

OCTOBER 2019



A catalogue of my completed and upcoming works.

WELCOME TO MY WORLDS

Stephen Coghlan

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COVER BANNER: Welcome To My Worlds

By Devon J Hall, 2018

September 2019 Edition, License Notes

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Introduction

Stephen M. Coghlan

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Website: <http://scoghlan.com>

Thank you for taking the time to peruse this catalogue (Canadian spelling) of my present published and signed literary works. I hope you enjoy this sampling, and if you do enjoy, I hope that there will be more to come.

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PUBLISHED NOVELS AND NOVELLAS

BOOK SERIES: GENMOS (THE GENETICALLY MODIFIED SPECIES)

AGE TARGETED: YA

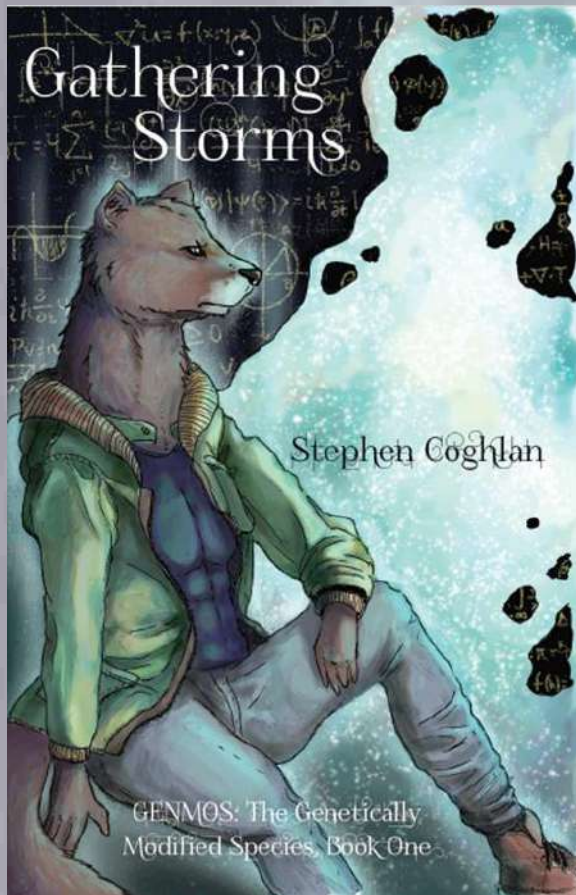
GENRE: Canlit, Cross-Canada, Anthropomorphic / Furry, Action, Adventure

Created as weapons, believed to be dead, raised in exile from each other, the fifteen surviving children of the Genetically Modified Species project must band together in order to stop the agency that wanted them destroyed from finishing their task.

BOOK TITLES:

BOOK 01: GATHERING STORMS

PUBLISHING HISTORY: 1st edition released March 31, 2017, from Thurston Howl Publications



• ISBN-10: 194524710X

• ISBN-13: 978-1945247101

SYNOPSIS:

I'm writing this letter to you because I want to tell you how my family, the Genmos, became recognized as living beings. You might have heard of us in the news recently, but if you haven't, let me quickly fill you in. It all started years ago, when my dad used a government contract to create super-soldiers for his own needs. After almost a decade of providing limited success, the project was canceled and we were ordered destroyed. Unwilling to kill his children, dad hid us throughout the country, splitting us up from each other.

Just after my eighth birthday, my oldest sister got into some hot water. Her guardian had died and she was forced to live on the streets. When several witnesses reported seeing her, it sparked

a race to recover her, and my other siblings, between my father and the agency that had ordered us destroyed. That night began my people's fight for our rights, our freedom and our very lives. I've collected writings from my siblings and have tried to put them into an order that I hope makes sense for you. This is our story.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Keper

The last original Genetically Modified Species.

BOOK 02: CROSSROADS

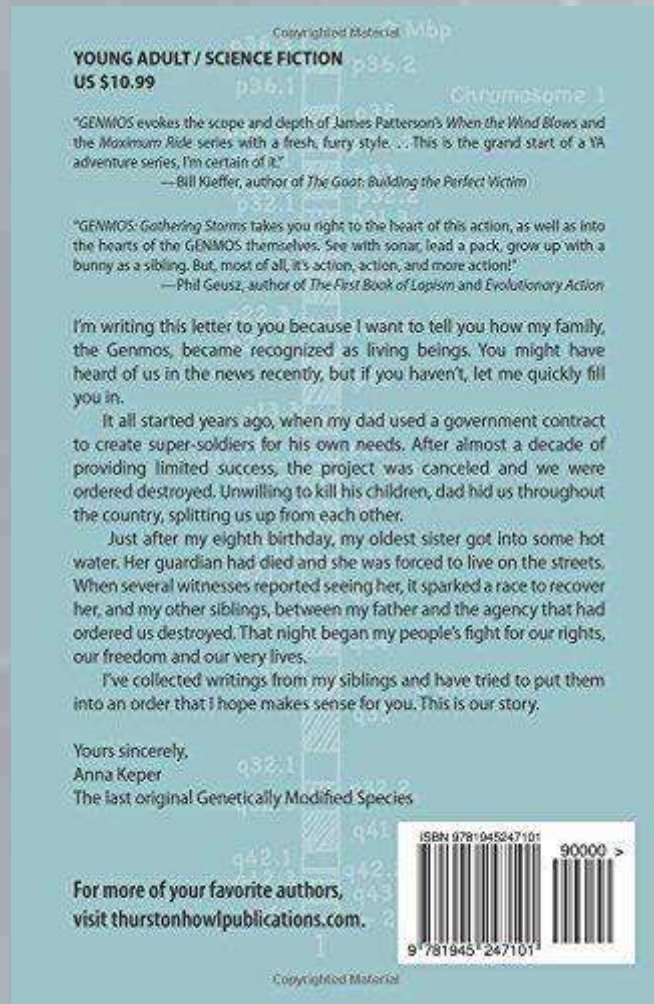
Transformed into the very prey that he had hunted so proudly, an elite soldier must figure out if he joined the ranks of the Genetically Modified Species as their ally, or their greatest betrayer.

Coming Soon from Thurston Howl Publications.

BOOK 03: CONCLUSIONS

Editing.

SHORT STORY 01: EMILY'S FLIGHT



BOOK SERIES: THE NOBILIS SAGA

AGE TARGETED: All Adult ages, YA SAFE

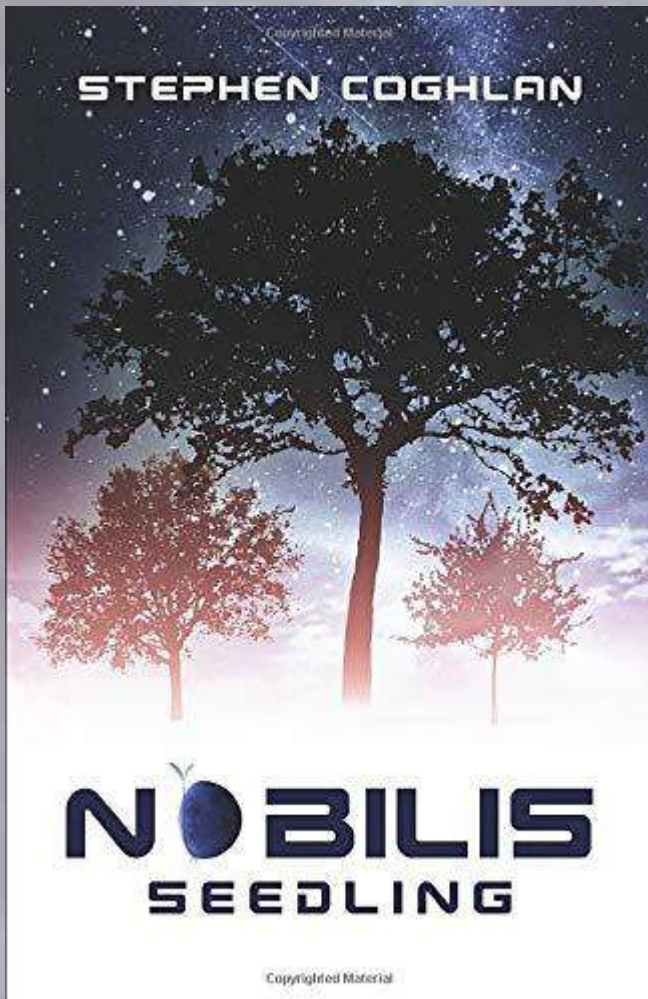
GENRE: Space Opera, Found Family, Giant Robot / Mecha

When her family of intergalactic hippies are brutally murdered before her eyes, a young woman inadvertently recruits the help of a grizzled veteran turned janitor, an exiled alien princess and her indebted human husband, four enslaved children, a genius scientist with not one social grace, and a giant alien that contains her brother's soul, in order to help her maintain her freedom and her life.

BOOK TITLE: NOBILIS BOOK 01: SEEDLING

Publishing History: 1st edition released August 31, 2017, from Thurston Howl Publications

- ISBN-10: 1945247355
- ISBN-13: 978-1945247354



SYNOPSIS:

If Nozomi had known that the discovery of the giant alien would lead to her parents' deaths, her brother being lost into a coma, and a world dying in a fiery apocalypse caused by her hand, she would have just stayed in bed.

In the years since she's found a home on a remote mining station and has been able to hide her past by stuffing the giant alien being that sustains her brother's comatose body into a cargo container, but then the race that murdered her family finds her. Forced to flee in a rickety spaceship captained by a man twice her age with just as many secrets, they are joined by an alien princess and her enslaved husband, four children of assorted species who've never been off-station, and a scientist with the social graces of rotting meat.

Together, they must try to survive the storms that the galaxy throws against them, which includes greedy mega-corporations, raiders, pirates, the occasional band of slavers, and their own phantoms from the past, as they flee from the destruction of their home and try to rebuild their lives.

SHORT STORY 01: WHEN THE CRONQUIST BLOSSOMED



NOVELLA TITLE: URBAN GOTHIC

AGE TARGETED: Adult

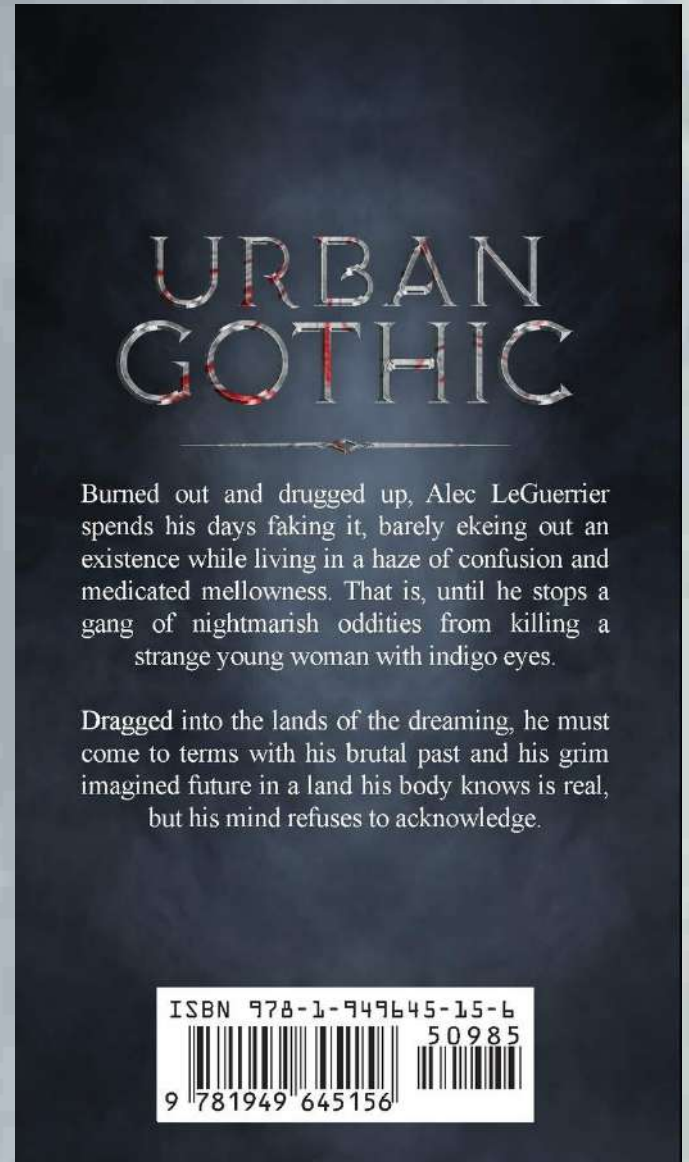
GENRE: Canlit, Urban Fantasy, Dreampunk

PUBLISHING HISTORY: 1st edition released March 8th 2019, from Kyanite Publications



• ISBN-10: 1949645150

• ISBN-13: 978-1949645156



Burned out and drugged up, Alec LeGuerrier spends his days faking it, barely eeking out an existence while living in a haze of confusion and medicated mellowness. That is, until he stops a gang of nightmarish oddities from killing a strange young woman with indigo eyes.

Dragged into the lands of the dreaming, he must come to terms with his brutal past and his grim imagined future in a land his body knows is real, but his mind refuses to acknowledge.

ISBN 978-1-949645-15-6
9 781949 645156 50985

PUBLISHED SHORTS, FLASHES AND POEMS

SHORT STORY: A CHOICE IN EXILE

GENRE: Apocalypse, disease, drama

SYNOPSIS:

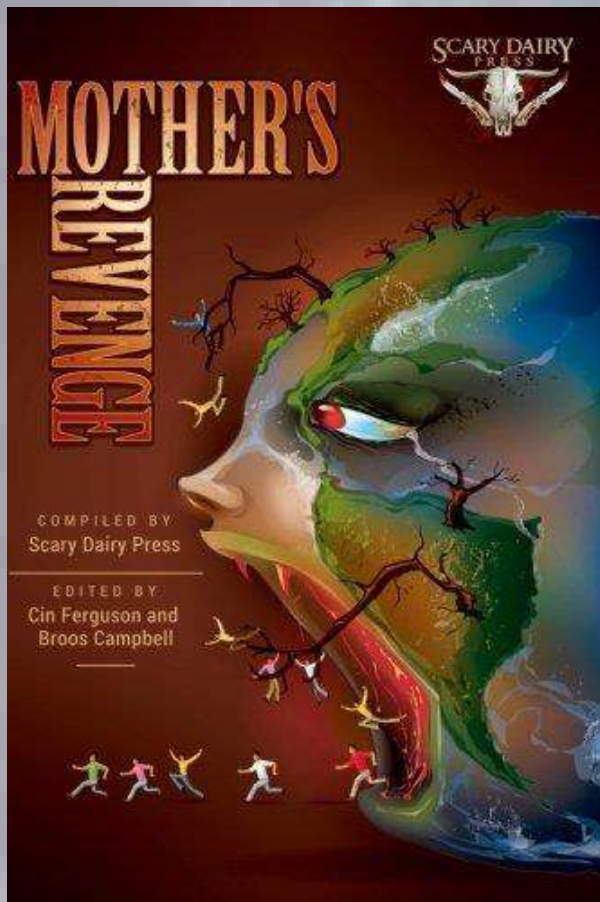
Having spent the better part of a year in isolation, "Deuce" is notified a month before his release that humanity is dying. The controls for his cell are released to him, and as the countdown to his original date of freedom draws near, Deuce tries to find reasons to continue existing.

APPEARING IN:

Mother's Revenge: A Dark and Bizarre Anthology of Global Proportions

Publisher: Scary Dairy Press LLC; 1 edition (June 7, 2017)

- ISBN-10: 0996052739
- ISBN-13: 978-0996052733
- ASIN: B07BMGL3C7
- ASIN: B072XVCLW7



SHORT STORY: A SOUL REMOVED

GENRE: Anthro, Body Horror, Violence, Religion, Erotic Relations.

SYNOPSIS:

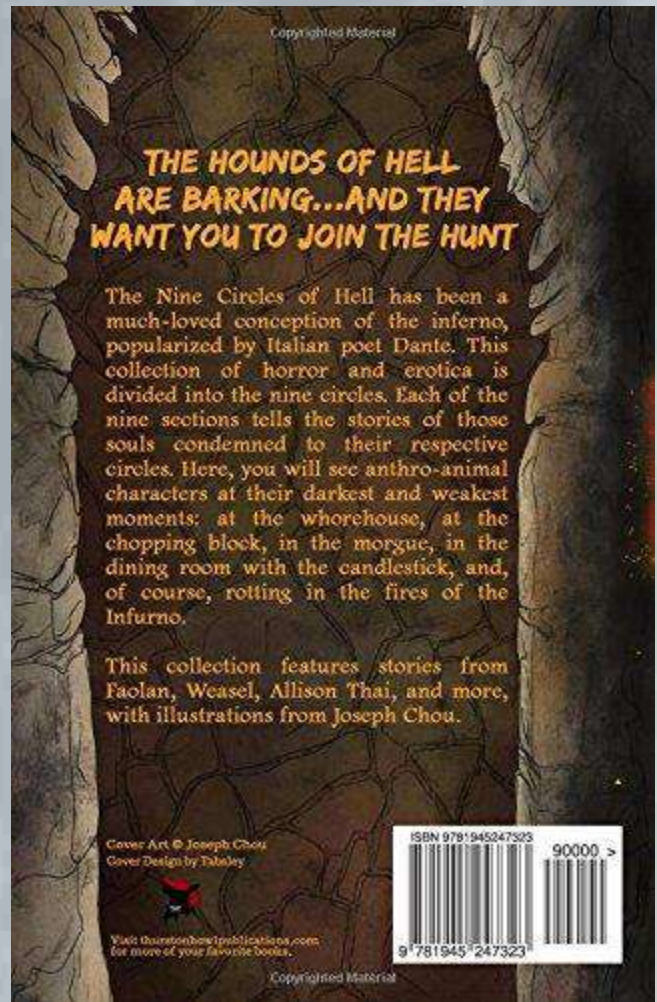
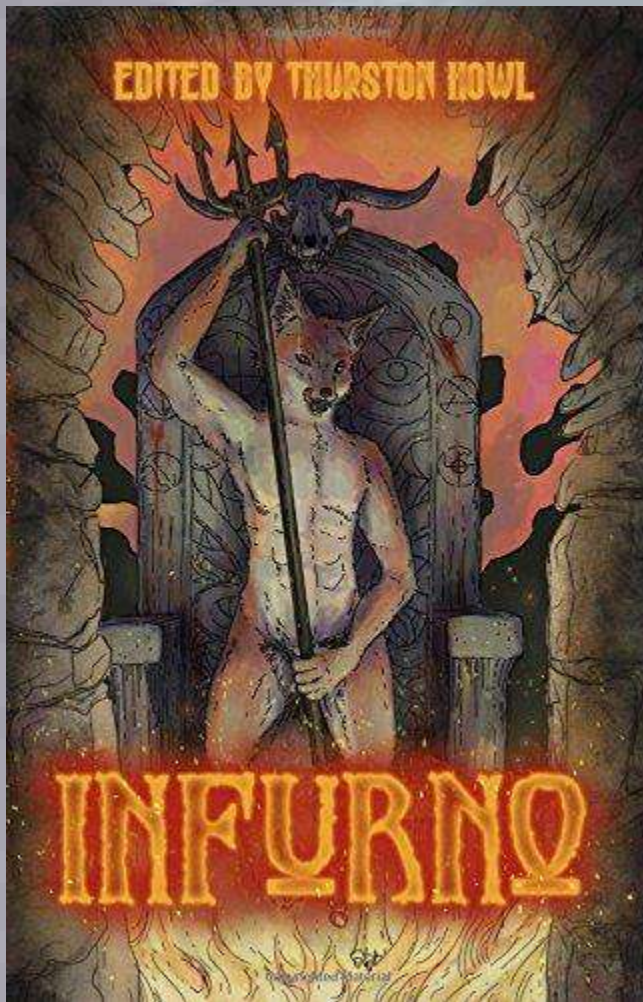
When a religious experience awakens his guilt, a young churchgoer takes, 'If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away,' a little too literally.

APPEARING IN: *Infurno (The Divine Clawmedy) (Volume 1)*

Publisher: Thurston Howl Publications (April 12, 2018)

Series: *The Divine Clawmedy (Book 1)*

- ISBN-10: 1945247320
- ISBN-13: 978-1945247323



SHORT STORY: A VOICE NOT SPOKEN

GENRE: Anthropomorphic, Political, Drama

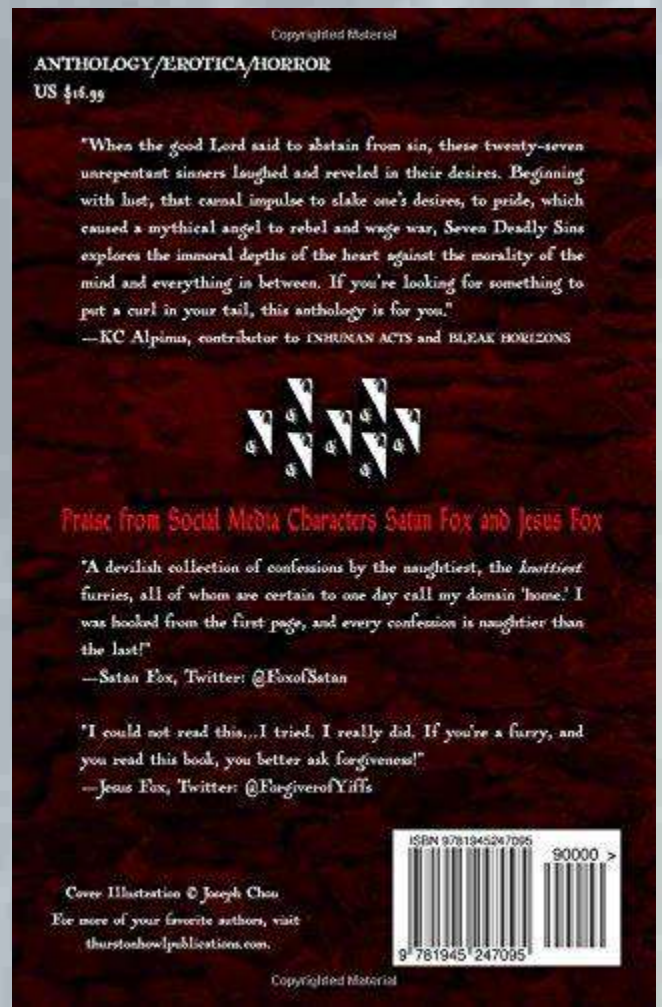
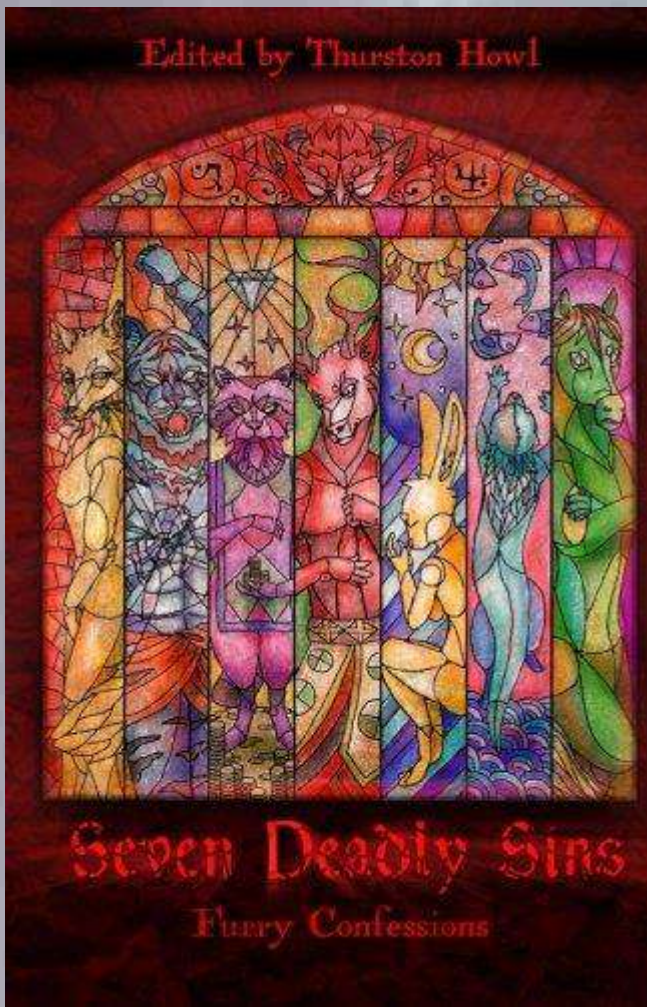
SYNOPSIS:

When the Predators fail to vote, the Prey take over the country and have their revenge against their long-time rivals.

APPEARING IN: *Seven Deadly Sins: Furry Confessions*

Publisher: Thurston Howl Publications (January 8, 2017)

- ISBN-10: 1945247096
- ISBN-13: 978-1945247095
- ASIN: B0762M5RVN



SHORT STORY: BY TRIAL AND CONVICTION

GENRE: Steampunk Swashbuckler

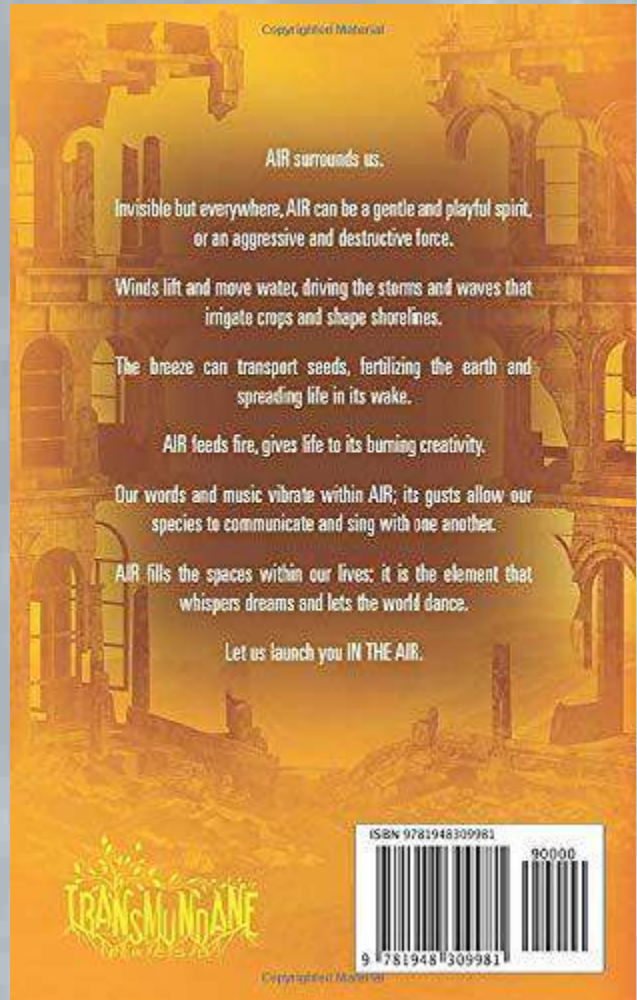
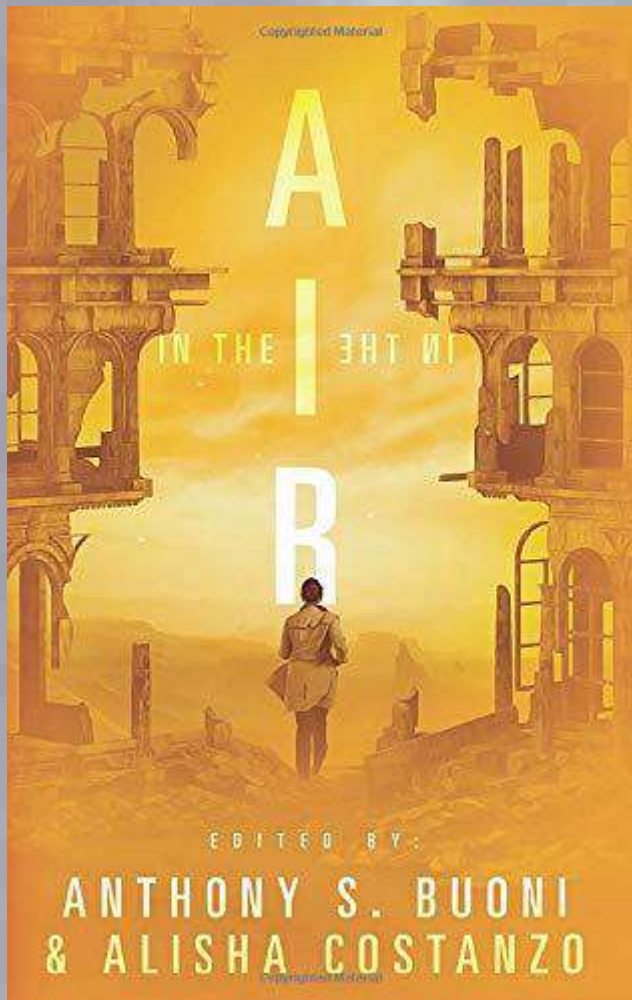
SYNOPSIS:

When the dreadnought airship Elysium bombs their capital city, the crew of the Albion seeks her out in vengeance, and for a chance to recapture her from her traitorous captain.

APPEARING IN: *In The Air*

Publisher: Transmundane Press, LLC (April 20, 2019)

- ISBN-10: 194830998X
- ISBN-13: 978-1948309981
- ASIN: B07QDFWJR8



SHORT STORY: IS IT REALLY GENOCIED (If Your Species Was Already Doomed)?

GENRE: Political, Post-Apocalyptic, Modern Sci-fi

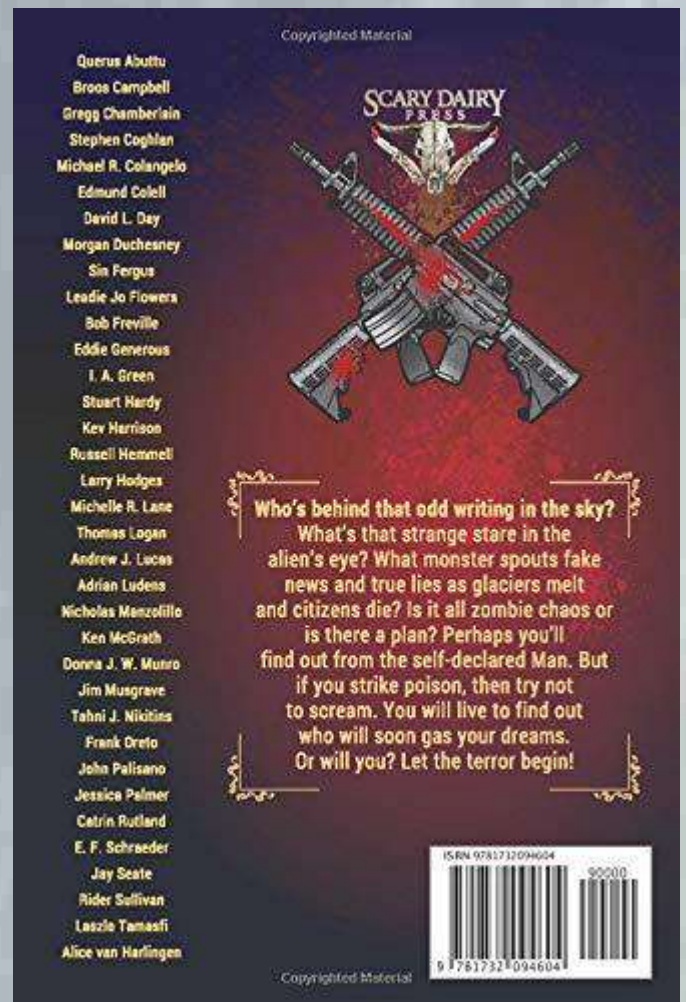
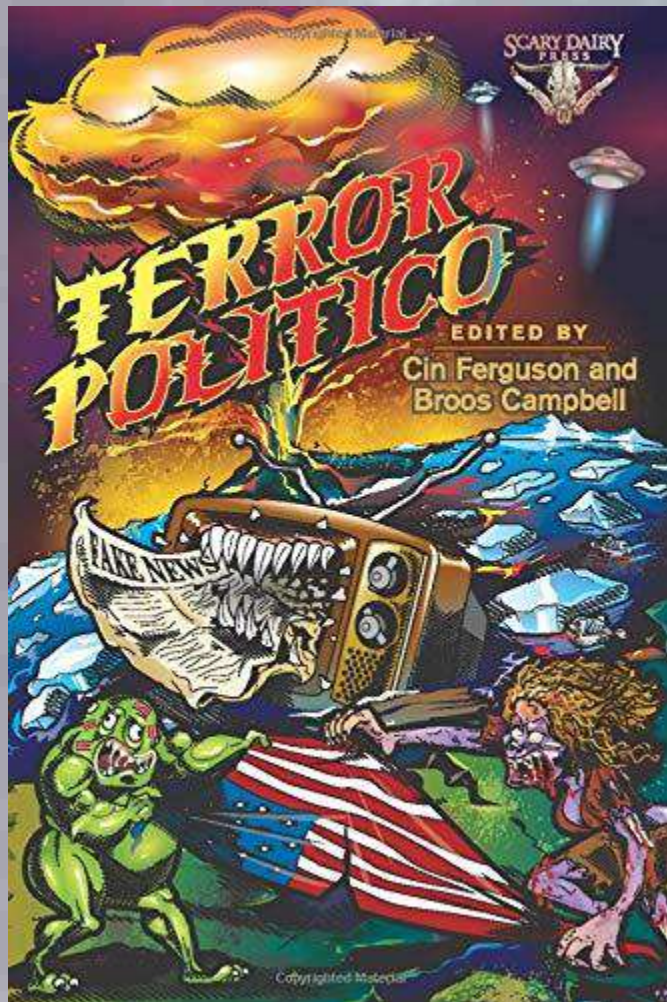
SYNOPSIS:

With earth destroyed and their spacecraft critically damaged, the leader of the human race must decide whether to risk the slim chance that all the survivors will find sanctuary, or make a decision that will damn her and most of the remaining souls on board.

APPEARING IN: Terror Politico: A Screaming World in Chaos

Publisher: Scary Dairy Press LLC (January 4, 2019)

- ISBN-10: 1732094608
- ISBN-13: 978-1732094604
- ASIN: B07N2ZS1ZT



SHORT STORY: JOSEPH AND THE TECHNICOLOR FUR COAT

GENRE: Anthropomorphic, Crop Opera, Drama, M/M clean romance

SYNOPSIS:

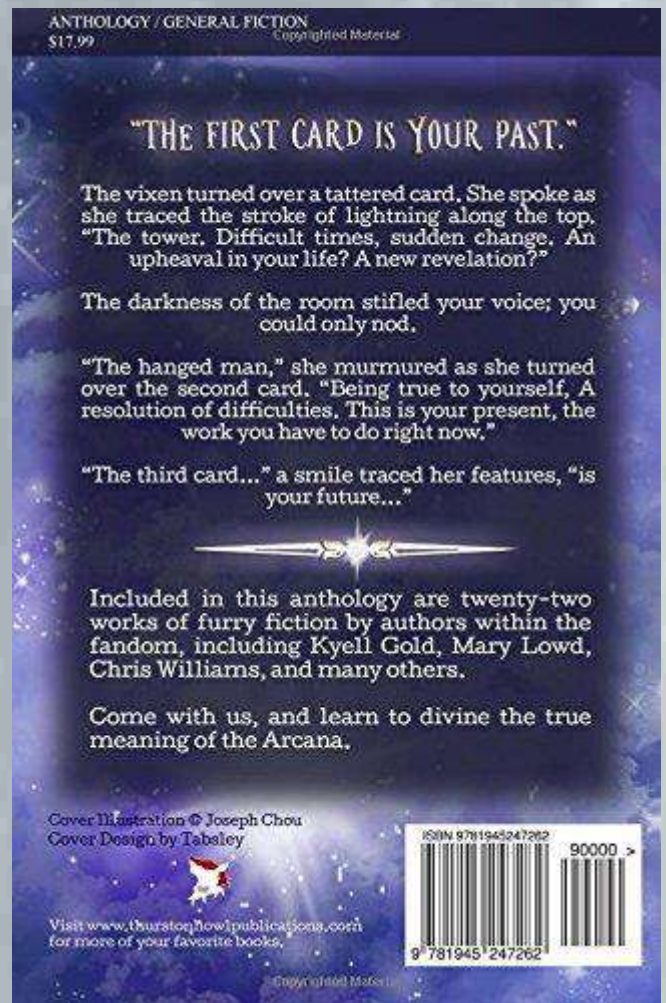
An aged farmer is invited to reconcile with his eldest son, but will their lifestyles clash, especially when his child admits to loving a scientific hybrid?

APPEARING IN: Arcana: A Tarot Anthology

(2017 C oyotl Award Winner: Best Anthology)

Publisher: Thurston Howl Publications (November 9, 2017)

- ISBN-10: 1945247266
- ISBN-13: 978-1945247262
- ASIN: B078324NWL



SHORT STORY: LAST RIDE OF THE INFERNO TRAIN

GENRE: Horror, Religion

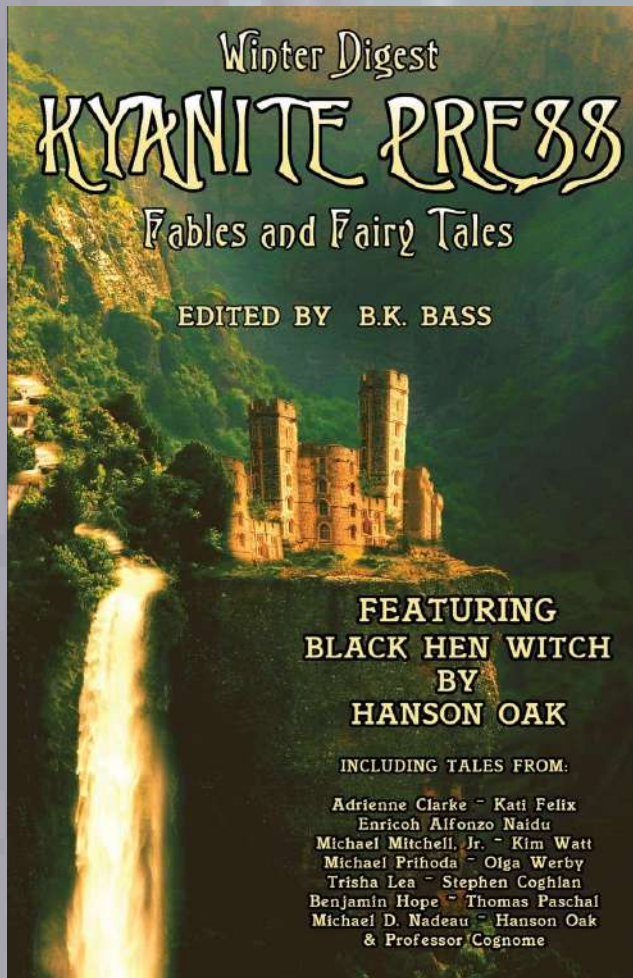
SYNOPSIS:

When hell is filled with the last of humanity, the great inferno train takes the last of the damned to their final places of eternal penance and penalty.

APPEARING IN: Kyanite Press Winter Digest 2018: Fables and Fairy Tales

Publisher: Kyanite Publishing LLC (December 1, 2018)

- ISBN-10: 1949645088
- ISBN-13: 978-1949645088



SHORT STORY: TARGETED

GENRE: Victorian Urban Fantasy, Horror, Action, Revenge , Alt-history

SYNOPSIS:

When Lord Batemont, purveyor of fine silks, dealer of rare spices, and inheritor of stolen lands is murdered at his party, Captain Arthur Combe gathers a posse to track down the murderer, unaware that Lord Batemont was only a bonus target for the assassin Lavanya, a member of the elite and mysterious Vish Kanya.

APPEARING IN: Kyanite Press: SEP/OCT 2018

Publisher: Kyanite Publishing LLC (September 1, 2018)

- ISBN-10: 1949645002
- ISBN-13: 978-1949645002

ISSUE 1 | VOL 1 | SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2018

KYANITE PRESS

JOURNAL OF SPECULATIVE FICTION

A.A. Rubin
Charlie Taylor
Benjamin Hope
Céline Terranova
Stephen Coghlan
Samantha Amenn
Dennis Mombauer
Alexander Thomas
Matthew Standiford
Enkell Arn Robertson
Richard D Mellinger, Jr
Cassandra Windwalker

THE PASSAGE OF TIME
Dennis Mombauer's deconstructed flash fiction explores the ruins of a flooded city.

THE THING INSIDE
Enkell Arn Robertson's cosmic horror follows the descent into madness of an accomplished artist.

FEATURE:
PRISONER ZERO
Matthew Standiford's post-apocalyptic sci-fi tale examines crime and punishment in a surprising way.

KYANITE Publishing

COMING THIS FALL
FROM KYANITE PUBLISHING

NIGHT SHIFT
ERIK BASS

DEAD BOAT
ANTHONY D REDDEN

WHERE THE RIVER RUNS BLACK
SOPHIA LEROUX

WHAT THEY DESERVE
SAM HENDRICKS

URBAN GOTHIC
STEPHEN COGHLAN

THE SHAPE OF WOOD
J.R. BROOKS
PRIMAL URGES
BOOK ONE

KYANITE Publishing

KYANITEPUBLISHING.COM

ISBN 978-1-949645-00-2
9 781949 043002

SHORT STORY: THE PREACHERMAN

GENRE: Anthropomorphic, Alt-History, dystopic

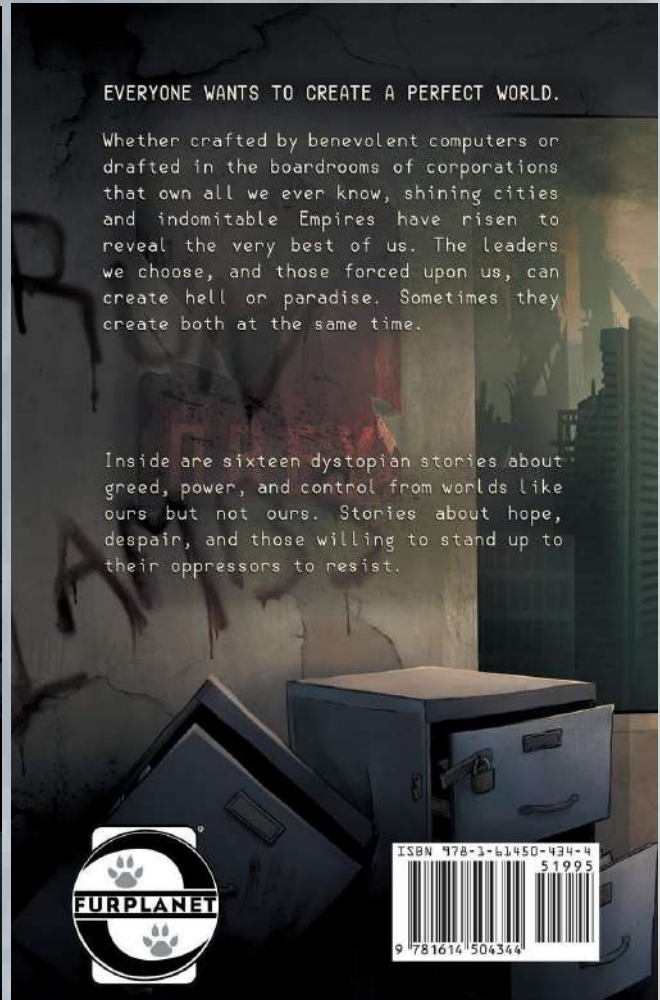
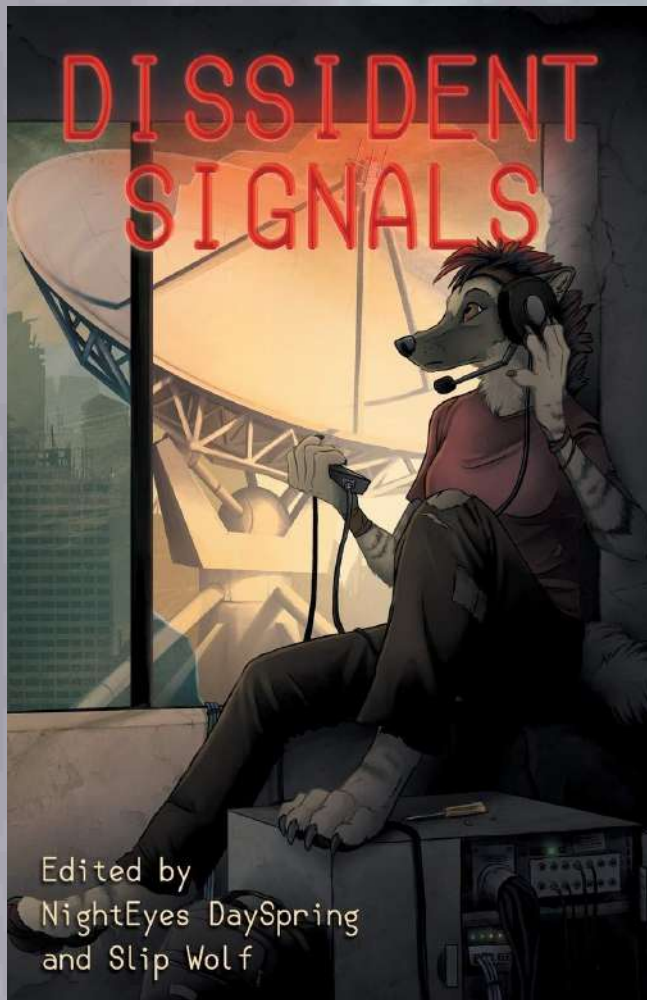
SYNOPSIS:

In the mid-19th century, the descendants of convicts are forced to labor for both the crown and church. When a young badger kills his best friend in a crime of passion he must make the decision to flee and live with the guilt, or accept responsibility for his actions and face his fate at the hands of a totalitarian state.

APPEARING IN: *Dissident Signals*

Publisher: FurPlanet Productions (July 6, 2018)

- ISBN-10: 1614504342
- ISBN-13: 978-1614504344



SHORT STORY: THE PRISONERS' DIARY

GENRE: Gothic horror, diary, transformation

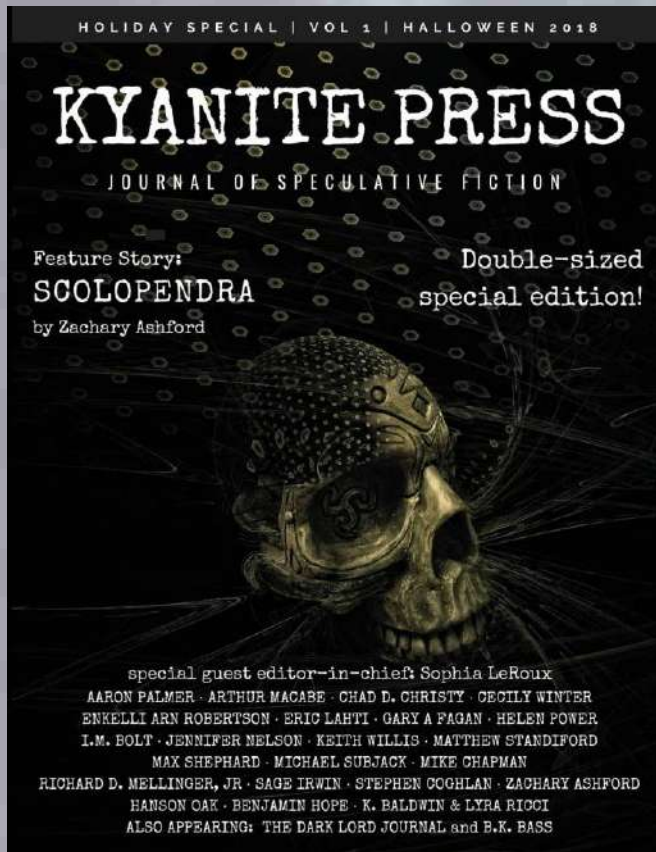
SYNOPSIS:

A man awakens in a cell, not knowing how he got there nor understanding why he is where he is. All he knows is that the guards are frightened of him, and his only companion across the hall may help his deteriorating sanity.

APPEARING IN: Kyanite Press: HALLOWEEN 2018

Publisher: Kyanite Publishing LLC; Volume ed. edition (October 1, 2018)

- ISBN-10: 1949645029
- ISBN-13: 978-1949645026



SHORT STORY: SUCH IS THE NATURE OF THE CHANGE

GENRE: Sci-fi, Western, Post-apocalyptic

SYNOPSIS:

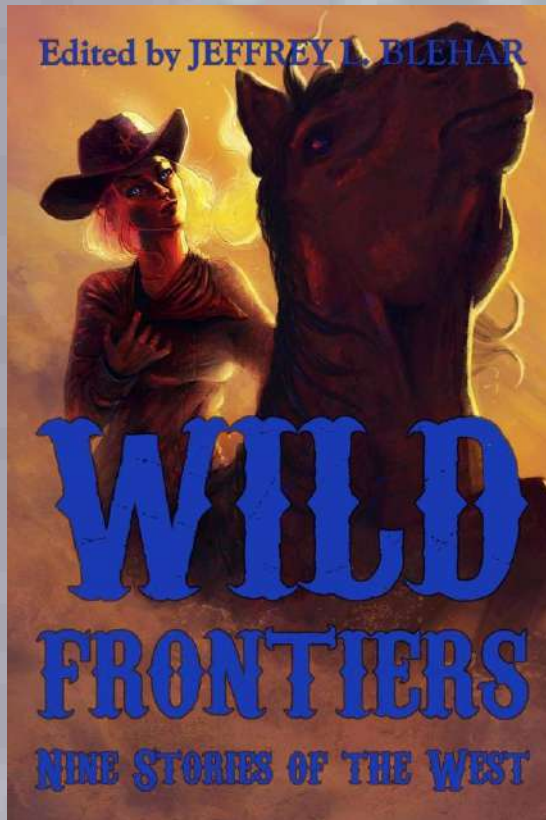
In one single day, in one single hour, the world was forever altered in the horror of nuclear Armageddon. Decades later, The Saints, an order of gunslinger priests, are the only source of organized justice across the land as they stand against Blood Robbers, Flesh Takers, and the wealthy slave traders.

While sparing people from the sin of suicide by killing them in mercy's name, Saint Dismas, a survivor of the day of "The Change" finds evidence of "Purists." (Survivors untouched by nuclear alteration) He intends to bring the children to "Eden", a sanctuary built by the founding Saints where they hope to rebuild humanity, but as he gets closer to his goal he discovers that his great organization might not be the chaste and blessed system he's been led to believe in.

APPEARING IN: Wild Frontiers: Nine Stories of the West

Publisher: Abstruse Press (May 31, 2019)

- ISBN-10: 1912674033
- ISBN-13: 978-1912674039
- ASIN: B07SCP1QZP



SHORT STORY: TOOTH, CLAW, AND FANG

GENRE: Anthropomorphic, War, Romance

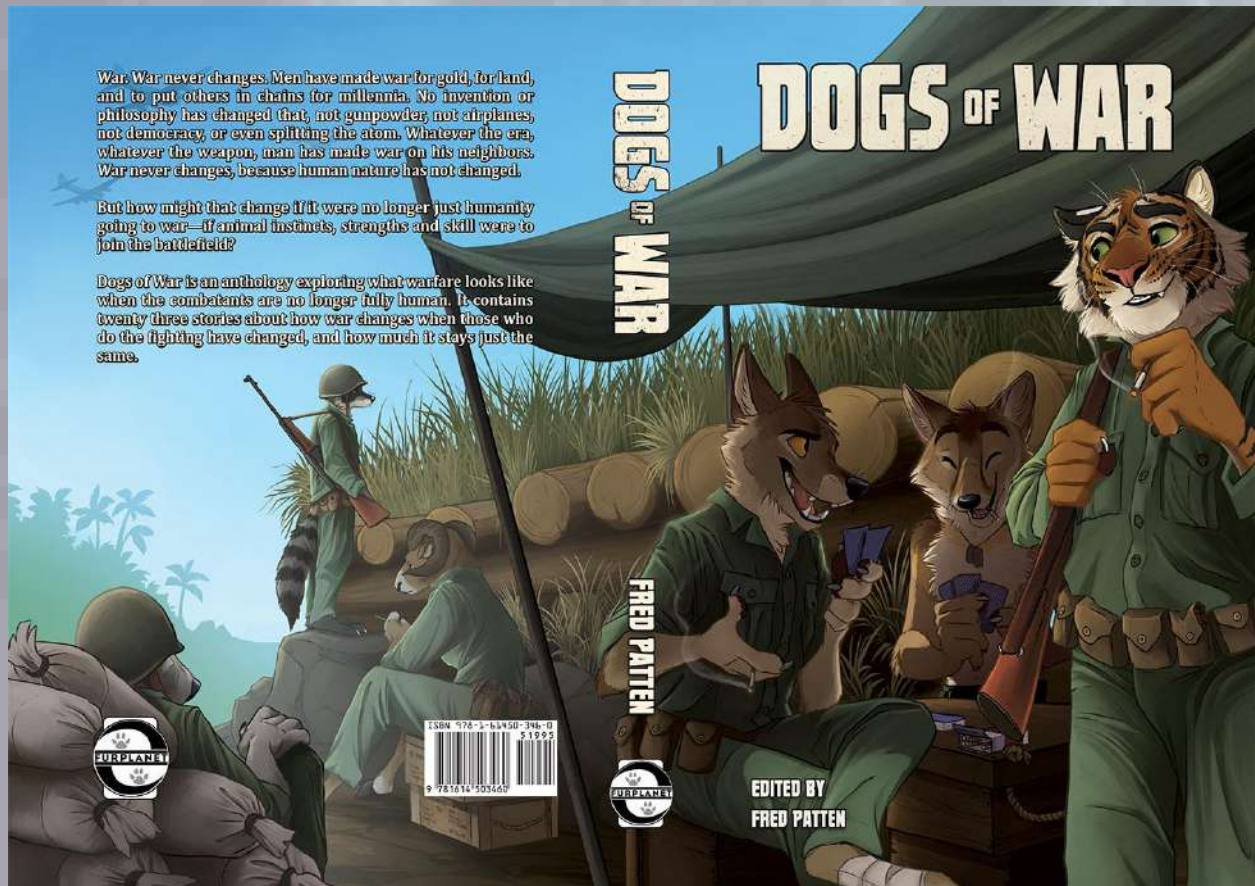
SYNOPSIS:

When a seasoned battle surgeon suddenly finds he is unable to treat the wounded as efficiently as the enemy is at making them, he is forced to deal with the emotions that he has kept buried for so long.

APPEARING IN: Dogs of War

Publisher: FurPlanet Productions (January 13, 2017)

- ISBN-10: 161450346X
- ISBN-13: 978-1614503460
- ASIN: B06XK4J634



POEM: WHY SHE ATE THE BIRDS

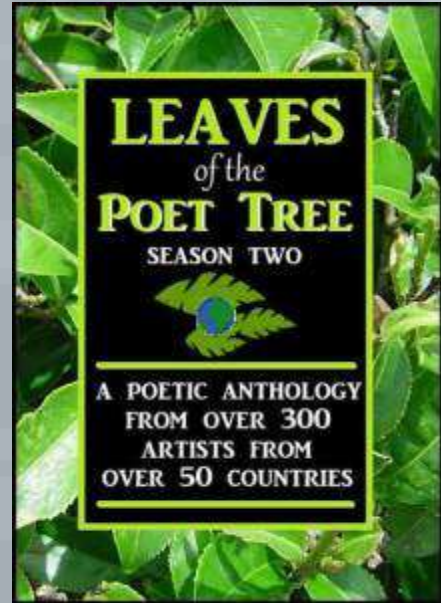
GENRE: Anthropomorphic

SYNOPSIS:

What do cats dream of?

APPEARING IN: Leaves of the Poet Tree Season Two

Publisher: Written Rock



FLASH FICTION: A BREATH SO SWEET

GENRE: Horror–Comedy, Science Fiction

SUMMARY:

What NOT to do in a spacesuit

APPEARING IN: Black Hare Press Dark Moments Online Publications

WEBSITE:

<https://www.blackharepress.com/a-breath-so-sweet/> (March 27, 2019)

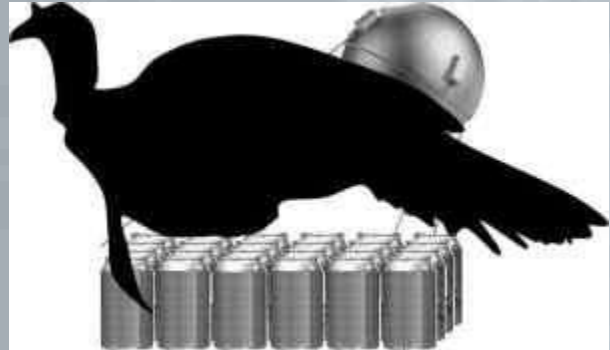


FLASH FICTION: COFFEE AND CALAMITY

GENRE: Christmas Comedy, Science Fiction

SUMMARY:

Beer Can a Turkey? What could possibly go wrong? (Or how Tim Horton's coffee became a Christmas Staple.)



APPEARING IN: Stephen Coghlan's Website

WEBSITE:

http://scoghlan.com/?page_id=492

(December 12, 2017)

FLASH FICTION: COLD VENGEANCE

GENRE: Science Fiction

SUMMARY:

Revenge in space.

APPEARING IN: Shameless Plugs Podcast, Episode 40

WEBSITE:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89yRgaGEYqk>

(April 29, 2019)



FLASH FICTION: A KERNEL OF TRUTH

GENRE: Horror–Comedy, Slice-of-Life

SUMMARY:

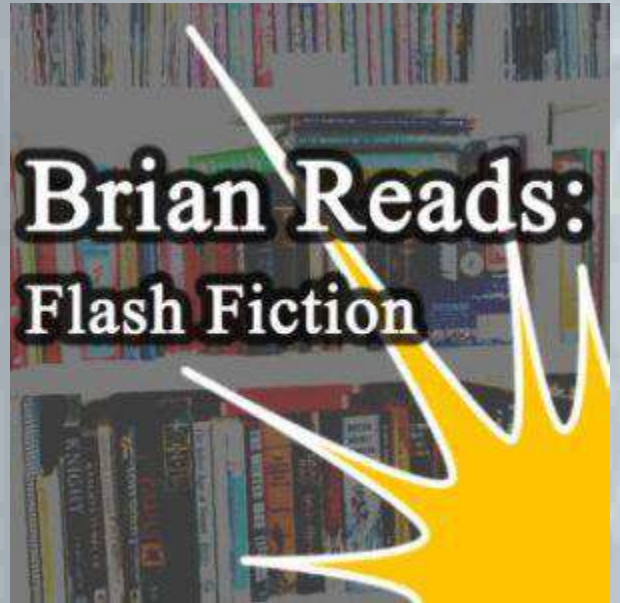
When frugality and sin combine into popcorn purgatory

APPEARING IN: Brian Hagan's debut podcast, *The Jungle Horror - Kernel of Truth*

WEBSITE:

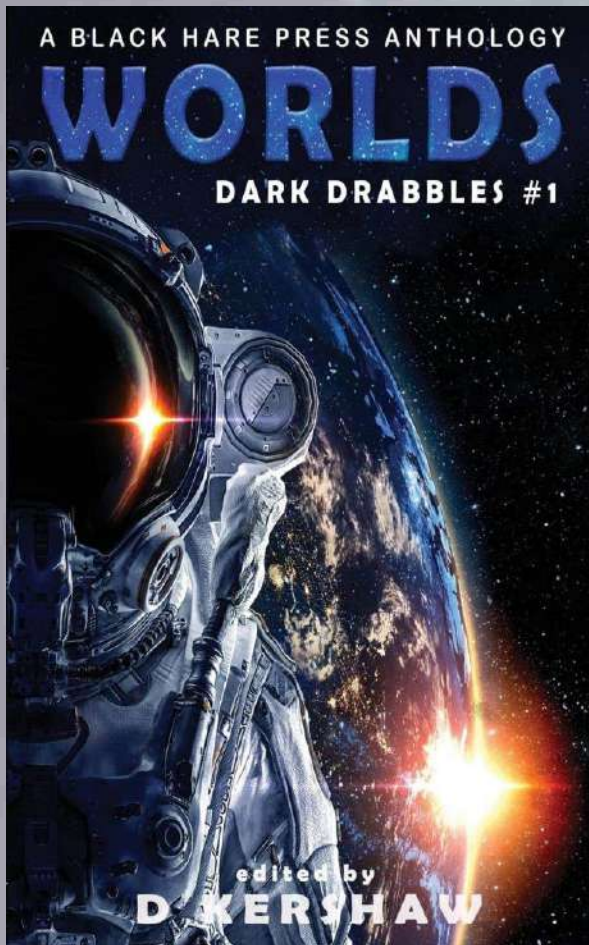
<https://audioboom.com/posts/6429332-the-jungle-horror-kernel-of-truth?t=0>

(Oct 29, 2017)



Stephen Coghlan, "WELCOME TO MY WORLDS"

ANTHOLOGY: WORLDS: A Science Fiction Microfiction Anthology (Dark Drabbles #1)



Publisher: BlackHarePress (June 17, 2019)

- ISBN-10: 1925809366
- ISBN-13: 978-1925809367
- ISBN-10: 1925809129
- ISBN-13: 978-1925809121
- ASIN: B07Q5VRCWL

FLASH FICTION: COUNTDOWN TO DESTRUCTION

SYNOPSIS: There's more than one way to fight a war.

FLASH FICTION: EXOSPHERE

SYNOPSIS: Take the plunge.

FLASH FICTION: INORGANIC

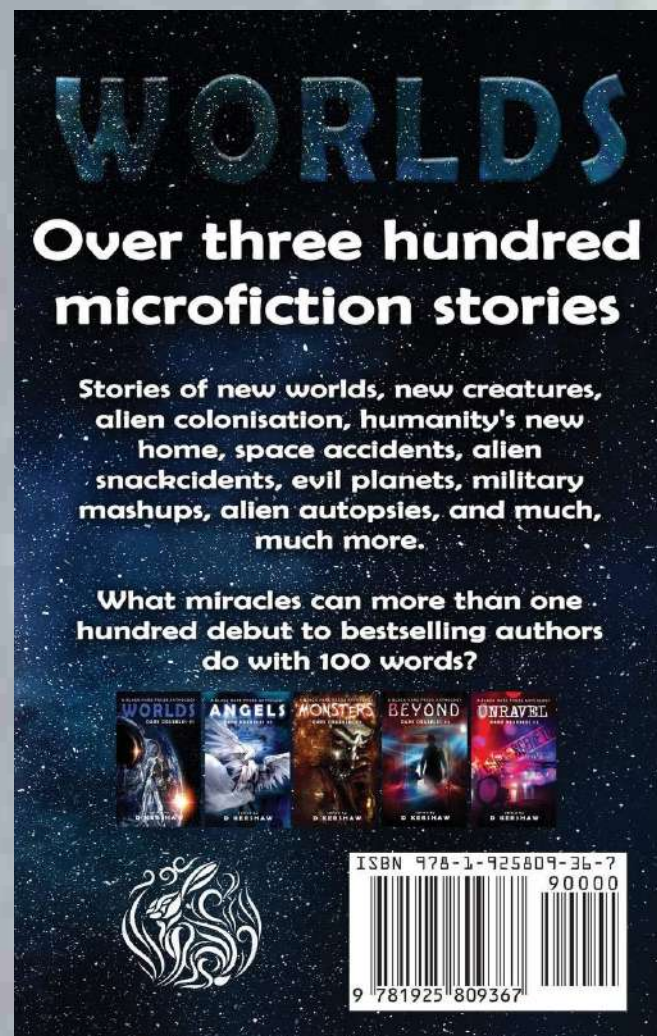
SYNOPSIS: Can you be my friend?

FLASH FICTION: JUSTE POUR RIRE

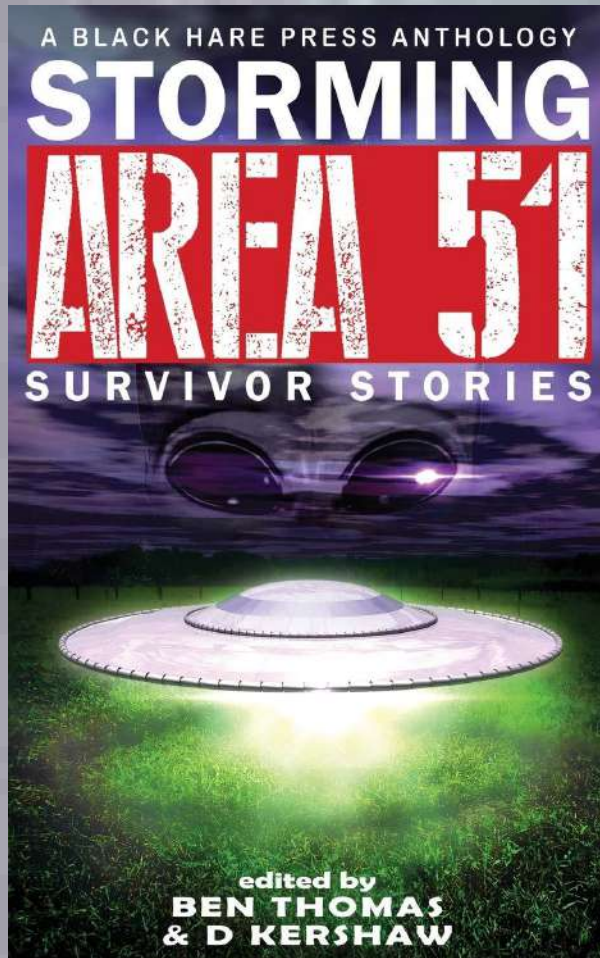
SYNOPSIS: Why would aliens kidnap a comedian?

FLASH FICTION: TWO

SYNOPSIS: Two to war.



ANTHOLOGY: WORLDS: STORMING AREA 51: Survivor Stories (BHP Writers' Group Special Edition Book 1)



Publisher: BlackHarePress (September 2, 2019)

- ISBN-10: 1925809293
- ISBN-13: 978-1925809299
- ISBN-10: 1925809307
- ISBN-13: 978-1925809305
- ASIN: B07WR1G8MZ

**SHORT STORY: MONSTER ENERGY PART 1:
SEXY_KIKASHI_69**

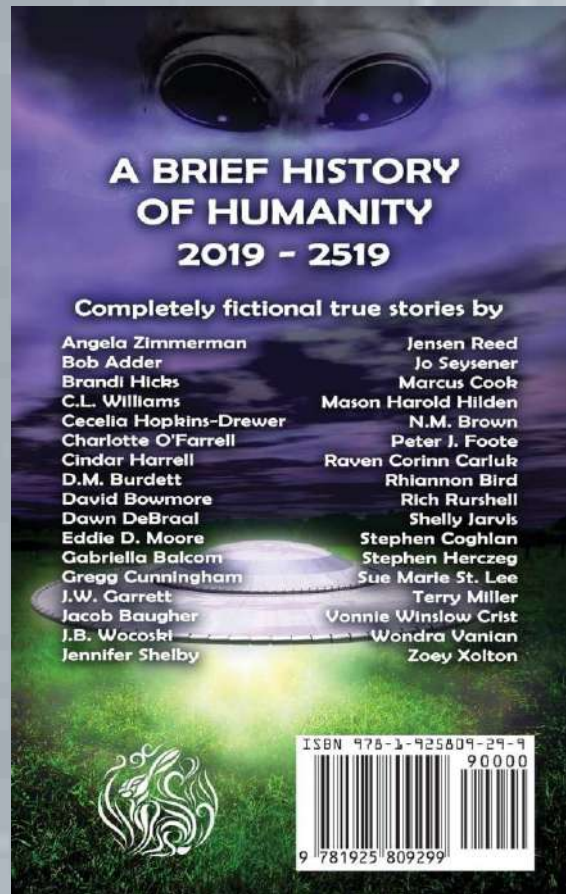
SYNOPSIS: As the runners storm Area 51, one man, hot, sweaty, desperate, finds a glowing drink that looks awfully familiar.

SHORT STORY: MONSTER ENERGY PART 2: MONSTER ENERGY

SYNOPSIS: When their truck breaks down, a group of soldiers await their ends thank to the growing goo.

SHORT STORY: :MONSTER ENERGY PART 3: THEY HELD OUR OWN

SYNOPSIS: While suppressing the aliens freed from the raid, the 437th Hussars find themselves fighting beasts mutated by Mountain Dew.



FREE SHORTS

SHORT STORY: MR. ABRAMOV'S LOCKET

GENRE: Slice-Of-Life, Memoria

SYNOPSIS:

There is a story I have to tell. It involves a trinket, and it may not mean much to you, but to one man, it spoke volumes, and to me, is a memento of love lost in hate that I shall never forget. I am not the one who holds the locket, but I do know the man who does. I know, because he has shown me it, with tears in his eyes, with a quivering voice. I have seen him bring it out late at night, when drinks have been had and revelry turns to somberness. I have seen him hold it tightly during ceremonies, or in prayers for peace.

It is a story that I think should be shared.

Publisher:

1st edition: Stephen Coghlan (August 15, 2017)

- ISBN: 9781310424502

2nd edition: Stephen Coghlan (August 15, 2017)

Mr. Abramov ran a small jewelry shop situated in a plaza filled with name-brand outlets and department stores. His workshop was tiny, buried in a corner between an electronics depot and a sports' clothing shop, and yet, despite the cutthroat nature of commercialism, his shop weathered decades of financial swings and fiscal fraught.

The shop was small; filled with only a few display cases, a work area in the back, and a small glass case filled

Mr. Abramov's Locket



By Stephen Coghlan

with paraphernalia stuffed on a rack behind the cash that I didn't think anything about. I supposed the two little lightning bolts, the skull and crossbones, the tiny eagle, and a small, ornately carved locket, which looked out of place amidst all the other trinkets, were experiments of his.

At first glance, one wondered why his little shop had endured, but if you had talked with Mr. Abramov, you discovered why; he was a kind, gentle and caring soul, despite his permanent sneer thanks to a scar that crossed under his eye, traveled down his cheek, and ended on the far underside of his nose, and despite being so shy that he avoided eye contact unless you were talking about jewelry or the mechanics of a watch.

His name held a minor celebrity status around town, as his charitable donations kept several local sports teams afloat and helped give recreational halls a chance to keep their doors open.

The kindness and skill spilled over the mall in a gentle curtain. Every employee of the big stores jewelry departments recommended his shop, even at the cost of their own reputation. My mother, the head of a local department store's jewelry counter, was just one example. Before she ever offered to ship an item back to the manufacturer, she recommended Mr.

Abramov, even doing so to her store's manager, who, after meeting the jewel smith, gracefully encouraged her to continued doing so.

I, myself, have a lot to thank him for. It was Mr. Abramov that gave me my first job during the period of bell-bottoms and shag carpets. At first I did little more than mopping his floor and cleaning the display cases. We didn't talk, initially. I just came in and did my tasks while he did his, all accompanied by either the humming of the overhead ventilation, or to the same record that he played so quietly on an old and beaten gramophone that a dropped pin would have drowned it out.

When business was slow, he disclosed how to repair a watch band, or tighten a spring, or polish silverware. His methods were so subtle that I didn't realize he was training me. He just encouraged, quietly, or guided me with small words of reassurance, until I had mastered the task he'd set before me. In no time at all, I was well on my way to being a jewel smith to rival those who had been doing the same jobs for decades. I soon looked forward to our small conversations, his lessons, to learning from such a gentle master, even if our conversations never strayed beyond our tasks at hand. He occasionally asked me

about my mother, but never once did he answer any questions I had about his family, until the day the neo-Nazis came into the store.

It was late in the evening, just before closing, I had recently braided a leather watchband, and was sharing a tea with Mr. Abramov as he worked on the guts of a cuckoo-clock when the gang of toughs from out-of-town barged their way in through the doors.

The leader of the youths ran his hand over his shaved scalp. His smile was sick and bitter with permanent scorn and his jacket proudly and prominently displayed the angled lines of the swastika.

"Hey," he yelled, "old man, I heard you had some fab Nazi junk behind the counter. I wanna see them."

Looking up from the gears that he had been busy replacing, Mr. Abramov smiled gently as he eyed the gang that had flooded his little store. Standing stiffly, he cracked his aged back and plucked his jeweler's lens from his eyes.

"Why would you want to see those things?" He asked quietly as he slowly walked behind the cash.

The members of the gang snickered, mocked him, but he never changed pace or

stance as they jeered and called him words I wish not to remember.

"

"Hurry up!" The leader demanded, flexing his shoulders, trying to appear larger-than-life.

"These little things?" Mr. Abramov chuckled dryly, in a tone I had never heard him use before. It was cold, humorless, a challenge of its own.

"Why would you want to see what I pruned from the cold and dead hands of each bastard I killed in the war?" He never looked away from the case, never looked or visitors in the eyes, but I saw the skinheads pale.

"Care for a demonstration?" He whispered. Gone was the sweet old man who offered candy to quiet the children of his clients, gone was the man who hummed the same lullaby as the almost silent record which he constantly played. Before them was Michael and Gabriel, before them was fire and brimstone. Most of the youths cowered, but one brazen lad stepped forward and offered to fight, pulling a knife from his pocket, he brandished it openly.

Mr. Abramov rolled up the sleeves of his dress shirt. He had never once pulled the cuffs higher than his wrists around me. Comfortable that they were secure, he said, in a voice fraught with absurd glee. "I've

never punched a Nazi before; shot them, yes, stabbed them, sure, and I even throttled one until he turned blue. This should be interesting."

The knifeman blanched and he backed away, suddenly uncertain if he could threaten the old man.

Grabbing the display counter, Mr. Abramov flexed, and shattered glass to dust between his fingers, uncaring of the fragments that cut his calloused flesh. Realizing that they were outmatched, the entire gang fled in a panic.

No sooner were they gone then Mr. Abramov found a dust pan and began cleaning the glass he had broken. I hurried to help him but he waved me away. As he worked, he sang a familiar song that even then, played in the background, but rather than hum it, he gave it lyrics in a language I did not understand.

*DURME, DURME IJIKO DE
MADRE*

*DURME, DURME SON ANSIA I
DOLOR*

It was loud, proud, cast in a tenor that trembled the walls, until Mr. Abramov began to cry. His shoulders shook and his voice broke. Unsure what to do, I

Stephen Coghlan, "WELCOME TO MY WORLDS"

approached him and wordlessly, he drew me into his arms. It was the only time I ever saw him cry. The tears came with great rasping sobs; like his soul had been torn in half and he felt it tearing apart stitch by stitch.

When he recovered, he held me at arm's length as he whispered, "Thank you." As we stood there, I couldn't help but notice the faded blue ink of a still-legible serial number tattooed on the wrinkled flesh of his arm.

"May Helsa and Haniel forever rest in peace," he prayed, and then returned to cleaning the mess he had made, finally letting me help.

I don't know if anyone else ever knew why he kept the small knick-knacks that he did, or the real story behind Mr. Abramov's love that he so freely gave. I don't think he ever told anyone else.

I moved on, went to college, grew up, and started a family of my own. As distance does, we grew didn't talk much, going our own ways, but every once-and-awhile I would return, and we would share smiles and kind words.

Then, a few years ago, a package arrived at my door. It was a plain paper envelope, and I opened it days later because I was too busy taking my children to their baseball games and soccer practice to give it

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much thought. What fell into my hands was a sheet of paper, still rough on the edges where the strips to help guide the paper through the printer had been torn away.

Dear Sir: It began.

We regret to inform you of the death of a Mr. Abramov. In his will, he bequeathed this to you.

With suddenly thick fingers, I opened the smaller envelope and out popped the locket that had rested beside the dark reminders of human history. I recognized the Star of David that had been lovingly etched onto the cover. Inside, a photograph

of a smiling baby, their toothless mouth wide open in glee and excitement, and a picture of a beautiful young woman stared back at me. Between them, a small piece of yellowed paper sat sandwiched, held in place by the mechanical closing of the locket.

Haniel and Helsa Abramov, lost to hate, 1941.

Never Again.

Please, remember them for me, so that they are never forgotten.

Sincerely, your friend,

Mr. Abramov.

FLASH FICTION: SQUEEZE

GENRE: Real-life horror.

SYNOPSIS:

From the mind of a school shooter

Publisher:

1st edition: Stephen Coghlan (March 31, 2018)

2nd edition: Stephen Coghlan ()

~~~~~

Warning:

Trigger

~~~~~

SQUEEZE

It's easy to me. They're not humans, they're dolls, marionettes, and I'm going to cut their strings.

Pulling my toy from my jacket, I release the safety; press the stock to my shoulder. My rifle is semi-auto, easy to fire.

Squeeze

A puppet falls, an explosion of crimson mist.

That WAS easy

Squeeze

Another puppet falls.

By now, others are screaming, running, hiding.

Did I bring enough bullets?

Squeeze

I have 4 magazines plus the one in my gun, that's 75 rounds, easy math

Squeeze

Squeeze

Squeeze

This is so easy, so simple; high velocity round, unarmed flesh, no



contest. I'm leaving fist-sized exit holes in every single puppet.

Squeeze

How many rounds have I fired? Not too important. I can easily reload.

Squeeze

Squeeze

Oh look, someone tripped, easy pickings

Squeeze

Aw, he thinks a table will protect him

Squeeze

Awww, she crying, begging for her life

Squeeze

Squeeze

Squeeze

Better change mags.

Swap out, too easy, cycle, raise my rifle again.

Hall is quiet, but there are lots of rooms to go. I know the drills. I was trained in them, after all...

A door, someone's hiding behind, I'm sure.

Squeeze

Squeeze

Squeeze

Someone's child isn't coming home tonight.

Squeeze

Squeeze

Squeeze

The armed cop is hiding.

Squeeze

Squeeze

Squeeze

I almost want a challenge

Oh, the gym... no place to go...

Kick the door, someone's holding it closed

Squeeze

Squeeze

Squeeze

Squeeze

Squeeze

Click goes the action, and its time to reload.

Door opens easy now

That puppet looks just like a teacher of mine. He's gasping pink frothy juice... must be filled with candy.

Oh look... more puppets

Squeeze
Squeeze
Squeeze
Squeeze
Squeeze
Squeeze
Squeeze

I don't worry if my gun jams because
I have a pistol in my belt

Squeeze
Squeeze
Squeeze
Squeeze



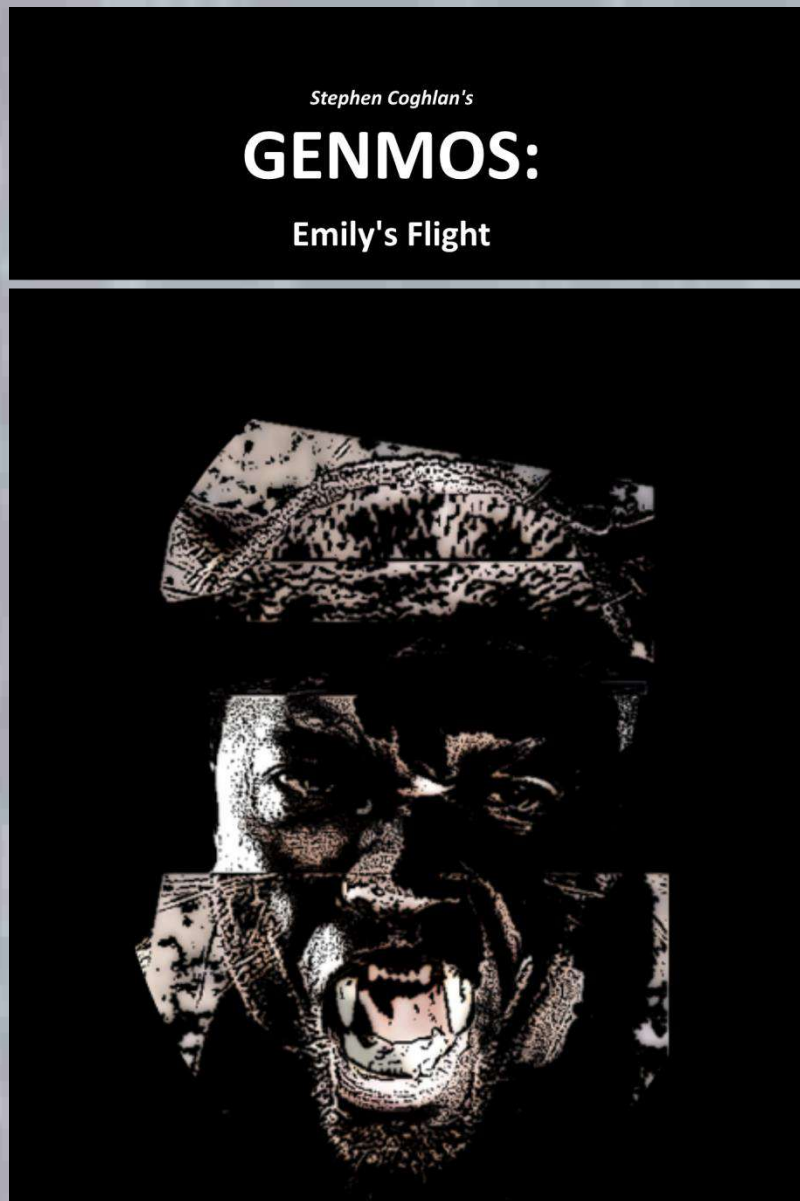
SHORT STORY: GENMOS: EMILY'S FLIGHT

GENRE: GENMOS, Canlit, Furry / Anthropomorphic , YA

SYNOPSIS:

When news of her existence is leaked over the internet, a discarded teenage genetic weapon must embrace her unique characteristics and abilities in order to save herself from those who wish her destroyed.

Publisher: Stephen Coghlan (January 26, 2017)



She hid her face in her hands and blocked herself from her mirror's reflection, yet even with her eyes obstructed Emily still sensed the space about her through her skin, through the smells, and through the taste of the air on her bifurcated tongue.

With a sigh, she replaced her brush to its rightful spot on her vanity. No matter how often she combed her hair, or adjusted the frills around her neck, or tried to hide her scales with makeup, she could not disguise the fact that she was not 100% human. Emily didn't always mind being different, and sometimes, she was proud of her abilities, but other times she resented the fact that she was so unique, and that she was unable to fit in naturally with anyone that she knew, because Emily was the only lizard / reptile / human hybrid in existence.

Revulsion built within her, and she stood from her vanity counter with a hiss of indignation. It took her a moment to calm and collect herself. Rolling her shoulders, she eased the tension in her neck before gently sliding open her closet's door.

Although she rarely wore clothes, Emily did own a few garments that either helped to fight off the harshness of winter, or were traditional garb of her adopted peoples, but it wasn't either of those that she was interested in. Removing a simple

cardboard box, Emily peered at the lovingly-folded blue dress within. Her foster sister had worn it once, decided the color did not do her well, and had planned to give away until Emily had asked for the garment. Nadie has been surprised, but had been more than willing to let her sister have it.

With reverence, Emily slipped the dress over her head. Her skin changed from its natural green, into the deeply tanned tone of her siblings. A small inhale of air, a brief warping of muscles, and she studied her - decidedly female - form's reflection.

She hated what stared back at her. The legs were lean and powerful, and the image's waist was petite, and the chest, ample enough. The reflection's hair shone in the light, and danced about its shoulders, but the eyes were too far apart, and the frills about the neck, the spikes along the flat tail, the claws at the ends of the fingers, and the fangs that occupied the mouth, destroyed the illusion.

It took all of her restraint not to tear the delicate fabric from her body, but Emily let out some of her frustrations when she tossed the dress onto her bed. As she watched the material meld with the sheets, her eyes caught on a picture that made her feel guilty for trying to be human.

The photograph, taken years ago, sat on her nightstand. In it, Emily was surrounded by the other hybrids that she considered her siblings. Her younger self was cuddled up against a canine brother for warmth, to stave off the bitter October.

Emily and the others were once humans who had been bonded with animals, in order to give them abilities and powers. Each one of the Genmos, or Genetically Modified Species, were unique, and distinctly inhuman.

With a moan, she fell on top of her bed and crossed her arms over her head. She felt horribly confused. Emily was proud of who and what she was, but at the same time she had not seen the others like her in over half of her life, and her thoughts had turned from childhood fancies as her body developed and her mind shifted.

At the last gathering of her adopted peoples, the Abenaki, she had noticed a few of the boys her age as more than just, acquaintances.

When she had first been introduced to the tribes by her foster family, she had been mocked and ridiculed, and her tail had been pulled so hard by the other children, that she had dropped it. It had taken weeks to grow back. Some of the elders had whispered about her, and more than once

she had been called Atosis, or Athussos, or, Gitaskog; names related to a horned serpent of old that skewered humans on sticks and consumed their flesh.

Emily had hated the way that she was treated, but not everyone was mean. Some people treated her with respect, and eventually, friendship. Over time those that mocked her were won over by her kindness, her willingness, her enhanced strength and endurance – which was coveted when it came time to play lacrosse - and she even began to appreciate the role she was given when she took on the beast's part in ceremonies and plays.

Just last weekend, there had been a small get-together. While out at the gathering, one of her childhood friends had caught her eyes in a different way than he had ever before. When Keme smiled at her, Emily's heart had skipped a beat, and when they had hugged hello, she had noticed the strength of his arms, and his smell, although musky, was entirely enticing. It had been a struggle to keep her skin from turning pink.

Their families were going hunting together on the weekend, and Emily couldn't wait. She loved going up north, loved the fact that she could run around freely in the woods, without fear of being seen by outsiders, loved the thrill of stalking

prey, and although she had never shot at anything bigger than a hare, she had helped flush moose and deer into the waiting sights of her companions.

It was the one time she could really be herself.

"Supper's ready!" Her foster-mother's voice echoed throughout the family's condo. The thought of a hot meal helped to sooth Emily's frazzled nerves. Tucking the dress under her bed's blankets, she stepped into the main hall.

The building was a leftover from prohibition days. It was four floors tall, and each quarter of each level was divided into a four-bedroom unit with a single washroom, a kitchen, and a main area. Old, cast iron radiators still ticked against the walls, and an ancient fire escape still warped the view outside the windows. It was left archaic on purpose. The pride of Quebec City's 400 year rich history was evident, and infectious.

The smells coming from the kitchen were both sweet and savory, which meant that her foster brother, François, who was studying culinary arts, was responsible for the meal.

Taking her seat at the table, Emily noticed that it was only set for four. Nadie was out at rehearsals again. Emily knew she should be proud of her sister, but it rubbed

her the wrong way. It was another play that Nadie would perform in that Emily would never see live.

Her father's voice came from the master bedroom. His language was short and profane.

"What's today's experiment?" Emily asked in French as her brother and mother emerged from the kitchen.

"Maple glazed back-bacon, caramelized poutine, and whiskey softened brown beans." François announced proudly as he set a plate before his sister.

Their mother rolled her eyes. "My God, if it was any more Canadianized it would apologize for being here."

Emily's much-needed laugh was cut short when their father emerged from the master bedroom. He was flushed and visibly upset. When he took a seat, he placed the keys to the gun safe on the center of the table.

"What is it, dad?" Emily asked.

At first her father did not respond, but when he spoke his voice was quiet and slow, as if he thought of every word before he spoke. It was just his way of controlling his temper, but it made it seem as if he had trouble with the language.

"I was called by the elders," he answered, looking at his foster-daughter

directly. "The dances were filmed, and one of our youths posted it to YouTube. It's been taken down, but the internet never forgets."

Looking up from his plate, François wiped a string of melted cheese from his chin.

"Just the dance?"

"Emily's dance."

The quiet was palpable. The recording of traditional dances had always been restricted, but in order to protect Emily, and her adopted tribe, an all-out ban had been enacted.

The mood was soured. Emily tried to eat, but the food was, for once, too salty on her tongue. She chewed without delight, and just as she swallowed her last morsel, there was a rattle at the front door. It was too early for Nadie to be home. Together, father and son rose to challenge whoever was on the other side.

The door opened, and for a moment, the super's face was visible. The look of regret was plainly evident for all to see.

And then the bad men entered the room.

The troops were dressed in heavy armor, and wielded automatic weapons, which they levelled at the father and son, who themselves, raced forward in order to

protect the women still at the table. With a cry, her mother grabbed Emily and dragged her into the master bedroom. Slamming the door, the two tipped an armoire across the entryway.

"The window!" Emily's mother ordered. Without waiting, the Genmos ran for the glass.

The door thumped as something solid rammed into it. The blow knocked Emily's mother to the ground before bullets pocketed the door and smashed through the room.

Emily did not wait, but curled herself into a ball and flung herself through the cracking view to outside. She landed on the fire escaped among shards of ceramics. Yells from below warned her that other pursuers were waiting at the ground.

There was only one direction to go.

Planting her hands against the brick, Emily felt her palms suction themselves to the rough surface, and she began to climb. As she made her way rapidly up the wall, her skin altered hue, until it resembled the building that she scaled.

There was another loud crash, and her mother screamed, and then one of her pursuers stepped onto the fire escape and searched for his prey.

Curling her tongue about her fangs, Emily blew forcefully, and venom flew in a stream that landed all over her opponent's face. Goggles protected his eyes, and a helmet his skull, but the rest of his head was only shielded by a thin balaclava, and where the poisons worked their way through, the flesh burned. With a cry of agony, her pursuer fell and ripped his mask from his face.

Not caring to stick around, Emily finished her ascent. On the roof, she had a better view of how much trouble she was in; they had the building surrounded.

Cursing, Emily ran to the opposite edge of the building and leapt out over thin air. Spreading her arms and legs, she opened the flaps of skin between her arms and legs opened, caught the air, and slowed her descent while maximizing her jump's distance. Soaring over the street, she smashed into a window of another old building. Unlike the one she called home, the structure she entered was in dire need of repair, and had been deemed too dangerous for occupancy.

Running as she landed, Emily stormed down the main hallway all the way to the end. There was no window, but a staircase led upwards. Taking the steps

three-at-a-time, the lizard Genmos hurried all the way to the top.

She regretted stepping onto the flat roof. A helicopter was landing, and more troops were pouring forth from the vehicle.

With a curse, Emily slammed the door and descended onto the top floor. She had to hide. Tucking her shoulder, she rammed open the entryway to one of the many rooms along the hall, but she didn't enter.

There was a loose floorboard beneath her feet.

Lying flat, Emily collapsed her body, and slipped through the hole, barely disturbing the wood that she passed through.

No sooner had she pulled her tail in after her, then the sound of running footsteps exploded throughout the hall.

Emily wanted to panic, but she knew that would accomplish nothing. Instead, she slowed her breathing, calmed her heart, and began to breathe through her skin. Her temperature plummeted, until she was no warmer than the wood and cement that she lay between.

She felt her pursuers walk over her, felt them inspect the doorway she had broken, felt them murmur and question and then spread out.

It was all jumbled in her mind. She lost track of time. Everything was a confusing muddle of sounds and scents. She thought she heard someone purr, then growl. She thought she heard French and English, she heard music, and saw shapes dance in front of her eyes.

And then, it was quiet.

After a time, she sped up her heart, increased her metabolism, and squeezed her way free.

The hallway was abandoned.

Shaking dust and asbestos from her skin, the Genmos took a tentative step towards the stairwell.

Someone charged from the doorway she had broken. When the two collided, Emily's skin took on a violent hue, and poison leached from her flesh.

Her opponent's screams were symphonic to her ears.

As the agent let her go, Emily balled one hand into a fist-like club, and drove it into her opponent's chest. The force of her blow knocked him flat, but others had appeared.

She was grabbed by a woman with gloves, but Emily's claws on her finger tips

punched through the woman's uniform and into her sides. Venom leached from Emily and into her foe, and the woman collapsed without a sound.

A knife was thrust at her stomach, but Emily tightened her flesh, and her scales formed an armor that the blade slashed, but did not pierce. A kick sent that opponent into others of his kind.

She took for the stairs and climbed. The helicopter sat idle, but the pilot looked her in the eyes. He did not wait, but drew a pistol.

Falling to all fours, Emily darted for the far edge of the derelict building. There was a busy street beyond that, and before anyone could stop her, she leapt off the roof and fell towards the cars below.

Her hands grabbed the side of a passing truck, and she stuck fast to the side. Before she willed herself invisible, Emily took one moment to wave goodbye, and then she was lost amongst the sea of humanity.

As the cold winds buffeted her and the ground passed rapidly beneath her feet, Emily smiled to herself.

She didn't mind being so unique after all.

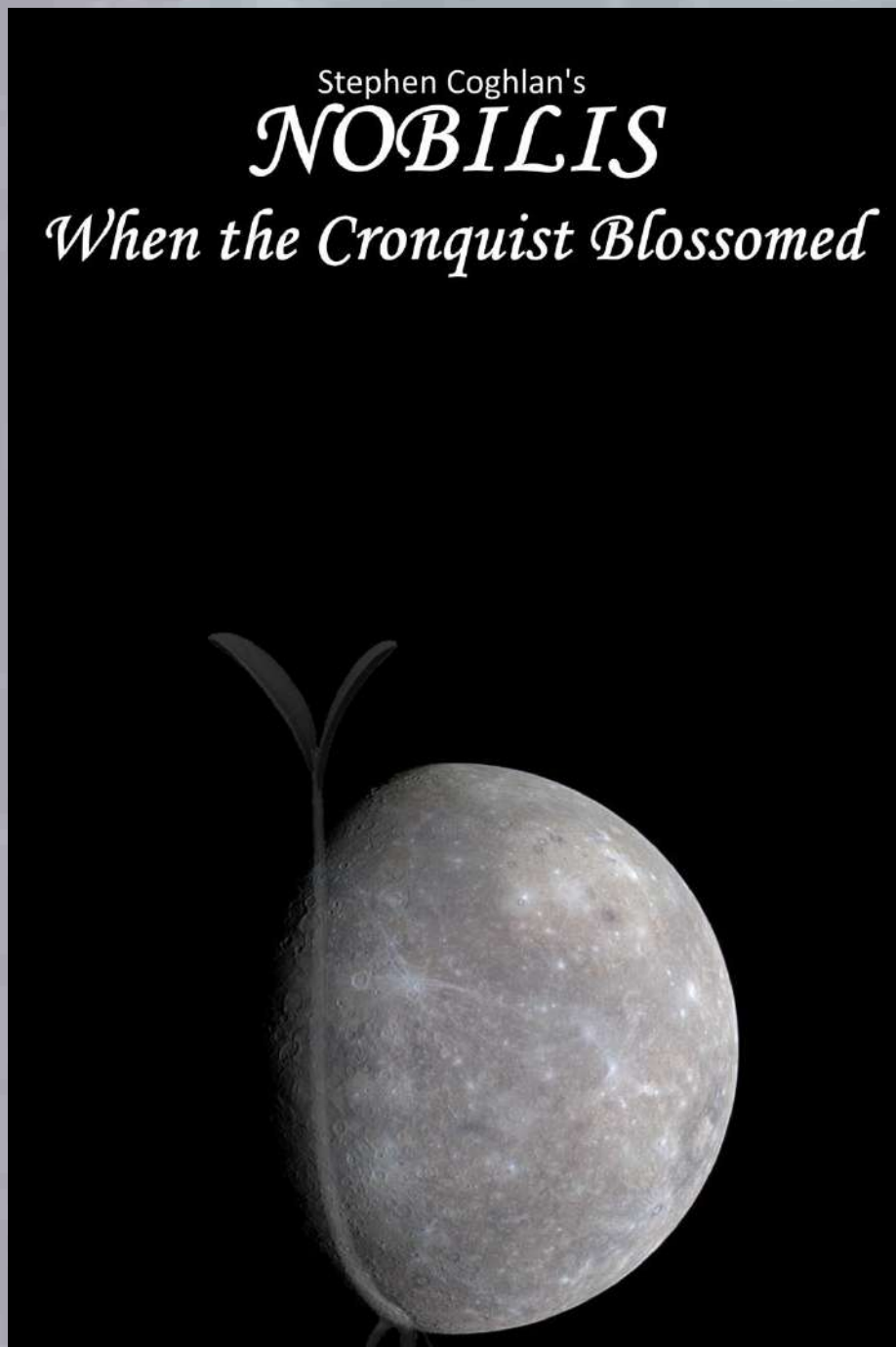
SHORT STORY: NOBILIS: WHEN THE CRONQUIST BLOSSOMED

GENRE: Nobilis, Science-Fiction

SYNOPSIS:

When their transport ship is ambushed, Commander X'xir must rely on the very species that he has scorned and rejected through his entire military career, humans, in order to save his life.

Publisher: Stephen Coghlan (August 18, 2017)



WHEN THE CRONQUIST BLOSSOMED

Commander X'xir Trang, victor of the battle of Drass, bearer of the crimson distinction, hero of the Confederated Forces, was excited. After almost an entire Galactic Standard Year of waiting, *The Fargesia*, the first and titular vessel of its class, and its full complement of Confederate Marines, and a squadron of the new *Abrus* fighters, was soon to be his to command.

The finishing touches were being applied. It would soon be ready for launch and Trang was determined to be there to christen it. He just had to get to it first.

There was a knock on his open office door. Sleath, his aid, stood in the doorway, a cup of Ceylon tea in one hand, and a Data-Slate in the other. She was, like him, a tough-as-nails Drizzbit. When they had first met, Trang had thought that he was going to have trouble with her, even though she was more than two decades his junior, because Drizzbits were matriarchal.

Since Sleath was raised off-core, she did not have the sexist views of others of their race.

Acknowledging her presence with a slight twist of his head, he bid her to enter and she slid into the room, handing him a cup.

As Trang sipped at his offered brew, Sleath began the morning briefing.

"Captain Bleth thanks you for your advice, and wishes you the best in future endeavors." She read aloud, using the Standard dialect only. "Lieutenant Commander Liles requests an update on the crew roster, and our ride is due to arrive in moments."

"Good." Trang said, elatedly, as he handed his empty cup back to his aid.

The two made their way to the landing pad where their cargo sat upon a skid. The tell-tale sign of the incoming shuttle cut a swath through the sky as the Hellcat descended through the atmosphere, and landed with a finesse that was uncommon with such vessels, so when the hatch

opened, and the pilot pulled off their helmet, Trang had to fight back the reaction of surprise. He did not consider himself bigoted or racist, but Trang had not had a good experience with humans in his life. Each one had left him with a bad taste on his palette afterwards. His distaste was so severe that he had put forth a request on his ship's staffing log. It read: *No Humans allowed.*

The pilot snapped to attention and placed her right arm across her chest before she bowed in the customary greeting to a senior officer.

"Commander Trang?" The pilot asked.

Trang replied by thumping his chest, once.

The pilot righted herself. The planet's orange sunlight enhanced the human's browned skin, accented her tied-back ebony hair, and glimmered in her dark eyes, which seemed to look everywhere at once.

"Specialist Lynn Lesard, sir." The human's voice was gentle, but sturdy and without waver. "Courier unit, fifteen fifty-three. I

Stephen Coghlan, "WELCOME TO MY WORLDS"

have orders to bring you the Denear system's dry-docks."

Forced to acknowledge, Trang nodded his affirmative and turned to walk towards the luggage skid.

"Please leave that for me," The pilot called out, which stopped Trang's march. "I like to load my own." She explained.

Wanting to throw his hands up in defeat, but indoctrinated otherwise, the commander found a seat in the area behind the cockpit.

"Are you okay, sir?" Sleath asked as she secured her harness. She knew about Trang's 'recruitment' policy.

"I'll be fine, corporal. Our pilot bears our insignia on her uniform."

"Do you trust that," Sleath asked with mirth in her tone, "Sir?" She added, as an afterthought.

Trang hoped his look made it clear what his opinion was.

The pilot returned to her seat. Her voice rang through the passenger area as the engines,

already hot, picked up in pitch. *“We are ready for liftoff. Please confirm status?”*

It was short and to the point. The Hellcat began to climb into the sky.

“Flight plan is as follows,” The pilot continued, her voice was smooth and unbothered. *“Once we break atmosphere, we will rendezvous with The Cronquist who will then take us to the Denear system. Any questions?”*

“ETA?” Trang spoke, already studying a Data-slate instead of worrying about their.

The Hellcat tipped its nose and began to apply thrust. *“If you mean The Cronquist? Then about twenty minutes. If you mean to Dry-dock, then two days, sir. Good to have you aboard.”*

“Pleasure to make your acquaintance.” Trang said casually, surprising himself with the honesty of his own words.

- # -

It didn't surprise either Trang or Sleath that they were sharing quarters with the

Stephen Coghlan, “WELCOME TO MY WORLDS”

human. Space was at a premium, and they were lucky that they each had a small closet with a bed to themselves.

There was little point to familiarize themselves with the few crew aboard, even if *The Cronquist* was a Confederate vessel. The officer and his aid were guests, and had no authority, so Trang and Sleath kept to themselves for the remainder of the first day as they continued preparations and paperwork. They did not see trooper Lesard until she joined them for dinner.

The meals were basic rations: protein sticks, carb plates, and veg' chips, but the three had eaten without complaint. Lesard had been respectful in conversation, and had even warmed up enough over time to share a few jokes.

Trang awakened the next morning. Still inundated with paperwork, he took a mid-morning break and wandered the ship to give his mind a rest. The Cronquist was an older vessel, a former troop transport that had been retrofitted for cargo. Space was at a premium, but there were still nooks and crannies for the crew to relax. One

such place was the gym, which Trang entered almost absent-mindedly, and where he found Lesard and Sleath in the midst of a physical battle against each other. He almost intervened, until he recognized the small cheers and subtle shifts, as signs of laughter and respect. They were merely sparring, and had already formed a bond only those who had fought together, or against, could make.

That afternoon, taking another break from the tedious chores of administration, Trang found himself in the aft cargo bay where the Hellcat was stored. Lesard was talking to her shuttle as she dutifully performed maintenance. Her affection for the inanimate craft both amused the commander and reminded him of his upcoming command. He wondered to himself if he would, like her, grow such a relation to his own vessel.

That evening, Lesard challenged the others to a game of cards. It was a diversion she had learned during her time growing up as a harvester in the Praxian Hegemony. Trang played

Stephen Coghlan, "WELCOME TO MY WORLDS"

along until he had lost a week's pay, but retired to his bunk still jovial at the prospect of the future.

His rest was short-lived.

The commander was deep in meditation when the ship screamed like a wounded beast and his bunk shook beneath him. He was on his feet in an instant and opened his door to the common room to check on the others.

Lesard was stepping from her closet. Her under-suit and the cybernetic enhancements all bipedal pilots received, in order to push blood out of their extremities, glinted in the pale light. Slipping into her over-suit with practiced motions, she was almost dressed before the klaxons began to sing.

Sleath emerged from her room a moment later dressed in her soft-suit.

"All hands to battle stations!" The order rang from the speakers and datalinks that were tied into the ship.

Another shudder ran through the vessel, and the trio steadied themselves.

"Weapons fire," Trang observed, calmly. Biting down on his cheek, he triggered his implanted communicator and asked of the bridge, "Captain?"

"We've been ambushed." The Ziz in charge of *The Cronquist* admitted. *"We're out--"*

The report died in a burst of static.

Lesard slapped her helmet on. The opaque gear hid her face from view, but her voice came through their communicators as she made sure that her two charges' suits were sealed.

"It looks bad." She admitted, and although she was calm, her words were concerning.

A new set of sirens joined in to the first. It was a call to evacuate the ship.

"Wait here." Lesard ordered as she opened the door to the hallway, and immediately braced herself as the metal barrier slid sideways and the atmosphere of the room was sucked away by the vacuum of space.

The hull had been breached.

The brilliant lights of las blasts passed through dust and debris, and the short lived explosions as missiles detonated, and the sudden crimson glow as radiant heat weapons melted through material, lit up the blackness of space. A lifeboat launched from a nearby hatch, drifted through the maelstrom of destruction, and died as it was holed by a myriad of deadly beams. All was accompanied by silence, as such was the nature of space.

"We won't have a chance unless we can maneuver," Lesard announced. *"We have to get to my Hellcat."*

She motioned for the other two to follow, but the corridor that led to the aft section of the ship vanished before their eyes. Instinctively, the pilot stepped in front of her charges and shielded the other two, whose suites were lighter armored.

"Well, guess we can't go that way." Trang observed dryly.

The ship shuddered again, the dampener system died, and with it went the artificial gravity. Sleeth anchored herself to a rung in the

wall as she grabbed her companions and held them secure.

"*We can't stay here!*" The aid said with an edge to her voice.

The commander almost sounded bored as he reminded her that, "*We can't continue.*"

The human removed a grappling gun from her belt as she asked her companions, "*What's your general mass?*"

"*Ninety-nine in suit*" Trang responded, but Sleeth hesitated. Such questions were considered rude by her people's etiquette, but she fought back any comment as she answered. "*Sixty-four.*"

Lesard punched the numbers into her Data-pad and made a quick calculation. "*We're going to push the envelope.*" She warned. "*Hold on!*"

The fine wire of the tether spanned the void and latched to a ruined strut mid-way, before the cable pulled taut and yanked the trio out into space.

Behind them, their quarters exploded as a torpedo pierced the hull.

As they passed where the tether was anchored, Lesard released the grapple, took aim again, and fired for a twisted and puckered opening at the far end of the gap.

A glint of light caught Trang's attention. The glowing orb of a particle projectile rapidly grew in size as it headed straight for them.

The grappler's motor was too weak to pull the three much faster, but it had aligned them. Grabbing the cord, Trang yanked them towards the opening at several times the speed they had previously travelled.

"*Brace yourselves!*" The pilot reminded her companions.

They passed out of the hole just as the particle projectile smashed into the center of *The Cronquist* and broke the ship in two. With no dampeners to slow them down and unable to stop, they continued rapidly towards the wall that was once their sanctuary, but now posed a new and dangerous threat. Positioning herself so that

she was between her charges and the decking, Lesard tried to relax.

When they hit the wall, their mass, combined with the sudden deceleration, was focused onto one small area, where Lesard and the hallway met. The wall absorbed some of the impact, but Lesard and her suit took the brunt of the blow as Sleeth stopped the gang from bouncing back out of hole that they had entered by.

The human's cry of pain was loud in her companions' ears.

Released from his aid's grasp, Trang knelt and took the pilot by the shoulders. He tried to look through Lesard's visor, but all he saw was a reflection of his helmet, and the destruction as the severed bow of *The Cronquist* was hammered into oblivion.

Lesard's next comment was in neither Standard nor Basic dialects, but its connotation was clear. She gasped before she reverted back to the more familiar, and intergalactic, language.

"*I think I broke a few ribs.*" She said, weakly.

Trang felt guilty for the trooper's injuries, but he buried his thoughts. There was no point to let his emotions get in the way. "*Can you function, Trooper?*" The commander asked. His voice was level but authoritative, having been trained by years on the frontlines.

"*I could walk on broken legs if I needed to, sir.*" Lesard made her comment with bitter humor, and Trang felt like her words were sincere. "*We need to keep going,*" she continued. "*Help me up, please.*"

The three made their way through the dying vessel. They passed the corpses of crew members who had been caught unaware in the opening salvo. Personal belongings floated about, and cargo, knocked free in combat, filled the halls.

By the time that they made it to the hanger, Lesard's breathing had become labored thanks to the pain, but she straightened herself, and limped for the cockpit.

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"*I can fly-*" Trang began, but he was cut off by his subordinate.

"*No offense sir, but I know my Hellcat.*"

Lesard grunted as she climbed into the hatch.

"*Besides, ugh, you two are still under my protection. If you want to help, there's a fold module over in the skids. Without it, we will be forced to travel at sub-light, if we escape.*"

"*Understood.*" Trang and Sleath hurried to bring the module over as the aft section began to shake under various impacts.

The attackers had turned their attention to the remaining portion of *The Cronquist*.

It only took moments before Trang and Sleath found their seats.

Lesard's voice was even thinner over the com system than it had been before she harnessed herself in. "*I've got the engines hot. We don't have enough firepower to go toe-to-toe with anything out there. We're going to have to play dead once we escape.*"

"*Understood.*" Trang spoke evenly, despite the adrenaline that was flooding through his system.

"*Dampeners online.*"

The familiar press of gravity sunk them into their chairs. "*I've transferred control of weapons to your consoles.*" Lesard reported.

"*Running hot,*" Sleath stated, energizing the two turrets.

"*Make an exit.*" Trang ordered.

The las blasts slagged a wall before the molten metal instantly hardened in the cold of space. With a quick burn, Lesard flung the Hellcat towards the opening.

No sooner were they out of the ship than the desperateness of their situation became apparent. Three raider vessels had jumped *The Cronquist*, and despite the valiant resistance of her crew, it had been a one-way struggle from the beginning.

The aft reactor's casing breached, and the remains of *The Cronquist* blossomed in a bright and sudden explosion. Debris flew about and

hammered the Hellcat. Some pieces pushed the ship further, others pinged off the armor or buried into the plating. If it wasn't for the dampeners, the three would have been thrashed into a pulp, but no sooner was their spin established than Lesard killed the Hellcat's power.

"What is she doing?" Sleath asked.

"Looking like junk." Trang answered, when Lesard remained mute.

Mixed within the cloud of debris, the Hellcat rolled along in the chaotic fragments. Disguised by *The Cronquist's* death, they floated past one of the raider's vessels.

"Are the nose camera's recording?"

Trang whispered, as if he was worried that the attackers would hear his words. Sleath checked her console, and acknowledged with a hand signal. The three attacker's logos and names had been hurriedly painted over, but Trang swore that he could make out an insignia through the ship's camouflage.

"It wasn't a raid, was it, sir?" Sleath asked.

"No, it was a massacre." Trang replied bitterly. He wondered if they would be spotted, but one-by-one, the attacking ships stretched, disappeared, reappeared in the distance, and then vanished from sight as their fold engines warped space and allowed them to travel faster than light.

The Hellcat drifted in silence until they were certain that no one had been left behind to pick off survivors. Only then did Lesard break the solitude.

"I need a path to the closest common shipping lane." She gasped.

Worried, Trang undid his harness and peered through the observation window. A shard of debris had shattered the cockpit, and had impaled Lesard through her stomach. Only the cold of space had saved her, as her blood had frozen about the spike and sealed her suit.

Trang called the human's name, concern thick in his voice.

"The route please, sir." The pilot begged.

"Got it." Sleath answered and the Hellcat was slowly pointed into the fold-solution.

The module that the two Drizzbit's had attached to the shuttle drew power from the Hellcat's reactor, and the stars coalesced into one bright pinpoint as space collapsed

Lesard coughed, and her rattling breath could be heard by her companions.

"Fifteen units, ETA." Sleath observed.

"What's your status?" Trang commanded of the pilot. It took her a few moments to study her Data-pad, and when Lesard spoke, her words were slurred in a combination of pain, blood loss, and falling internal temperatures.

"Suit's primary battery damaged. Thermal control system, compromised. Pressure system's inoperable. I'm suffering massive internal damage and trauma. At least I'm not leaking atmosphere."

"That's good, trooper." Trang encouraged. *"Hold yourself together."*

The pilot's vision began to double, and Lesard found it hard to focus as she tried her best to keep the ship on course. An alarm engaged on

her Data-pad and warned her that her bio-signs were falling below critical levels.

"Don't die on me, trooper." Trang ordered.

"No offense sir," Lesard tried to laugh, *"But you could have given me an easier order."*

Her attempt at humor was painful to the commander, and the hurt he felt in his chest at her response was no longer unexpected.

Her life became a single focus, not on the light in front, but in the icy hot pain of her intestine. Trang's voice felt far away, distant. Sleath counted the moments, and each number was harder and harder to hear.

The light ahead grew as they came out of fold. It was too much for her, and Lesard passed into darkness.

- # -

The odor of seared meat and burnt metal combined with the sickly sweetness of

disinfectant was rank, and it clung to the inside of her nose and stayed there.

Next was the sounds; beeps and whirrs, clicks and hisses became clear. Warmth caressed her face, and the numbness in her hands and toes was interesting and alien.

Lynn Lesard opened her eyes.

It was dim in the room, but her eyes adapted. She lay on a bed. Wires and tubes snaked about her, some fed her fluids, others gasses, while others removed waste. The beeping came from monitors that constantly fed her bio-data to the medical cloud.

“Welcome back.” A familiar voice said. It took effort, but Lynn slowly moved her head until she saw Trang sat at the side of her bed. The black and gold uniform of the Confederate Navy glittered brightly in the dim light.

“Sir,” Lesard croaked, weakened still.

“Good to see you’re okay. I take it that I completed my mission?”

“Yes.” Trang smiled. “We were picked up within minutes. I must say, I didn’t think you

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would make it. If you had not been hypothermic, you would be dead right now.”

“I’m tougher than I look.”

“Obviously,” Trang laughed, honestly.

Then he stood, and gently placed something upon Lesard’s legs. “When you have time, look over my report, please.”

“Yes sir.”

The commander walked to the exit, but stopped in the doorway. His voice was gentle.

“If you’re interested, *The Fargesia* needs a few top-notch pilots and I need good helmsmen who know what we’re going up against. Thanks to your Hellcat’s recording, we’ve identified who destroyed *The Cronquist*. We plan to teach them a lesson.

“I read your file and I see that you’re approved for large-craft piloting. I talked to your CO, and he agreed that you’re free to work with me if you desire.”

“I take it I made a good impression, sir?”

Lesard’s words were both happy and tired.

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"Read the report when you have some more strength." Trang whispered, and then left the room.

Sleath waited patiently for her commanding officer in the hallway. Adjusting his uniform, the commander handed his aid a Data-slate.

"Please see that this gets posted to the company net as soon as possible." He requested.

Commander Trang, captain of The Fargesia, requests volunteers to crew his new vessel. Looking for dedicated, tough personnel who can work both independently and in group environments and who are not afraid of a little adventure.

P.S.

Humans Wanted.



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COMING SOON

NOVELLA: 50 SHADES OF NEIGH

GENRE: Fantasy, Fantasy Romance, Fantasy Erotica

SYNOPSIS:

With the threat of World War 1 and its technological horrors looming, the heir apparent to the deadliest warrior kingdom, and home to honest-to-god Centaurs, must find a new path for her peoples before they are massacred in the trenches.

Journeying to America, she searches for a future free of death, but will her absence leave the kingdom vulnerable to her conniving siblings?

Publisher: Kyanite Publishing

Estimated Release Date: November 20th, 2019



This title contains
graphic sexual content.

NOVEL: GENMOS BOOK 02: CROSSROADS

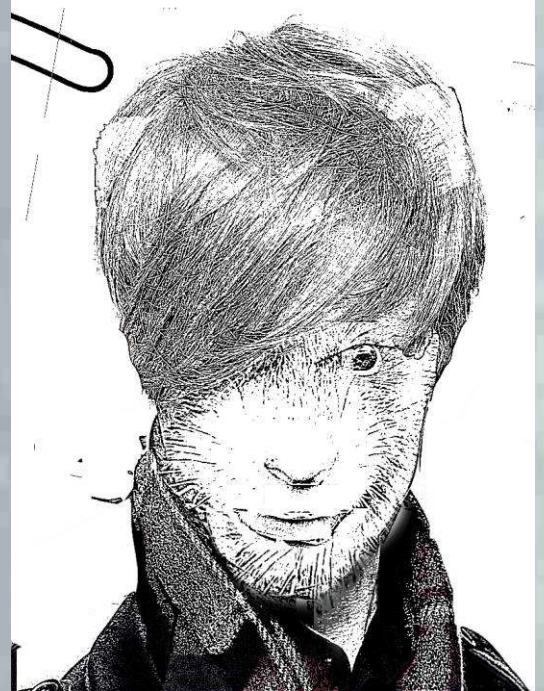
GENRE: Canlit, Cross-Canada, Anthropomorphic / Furry, Action, Adventure, GENMOS

SYNOPSIS:

Having found each other, the GENMOS now face a greater danger than just the agency; division within their ranks. As cliques develop, Devlin, lead scientist and father figure, struggles to keep the more ambitious of his children from becoming casualties. To make matters worse, their enemy has left a gift for him; a new Genmos. Is the newest Genetically Modified still a soldier and due to betray them, or was he really betrayed by the agency, and now fights alongside the children?

Publisher: Thurston Howl Publications

Estimated Release Date: Winter, 2019/2020



FLASH FICTION: A BURNING EPITAPH

GENRE: Post-Apocalypse

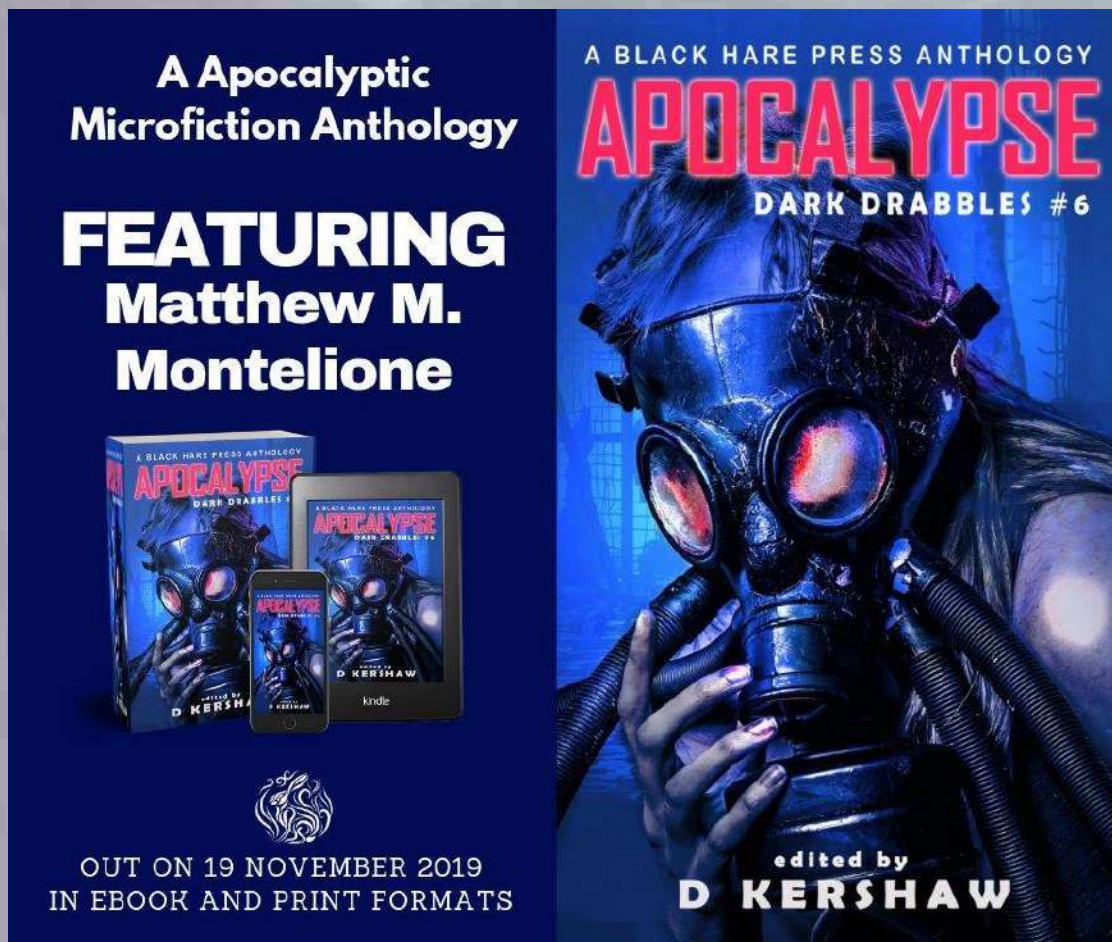
SYNOPSIS:

One last message, "I was here"

Publisher: BlackHarePress

APPEARING IN: APOCALYPSE: A Apocalyptic Microfiction Anthology (Dark Drabbles #6)

Estimated Release Date: November 19th, 2019



FLASH FICTION: WOODCHUCK LUMBERJACK

GENRE: Humor

SYNOPSIS:

How much wood could a Woodchuck chuck?

Publisher: Jaleta Clegg

APPEARING IN: Beer-Battered Shrimp for Cognitive Ruminations

Beer-Battered shrimp
shrimp
FOR
COGNITIVE RUMINATIONS
An illustrated collection of very short writings

Now LIVE on Kickstarter!

Barry Rabbits

*I wish all rabbits were named Barry.
That way,
when you were out
walking with your friend
and you saw a rabbit
and your friend said,
"I wonder what that rabbit's name is?"
you could say, "It's Barry,"
and you'd look very smart.*

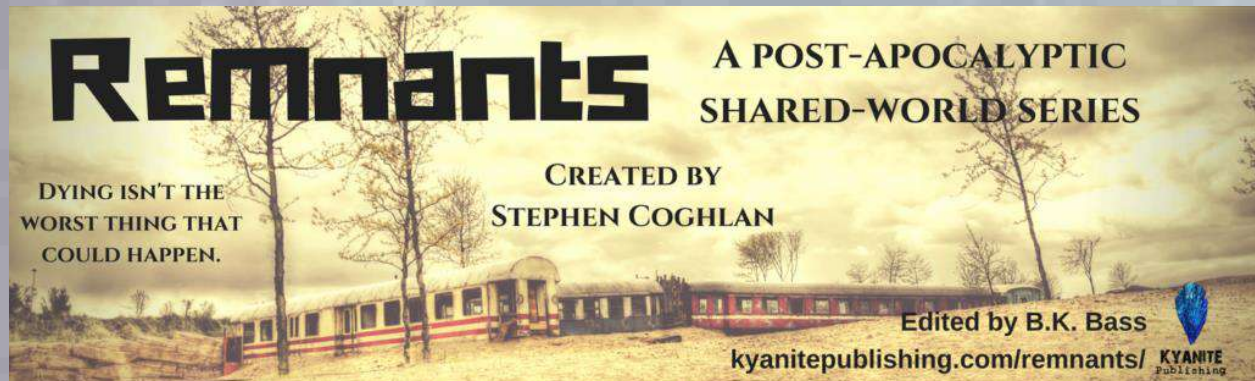
<https://kickstarter.com/projects/jaletaclegg/beer-battered-shrimp-for-cognitive-ruminations>

ANTHOLOGY: REMNANTS

REMNANTS is a shared-world science fiction project based upon a universe I proposed. This has produced an anthology where a number of different authors have explored the world of Remnants with their own voice and perspectives.

The World of REMNANTS: Humanity has fallen to the horde, and monsters now roam the earth; From the bugs that swarm the sky above, shocking survivors before finishing off the corpses, to the beasts of the land, who heal almost supernaturally, who play with the dying, who sadistically toy with the living, who are finishing off the few survivors that have yet to succumb to the toxic lands and acidic rains left over from humankind's last futile efforts.

Publisher: Kyanite Press



Estimated Release Date: Winter, 2020

NOVELLETTE: REMNANTS - RESISTANCE

SYNOPSIS:

With the world ruined and humanity decimated, one survivor resists where he can until he finds himself rescuing a child from a fate worse than the monsters themselves. Will his new companion be a blessing, and a chance to save his soul, or will the added burden of protecting someone else lead him into the monsters' maws?

SHORT STORY: REMNANTS - AGAINST THE DARKNESS

SYNOPSIS:

As the monsters of the Horde dig their way into one of the remaining bastions of humanity, the handful of survivors form a last ditch resistance of their own in order to rebuild morale; they party against the ensuing darkness.

SHORT STORY: REMNANTS – A FINAL LONGING

SYNOPSIS:

When the earth is destroyed and humanity hangs on a thread, one survivor loses himself in an attempt to preserve the human race through a new species; desperate to both save his kind, and let the ones who destroyed their own planet perish.



SHORT STORY: THE DEAD SQUAD

GENRE: Horror, Post-Apocalyptic, Action, First Person

SYNOPSIS:

When a young but experienced war journalist gets invited on a mission, she finds herself working alongside soldiers who are, by all rights, already dead as they search for a cure for the disease that has ravaged all life on earth.

Publisher Phrenic Press (A division of Siren's Call Publications)

Estimated Release Date: Eventually



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Stephen Coghlan is an ever-expanding (at least at the waistline) author. Hailing from the capital of the Great White North [Ottawa, Canada, not Montreal, Vancouver, or Toronto], he spends his days either erecting buildings - or torturing his long-suffering wife with the help of his kids - , his nights reveling in the dreamscape, and furiously scribbling whenever he has a moment to himself. Since 2017, he has had produced a myriad of flash fictions, short stories, novellas and novels.

Feel free to find him on Twitter or Facebook as @WordsBySC, or check out his website at <http://scoghlan.com>

