them with personalized promotions or build customer persona automatically. A documented case reports that online gambling companies were using AI to improve customer targeting.

Moreover, the application of Personality computing AI models can help, reducing the cost of advertising campaigns by adding psychological targeting to more traditional socio-demographic or behavioral targeting.

Artificial Intelligence has inspired numerous creative applications including its usage to produce visual art. The exhibition THINKING MACHINES: ART AND DESIGN IN THE COMPUTER AGE, 1959-1989 at the Museum of Modern Art provides a good overview of the historical applications of AI for art, architecture, and design. Recent exhibitions showcasing the usage of AI to produce art include the Google-sponsored benefit and auction at the Gray Area Foundation in San Francisco, where artists experimented with the DeepDream algorithm and the exhibition UNHUMAN: ART IN THE AGE OF AI, which took place in Los Angeles and Frankfurt in the fall of 2017.

In the spring of 2018, the Association of Computing Machinery dedicated a special magazine issue to the subject of computers and art, highlighting the role of machine learning in the arts. The Austrian Ars Electronica and Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, opened exhibitions of AI in 2019. The Ars Electronica's 2019 festival OUT OF THE BOX extensively thematized the role of arts for a sustainable societal transformation with AI.

# A COMPUTERIZED MAN by Celine Rose Mariotti

## serial, part two



Synopsis: Dr. Humpford, a former astronaut and computer scientist, has a secret project—the building of a computerized man whom he intends to program and run for political office and finally for President. He is discovered by two children who live next door to him and he makes new plans to incorporate them into his project and have them be the family of the robot.

“Hey, Danny, did you know that Dr. Humpford went up in the spaceship Discovery to do experiments on the space station for robotics?”

“Wow! He’s an astronaut! Cool!”

“Yeah, that’s what I thought too!”

“I read up on robotics. You wouldn’t believe how many different robots have been invented over the years. And Dr. Humpford was written up for inventing a robot that could recite all kinds of scientific information and even give the weather! This guy’s a real genius. Wonder why he’s living next door to us?”

“Maybe to be hidden and work without anyone suspecting anything,” said Danny.

“I think you’re right. Let’s go over and see him and help him with the ‘Computerized Man’.”

“Yeah, let’s go.”

The children knocked on the door three times with the rapper. That was the secret code between them and Dr. Willis Humpford so he knew it was the two of them at his door.

Dr. Humpford partially opened the door. Seeing that it was the kids, he welcomed

them in. "We have a lot of work to do. I have been teaching him how to give a speech so when he runs for the Senate, he will be prepared. We have to work on teaching him manners. We want him to be a polite, respectable 'Computerized Man'," he explained.

"I was thinking of one little problem we have," said Danny.

"What's that, my young genius?"

"He can't eat. If he's campaigning people will offer him coffee, donuts, fried chicken, and other foods. If he never eats, what will people think? What will the media say?"

"Glad you brought that up. When I consulted Roger, I used some of the lab tissue I had cultivated from a homeless man who was found dead in the street. The city morgue offered his body for scientific research. I took bits of stomach tissue, added stem cells, and cultivated it in a petri dish for several days. I did the same with the man's intestines, colon and liver. So our 'Computerized Man' is part human and he can eat, just not any really big meals. I did the same with his bladder. So, from all pretenses, he will seem as though he is a human being. But the rest of his parts, his limbs, his hands and his feet, his neck, his head are bionic and mechanical, but he has that man's eyes. And I put some bionic parts in his eye pupils so he can see for as far as one hundred miles out and see it like it was close up. He also has a half-human heart and half mechanical. It should be interesting to see how he develops. His brain is totally computerized."

"His brain is totally computerized! Wow! This is so exciting!" exclaimed Danny.

"Okay, let's have a conversation with our 'Computerized Man'. Come along, children."

They followed Dr. Willis Humpford to his study where Roger was sitting at the computer typing.

"Wow! He's really good at the computer!" shrieked Danny.

"He is a 'Computerized Man'," said Stephanie, laughing.

"Roger, our Stephanie and Danny are here to help us."

"Good afternoon, Danny. Good afternoon, Stephanie. Good to see you. Are you a positive force in our universe?" asked Roger.

Stephanie laughed. "Yes, Roger, we are a positive force. We are your friends and Dr. Humpford's friends as well."

"Friend is a non-descriptive word in my functioning. How does one describe what friend is?" asked Roger.

"I'll describe it to you," offered Danny.

"Please proceed so friend will compute," said Roger.

"A friend is someone you share good news and bad news with, someone you go to a

football game with or to the movies, someone who encourages you and someone you also encourage; you invite your friend to your home and they invite you to their home; someone you laugh with, someone you cry with, someone who loves you and you love them back," Danny explained.

"I will be your friend, Danny. You and I will share things together. We will search the internet together and have a cupcake together," said Roger.

"That'll be super!" exclaimed Danny.

"Roger, do you know some of the historical information we went over?" asked Dr. Humpford.

"I have studied and retained it," said Roger. "I shall recite it. New Hampshire's state motto is 'Live Free or Die'. Our capitol is Concord. New Hampshire is known as the White Mountain State," recited Roger.

"Very good, Roger. Now tell us how New Hampshire was first settled," instructed Dr. Humpford.

"New Hampshire once belonged to Massachusetts, but it became a separate colony when the division was made in 1629 of a land grant that was given seven years before to Sir Fernando Georges. He was the person who founded Maine. New Hampshire was first settled in Rye, near Portsmouth, by a group of fishermen from England led by a man named David Thompson."

"Excellent, Roger! He has the history down pat. Good background for someone who is going to run for the U.S. Senate," exclaimed Dr. Willis Humpford, feeling very proud of himself. He was accomplishing something that no other scientist had dared to do.

"What's the next step?" asked Stephanie.

"He makes his announcement to run for office," said Dr. Humpford.

"When?"

"Tomorrow afternoon," replied Dr. Humpford. "The five of us will go up to the State Capitol."

"Great! We can't wait!" shouted Danny happily.

"Okay, kids. Keep our secret. Tomorrow is our big day but remember no one is to know he is a 'Computerized Man'. This is our big secret," Humpford reminded them.

"Pinky swear! It's our secret," said Stephanie.

"Good. See you tomorrow at three o'clock sharp."

"Okay, see you then."

With that the two kids returned home bound by their secret.

At four thirty, Peter arrived to help Dr. Humpford. Roger had to rehearse his speech. Dr. Humpford kept making editorial changes on it, and Peter told him to make it all seem as natural as possible, as a real live human candidate would not be perfect when he or she spoke.

"Better he sounds like a natural human being running for office instead of sounding so perfect and methodical. The way you're writing that speech, people will get suspicious of Roger. By the way, I stopped by the Mall and got a toupee for Roger so he looks really human-like. The only thing that bothers me is from his forehead up, you can see through him! And his hands! Look! You can see through those too and they are a light green with a white luminescence coming from the palm. If people see that, they'll know he's not for real and we'll all be toast!"

"His hands have the highest volume for the bionics and he can pick up a refrigerator or even a car," said Dr. Humpford.

"But there must be some way we can cover up the greenness of his hands and that luminescent light shining out of them. Hmm. Oh, I've got it. We can use wet clay and rub it on him and put his hands under a dryer, so the clay dries on them and his hands seem human. The same with his forehead," said Peter.

"You have an excellent mind for this, Peter. Glad you're working with me," remarked Dr. Humpford, a smile suddenly coming across his rugged, worn face.

"No problem, Dr. Humpford. We'll work all night fixing Roger and practicing his speech," said Peter, shaking hands with Dr. Humpford.

The next day Stephanie and Danny hurried over to see their neighbor, Dr. Willis Humpford. Danny wore a jacket and tie, a white shirt and blue pants. Stephanie wore a blue crinkled skirt and a matching blue top with three quarter sleeves and a white silk scarf. They rapped three times on the door. Dr. Willis Humpford greeted them.

"Come on in. Peter is on his way. We have to go over everything when he gets here," instructed a very nervous Dr. Humpford. His hands were shaking and his right eye was twitching.

Humpford had the TV on and the kids watched with enjoyment "Press Your Luck" on the Buzzer Channel where they have lots of old game shows. Peter finally arrived, nervous and out of breath. He got held over in the last class he had for the day, his genetics class.

"Let's go over our plan. We introduce Roger as a candidate for the US Senate. We, well, I tell them that I'm the campaign manager. Roger gives a speech and tells who he

is and why he's running. Am I right, Roger?"

"This has been put into my memory bank. I am Roger Humphrey and I'm running for the US Senate. I want to be your next Senator from the Granite State of New Hampshire," said Roger proudly.

"Excellent, Roger!" exclaimed Dr. Humpford. "Come, let's go to the State Capitol".

Dr. Willis Humpford, Stephanie, Danny, Peter and the "Computerized Man", all got into the car, a 2011 Cadillac Seville. He put on the radio and listened to National Public Radio. Roger sat in front with him reciting details about current events.

"The Concord Sun reported that two thousand more people signed up for unemployment checks. Our inflation rate has gone up another three percent and our prices are higher than ever. We need someone in the U.S. Senate who will fight for the people," recited Roger Humphrey, in a little less mechanical voice but still sounding a bit robotic.

Danny and Stephanie listened to their conversation. Danny reached for his smartphone and went on Twilight Space and sent a message: "New Senate Candidate Roger Humphrey to make announcement this afternoon NH.—danny56trains." He sent the message. By the time they got to the Capitol, Danny had received twenty-five responses to his message on Twilight Space. Peter was busy sending out text messages too, and emails to all his friends. They were all laying the groundwork for Roger's campaign.

"Dr. Humpford, I sent a message about Roger running for the Senate on Twilight Space. I am already getting responses," exclaimed Danny happily.

"You kids are a great asset to me," said Dr. Humpford, smiling.

"A great asset!" repeated Roger. Stephanie smiled and put her hand on her brother's shoulder. She was so proud of him. Peter had a small notebook and he wrote some notes for some other things Roger could add to his speech. They all followed Dr. Humpford into the State Capitol where they caught the elevator to the third floor. Then they walked down a long corridor till they came to the office of the Secretary of State.

"Mrs. Bocelli, I'm Dr. Willis Humpford and this is my good friend, Roger Humphrey. Roger is running for the U.S. Senate and he's here to make out the paperwork and file the necessary papers," explained Dr. Humpford.

"And are these children Mr. Humphrey's family?" asked Mrs. Bocelli.

"Yes, these two young children, Danny and Stephanie, are Roger's family. Two very bright kids. And this young fellow Peter works with me," said Dr. Humpford, smiling and

nodding to Danny and Stephanie and Peter, who smiled back at him.

"Nice to meet all of you. I'll get the paperwork you need," said Mrs. Bocelli.

"Roger, sit right here," said Dr. Humpford.

"Yes, Professor, I will sit."

Mrs. Bocelli gave them a funny look. Something didn't jell with this guy. She went in the back to get the paperwork, and she made a call to the Speaker of the House in their General Assembly. His name was Corbin McGray.

"Corbin, this is JoAnn. There are two fellows here, one is a Dr. Humpford, and his old friend, Roger Humphrey. Roger is filing papers to run for the U.S. Senate. There are two kids with them, Danny and Stephanie, and this other young fellow, Peter, and then the candidate Roger who has a mechanical voice and he just called Dr. Humpford 'Professor'. And there's something strange about Roger's face," explained Mrs. Bocelli.

"That does sound strange. You say the guy's name is Dr. Humpford?"

"Yes, Dr. Willis Humpford."

"I know who he is! He is an astronaut and he's a professor now and known for scientific experiments. Matter of fact, he built robots."

"Oh, my God. Do you think this Roger is a robot?"

"Might be. Go ahead and file the papers. Let him run for the U.S. Senate. Then we'll definitely be able to find out who and what this Roger is," said Corbin.

"Okay. Thanks. I'll do that."

JoAnn hung up the telephone and returned to her desk. Roger and Dr. Humpford were waiting there with the children. Peter was too, and he was suspicious of how long it was taking her.

"Here's all the paperwork. You can start filling it out and I have to make some entries for you on the computer," explained Mrs. Bocelli. "Be sure to answer all the questions and provide as much detail as possible."

Roger picked up the pen and held it up to the light examining it. Dr. Humpford told him to stop doing that. JoAnn looked at his quizzically. He was a strange one. Roger started filling out the papers relying on his computerized memory bank to recall all the pertinent details of his manufactured life. Dr. Humpford had his iPad with him and he would show information on the screen to Roger to make sure he knew what to do. Stephanie and Danny and Peter sat next to Roger and they watched him too. So far everything seemed to be going fine. Roger completed the forms and it was now 5:00 PM. Mrs. Bocelli made her necessary entry in the computer. With that Roger's campaign

for the U.S. Senate seemed to be on the way and totally official.

"By the way, Mr. Humphrey, you didn't fill out which party you are affiliated with?"

"I am affiliated with the Happy Party. We believe in making people happy, making life better, and helping everyone. That is what computes for me. Smile, Mrs. Bocelli, that is affirmative. Good day! Bon Voyage! Bon Appetit! That does compute!"

Everyone was laughing including the throng of reporters gathered outside. They all seemed excited to speak with Roger. He was an anomaly for them. They couldn't wait to hear his statement.

"Roger Humphrey, you seem to be a most unusual candidate. No one has heard of you. What's your background?" yelled out a female reporter.

"I am new to politics. I compute what you say, but I don't think I see myself as how do you say—'A most unusual candidate'. I think of doing good things to help people. I am a lawyer and I study how people interact. I learn just watching and listening. I learn just seeing and studying. I learn just reading and writing. The world is a long-term learning process. Being in the Senate will allow me to help people, to make their lives better; to help build things, to improve our roads and highways, to invest in our own future where cars will run by electricity or by fuel cells. Airplanes will be supersonic and we will fly from Boston to Los Angeles in one hour; everything will once again be built in the USA: I will put America and the American people first because that is the way it should be. I am Roger Humphrey. I am a candidate for the U.S. Senate. That is all you need to compute. That is affirmative. Good afternoon, everyone."

With that, Roger, Dr. Humpford, Stephanie, Peter and Danny departed and headed home.

Stephanie and Danny got home later than they expected to and found two police cars parked in front of their house. When they walked in, their mom ran up to them and hugged them. She shouted hysterically, "It's almost 7:30. Where did you go without telling me?"

"Take it easy, Ma'am. Let the kids talk. We'll get to the bottom of this. Just relax," said Officer Giannetti reassuringly.

"Stephanie, Danny, your mom called us. She has been very worried about both of you. Where did you go? Why didn't you call home?" questioned Officer Giannetti.

"It was a secret. We didn't expect to get home this late!" blurted Danny.

"What secret?" asked Officer Sloan.

"We were staying with our neighbor, Dr. Willis Humpford, helping him with his secret



project," said Stephanie, her voice shaky.

"My God! Is he some kind of pervert? Did he hurt you? He's an oddball," shrieked their mom.

"No, Mom. He's a nice man! He's good to us and he's a scientist," exclaimed Stephanie.

"What is this secret project you're helping him with?" asked Officer Giannetti.

"We're not supposed to tell. We promised him!" pleaded Danny.

"I'm sorry, kids, but we have to know what this secret project is. If he is breaking some kind of law, we can't have him dragging you into it as some kind of accomplices. So please tell us about this secret project," explained Officer Sloan.

Stephanie looked at Danny and he nodded his head. They both dreaded telling on Dr. Humpford. Danny pulled Stephanie aside so they could talk without the grown-ups overhearing.

"We can't tell them about Roger! We promised Dr. Humpford!" whispered Danny.

"I know. We can't tell them. We'll make something up," said Stephanie.

"Okay, we'll make something up so we keep Dr. Humpford's secret," agreed Danny. The kids returned to speak to the grownups.

"We were with a bunch of our friends. We went to the museum to see the science exhibit and there was a big line there. It took a while to get in to see all the cool scientific stuff they had there," explained Danny.

"You've got a cell phone. Why didn't you call me?" demanded his mom, her lips quivering, her voice shaky. She had rolled her tissue real tight in her hand too.

"We're sorry, Mom. We just got really carried away. We forgot to call. We didn't mean to worry you," said Stephanie.

"But you said you were with your neighbor?" asked Officer Giannetti.

"Yeah, he led the tour of the exhibits," said Danny.

"You better not be lying to me, young man!" reprimanded his mom.

"I'm not. That's where we were! I swear!"

"Which museum?" asked Officer Sloan.

Stephanie looked at Danny and then she spoke. "That new museum, the one about robotics, outer space. It has a telescope."

"You mean Nelson and Mayfield's Museum of New Science?" asked Officer Sloan.

"Yeah, that's the one," said Stephanie.

Officer Sloan called the museum to find out. After asking several questions and

noting everything on his iPad, he closed his cell phone and shook his head. "You two just told a big lie. The manager at the Museum just told me there was no exhibit led by Dr. Humpford. They did say he's scheduled to do a lecture there next week. So where were you two?" asked Officer Sloan.

"We're sworn to secrecy! We can't say a word to anyone!" protested Stephanie.

"Look, they're on TV!" exclaimed their dad.

"What? On TV? Let me see," said Officer Giannetti. Everyone watched.

It was Roger Humphrey, the Computerized Man, making the statement he had made at the Capitol in Concord, and standing there next to him was Dr. Humpford, Stephanie, Danny and Peter.

Danny whispered to Stephanie. "We're toast!"

## Part Two

Danny and Stephanie hid in Stephanie's room not wanting to know what their parents were discussing, though they knew it had to be about them and Dr. Humpford. Stephanie ate a bag of M&Ms while Danny texted Dr. Humpford.

*Dr. Humpford, what do we do next? Our parents are really upset!—Danny and Stephanie*

"He might not answer. There are lots of vans from the TV station at his house and the police too," muttered Stephanie, munching on her M&Ms. Danny got out his laptop and researched all the news on Dr. Humpford and Roger and on them. Total strangers were writing about them and they didn't know what any of it was all about. They were so totally wrong and so ignorant. He had to find a way to get his own article out there so he could answer what they were all saying. He needed his sister's help. She was the writer in the family.

"Stephanie, we've got to write our own story and put it up here on the Internet for everyone to read so they know the truth of who we are," pleaded Danny.

"No, that's the worst thing we could do. We have to stick by Dr. Humpford and the secret project. If we go viral, we're not being loyal friends to Dr. Humpford. He's counting on us. What we need to do is go over to his house and save him from the media frenzy. Come on, Danny, let's go!" urged Stephanie.

"We can't go downstairs because our parents will see us!" cried Danny, sounding desperate.

"No, silly goose, we climb out the window and into the tree with a rope and climb

down to the ground," said Stephanie, smiling ear to ear.

"I got rope in my closet," said Danny.

"Okay, go get it! Hurry!"

"I'll be right back!"

Danny came back with the rope and he opened the big storm window in his room, opened the screen window so he could screw the hook inside the windowsill, tie the rope to it and they could each let themselves down into the tree by Stephanie's room. It was a big spruce tree. Danny got the rope tied tight and gently slid out, holding onto the rope, and let himself down into the tree. Then Stephanie grabbed the rope and did the same. They were both nestled in the tree now and had to climb down safely from the tree. So Danny made his way over to a lower branch and Stephanie did the same. Then Danny held onto the bark of the tree and slowly made his way down using his feet to maneuver his way down. Stephanie followed him and he helped her get down to the ground. Now they sneaked over to Dr. Humpford's back porch. They tiptoed up the stairs of the porch and Danny tried the screen door and it was open. Dr. Humpford was in the living room in the front of the house besieged by reporters from all different networks, radio stations and newspapers. And the police were there too! Danny and Stephanie peeked out from the folding doors in the kitchen. Danny whispered to Stephanie. "How do we get them out of here? Dr. Humpford is scared of people!"

"I'm thinking," said Stephanie.

"Think fast before they go down to the basement and find the "Computerized Man". All of his work will go down the drain if they confiscate the "Computerized Man", said Danny.

"I know! Let's go down to the basement and we can tell Roger what to do and he'll scare all these folks away for Dr. Humpford," said Stephanie.

"Great idea! We'll be super quiet and sneaky," whispered Danny. And so they both opened the door to the basement and crept down the stairs quietly. To their surprise, Roger was sitting up and he was at the computer typing away.

"Roger! Dr. Humpford needs your help. There are a bunch of crazy people from the media crowding all around Dr. Humpford wanting to know about you. We have to help the poor Doctor," said Danny.

"And we are, my friend. I have just the right solution," said Roger, as he ate a spoonful of apple sauce.

"Well, what is it?" pressed Stephanie.

"It's genius! I'm going to put out a news bulletin that my opponent wants to kill me and that he is on his way with a gun! That will make them all skedaddle as you say in human language. That does compute, doesn't it?" said Roger.

"Wow! Why didn't we think of that?" said Danny.

"I'm part robot as I'm a computerized man with all sorts of circuits in me. I have abilities humans don't possess," said Roger as he put out the news bulletin.

"Let's hope your genius plan works, Roger!"

Suddenly they heard a loud booming noise coming from upstairs. The booming voice had a French accent. Peter, who was right by Dr. Humpford's side, recognized that it was Dr. Emil Renaud, the professor who had written that article about building a computerized man. Peter wondered who contacted him. He certainly didn't. And he doubted Stephanie or Danny would even know of him.

"*Bonsoir, Monsieur* Dr. Humpford! *Vous etes une tres grand nom de la science de la NASA!* Let me be the first to congratulate you, my friend! Let me introduce myself! I am the one and only Dr. Emil Renaud, and till the news broke today of you building a robotic man, I thought, *c'est magnifique*, Emil, you will be the first to accomplish this! I have written numerous articles on this very subject. But how did I know a sly fox like you would beat me to it! Ah, *c'est vrai*, what can Emil do, *oui?* I am astounded by this creation you call Roger Humphrey! Can we meet Roger?"

Peter was puzzled. Who told this man that Dr. Humpford built Roger?"

"Excuse me, Dr. Renaud, but who told you what Dr. Humpford has been working on?" asked Peter.

"It's all over the news about how Roger was filing papers at the State Capitol to run for US Senate and you were right there beside him. Everyone up there knows who he is—the famous astronaut and scientist. We knew Roger was not a REAL human being!" exclaimed Renaud.

"Who told you?" demanded Dr. Humpford, his voice raging with anger now.

"That nice lady, JoAnn Bocelli. She's my wife's cousin! I do have connections in all the right places," said Renaud, laughing like a hyena.

"You're just a bag of wind, Emil! And you're interfering with my life! Go home, Emil!" shouted Humpford.

Suddenly all the media were looking at their cell phones. The message had come across that Roger's opponent wanted to kill him and was on his way with a gun. The policemen also got the message and everyone was out the door in no time at all.

Soon Stephanie and Danny heard a mass of commotion and footsteps running. Then all was quiet. And they heard the soft footsteps of Dr. Humpford's slippers. And Peter's heavy footsteps as he wore boot shoes.

"Thank God they're gone! I thought I would have a heart attack!" exclaimed Humpford.

"It is I, Roger, your computerized man, who made the media skedaddle! Genius! I'm a genius, Dr. Humpford!"

"I certainly did a magnificent job creating you! Now we need to concentrate on the goals I have for you. You are going to be elected a United States Senator from the Granite State of New Hampshire. So, let's get to work on Phase Two of our plan!"

"Yeah, let's get to Phase Two of your plan," said Danny excitedly.

"I just hope Mom and Dad don't come looking for us with that policeman, Officer Giannetti. We'll never get to finish helping Dr. Humpford," lamented Stephanie.

"Don't worry, children, I'll find a way to explain all of this to your parents," said Dr. Humpford, trying to reassure them.

Roger typed away at the computer and Dr. Humpford was pleased with the emails Roger was writing to the press. One of them said very briefly and succinctly, "I Roger Humphrey, Candidate for the US Senate, will be campaigning at the campus of John Paul Jones University at 11 am. There will be coffee and donuts served. Come and hear Mr. Humphrey's speech and shake hands and ask questions."

"Excellent, Roger!"

Stephanie and Danny helped Dr. Humpford and Roger put together the speech he was going to make at the university. Everything was so quiet down in Humpford's basement. Peter took him aside while the children worked with Roger.

"What do we do about that Dr. Renaud? I read one of his articles and he's got to be totally jealous of what you've achieved," said Peter. "And he and that lady at the State Capitol have made all this trouble," added Peter.

"Yes, they have. I just hope nobody stops us from having Roger run for the Senate," said Dr. Humpford.

"Yeah, I sure hope not. There goes your whole plan," said Peter, somewhat down in the dumps after this difficult day.

"Let's get back to working with Roger," said Dr. Humpford.

"Maybe he should talk about health care," said Stephanie.

"And developing more new technology for space explorations and journeying to the

bottom of the sea to discover more of the riches down there," said Danny.

"We can talk about both of those and building up our defense," said Dr. Humpford.

Just then they heard someone pounding on the doorbell, and then they heard their parents' voices calling out to them.

"Stephanie! Danny! Come home with us!"

"Open this door, Dr. Humpford!" shouted Officer Giannetti.

"Oh, no, our mom and dad are here with the police!" exclaimed Stephanie.

"It's okay, children. I should have known my plan won't work. Too many obstacles. Too many chances I might be found out and you children could get hurt by all this. Let's go speak to your parents and the policeman," said Dr. Humpford.

"Yes, Dr. Humpford," said Danny.

"Come along, Roger," commanded Dr. Humpford.

Dr. Humpford answered the door and welcomed the children's parents and the policeman. They all sat and talked. Roger served them coffee and cookies.

"So, you're a scientist and an astronaut and you built this computerized man?" asked Officer Giannetti.

"Yes, I built Roger and I had a plan for Roger to run for the US Senate and I would control him and tell him what to do and then I would make him run for President and again I would control him. I would be able to run the country and rule the world with Roger doing what I tell him to do. Everyone and everything would be controlled by me and Roger! No one would talk about me any more! I wouldn't be the one left out. I would be the one pulling out all the stops and telling everyone else what to do! And Roger and I would be doing all good things—coming up with a national health care plan, making sure everyone had a job to go to, and everyone would be happy. There would be more space exploration like President Kennedy dreamed of, and I'd have more exploration of the sea and all its treasures. As President Kennedy said, "From the sea we come, to the sea we return." Sure, I have had success in this life as a professor and an astronaut, but people never care about me much. I've never been popular and I'm all alone in the world. Stephanie and Danny have been the first two friends I ever had. And Peter has been my right-hand assistant. I never meant any harm. I wanted to make the country and the world a better place, thus the name for our party, the 'Happy Party'. They believe in me!" Dr. Humpford started to cry. Stephanie and Danny were crying too. Peter tried to fight back his tears also.

"You know what, I like what you're doing, Dr. Humpford! Good luck! I hope Roger

wins!" said Officer Giannetti, shaking hands with everyone as he left. Officer Sloan was doing the same.

Dr. Humpford for the first time in his life felt like he really had friends who liked him and supported his work.

"You and I are going far together, Roger!"

"That computes, Dr. Humpford. We will travel far," said Roger in his mechanical voice.



## The White Lady by John Polseili



### I

When midnight waits beyond a misty wood,  
And moonlight beckons from a stillness deep  
Within a soundless gulf, her womanhood  
Pervades my thoughts. Hence, rising from my sleep  
I part and walk far from the neighborhood  
Into the wilderness through which I creep  
In trepidation of her deadly charms,  
Of falling helplessly within her arms.

### II

Against a sullen sky when trees sway slow  
Above a wintry lake, my love abides  
Despite the brooding horror that I know  
Will lurk within my heart where she presides.  
The deathly whiteness of her skin, the glow  
Of her blue eyes, the pale mare she rides,



Her countless rows of graves etched in the earth,  
The nuptials and the miracle of birth.

III

Across a gloaming thicket reach the shades  
That permeate my tainted soul, and steer  
My thoughts to brood upon my hope that fades  
With every shape the moon assumes. Not fear  
So much as anguish haunts my serenades  
To one who dwells betwixt the far and near.  
And I regret that from my arms she flees  
And leaves me lone and dying by degrees.

IV

The barren path upon which I now tread  
Commingles with the waywardness of dreams.  
Unto the darkness I reach out in dread,  
For what she is so seldom does she seem.  
Although I acquiesce amongst the dead,  
An earnest invocation intervenes:  
That I be resurrected by her light,  
And once again pursue her in the night.

V

O Cerriidwen, Goddess of Destiny,  
Bequeath to me the bounty of your charms.  
Consent to allocate nimirity,  
Although it may mean death within your arms.  
And whether death be bliss or agony—  
A staying sweet or harsh—your love disarms  
Uncertainty. And while your love is stern,  
Within my grave I'll wait for your return.



back cover