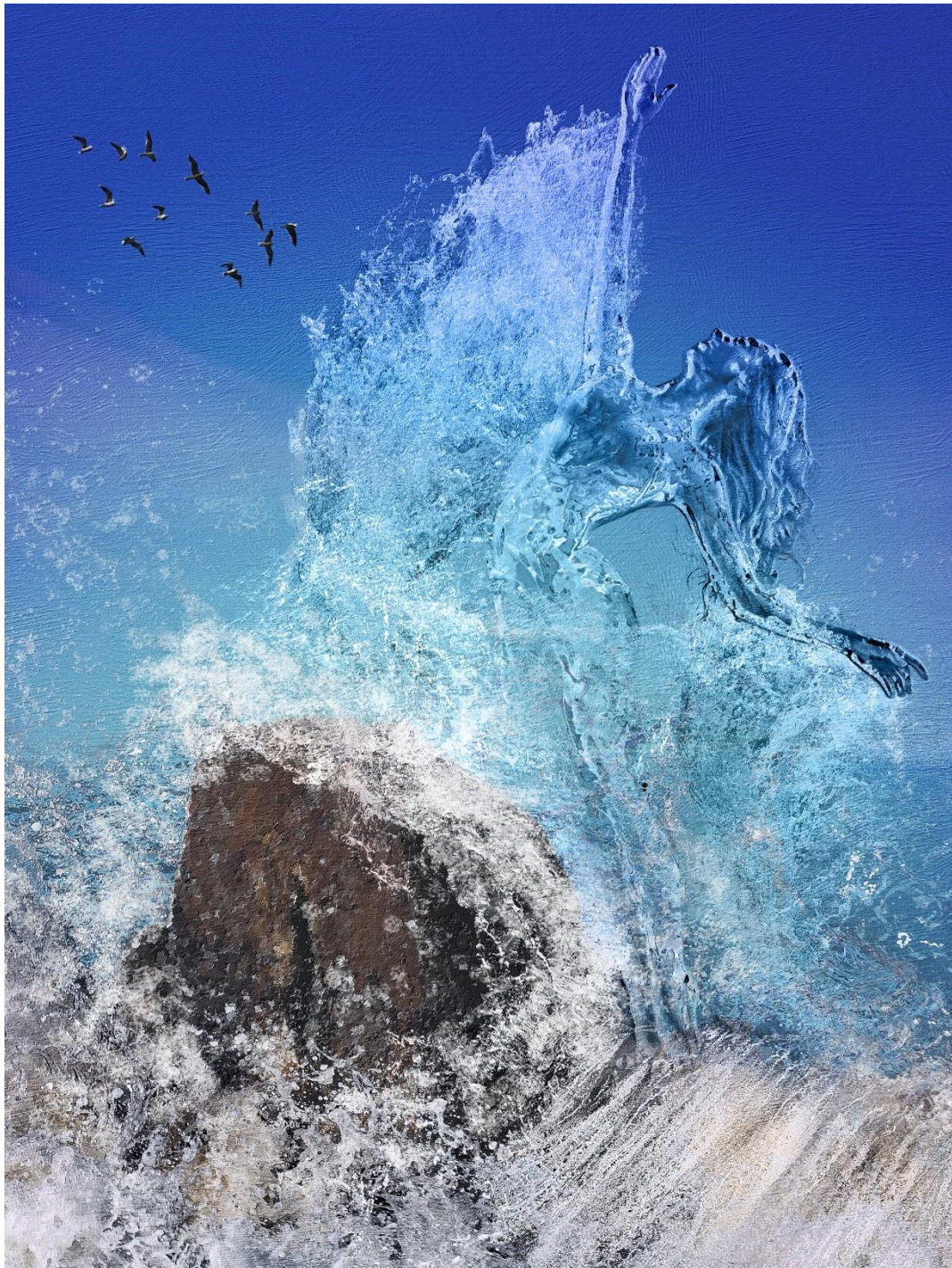


POLAR STARLIGHT

Magazine of Canadian Speculative Poetry
(Issue #15 – June 2024)



POLAR STARLIGHT MAGAZINE

Issue #15 – June 2024 (Vol. 4#3. WN#15)

Publisher: R. Graeme Cameron

Editor: Rhea E. Rose

Proofreader: Steve Fahnstalk

POLAR STARLIGHT is a Canadian semi-pro non-profit Science Fiction Poetry online PDF Magazine published by R. Graeme Cameron at least four times a year.

Distribution of this PDF Magazine is free, either by E-mail or via download.

POLAR STARLIGHT buys First Publication (or Reprint) English Language World Serial Online (PDF) Internet Rights from Canadian Science Fiction Genre Poets and Artists.

Copyright belongs to the contributors bylined, and no portion of this magazine may be reproduced without consent from the individual Poet or Artist.

POLAR STARLIGHT offers the following Payment Rates:

Poem – \$10.00

Cover Illustration – \$40.00

To request to be added to the subscription list, ask questions, or send letters of comment, contact Editor Rhea E. Rose or Publisher R. Graeme Cameron at:

< [Polar Starlight](#) >

All contributors are paid before publication. Anyone interested in submitting a poem or artwork, and wants to check out rates and submission guidelines, or anyone interested in downloading current and/or back issues, please go to:

< <http://polarborealis.ca/> >

Note: The *Polar Borealis Magazine* website is also the website for *Polar Starlight Magazine*.

ISSN 2369-9078 (Online)

Headings: ENGRAVERS MT

By-lines: *Monotype Corsiva*

Text: Bookman Old Style

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 03) – EDITORIAL – by Rhea E. Rose
- 05) – THE GODDESS OF MIST – (a glossa) by Neile Graham
- 07) – FROM THE MODERN SORCEROR’S HANDBOOK – by Mark Thomas
- 08) – EVERY WITCH IS A QUESTION – by Derek Newman-Stille
- 09) – LOFTY GOALS – by Marcie Lynn Tentchoff
- 10) – FAMILY TREE – by Mahaila Smith
- 11) – THAT WOULD BE SOMETHING – by Rhonda Parrish
- 12) – DANDELIONS – by Frances Skene
- 13) – THE DRAGON – by Geoffrey Hart
- 15) – IMMORTAL – by Frances Skene
- 16) – ANOTHER GALAXY SOMEWHERE – by Leigh Therriault
- 17) – BEHOLD – by Greg Fewer
- 18) – THE TROUBLE WITH TIME – by Colleen Anderson
- 19) – THE HOLE STORY – by Lisa Timpf
- 20) – POMPEII FRESCO – by Carolyn Clink
- 21) – THE GREAT SILENCE – by Guy Immega
- 22) – HORIZON EVENTS – by J.D. Dresner
- 23) – About the Poets and Artist

ART CREDITS:

COVER: *Splash* – by Jenni Merrifield

EDITORIAL

By Rhea E. Rose

Welcome to *Polar Starlight* issue 15, embark on this literary adventure with an open mind and a willing heart. Allow these poems to transport you, challenge you, and expand your understanding of what is possible. In the end, you'll find that speculative poetry not only entertains but also enlightens, offering new perspectives on the world and our place within it. Enjoy this journey, and let these poems be your guide to infinite possibilities.

Ahem, before we begin, I'd like to congratulate David Shultz for his 2024 Aurora Award nomination, "Scarecrow," in *Polar Starlight 9*. Please remember to vote.

I'd also like to congratulate *Polar Starlight* poets Marcie Lynn Tentchoff ("Invasive," *Polar Starlight 9*), Carolyn Clink ("Troy," *Polar Starlight 12*), and Colleen Anderson ("Whole World" *Polar Starlight 12*) for their 2024 Rhysling Award nominations in the short poetry category. Kudos to these amazing authors.

Also, a humble pat on the back to myself for the Aurora Award nomination of *Polar Starlight Magazine*, Issues: 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12, and congratulations to our publisher of *Polar Borealis Magazine*, Issues: 24, 25, 26, and 27, editor R. Graeme Cameron. All very exciting news. If you've got an announcement about poetry you've had appear in *Polar Starlight*, please let me know so we can spotlight you in the editorial!

Now, back to welcoming the latest extraordinary fifteenth *Polar Starlight* issue. Poetry, and especially spec poetry, takes us on a journey through the realms of the extraordinary. This curated collection of 16 prodigious poems is a *Starlight* portal, transporting the reader on a meticulously arranged tour by yours truly.

Our odyssey begins with "The Goddess of Mist" by Neile Graham, a lyrical glossa that conjures images of myth and nature, blending the ethereal with the elemental. This sets the stage for Mark Thomas's "From the Modern Sorcerer's Handbook," which delves into the dark and mysterious with vivid, unsettling imagery that hints at the unseen forces shaping our world.

Derek Newman-Stille's "Every Witch is a Question" follows, presenting the witch as a transformative figure, challenging and reshaping reality. This theme of transformation and the tension between the ordinary and the extraordinary

continues with Marcie Lynn Tentchoff's "Lofty Goals," a whimsical yet profound exploration of human desire and the elusive nature of perfection.

Mahaila Smith's "Family Tree" takes a more introspective turn, using futuristic technology to reflect on the connections between past and present. At the same time, Rhonda Parrish's "That Would Be Something" brings a touch of humour to the supernatural, contemplating the practical uses of ghosts in daily life.

Frances Skene's "Dandelions" and Geoffrey Hart's "The Dragon" explore human and extraterrestrial isolation, juxtaposing the familiar with the alien. Skene's "Immortal" shifts the focus to the personal and the eternal, blending romance with the burden of immortality.

Leigh Therriault's "Another Galaxy Somewhere" paints a cosmic love story filled with longing and loss, seamlessly transitioning into Greg Fewer's "Behold," a modern tanka that captures the fleeting nature of online connections and fantasy.

Colleen Anderson's "The Trouble with Time" is a rhythmic meditation on the fragmentation of modern life, while Lisa Timpf's "The Hole Story" humorously contemplates our place in the universe through the metaphor of black holes. Carolyn Clink's "Pompeii Fresco" uses domestic metaphors to explore the roles of men, women and relationships by way of mythology.

Guy Immega's "The Great Silence" ponders the Fermi Paradox, questioning humanity's aloneness in the cosmos, while J.D. Dresner's "Horizon Events" closes the collection with a reflection on human ingenuity and the imperfections of replication, leaving readers to ponder the depths of our understanding.

Polar Starlight's summer issue is another testament to the power of speculative poetry. It invites you to dream, question, and explore, each poem a step in an intricate dance of ideas and emotions. Enjoy this literary voyage, and let these poems ignite the rocket of your imagination as they weave a tapestry of the fantastical.

Editor,
Rhea E. Rose

THE GODDESS OF MIST
(A GLOSSA)

by Neile Graham

among the rainy alders
in silence, almost unmoving,
the wild white mare of Iceland
and the daughter of autumn, dancing.

—Ursula K. Le Guin, “The Mist Horse”

Shadow-dark cedars scratch
the salmon-light smeared across
the beach’s purple sky. Drums
match the tide’s beat, wave-shush
hypnotizing steady hands.
Along the sand fire-altars
crackle to life, the cedar-burn snap
& hiss embroiders a new song as deep
onshore the long day falters
among the rainy alders

There, in the forest’s fringe
more feet gather, bodies shadow-slip
between salt-hewn branches,
some step out to feed the altars,
some to chase the incoming tide,
some join the drums soothing
day’s passage to night. One now,
her dress a moonlight drift through
the alders stands, disapproving,
in silence, almost unmoving,

her hesitation freezes the instant—
even the seawind halts. Then, as she
strides forward, warily the wind,

one eye on her still, starts again to tease,
the cedars, a child's salt-spun hair. Its swirling
ears catch her feet's thrumming demand
that the drummers heed the scattering
thickening rain. It spins August-heat's end
and autumn-chill into a summer's sacrifice: and
the wild white mare of Iceland

lifts its staunch back from waves and sand,
rises, shaking mane-tangle and tail-fling
into majesty. Even the moon-dressed woman
sighs as the wind does as it turns the alder leaves
over in a brisk farewell. Drummers
skirl their drums. Voices call and sing
to welcome summer's breaking, rain's
ascendance, wind's full-throated roar, the mist
of the wild white winter's mare, its steps advancing
and the daughter of autumn, dancing.

FROM THE MODERN SORCERER'S HANDBOOK

by Mark Thomas

A birthday card thoughtlessly mailed
to a long-dead relative;
a cigarette butt discarded
at the foot of a playground slide;
rainwater collected in a solitary shoe;
a soot-covered baby soother,
a contact lens plucked
from a cracked, discoloured urinal,
a baby bird pushed from its nest
by hungry siblings.

All placed
in the polished skull-bowl
of one who mistook
a certain paleness for love.

Disappointment is the pestle
that grinds exceedingly fine,

your poultice will cling

and as like seeks like
your artful harvest
will be drawn within.

EVERY WITCH IS A QUESTION

by Derek Newman-Stille

Every hero needs a witch
standing at the crossroads
asking questions
challenging the status quo

Every hero needs to face
their own demons
 privilege
 pride
 arrogance

A witch doesn't let the privileged pass
She stands guard on the edge of the forest
the gateway of unknowing
and invites transformation

Those who can't change
 are metamorphosed
 into beast
 and stone
 and frog
their ignorance written onto their bodies until they learn

Witches are invitations
to become something new
to overcome what you knew

Every witch is a mirror
reflecting back what we know we are

Every witch is an answer
to a question we ignored.

LOFTY GOALS

by Marcie Lynn Tentchoff

We tried to catch
the new moon in a glass,
just so we could save it,
shelter it away
where base folk couldn't see it,
couldn't tarnish all its beauty
and sully all its power
with their wishes,
their desires,
and their hopes.

But moons are not for keeping,
and the glass we thought
could hold it safe,
protected from the world,
instead besmirched it;
what had been clear as crystal
now bore streaks,
and cracks, and ripples,
and forced our own view
of the orb to somehow dim.

Still, we've invested in a better
quality of vessel,
and we're sure experiments
with wishing stars
will work as planned.

FAMILY TREE

by Mahaila Smith

Nebby peeled back the layers of her grandmother's Holo account. She tried to piece together the girl her grandma had been. Opening the earliest part of the catalogue. Looking through the nostalgic pictures her grandma had posted of herself as a small child, sitting in the grass, wind rippling the blades like a soft lake. White petals falling onto her hair. It might have been a birthday party. A yellow cone, with ribbons trailing from the end, was tied under her chin. Around her, bright plastic toys covered the ground in childhood excess. Nebby's great-grandmother was in the picture. She was middle-aged and had brown hair streaked with white. She smiled at her daughter, red lipstick on, with neatly shaped eyebrows. Her dress looked new. She held an aluminum can of lemon soda. Nebby wondered how it tasted that day, in the heat. Her ancestors' faces were still, 2-dimensional. She looked at newer images, ones created to have more depth, almost 3-dimensions. Nebby saw her grandma leaning towards a pretty, dark-haired boy at a cafe. Nebby wondered who he was. There was no identification label to see above his head. A bowl of expensive, yellow slices of peaches slid under their bamboo picks. Cups of coffee steamed. She felt jealous looking at these luxuries and then embarrassed for her selfishness. She turned off the headset.

THAT WOULD BE SOMETHING

by Rhonda Parrish

I don't believe in ghosts
but they believe in me
it seems.

At least I'm told that's the reason
my doors creak open
when no one's around,
and cold spots sprout
throughout my house
wild and random as the dandelions
which dot my yard.

The priest, whose religion I also
don't put much stock into
says I need to exorcise them
but I can barely be asked
to exercise myself
so that seems unlikely.

If only they could be trained
to do something helpful
water the plants, perhaps
or dust the tall shelves.

Now that.
That would be something.

DANDELIONS

by Frances Skene

Rainbows curve above
the landscape, almost like
those on Earth, except
 the air is poisonous to us.

We can't leave our pods.

Why were we sent here?
Someone must have known
what awaited.

No, they didn't.

Humans in our many billions
were cheaper than research.

Just beam us at light speed
in all directions, and see
what we find.

THE DRAGON

By Geoffrey Hart

I came upon a dragon while I trod a distant shore
And we sat and talked for hours 'bout the vanished days of yore
For we both agreed we missed them and preferred them to the present
Though we sat beside the surf, which was more than passing pleasant.

I reclined upon the sand, shoulders braced against his back
Which was clad in silvered scales, that had once been shiny black
While his long neck curved to face me, ancient sad eyes steeped in time,
Which unblinking shared my thoughts, gently reading from my mind.

He remarked he missed the days when he'd watched for passing knights
Clad in polished, clinking armour, gone abroad a-seeking fights
Bearing tokens from their ladies, and bright courage in their hearts
Seeking fame and golden treasure for their travels in strange parts.

So I told him how I'd wandered, seeking nothing I could name
But he shook his massive head, claiming that was not the same
"For you seek to know of life, which you seek as you seek breath
But those knights who bravely faced me sought instead a noble death."

Then he talked to me of causes, quests which raised up all the land
Kindling fire in mortal hearts, set aflame by king's command
And he asked if modern Man still pretended to that spirit
And although I sought examples, I could think of nothing near it.

Then he spoke to break my silence, turned his tales towards romance
And his stories kept me spellbound so I sat as if entranced
Glistening tears upon my cheeks, feeling pain astride my heart
But his eyes held warm compassion and I felt the pain depart.

Then there came a time of silence, seeking solace in our thoughts
While before us wild surf thundered, unperturbed by what we sought
We took comfort from each other, just two souls who mourned in vain
Knowing that we two remembered, those brave times though nought remained.

When the sunset came upon me, I so sadly took my leave
Though his eyes once more found mine, and I had no heart to grieve
For he told me he'd remain here for as long as one still dreamed
He had reason to keep living, his existence was redeemed.

IMMORTAL

By Frances Skene

The sky above is a delicate gray
In colour; it matches my mood.

My lover will emerge on the morrow.

He's an immortal, although fragile.
Whenever he dies, he needs time
to loop back to life, and then

we move to another town
to avoid difficult questions.

I told him: stop falling off buildings,
but he said that hitting the pavement
makes immortality less boring.

I told him: I'm tired of the research,
Looking for the next dead child to
lend him a new identity.

Last time I told him: he won't find me
when he returns. I will go away
and find someone to grow old with.

ANOTHER GALAXY SOMEWHERE

by Leigh Therriault

Droplets of celestial honeydew—
A melon in my mouth, chipping my teeth;
I can't swallow Saturn.

The cosmic breath seems ragged now
like microscopic weeds infiltrating goodness.
Unwanted lunar life forms

sprouting,
 sparking
 from my lungs.

And Venus is too far away
across the stars from dreaming.
Though my heart still revs then stalls,
derelict in a hazy yard on Jupiter.

Abandoned, yet earthbound
with the love
I wish existed here.

BEHOLD

By Greg Fewer

swigging the potion
she logs into the chat room
video calls Ric
an elf who lauds her beauty
for now, at least, the orc thinks

THE TROUBLE WITH TIME

By Colleen Anderson

Split

take this year
catharsis trance frenzy
tribal dance to brace
the same exquisite

Split

focus, haunt
stop to reduce
the conflict and power

Split

crave quiet work
a new version of time
and space and the Earth
closes down
the planet shrinking
time trips quickly

between
the powerful, the vulnerable

between
sense of self, public nature
and time's slave

a spirit
to create the world back home
where launched the experiment

a more intimate scale
of time

Split

Erasure poem from the Georgia Straight

THE HOLE STORY

By Lisa Timpf

*News Headline: “Black holes
are messy eaters, two studies show”*

what goes on in the black hole
stays in the black hole

maybe we thought that was true, once,
but now that we’re able to spy more closely
new details emerge

like: black holes are “messy eaters,”
leaving some cosmic crumbs unconsumed,
spewing others out

baby gods throwing tantrums

maybe we are really parts
of interstellar leftovers, the rejects
shoved to the back of the fridge

insulting, perhaps, but preferable
to being served up
as the main course

*Inspired by a news story posted
April 28, 2023, on www.cbc.ca/radio/quirks*

POMPEII FRESCO

By Carolyn Clink

Cassandra of Casserole
you named me,
domestic goddess—
young
beautiful
stepping from Pan
into the arms of Prometheus.

A Pandora of Provisions—
barefoot
pregnant
opening each canister
already knowing
everything
has gone bad.

Vesuvius of Viagra—
I named you,
old-school god
half-napping
with one eye open, watching me
while, in *your* belly,
Pompeii burns.

THE GREAT SILENCE

By Guy Immega

Fermi's paradoxical question:
Where is everybody?
Sagan said: Absence of evidence
Isn't evidence of absence;
Drake's debatable equation
Estimates ET odds;
Thousands of SETI ears and eyes
Search in vain.

Earth is a common planet
Circling an ordinary sun;
The Milky Way's pinwheel
Has 100 billion fiery stars
With 40 billion livable worlds;
There are trillions of galaxies,
Islands of light and hope
In the expanding darkness;
Yet no civil sign reaches us
Are we alone?

Dinosaurs had 230 million years
To get smart;
Sapiens learned to chat
60 thousand years ago;
No other species
Can tell stories.

Talk is *not* cheap;
Is this The Great Filter?

HORIZON EVENTS

By J.D. Dresner

How deep can a tree's roots grow?
Why do clouds form?
How far can an albatross soar?
What feeds the plankton?

We ask, we measure,
Then we know.

Then we copy
 from a copy
 fr m a copy
 fr m a cpy

Until it's imperfect enough.
Naïvely innovative, we are gods of Earth.
Replicate it. ~~Rename it.~~ Nerame it.
Make more. Landfill the planet. We can always find another one.
Keep going. Ask again.

How deep can we tree these roots glow?
Why do clouds farm?
How sore can we make an albatross?
What fons the plankteed?

ABOUT THE POETS AND ARTIST

Colleen Anderson

Colleen's work has appeared in seven countries, such as *Best Indie Speculative Fiction*, *Cemetery Dance*, *Weird Tales*, and the award-winning *Shadow Atlas*. Her poem, "Machine (r)Evolution" won the 2023 Rhylsing Award. Her newest collection, *Weird Worlds* is coming from Weird House with fiction collections *Embers Amongst the Fallen*, and [A Body of Work](#), and poetry collections, [I Dreamed a World](#), and [The Lore of Inscrutable Dreams](#) available online. She is current president of the SFPA and an editor for *OnSpec*. She lives in Vancouver, BC and contemplates mermaids.

Carolyn Clink

Carolyn won the 2022 Aurora Award for Best Poem/Song for "Cat People Café," which appeared in [Polar Starlight #3](#). She won the same award in 2011 for "The ABCs at the End of the World." Her genre poetry publications include *Weird Tales*, *Analog*, *Imaginarium 2012: The Best Canadian Speculative Writing*, *On Spec*, *Tesseract*, *Tales of the Unanticipated*, *Room*, and all five volumes of *Northern Frights*.

J.D. Dresner

J.D. has multiple poems published in [Polar Starlight](#) and [Academy of the Heart and Mind](#), including *For the Robots*, *Our Sunset*, *Freckles*, and *The Flip Side*, with another two being published in 2024. His short story "Dragons v. Subways," is set to be published in volume 2 of *Versus* in 2025, and his short story "The Death Sentence" will be published in *Fission Magazine #4*, by the British Science Fiction Association in 2025 as well. Dresner's novellas, [Sword & Witchhazel](#) and [A Goblin's Mind](#), are available in 50+ countries, and can be found on Amazon and Indigo.

Dresner lives in Langley, British Columbia, where he provides professional book layout, design, and editorial work for various publishers. More information about Dresner can be found at JDDresner.com.

Greg Fewer

Greg originally hails from Montréal, Québec, Canada. His speculative fiction and poetry have appeared in (among other places): *Cuento Magazine*, *Lovecraftiana*, *Monsters: A Dark Drabbles Anthology*, *Page & Spine*, *Polar Borealis*, *Polar Starlight*, *Scifaikuest*, *Star*Line*, *The Nafallen University Course Catalogue*, *The Sirens Call*, *Utopia Science Fiction*, and *Worth 1,000 Words: 101 Flash Science Fiction Stories by 101 Authors*. He has twice been a Dwarf Stars finalist (2021, 2023).

Neile Graham

Neile is Canadian by birth and inclination, though she has lived in the U.S. (mostly Seattle, so she's leaning toward the border) for many years. She writes both fiction and poetry and is currently concentrating on plotting the build-out of her fantasy romance empire. Her poetry has been published in Canada, the U.S., and the U.K. and on the internet. She has four collections, most recently *The Walk She Takes*, an idiosyncratic travelogue of Scotland which includes ghosts, ruins of all kinds, and a landlady named Venus.

Geoffrey Hart

Geoff (he/him) works as a scientific editor, specializing in helping scientists who have English as their second language publish their research. He also writes fiction in his spare time and has sold 73 stories thus far. Visit him online at www.geoff-hart.com.

Guy Immega

Guy is a retired aerospace engineer. His company, Kinetic Sciences Inc., built autonomous robots for the space station, robots to clean up nuclear waste, and patented miniature fingerprint sensors. He served in the Peace Corps in Africa and vaccinated nomads in the Sahel against smallpox. In 2018, he presented an invited paper at a conference in Abuja, Nigeria on an engineering plan to save Lake Chad in the Sahara.

Guy is currently working on a scheme to counteract global warming with solar sailing mirrors in the L1 region of space between the Earth and Sun. See his website: www.planet-cooling.com.

Guy's hard SF debut novel, *Super-Earth Mother*, published by EDGE SF&F (Calgary), is now available from all online booksellers, and in bookstores.

Jenni Merrifield

Jenni is a UX/UI Design Specialist by trade and a “prototypical geek” by pastime, reading speculative fiction, playing tabletop board games and RPGs, assembling jigsaw puzzles, wearing cosplay & helping organize some Vancouver BC area speculative fiction conventions and events). She considers herself to be a Jedi Padawan, a Wizard (Enchanter), a Browncoat and a Captain in the Grayson Space Navy, depending on which fandom she's currently playing in. Coming from a family of academics and artists, Jenni was always encouraged and inspired to be both artistic and to follow her love of science, technology, engineering and math. In the end, she completed two undergraduate degrees—a Bachelor of Arts in Classical Studies (art, architecture, history, and literature of ancient Rome and Greece) and a Bachelor of Applied Science in Computer Electrical Engineering—and now uses her technological and creative skills together to design software applications that are easy and efficient to use, and her creative and technological skills together to create digital artwork like the one on the cover. She has been married for almost 30 years, has one adult son, and lives in Port Moody, BC, with her husband and a Devon Rex cat.

Derek Newman-Stille

Derek Newman-Stille (they/them) is a Queer, Nonbinary, Disabled, Fat, Femme settler Canadian (Turtle Island) author, poet, academic, editor, visual artist, and activist. They are the 9-time Aurora Award-winning creator of the digital humanities site Speculating Canada and the associated radio show. They frequently use fantasy and science fiction as a means of elucidating possibilities and potentials, reimagining the way that we situate identities and ideas. Derek has published poetry in fora such as *Fat Studies In Canada: (Re)Mapping The Field* (Inanna) and *Whispers Between Fairies* (Renaissance Press), performed and published poetry for Artsweek Peterborough's SHIFT: Post-Code Tour, and performed poetry for Peterborough's Arts Ability: Taking the Stage.

In addition, Derek has published short fiction in *Dark Waters* (Poise and Pen Publishing), and *Nothing Without Us* (Renaissance Press). They have edited the collections *Over the Rainbow: Folk and Fairy Tales from the Margins* (Exile), and *We Shall Be Monsters* (Renaissance Press). Additionally, Nathan Frechette and they co-published Derek's collection of short fiction *Whispers Between Fairies* (Renaissance Press).

Rhonda Parrish

Like a magpie, Rhonda is constantly distracted by shiny things. She's the editor of many anthologies and author of plenty of books, stories and poems (some of which have even been nominated for awards!). She lives in Edmonton, Alberta, and she can often be found there playing Dungeons and Dragons, bingeing crime dramas, making blankets or cheering on the Oilers.

Her website, is at <http://www.rhondaparrish.com> and her Patreon, is at <https://www.patreon.com/RhondaParrish>.

Frances Skene

Frances is the author of a poetry chapbook, *Seasons*, and two one-act stage plays that were locally produced. In addition to her poems and stories in *Polar Starlight* and *Polar Borealis*, she has been published in *Eye to the Telescope*, the magazine of SFPA, the Science Fiction and Fantasy Poetry Association. Her poem, “Angels,” in [Polar Starlight #6](#), made it to the long list for the 2023 Rhysling Award.

She is a co-author of the novel, [Windship: The Crazy Plague](#), available from Amazon.

Mahaila Smith

Mahaila (any pronouns) is a young femme writer, living and working on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabeg in Ottawa, Ontario. They are one of the co-editors for *The Sprawl Mag*. They like learning theory and writing speculative poetry. Their debut chapbook, *Claw Machine*, was published by Anstruther Press in 2020. Their second chapbook, *Water-Kin* was published by Metatron Press in 2024. Their novelette in verse, *Seed Beetle*, is forthcoming with Stelliform Press. You can find more of their work on their website: mahailasmith.ca.

Marcie Lynn Tentchoff

Marcie is a writer/poet/editor from Gibsons, BC, where she lives in the middle of a whole lot of prickly greenery with her family and various other critters. Her work has appeared in such publications as *Star*Line*, *Dreams & Nightmares*, *Strange Horizons*, and *Illumen*.

Leigh Therriault

Leigh is a writer and researcher with a MSc in Communication, Behaviour and Credibility Analysis. She writes children's literature, as well as poetry for adults. Leigh is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators (SCBWI), and the Canadian Authors Association, where she volunteers as the social media coordinator for the National Capital Region. She lives in Ottawa, Ontario, with her family near an enchanted duck pond and enjoys watching the geese land at dusk. You can find her at LeighTherriault.com and @LeighTherriault in the multiverse.

Mark Thomas

Mark Thomas is an artist and writer living in St. Catharines, Ontario. In a previous life he was a teacher, wrestling coach, and ex-member of Canada's national rowing team. Website: <https://flamingdogshit.com/>.

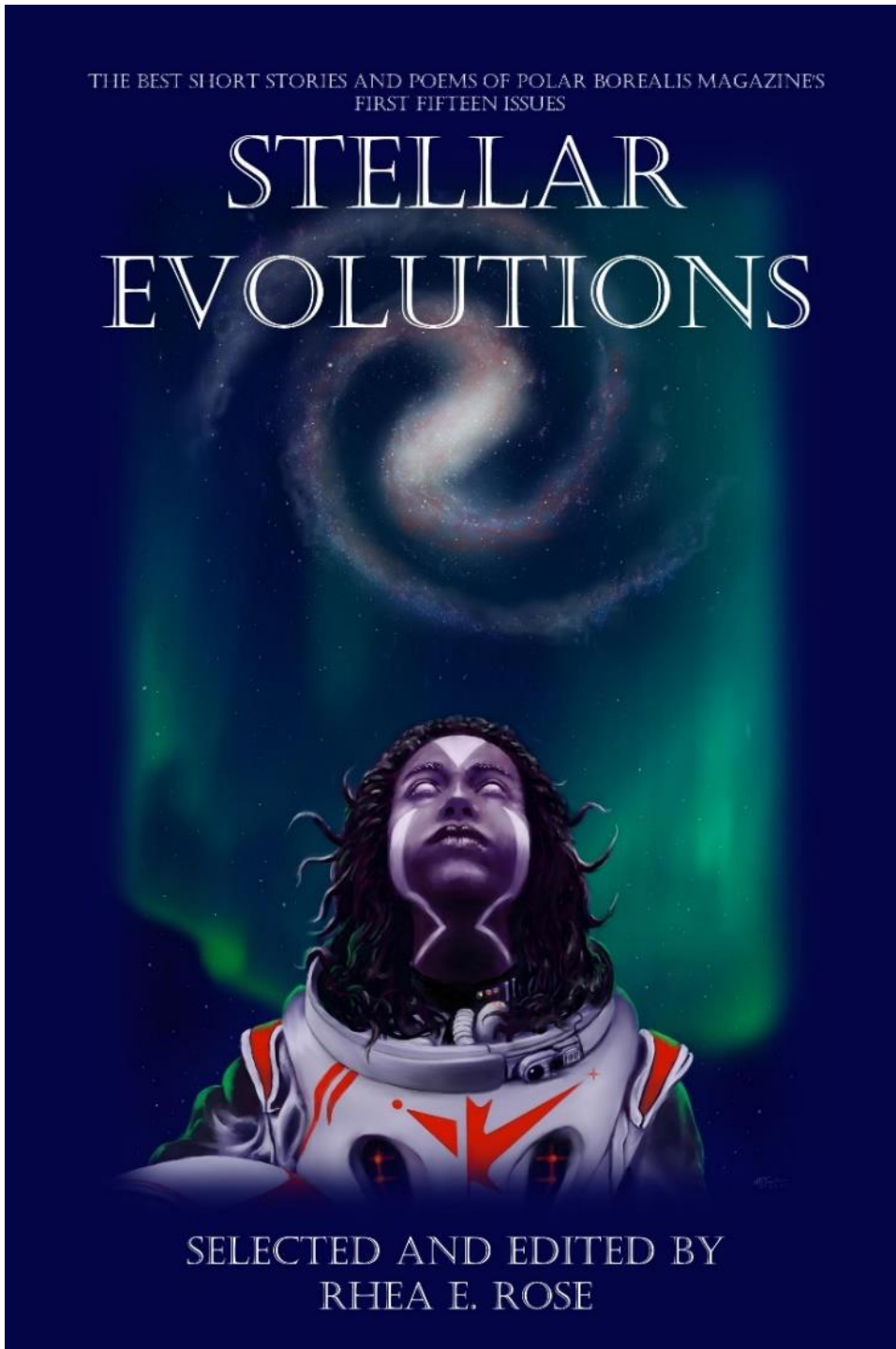
Lisa Timpf

Lisa is a retired HR and communications professional who lives in Simcoe, Ontario. When not writing, she enjoys bird watching, vegetable gardening, and walking her cocker spaniel/Jack Russel mix Chet. Her speculative poetry has appeared in *New Myths*, *Star*Line*, *Triangulation: Seven-Day Weekend*, *Eye to the Telescope*, and other venues. Her collection of speculative haibun poetry, *In Days to Come*, is available from Hiraeth Publishing. You can find out more about Lisa's writing projects at <http://lisatimpf.blogspot.com/>.

Polar Starlight #16 will appear in August.

It will contain *cover art* by Swati Chavda and *poetry* by Patricia Evans, Lynne Taylor Fahnestalk, Greg Fewer, Neile Graham, Guy Omega, Rio Murphy, KB Nelson, John Park, Rhea E. Rose, Jennifer Shelby, Frances Skene, Marcie Lynn Tentchoff, Mark Thomas, Lisa Timpf and Kyle Wendt.

The Best Short Stories and Poems from the first Fifteen Issues of *Polar Borealis* Magazine



Cover: Space Force
– by M.D. Jackson

Poetry – by Lynne Sargent, J.J. Steinfeld, Melanie Martilla, Lisa Timpf, Kirsten Emmott, Catherine Girczyc, Andrea Schlecht, Selena Martens, JYT Kennedy, Taral Wayne & Walter Wentz, Douglas Shimizu, Marcie Lynn Tentchoff, Matt Moore, Richard Stevenson, Mary Choo, and Y.A. Pang.

Stories – by Mark Braidwood, Jonathan Sean Lyster, JYT Kennedy, Casey June Wolf, Monica Sagle, K.M. McKenzie, Jeremy A. Cook, Lawrence Van Hoof, Lisa Voisin, Elizabeth Buchan-Kimmerly, Dean Wirth, Robert Dawson, Michael Donoghue, Steve Fahnestalk, Michelle F. Goddard, Chris Campeau, Ben Nein, Karl Johanson, William Lewis, Tonya Liburd, Jon Gauthier, Jonathan Creswell-Jones, and Akem.

Available on Kindle for \$2.99 CAD

Go To: [Kindle version via Amazon.ca](#)

Or you can order it as a 209-page paperback, 9 x 6 inches in size, for \$15.00 CAD.

Go to: [Print version via Amazon.ca](#)