

POLAR STARLIGHT

Magazine of Canadian Speculative Poetry
(Issue #16 – August/September 2024)



POLAR STARLIGHT MAGAZINE

Issue #16 – August/September 2024 (Vol. 4#4. WN#16)

Publisher: R. Graeme Cameron

Editor: Rhea E. Rose

Proofreader: Steve Fahnestalk

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

- 04) – EDITORIAL – by Rhea E. Rose
- 05) – RELATIVE TIME – by Guy Immega
- 07) – PARDON ME WHILE I DELIQUESCE – by Jennifer Shelby
- 08) – THE MEDUSA EFFECT – by Rhea E. Rose
- 10) – TR DISCUSSES SOME REMAINS IN THE TIME-VAULT – by John Park
- 11) – ALGERNON WORTHINGTON COG – by Lynne Taylor Fahnestalk
- 12) – PLEASE UNPLUG COFFEE MAKER PRIOR TO CHECKOUT
– by Mark Thomas
- 13) – SPIRALLING BEAUTY – by Patricia Evans
- 14) – THE BELLS – by Frances Skene
- 15) – PARISIENNE – by Mark Thomas
- 17) – TERROR – by Greg Fewer
- 18) – THE ATOMIC LANGUAGE – by Rio Murphy
- 19) – IS THE FUTURE CYBERPUNK – by Kyle Wendt
- 20) – WE'RE BACK – by Lisa Timpf
- 21) – SECOND THOUGHTS – by Marcie Lynn Tentchoff
- 22) – THE NIGHT WE SHUT OUT THE CHILDREN – by Neile Graham
- 23) – SONG OF THE WOLF – by KB Nelson
- 24) – A REVIEW – by Rhea E. Rose
- 25) – About the Poets and Artist
- 32) – IN MEMORIAM: FRANCES SKENE –by Rhea E. Rose

ART CREDITS – COVER: *Road to the Sky* – by Swati Chavda

**THIS ISSUE
DEDICATED
TO
THE MEMORY
OF
FRANCES SKENE**

DECEMBER 18, 1937 – JUNE 17, 2024

EDITORIAL

By Rhea E. Rose

Welcome to the final issue of *Polar Starlight* for 2024! It's truly astonishing to see how far we've come in such a short span of time. Tempus Fugit, indeed. It feels like just yesterday that we launched our very first issue, and now we're presenting the sixteenth edition, continuing to highlight the vibrant and imaginative world of Canadian speculative poetry.

In this issue, our poets explore a myriad of speculative landscapes. From the haunting echoes of history in Frances Skene's "The Bells" to the cosmic musings on time in Guy Immega's "Relative Time" we are transported through eras and galaxies. Jennifer Shelby's "Pardon Me While I Deliquesce" invites us to witness the delicate dance of decay and rebirth, while my own "The Medusa Effect" transforms environmental science into mythic poetry, blending modern innovation with ancient legend.

As you delve into issue 16, let your imagination soar with John Park's whimsical "TR Discusses Some Remains in the Time Vault," and feel the rush of humour in Lynne Taylor Fahnestalk's "Algernon Worthington Cog." A limerick of sorts. Mark Thomas' "Parisienne" offers a gritty, fast-paced ride through a night filled with otherworldly dangers, while Patricia Evans' "Spiralling Beauty" captures the ethereal elegance of cosmic travel.

Our journey has been marked by notable achievements. And I'll talk more about these in this issue's review. Graeme and I have poured our hearts into this poetry project, driven by our love for speculative poetry and our desire to support and showcase Canadian talent. From our early days at the Vancouver Science Fiction Convention to the inception of *Polar Starlight*, this journey has been nothing short of extraordinary.

As we close the chapter on 2024, we look forward with anticipation to the many speculative poems yet to be discovered and celebrated. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey. Here's to many more years of shining a light on the brilliance of Canadian speculative poets.

Until next year, keep imagining, keep writing, and keep pushing the boundaries of the fantastical.

Happy reading!

Rhea E. Rose

RELATIVE TIME

By Guy Immega

Thermodynamic diktat:
the cosmic clock's arrow
flies in one direction;
The past has passed
The present is forever
The future is in doubt.

Einstein upstaged Newton;
Special time dilates,
Mass grows heavier;
General gravity accelerates,
Curved geodesics dance;
And the universe expands.

Elastic eons, variable rates,
Summer fast, winter slow;
Compressed during drama,
dense with expectations
but vaporous and elusive,
When joy distracts.

Our first decade,
an endless year,
a tenth of a lifetime;
When we're aged
the metronome's tick
Becomes a buzz.

Nobody knows
their fatal finale;
But elders understand
life's fragile bargain
and the exponential value of
Remaining moments.

Time's archer shoots
faster and faster;
We try to catch
the flying bolts
to memorialize
Existential truth.

PARDON ME WHILE I DELIQUESCE

by Jennifer Shelby

I am made of soil and secrets
Rising from a storm,
but quick to wither
and deliquesce into a pool of ink
I dip my pen into the ink of me and write these words
these letters of my decomposition
my fruiting bodies
my eruptions and my little deaths
Come and catch the spore of me
I am daughter to the Underworld
my true body lingers there, mycelial
mats curled around the bones of the dead
they get so cold there in the dirt
they like the way I squish
they like the way I ink
they like the way I decompose

THE MEDUSA EFFECT

By Rhea E. Rose

Inspired by the article found at, bit.ly/3W7Qlem

Iceland,
a lone mantle, tougher than
reindeer bone, intimate with
all things cold, all things hard,
all things stone.

Hellisheidi Power plant
sucks CO₂ from the hot
breath of industry,
mixes a hellish shamanic brew,
hydrogen Sulfide and H₂O,
creates a carbonated soda drink
only a girl like Medusa might think
tastes good on ice.

To clear the crisp Icelandic
atmosphere of hot pollutants,
an alchemical hydrologist
captures and cooks into rock,
a carbon dioxide stew.

Hot Medusa, ancient goddess,
vacations in Icelandic breezes,
cooling those serpents in the arctic freezes,
She likes lounging on old lava chairs turned basalt.

The alchemical hydrologist knows a hydra
TikTok star when he sees one. Asks her for
a selfie taken with his phone and thanks
her for not turning him to stone,
She is on holiday, after all.

He sets her image by his flowing vat of brew
pinned above the heated CO₂, calcium,
iron, and magnesium, react to her sweet smile,
to form a solid stony stew set forever in the mantle of Icelandic time.

When Medusa returned to her land of heat and sun,
She never knew what goodness she had done.

TR DISCUSSES SOME REMAINS IN THE TIME-VAULT

by John Park

This creature was bipedal, but small,
larger than a hatchling
but barely big enough to feed a yearling pair.

Its head is grotesque.
A sphere, with the eyes, nose and mouth
crammed together on one sector,
less than half the whole.
Its jaw is small and weak
Its teeth rudimentary.
We surmise it fed on flying insects or vegetation.

Very remarkable are its upper limbs.
Anchored by bony struts to its thorax
they end in a cluster of long but feeble digits
blunt-tipped and without claws.
These limbs must have dangled below its waist
and surely would have impeded its motion had it tried to run.
One wonders what possible use this creature had for them.

Most striking of course is the completely undeveloped tail,
no more than a slight extension of the lower spine.
Without any counterweight or anchor for the leg muscles
this creature must have tottered upright
swinging its upper limbs before it,
clumsily darting its swollen head after fruits or flies
snapping at them with its tiny jaws.

We consider ourselves most fortunate to have found
even one specimen of
so fascinatingly primitive a creature.

ALGERNON WORTHINGTON COG

by Lynne Taylor Fahnestalk

Algernon Worthington Cog
Was partial to alien grog.
One night after drinking,
The Martians came slinking
And took him away in the fog.

The trip was a bit of a slog
But he kept a meticulous log
That told of the bars
He encountered on Mars
Which became his most popular blog!

PLEASE UNPLUG COFFEE MAKER PRIOR TO CHECKOUT

by Mark Thomas

If I were a motel
I would sit on a riverbank,
overlooking a rock-strewn rapid,
with an island bifurcating
the rushing water.

If someone built me, instead,
near an airport or casino
I would shake off the neon
and walk, stiff-hipped, away.

I'm sure people would point,
and talk,
and wonder why an enormous
concrete pile was monster-plodding
through the landscape,
stepping over medians and offramps,
trailing hydro wires
and sewer pipe entrails.

There would be nothing, really, I could say
to justify the dereliction.

But motels have dreams
and mine is to sit on a riverbank
near a rapid, and watch
the waters rise and fall
with the seasons.

SPIRALLING BEAUTY

by Patricia Evans

We
or is it I
twist and turn
our body a stream of golden dust
coiling around planets and stars
suns shine in our aureate trail
we travel
through the cosmos
our path
lighting up galaxies
our glistening bodies,
(or is it body)
interlacing brilliance
into dark space
travellers on the solar wind
a collective of beauty
radiant
eddies of gilded motes
spiralling through the universe

THE BELLS

by Frances Skene

Villagers tell me of the man who
cast the bells for the tower
long ago, before he took passage
on a steamer to another continent.

The bells don't ring. Instead,
they mark each hour from one
to twelve, day after day, with a
sound from the past: roars of
giant lizards, coos of dodos, or
the stone-upon-stone scraping of
a temple being built, by slaves.

At last, the bells get to sounds of
muskets in the killing fields
of modern war, or calls of the
last moose in a dried-up marsh,

and then they start again:
rumbling volcanoes on a new Earth,
or roaring waves in an ocean
still innocent of life.

PARISIENNE

by Mark Thomas

A fluorescent diamond-shaped sign
warns me of "Night Danger,"
and features the sharp-edged silhouette
of a leaping deer.

The Parisienne doesn't care;
it snarls, eager to slaughter
any creature that
crawls from the tangled ditches.

The Parisienne sprays gravel
at foolish hopes and false memories,
and tells me to drive faster, faster

and I comply.

After all,
the leaping deer on this road
are otherworldly,
they are alien cattle,
dropped on the planet to graze
by their intergalactic shepherds.
The space-deer snort liquid bismuth and
antler-spar with telephone poles,
while transport ships
hum and circle the night sky, above.

If the Parisienne somehow
manages to kill one,
slashing its throat with headlight beams,
there'll be no complaint
from the interlopers.
They'll simply round up survivors
And slink to another planet.

I grip the wheel
and drive faster, faster,
while the *real* night dangers crouch.

TERROR

by Greg Fewer

undead horde
they stagger towards us
lightning-lit horrors
we huddle inside our homes
will the barricades hold?

THE ATOMIC LANGUAGE

By Rio Murphy

I live trying not to feel what you feel.
It's not even about your skin.
It's about seeing you
behind your fluttering eyelashes,
hiding behind a persona that
you stitch together
in every moment
anew.
Intimacy.
I can't bare all this potential energy.
You pass me on the street
looking like a city full of strangers
I am lost in.

IS THE FUTURE CYBERPUNK

By Kyle Wendt

Wires burning under the surface
Intertwined with charred nerves
That can't feel the metal slicing in and out
Through the surgical slits in what looks like skin
But we are now so much more than flesh and bone
Infrared vision sees through neon signs on concrete
Chrome with smoking bullet holes
Like painted red-tipped cigarettes
That light up like the real thing
But nothing is real
Holograms behind the windowpane
To pull your heartstrings inside
Where they can feed you cheap whiskey
And play music from when you heard that things were better
In the good old days

WE'RE BACK

by Lisa Timpf

fresh back from outer space
we're wobbly legged as newborn beasts
tears fall—it's no disgrace
fresh back from outer space
we're trying to find our place

fresh back from outer space
we look around at Earth—
familiar faces all around
yet we're uneasy, on the ground,
this is the planet of our birth
but we have flown too far—
please send us back to outer space
our home's now with the stars

SECOND THOUGHTS

By Marcie Lynn Tentchoff

At the spaceport, waiting for our ship
while Callie tries to smash her Spig Spig doll
into the baby's tertial orifice,
and Arvic races through his seventh comic
(though we've only brought him twenty-three to last the trip)
on his latest (still under warranty, thank Twill!) nasal projector,
I wonder once again if, instead of bowing
to the promise that we've made for revs
to take the kids to Jump Grav World,
we might have pleaded poverty (or sanity)
and hit the trans-stream carnival
just down the Belt.

THE NIGHT WE SHUT OUT THE CHILDREN

By Neile Graham

They were biting each other.
Crying, shouting, long screams.
Damn, they were loud.
Then their faces at the window,
little fists and foreheads aglow
in lamp light banging the glass,
leaving tears and snot and swipes
of blood. Frenzy like nothing I've
ever seen before. Nothing
you've ever seen. Not that you'd
ever see anything again,
full of bitter night trauma
you had blinded yourself.
I'd have called you Oedipus
if you'd ever had a mother.
And I wasn't yours. I was no one's.
Ever. Since now the children were gone.
Such a long, slow night,
scratching and wails, inside and out,
wetting fresh compresses
to salve your previously sea-deep
eyes. A night stuffed with basilisk,
minotaur, chimera, manticore,
our little nightmare chain
head to toe head to toe head to toe
tucked up and dreaming in
the morning sun, sparking with dew,
about to wake.

SONG OF THE WOLF

By KB Nelson

When I first met you,
silly basket in hand on that forest path,
I marked the dimples in your knees,
and how your curls tumbled
over your red cape,
soft as your words, as your bones.
I like a bit of the world in my fare—
sharpness in my cheese
and experience in my wine.
Patience is one of my strong suits
and had well served my life
of rich indulgence,
but not this time.
While I bided in silence,
wagged my tail like some lowly cur,
your callow fingernail found
a discontented spot behind my ear
that I hadn't known was in need.
I had forgotten the delight of quiet joy;
unwittingly, you saved us both.
Now we are tempered,
you've become both round and angular,
while my muzzle is white
and my teeth blunted and brown.
Soon I'll be gone
and my silence will be forever.
When I am no longer,
remove my worn coat
and discard your hooded cape.
Wrap yourself in my tanned pelt,
and plant lupines and red poppies
over my buried, naked remains.
Howl.

A REVIEW

By Rhea E. Rose

Well, here we are at the end. It's hard to believe the last issue for 2024 has arrived. Wow! Worth repeating—Tempus Fugit. I had to count the issues several times in my mind to convince myself that this was the fourth for this year, the sixteenth since we started *Polar Starlight* in 2021. It seems *Polar Starlight* has always been here, highlighting Canadian speculative poets' works, but it hasn't. It's only been four years (this is the fourth), a flash in the universal pan of time.

Since its inception, *Polar Starlight* has garnered three Aurora Nominations for Best Fan Writing and Publication. We celebrated Carolyn Clink's win for Best Poem/Song at the 2022 Aurora Awards with her piece ["Cat People Cafe."](#) Additionally, our poets have been recognized for their contributions across various prestigious platforms, including the coveted Rhysling Award. This year, we have *three Polar Starlight* poets—Marcie Tentchoff, Carolyn Clink, and Colleen Anderson—nominated for this esteemed honor.

Here are some of our notable achievements:

- One nomination for Best Cover, issue #1, (Artist, Swati Chavda.)
- Five Aurora Award nominations for *Polar Starlight* poetry and authors.
- A win in 2022 for Carolyn Clink in the Best Poem/Song category for her poem "Cat People Cafe," published in issue #3, October 2021.

These are the kudos I know of—there might be more out there! I'd like to see these successes grow over the years and I'm sure they will.

Graeme and I have worked together for many years in the writers' workshops at the Vancouver Science Fiction Convention (VCON). Eventually, I retired from my busy life as an English high-school teacher. I recall speaking with Graeme about helping him with his publications. I thought I could be a slush reader. I knew he was swamped with his review writing and publications. He's a very efficient reader and writer, and he doesn't need much in the way of help, so I suggested I do a book highlighting my favourite stories and poems from the first fifteen issues of his publication *Polar Borealis*. He

agreed, and [Stellar Evolutions](#) was born! But that wasn't enough for me, and I wanted to do more. He mentioned his idea to create a publication for Canadian poets, and *Polar Starlight* was born.

As we close the chapter on 2024, I look forward with anticipation to the many speculative poems yet to be discovered and celebrated. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey, and here's to many more years of shining a light on the brilliance of Canadian speculative poets. Until next year, keep imagining, keep writing, and keep pushing the boundaries of the fantastical.

Rhea E. Rose

ABOUT THE POETS AND ARTIST

Swati Chavda

Swati Chavda is an author, editor, artist, and a former neurosurgeon. After years of repairing people's brains, in 2010 she left her thriving neurosurgery career to follow her passion to become a full-time writer. She has published a self-help book: *Ignite: Beat Burnout & Rekindle Your Inner Fire*, and two illustrated poetry books. Her poem *At the Edge of Space and Time* is a 2020 Aurora Award winner.

She also writes speculative fiction, where her characters tend to seek answers to questions ranging from "Is there life after death?" to "Should there be life before breakfast?" She uses too many commas, too few coffee breaks—and there's a constant battle waging in her head between British and American spelling.

Website: www.swatichavda.com

Patricia Evans

Patricia prefers to write horror and sci-fi short stories. She has been published in *The Yellow Booke*, *Culture Cult* and *The Horror Zine*. She has also been published in several on-line flash fiction horror sites, which have since closed down. She is not sure if this is related to the quality of her work but firmly believes in coincidence. She is a recovering lawyer who practiced family law for too many years, where she came across stories and events more shocking than anything she could put into her narratives. She lives in Vancouver, but eschews all the bright, fun, outdoor things the city is notorious for. Instead, she prefers to look for quiet, out of the way coffee shops where she can sit undisturbed and think about her next dark story. She has never been and does not ever intend to be, a parent to a small four-legged animal.

Lynne Taylor Fahnestalk

Lynne spent most of her childhood drawing dinosaurs and purple bunnies. Later, she started her own printing company, was art director for three national magazines, created a comic strip about cows, fixed a printing press with a bobby pin, produced *The Science Fiction Colouring Book*, and illustrated an Ichthyology textbook. She has also discussed composting toilets with Frank Herbert and penmanship with Harlan Ellison.

Lynne is an illustrator, cartoonist, and sculptor. She is a two-time recipient of the Canadian Prix Aurora Award for Artistic Achievement, and her artwork has appeared in numerous publications including *Amazing Stories Magazine*, *On Spec Magazine*, *Polar Borealis*, *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, *Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine*, *Pulphouse*, and *Science Fiction Review*.

Lynne's current passion is creating one-of-a-kind robot sculptures from upcycled metal objects. The question she is asked most often about her Bots is, "Do they move?" and her answer is "Not when I've been looking."

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 Catalog*, *The Sirens Call*, *Utopia Science Fiction*, and *Worth 1,0000 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.

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.

Rio Murphy

Rio's very first published Science Fiction story was in *Polar Borealis*! She was so emboldened by that success she has continued to write more stories.

She recently graduated from the Manuscript Development program at Humber College. She hopes to have her book, *Frugal Chariots*, the tale of a dysfunctional family, (of course) set during the end of the world (when else could it be?) ready to publish in 2025, barring the actual end of the world.

Her story "Cyclops" won first prize in the Pickering Public Library Short Story contest. She will be bragging about that until the day she dies.

You can read her story at: <https://pickeringlibrary.ca/ppl-writing-contest/>

KB Nelson

KB Nelson is a Canadian writer who has won awards in both poetry and short fiction. You can find her work in a variety of publications including *SurVision*, *Bethlehem Writers Roundtable*, *Sea-To-Sky Review*, and *The Wild Word*. Her chapbook *The Muse of Natural History* was published in June 2021. KB has resided from coast to coast in Canada, in Arizona, and in New Zealand. She currently lives on the sunshine coast of B.C.

John Park

John has published one novel, *Janus* (2011), and a similar volume of short fiction, most recently in James Gunn's *Ad Astra #10*, in

The State of the Ark, edited by Lesley Choyce (a reprint), and in *The Nameless Songs of Zadok Allen* (JayHenge Publishing).

John was born in England and educated there and at the University of British Columbia, a process which temporarily converted him into a chemical physicist. Since the late 1970s he has lived in Ottawa, where he is now retired. He likes a number of dead artists (Beethoven, Golding, Le Guin, Pratchett...) and disapproves of such phrases as “centre around,” “hone in on,” and the use of “epicentre” to mean “centre.” Rediscovering some of his childhood love of dinosaurs, John finds that while he wasn’t looking their numbers have grown to an astonishing degree.

Rhea E. Rose

Rhea Rose writes and publishes short fiction and poetry. She was 2019’s guest writer and presenter at Wordsmiths writers’ retreat/workshop at University of BC’s Carey Center, and featured writer in *Pulp Literature*’s issue #35 summer 2022. As well, she was the featured poet in 2021 in *On Spec magazine*’s autumn publication. She has been nominated for several awards.

Website: www.byrhearose.com,
[Instagram @roseypoesy577](https://www.instagram.com/roseypoesy577)

[X \(Twitter\) @rheaerose1](https://twitter.com/rheaerose1)
TikTok: @rosewriter7

She is editor of *Polar Starlight Magazine* for speculative poetry. For sample issue, see: <https://polarborealis.ca/>

Jennifer Shelby

Jennifer hunts for poems in the beetled undergrowth of fairy-infested forests. She fishes for them in the dark space between stars. As part of her ongoing catch-and-release program, a collection of her stories is going to the Moon with the Lunar Codex. You can read more about that at <https://jennifershelby.blog/>.

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.

See “In Memoriam” on page 32.

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*.

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.

Check out his website: 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/>.

Kyle Wendt

Kyle is Canadian, born in Kelowna, B.C., but is living in Germany to attend university, although he still retains his Canadian nationality.

ATTENTION POETS!

By R. Graeme Cameron

Effective immediately, both *Polar Starlight* and *Polar Borealis* are open to poetry submissions through to the end of September.

You may submit poems of any length up to 60 lines, and up to five poems total. We pay a standard rate of \$10.00 per poem.

Rhea accepts only original submissions for *Polar Starlight*, but I will consider reprints for *Polar Borealis* (though I prefer originals).

The poems can be any type, from traditional to Avant Garde, as long as the subject matter is genre, i.e. related in some way to Science Fiction, Fantasy, or Horror in theme.

We both treasure originality. Surprise us.

Take note, both *Polar Starlight* and *Polar Borealis* are narrow-niche Canadian magazines specializing only in Canadians, Canadian landed immigrants, Canadian expats, or foreigners long resident in Canada.

Send your submissions to polar.borealis.magazine@gmail.com

IN MEMORIAM: FRANCES SKENE

DECEMBER 18, 1937 – JUNE 17, 2024

By Rhea E. Rose

Remembering Fran

I was shocked when I heard of Fran's passing. I think I took her presence for granted. I'd met her for the first time somewhere in the early to mid-'80s when I went to my first or second VCON. She introduced herself to me in an elevator and I thought she was a cool "older lady" doing the convention. I had no idea then and perhaps I never knew until now how deep her roots went when it came to VCON. I was blissfully unaware of her efforts and the efforts of those who made VCONs happen. I fell in love with VCON and went every year after my first time. And every year I saw Fran, walking the halls, up the elevator, down the elevator, in the audience listening to a panel. Fran was there. I only knew the part of Fran exposed above the surface of VCON's convention waters. I knew her as a writer, a retired librarian (perhaps not retired during those first meetings in the '80s), and Sylvia's mom.

I was an avid reader of science fiction and fantasy, but I'd never heard of fandom, the Vancouver Science Fiction Convention nor had I heard of anyone involved in that world. I came to it all very late in my mid-20s. I took a writing course in Burnaby with Eileen Kernaghan, who became a mentor to all of us early writers, penning out our first attempts at science fiction and fantasy stories and poems. Somewhere in there, I took a writing workshop with Susan Wood, held in her apartment! I had no idea about Susan's or Fran's connection to VCON, UBC, and all the rest.

Eileen and Bill Gibson used to do talks and workshops together, in Burnaby at the Burnaby Art Center, now Shadbolt (it's all a bit fuzzy), and wherever they went, there went I hoping to learn through osmosis how to write in my favourite genre. Eileen encouraged me to go to VCON because they had writers' workshops, and there I met Michael Coney who was one of the pros in the writers' workshop. He was hilarious and told all of us wannabe writers that none of us could write, but that I had written a pretty good sex scene! And Fran was always there, in the audience listening quietly, hanging out in the restaurant with us for breakfast or dinner, laughing with a sharp comment

about something ironic. Still, I never knew Fran was a serious writer! I thought she dabbled. Not until I took up the *Polar Starlight* reins, did I discover that Fran was a professional poet and writer. I remember the first time I read her poetry for an early issue of *Polar Starlight*, thinking, Fran where have you been hiding? But she hadn't been hiding, more like unassuming and encouraging, never putting her writing interests ahead of others.

Over the years, I saw Fran get frail, but I saw her resilience, too. And often she'd rally from her serious ailments, and I just expected her to keep on keeping on, to keep being that comforting, supportive, wry person she always was to me and to others who wanted to write. And she did keep on. Until she didn't. It's my privilege to have worked so closely with her poetry in *Polar Starlight*. I've come to appreciate and admire Fran's work on a deeper level. The cosmos has gained another star.

Francis Skene poems in *Polar Starlight* and *Polar Borealis*.

Poem – *Walls* – PB #19 – September 2021

Poem – *Pipes* – PB #20 – December 2021

Poem – *Daughter of Spring* – PS #05 – March 2022

Poem – *Afterward: Iterations* – PB #21 – May 2022

Poem – *Love and Amoebas* – PS #06 – June 2022

Poem – *Angels* – PS #06 – June 2022

Poem – *Paths* – PB #22 – July 2022

Poem – *Winged Viper* – PS #08 – January 2023

Poem – *Tea and Aliens* – PS #09 – March 2023

Poem – *Moments* – PS #10 – May 2023

Poem – *Death* – PS #11 – July 2023

Poem – *New God* – PS #12 – January 2024

Poem – *Terminus* – PS #13 – February 2024

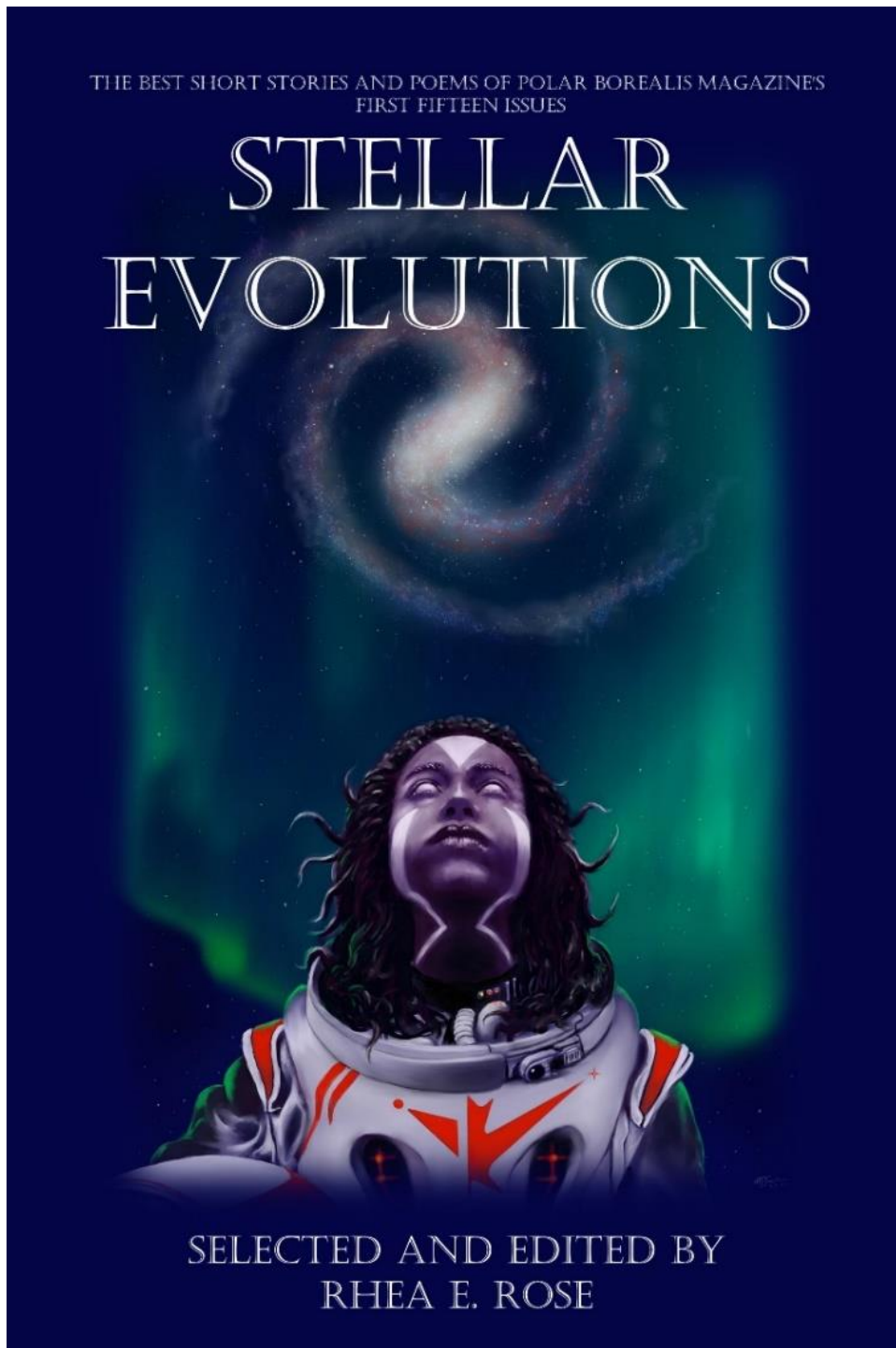
Poem – *The Well* – PS #14 – April 2024

Poem – *Immortal* – PS #15 – June 2024

Poem – *Dandelions* – PS #15 – June 2024

Poem – *The Bells* – PS #16 – August 2024

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 Fahnstalk, Michelle F. Goddard, Chris Campeau, Ben Nein, Karl Johanson, William Lewis, Tonya Liburd, Jon Gauthier, Jonathan Creswell-Jones, and Akem.

Available on Kindle for \$5.00 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](#)