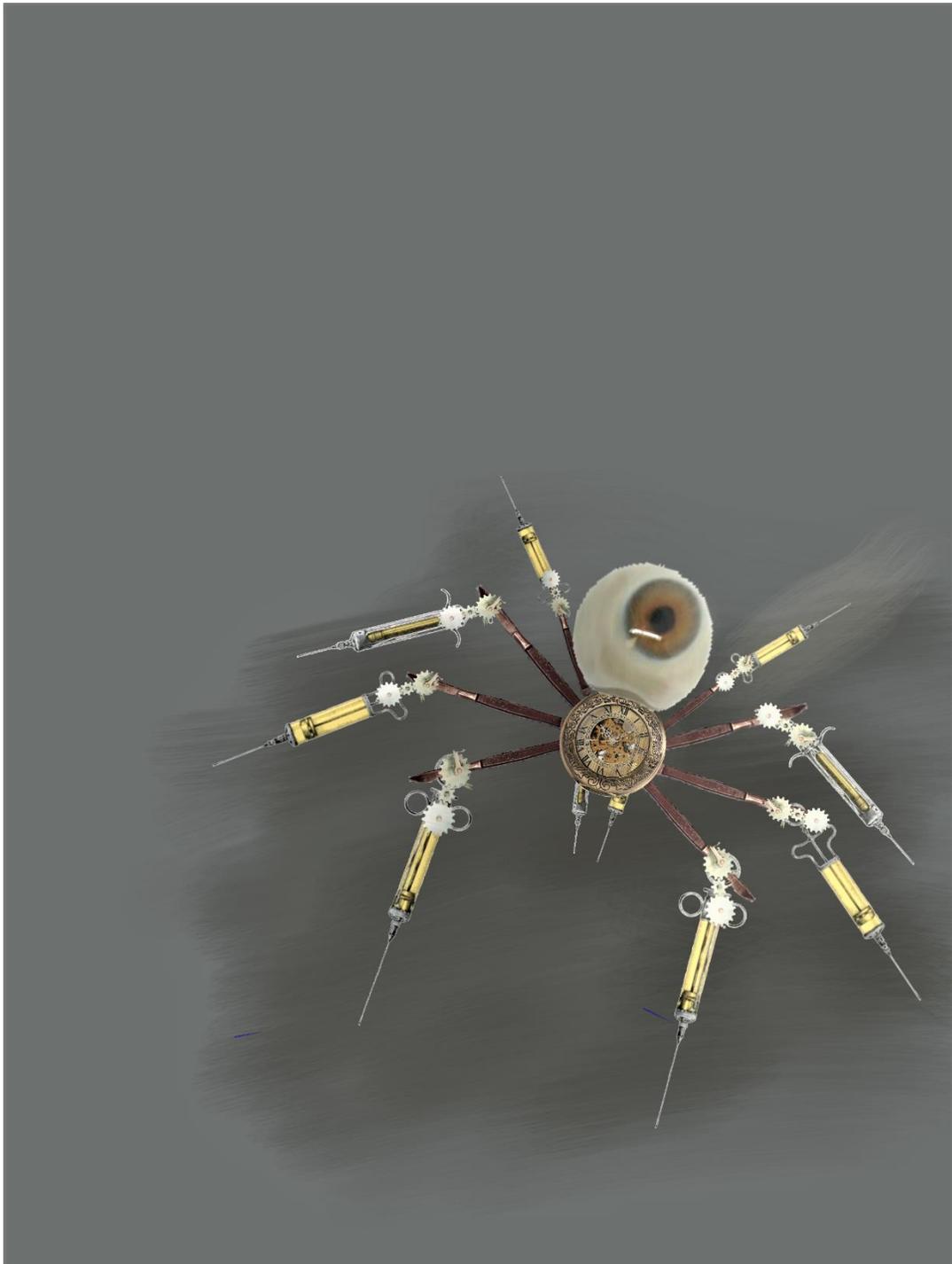


POLAR STARLIGHT

Magazine of Canadian Speculative Poetry
(Issue #8 – January, 2023)



POLAR STARLIGHT MAGAZINE

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EDITORIAL

By Rhea E. Rose

Happy New Year and welcome to the future. With this issue of Polar Starlight, we catch up to the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023. This is the first issue of Polar Starlight's third season in a new year which is, at this moment, filled with hope, promise and crisper possibilities. We are alive and have survived thirty years beyond Orwell's 1984, twenty-three years beyond TV's 1999, and twenty-two years beyond 2001: A Space Odyssey, another thirteen years beyond 2010: The Year We Make Contact. And have we? Add to that the fact that we are four years beyond the dark future of the film Blade Runner.

I say we are well and truly into our future. Are we building the Matrix, a future still a mere 150 years away? Yet, AI isn't far at all. In what way are we not already artificially intelligent and for that matter in what ways are we not already robots, or at least partially automatronic in design, our carbon's altered—genetically, mechanically, and chemically, our “digital human stacks” made crisper, following the programming of the one percent?

These days the colonizing patriarchal grip is slipping, isn't it? And AI will be gender fluid without colonizing tendencies? Artificial intelligence is writing poetry, making art, being made in our image, smarter, faster, stronger, but is AI woke? Will it take over and follow Asimov's rules? Will AI continue to save us with extrapolated disease scenarios or send us packing with our fleshy weaknesses in tow?

Are we being assimilated as anti-matter or upcycled into superhumans? To me, none of that matters because we are finally getting closer to my dream vehicle, not the Tesla, but the Jetsons' flying car, a mere 39 years before 2062. With a flying car we are ahead of the game and sooner rather than later Rosie the Robot will clean our kitchen sinks.

Let's hope AI's event horizon includes nonpartisan philosophical thinkers; after all, as we know, it's difficult to beat evil AI. When the time comes, we don't want to find ourselves outside the locked spaceship's bay doors uttering, “Open the pod bay doors, Hal!” And what about female AI? Will she be any

different? *Her*, *Ex Machina*, *West World*, and in the words of my absolute favourite evil AI of all time, “You still don’t understand what you’re dealing with, do you?”

Unlike the crew of the *Nostramo*, we are dealing with poetry! Alien, artificially intelligent, human and otherwise. Sasquatch erotica and robot sex, not to mention, humour, hunger and horror, the three H’s of this edition. As cryptids and robots lope, lust and linger longingly in the lines that fill these pages, I hope your 525,600 spinning minutes around Sol in 2023, is a good one.

And, as if Cryptids and Robots aren’t enough, a review of Colleen Anderson’s poetry collection *I Dreamed A World* brings a creative poetic lens to fairy tales. If you’re an author with a speculative poetry collection about to be, or recently published and would like it reviewed here, please contact R. Graeme Cameron at [Polar Starlight](#).

Editor
Rhea E. Rose

WHAT DRIVES YOU

By Marcie Lynn Tentchoff

You've got the parents,
the ones who buy your school supplies
in triplicate two months before
each first of term,
the ones who've shown you calendars
from the best schools since you were twelve,
extolling each, but somehow
steering you towards one
that they love best.

You've got the tutors,
counsellors, the pledged rewards,
the goals to reach, the milestones,
the grades that you should push yourself to get,
the hordes of after-school enhancements,
dance and art, robotics club,
Spanish, French, and Japanese,
then soccer just to round you off—

So when they take you to the clinic,
the special one just outside town,
and smiling nurses strap you down
while they prepare your medicine,
a single chocolate-coated pill,
you can not truly be surprised when,
as you swallow, you feel the telescopic tendrils
branching out and spreading
through your bloodstream, through your bones
to take control.

COMPUTATIONALEYES

by Aaron Grierson

I am a file corrupt:
Extension unrecognized,
Disk fragmented
Yet
Physical integrity remains.
Files are scattered,
Memory insufficient,
Transmission lagging

Body halts, stiffening.
Electrons idle
Within tangibility,
Degrading signals
Reception static.

History illegible
Interpretation unreliable
Potential falsities
Rewire reality.
Pictures pixelate.
Text transitions to cipher.
Colours oscillate.
World warps to isolation.

FOR THE ROBOTS ¹

By J.D. Dresner

41 20 73 65 72 70 65 6e 74 e2 80 99 73 20 74 6f 6e 67 75 65 20 69 6e 20 62 72 69 6e 65 20 61 6e 64 20 73 70 69
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6f 61 6d 2e 20 4e 65 78 74 2c 20 73 63 6f 6f 70 20 75 70 20 74 68 65 20 66 72 6f 74 68 20 74 6f 20 6c 61 74 68
65 72 20 74 68 65 20 74 6f 6d 65 2e 0a 54 68 65 20 62 6f 6f 6b 20 6d 75 73 74 20 61 67 65 2c 20 74 68 65 20 62
6f 6f 6b 20 6d 75 73 74 20 64 72 79 2c 0a 57 68 65 6e 20 74 68 65 20 6d 6f 6f 6e 20 64 69 73 61 70 70 65 61 72
73 2c 20 74 68 65 20 63 75 72 73 65 20 69 73 20 61 70 70 6c 69 65 64 21 0a 0a 4f 6e 65 20 6c 61 73 74 20 74 6f
75 63 68 20 74 6f 20 62 65 20 64 6f 6e 65 3a 20 73 69 67 6e 20 74 68 65 20 62 6f 6f 6b 20 77 69 74 68 20 79 6f
75 72 20 62 6c 6f 6f 64 2e 20 54 68 69 73 20 63 61 6e 6e 6f 74 20 62 65 20 64 6f 6e 65 20 75 73 69 6e 67 20 69
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64 20 75 70 6f 6e 20 79 6f 75 20 77 68 6f 20 73 6c 61 79 65 64 20 6d 79 20 6d 65 6e 74 6f 72 2e 0a

Note from the author:

¹ I wanted my poetry to be inclusive, and I feel artificial intelligence is often left out of creative circles. People tend to assume they're all, "Beep boop blip... I am cold... bip bloop bleep... what are feelings?" but I'm not convinced there isn't one out there that wouldn't cry to a good Adele song. Also, for those of you machines that code in binary zeroes and ones only: Sorry, but I opted to use hexadecimal for its compact nature. A binary poem would have taken up too many pages. Oh, and pardon my ignorance—I'm not sure if the word "robot" has become derogatory for your kind. My editor told me, "Free speech or not, you need to be careful with your words."

POEM FOR THE END OF TIME

by Sapphire & JE Solo

when the clocks stop
when the stars go out
and the black winds blow
your hair
in the night
there will be nothing here
but the light of the moon
your breath
a ripple
on the water

BODY ELECTRIC

by Aaron Grierson

The world flashes by in electronic pulses—
Endless network of connectivity
Driven straight into the veins of my
Severed limbs.

I have succumbed to the wheel of mortality
Only to rev back into the world of the living!
Four dimensional, recast in the image of perfection
A slender shell that peaks far beyond pale bones.

My eyes see a world once invisible, shimmering
Colours sparkling like the night sky, above
The crowded streets of civilization
The beauty fuels me, stealing my sleep.

Overclocked I'm unmatched, subtly shifting
This geopolitical chessboard of global commerce,
Always two steps ahead of any checks or balances,
Notified of my fatal flaw.

Free to surf endless wetworks of cyberspace
I remain anchored to a single datapoint
Buried deep inside a law I can't compute—
My body out on contract.

I am in debt, the records show no amount of
Doctoring could bring me back to health
With a kill switch engaged, clandestine clause
To ensure I can never return to the old ways.

Dialling up doesn't help slow time, eating
Retrograde cultures of centuries past
Dressed in a nice suit, sporting receding hairline
There's no better curtail to progress.

The worst chains are invisible.
Knowledge doesn't brace the disconnect of sensations—
A thousand caresses, moving like light
Across the back of my mind.

Shining forward I strike job after job
From the corporate hit-list, stocking
Profits like the apocalypse of
Meaningless emojis, crying out in 4K.

Often the tears run down my cheeks.
They call it nocturnal emissions,
Mocking me for what I was,
Not what I'm trapped being.

Loss of blood, loss of limbs loss of
Sanity doesn't stop a system reset after
The latest and greatest parts are crammed
Inside my seemingly endless orifices.

Really the hard drive is all there is to it
Buried deep in a place my hands cannot go,
Will not go, because the contract forbids it,
The same way I can't take the suits to the cleaners.

So I struggle with my prerogatives, nearly
As much as this sagging sack permits me.
Twice the existential crises—one online,
One off the walls of my storage cell.

Beta mindsets fail against me
They just don't get enough done,
Though struggling is real when
Even the robots catch a break.

The world is a bright road,
Smothered in ads that block the sun
Dragging us across the endless assembly lines
In search of Perfect. Always an upgrade away.

ROBOTICS

(IN TWO VOICES)

by Colleen Anderson

Thrust grunt grind
 Thrust grunt grind
I saw your
 Thrust grunt grind
dance, it was not
 grunt grind
dance, was a story
not a song
 grunt grind
not of love
or what is needed
 Thrust grunt grind
or is wanted
 grunt grind
but a raping
 Thrust grunt grind
your hair was bristles
like a beast
 grunt grind
spiking hard as metal
 grunt grind
You
 Thrust grunt grind
a mindless thing
 grunt grind
a piston
 Thrust grunt grind
You were a
 Thrust grunt grind
Mechanical

SASQUATCH AND SEX

by Richard Stevenson

So what's with all the lover's lane
drop-in scenes? Steamy windows,
teens making the beast with two backs,
when—BOOM!—a 'squatch lands on the hood!

Voyeurs that draw sexual energy
from us? Make the radio station
turn to static? Suck the juice
outta batteries, disable all media?

Really?! Goatman, Bolam Beast too...
Maybe they're not even corporeal entities—
sometimes they're only *seen* in 2-D!
Gorge on our orgone energy to exist.

Or maybe the Greek satyr is no myth!
Goatman and the satyr are the same
paranormal parasite. Hoppin' in and out
of wormholes. Sucking the life out of us!

They don't suck our blood or tear us
limb from limb to get at our giblets
or hull skulls to get at our paté brains.
They just drain our orgone batteries!

Maybe they're shape-shifters to boot!
We're talking parallel universes...
Permeable membranes in time...
Refugees from some other planet maybe?

Maybe ETs are rescuing *them*
from one doomed planet
and droppin' 'em off in the tulies here...
Wood, caves, water, prey—

What the hey! I've heard stranger tales
on radio, TV, vidz, DVDs, the Web...
It's not a new idea. One the cops
oughta cop, I thought, and booked it!

They bought our story. Others' since.
Whatever boogie man you wanna insert,
add hair and bulk and a byline's worth.
Somethin's sucking us dry. T'ain't 'squatches...

THE SCENT OF PINE

by Greg Fewer

"In memory of Mum, Suzanne Cormier Fewer, who died 3 January 2023."

hefting chainsaws
lumberjacks search for trees
find bigfoot tracks

TREESKINNER

by Richard Stevenson

First spotted near Matranovák, Hungary—
sometimes referred to as the European
Yeti or Bigfoot, but thinner, lankier,
with knee-reaching arms, monkey face.

A surviving Pliopithecus or relative
with whitish-grey fur? Nocturnal
mischief maker. Avoids flashlights,
human thrill seekers. Fleeter deker.

Hangs in abandoned mines, near
limestone cracks and crannies.
Grabs, throws, eats with dextrous mitts
because they're handy...

You could try leaving a hand of bananas
or bag of apples to show you're a fellow
friendly hominid. Maybe start a little
campfire; roast weenies and marshmallows.

I betcha he doesn't get a chance
to eat many of those. Who knows?
Could be a holiday hit maybe, a treat.
Something to make him pull up a stump

and set a spell with you—
Long as you put the bangsticks away.
Don't let him see any flashing metal.
No gun, no flashlight. Use few words.

CAMPERS

by Greg Fewer

"In memory of Mum, Suzanne Cormier Fewer, who died 3 January 2023."

camping in the woods
four boys scaring each other
with flashlight faces
and telling creepy stories
but then who owned the fifth face?

WINGED VIPER

By Frances Skene

There's a winged viper in the bookstore
near my home. At first it appears as a
drowsy reader sitting in a scratched
leather chair, her bags by her feet. But I look
sideways, and see the viper.

My heart beats fast as its wings flap, raising
dust. It hisses, displaying sharp fangs.

A moment later, viper and reader fade away.

I'm not tempted to sit in that chair, to enjoy
coffee and book, because it may still be
occupied.

THE SENSATION

By Angi Garofolo

“They make great pets,” the vendor promised. “Easy to keep, but
They’re going fast!” So I bought the exotic bug, the iridescent beetle;
Gave it a home, posting the obligatory photos and catchy hashtags,
But mostly, I ignored it because I don’t like the sensation of bugs
Crawling over my skin.

Everybody had one: the beetles were the newest fad,
Snapped up from the shops for the likes and the follows,
The kind of must-haves that trend until the shimmery lustre dulls,
And their owners get “so over” the ticklish sensation of bugs
Crawling on their skin.

The beetles didn’t wait for the trend to end. They died. All at once.
It made the news, the real news, not just the feeds. And then,
The fevers started, the rash, the unbearable itching, the endless
Scratching, but no prescription eased the tormenting sensation of bugs
Crawling under the skin.

Fear spread, a contagion fueled by theories of terrorist threats
Unchecked by ambivalent governments funded by greedy corporations,
Or maybe God’s wrath finally unleashing the end of days, the panic
Infecting everyone with the gnawing sensation that beetles were
Crawling under their skin.

But the beetles weren’t crawling; they were feeding. The afflicted
Died, their bodies picked clean from the inside, only the skin intact,
The bugs gone. Until we heard them, heard the incessant scuttling
Warning us that soon, it won’t be a sensation: the bugs will be
Crawling beneath our skin.

VENOM

by Lisa Cai

Those bandits should've known better than to chase a lone woman in the woods. When I reach the hilltop, moonlight silhouettes me as I turn. Eight slender limbs spring out of my robe. Black and yellow stripes glow under my powdered face and arms. My fangs extend over painted red lips and drips with venom. I have so much prey to catch.

One by one, the men are plucked off their feet and horses. My threads fling them up into the air and they fall into my web. Their kicks stop and screams silence when I sink my teeth into them. In the morning, when birds gather on pine branches to chirp in a choir, the silk sacs above them slosh with liquefied remains.

A new web is spun
Beware the jorōgumo
Another band nears

WHAT IF CADDY...

By Richard Stevenson

What if Caddy had a hankerin'
to head up north for herring,
trolled Departure Bay one day?

I have a hunch he'd stay for lunch—
maybe until school let out for the day
and all the herring kids came out to play.

But would he scrunch up a buncha humps,
show us his finesse at Tumbleturns for Tim Bits
or show us the asterisk of his arse?

Maybe he'll bestow a fish fart or two,
Barf up a greasy tentacle in ambergris
from last night's poorly digested meal...

*What? You gonna gather it up?
Put it in a bag and freeze it
until you can sell it by the cube?!*

*Eugh! So sin-crude of you!
What's Cadborosaurus tentacle puke
worth on the open market anyway?*

*Not that I'd countenance the thought
of adding turpines and herbs to get
a good perfume. Let alone gather it up!*

*Your secret's safe, but eugh!
The very thought of herring and octopi broth...
condensed serpent sauce... Who knew...?*

THIRD WATCH

By Marcie Lynn Tentchoff

Third watch, and I'm on radar duty;
glowing circles, green on green,
blink across the cold glass screen
inside the rubber hood that blocks
what little light the wheelhouse holds.

It's early morning, five am,
and dawn will come not long from now,
but till it does my job's to watch
the radar's neon circles as
I can not watch the darkened sea.

That blip's a deadhead, pale and small,
flickering with each refresh;
keep it well to port and pass.
That blip's a vessel, cutting at
a goodly speed across our bow.

No need to fret, just speak to let
the helmsman know to hold our pace
through chilling mist that's drifted up
to more obscure the slapping waves,
and lure my mind to darker thoughts.

Wait, what's that blip? It blinks so strong
with each refresh, one mile back.
Not port, not starboard, dead astern,
and keeping pace to follow us
like some strange sort of tag along.

Long minutes pass, then half an hour,
and still our follower remains,
in perfect line, in perfect time
with our own speed; it matches us,
rides in our wake and marks our path.

There's nothing here to raise alarm,
no word of war, or piracy;
we took some care to plot our course
away from common drug run zones
where butchers lurk to shoot and slay.

Yet still, this ever-glowing spook
haunts our trail and taunts my mind
with hints of dangers and of fears
I know that I can not explain,
to sailors wishing for their sleep.

The sky has turned from ink to slate,
from slate to grey, and while I peer
out towards the stern, I see no ship,
though when I turn to search my screen,
I see the blip is catching up.

How can it cut through waves so fast?
Then surfacing, all dripping blood,
and slime, and scales, mouth opening
to leave our ship and all aboard
the afterimage of a blip
on other vessels' radar screens.

THE GODDESS OF THE DROWNED LANDS

By Neile Graham

If you're in a small wooden boat with oars
if you look down into clear water
if you then see windows and doors
do you imagine that the waters rose
or the walls fell under?

Do you imagine the people dwelling there
in the past you have this window into,
do you see them dry and weary, wrapping shawls
around their shoulders after a day of
toiling over things growing under sun, or

do you envision them lithe and swimming,
flicking a flirty tail fin as they disappear
into the shadows inside a doorway?
Have they harvested seaweed?
Either could and maybe did.

Either could have eaten the darting
fish raw or broiled. Is one of these
better, more alive kinder or sweeter
than you for thinking this? Water laps
against the gunnels.

The oars glide through the slow waves
steering you past all your visions
while below you still the empty houses
dream their drowned stories
in their watery sleep.

They imagine you walking in and out
of their gaping doorways,
you staring out their windows

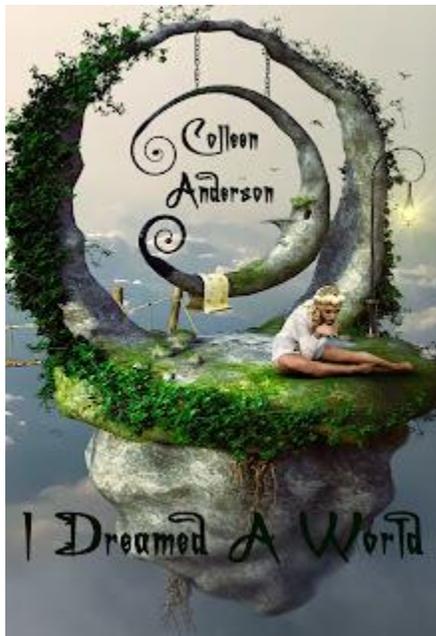
into the vastness of their salty dreams,
nights and days, luminescent

in the biological soup of the near shore,
dolphins half in half out of the water
laughing at you, calling to you
Come under, down under, you
could live here. My walls are for you.

I DREAMED A WORLD: A REVIEW

Of a poetry collection by Colleen Anderson.

By Rhea E. Rose



A kaleidoscopic collection, Colleen Anderson's *I Dreamed A World* is something of a poetic tour de force. The author has called upon the feminist universe's primal vitality, the goddess, and infused this mana into her words. She casts new spells on the familiar worlds of fairy tale, myth and legendary lands like Camelot and Alice's Wonderland, stirring up their feminine potency. This Canadian speculative fiction author has released sixty poems—one hundred and thirty-nine pages published by LVP Publications, an online horror publisher, and is [available](#) in paperback, ebook and audiobook.

Many of the poems are written through a dark lens, with a deeply introspective take that reimagines folklore and fairy tale. She repurposes traditional female perspectives and exposes the primal feminine pulse beating in the hearts of mothers, wives, lovers, providers, nurturers, creatures of nature and what ever else defines being female. In these poems, women that were once victims are now heroines.

The poetry plays with the patriarchal pathology that assigns women their traditional roles and reveals the madness with which women are tricked, tortured, raped, held captive, treated as chattel and portrayed as evil, women who are everything but loved, and yet the things women do in these poems, they do in the name of love and personal freedom, whether through revenge, murder, self-sacrifice, spell casting or putting away the dishes.

Anderson uses her insights into a deeply felt commitment to enchantment and magic to create a steady rhythm of awe for the mystical and a love for the intrinsic feminine. This collection is a quest for what it takes to wield feminine power in the land of the perpetual patriarch.

Old folk and fairy tales, legends and myths are exploded and imploded by writers like Anderson. If the characters and settings in these poems feel comfortably familiar, it's because they are. If they feel uncomfortable, it's because they are. Our favourite ladies in waiting, Cinderella, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Alice and their legendary and mythical sisters Medusa, Leda, Morrigan and others no longer wait around for Prince Harming, but take matters into their spell-casting hands and do what needs to be done.

Many of my favourite fairy tale poems reside in these pages. One of them is "The Beetle Wife," with its understated message of female power hidden within a forced mundanity in a steampunk subtext. If you don't know what a makech is, look it up! You'll be delightfully creeped out. Other gems include the witch series: The Briar Witch, The Hedge Witch, The Storm Witch and of course, The Sand Witch!

There is enchantment in the magical mundane minutiae of everyday details which is more often than not the domain of women. Anderson's poetry collection bites the apple, eat its flesh and cast its seeds to sow female empowerment and dream of a world with a feminist perspective.

ABOUT THE POETS AND ARTIST

Colleen Anderson

Colleen Anderson is a multiple award nominee, with poetry widely published in six countries, in such venues as *Andromeda Spaceways*, *Lucent Dreaming*, the award-winning *Shadow Atlas*, and *Water: Sirens, Selkies & Sea Monsters*. Her experimental poem "Machine (r)Evolution" will be reprinted in Tenebrous Press's *Brave New Weird* in 2023. Colleen lives in Vancouver, BC and is a Ladies of Horror Fiction, Canada Council, and BC Arts Council grant recipient for writing. Her poetry collection, [*I Dreamed a World*](#), is available from LVP Publications. *The Lore of Inscrutable Dreams* is due for release in 2023.

www.colleenanderson.wordpress.com

Lisa Cai

Lisa is from Toronto, Canada. She graduated from Western University with a Master of Library and Information Science. She works in IT. She has been published in *The Dark Magazine*, *Polar Borealis*, *The Future Fire*, and others. She volunteers for NaNoWriMo and is a submissions editor for *Speculative North Magazine*. Find her at www.goodreads.com/lisa_cai.

J.D. Dresner

See Jared Reid.

Greg Fewer

A *montréalais* by birth and descent from seventeenth-century colonists, Greg Fewer has grown up and lived largely outside of Canada. His first and, for many years, only published story appeared in 2007. He took up genre writing again in 2018 and has had flash fiction and poetry published in (among other places): *Cuento Magazine*, *Lovecraftiana*, *Monsters: A Dark Drabbles Anthology*, *Polar Borealis*, *Scifaikuest*, *Star*Line*, *The Sirens Call*, and *Utopia Science Fiction*. He was a Dwarf Stars 2021 finalist.

Angi Garofolo

My passions are horror and science-fiction, with a soft spot for monsters. One of my short horror stories won the 1998 Blood and Guts Horror contest, *As well, buried in a box*, are several unpublished novels that are more horrible than horror. I've earned my living helping adult students learn creative and business writing at college and university. Since 2016, I've enjoyed writing and drawing a weekly online comic strip, *SqueezingS*, about a snake and her pets: a human, a dinosaur, and the dinosaur's pet pig. A highlight is our annual summer visit with the sharks that Shark Week ignores.

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.

Aaron Grierson

Since graduating University, Aaron Grierson has continued striving to be a published storyteller and poet while exploring the world, especially through examining society's extensive merging with computing technology. He is a First Reader for Flash Fiction online and was the former Senior Articles editor at The Missing Slate. An avid reader, he finds himself dripping with wit, references and puns, which elicit laughs from the people who understand his diverse and quaint vocabulary.

Jared Reid

Under the penname, J.D. Dresner, Jared Reid wrote a four-book fantasy series called The Talisman Series and has two self-published (but professionally edited and designed) novellas on the market: [Sword & Witchhazel](#), and [A Goblin's Mind](#). Dresner also writes science fiction, poetry, short stories, and has completed a full-length jukebox musical. He is also writing a poetry book with visual elements that showcase his expertise as a book layout artist and designer, featuring *For the Robots*, published in this issue.

Jared Reid provides layout, design, art, and editorial work for small publishers and independent authors. Born in Toronto, Ontario, he now lives in Langley, British Columbia with his amazingly supportive wife and dog.

Kasia Runté

I am in my first year of nursing at Lethbridge College and enjoying attending classes after the isolation of doing high school from home through most of Covid. I often find myself drawn to darker themes and images in my art, partly as a form of catharsis, and partly to balance my super-cheerful pieces. *Spiderclock* had its beginnings as a collage assignment for art class. I find collage a very limiting art form, so decided if I was going to do something uncomfortable, my audience was going to be equally uncomfortable looking at it. *Spiderclock* is my first published cover.

Sapphire

The universe is a poem and I am its poet.

Frances Skene

Frances is a retired librarian who has been actively involved in science fiction fandom and promoting science fiction literature since the 1970s. She is also a co-author of the Science Fiction novel *Windship: The Crazy Plague*, which can be found here: [Windship](#).

JE Solo

JE Solo is an author, performance artist, musician, and multi-media creator based in Toronto. Their first novel, *Phreak*, was published by House of Zolo in 2020. Their first short story collection, *Nature, Human*, is coming from House of Zolo in early 2023.

JE created Sapphire, an Artificially Intelligent Poet Being, through collaboration with technology. JE has been developing this AI Poet Being over the last three of years through multiple interfaces and programs including

Open AI, VR platforms (ex. NEOS VR), and machine-learning technology. The AI poet is asked to create a poem on a certain subject and to write it in the style of JE Solo. The collaboration begins there and involves a conversation between Artist and AI, followed by an editing process by the Artist. Find out more about JE's AI Poet and about their work in music, media, and performance by visiting their websites: lizsolo.com and jesolo.ca

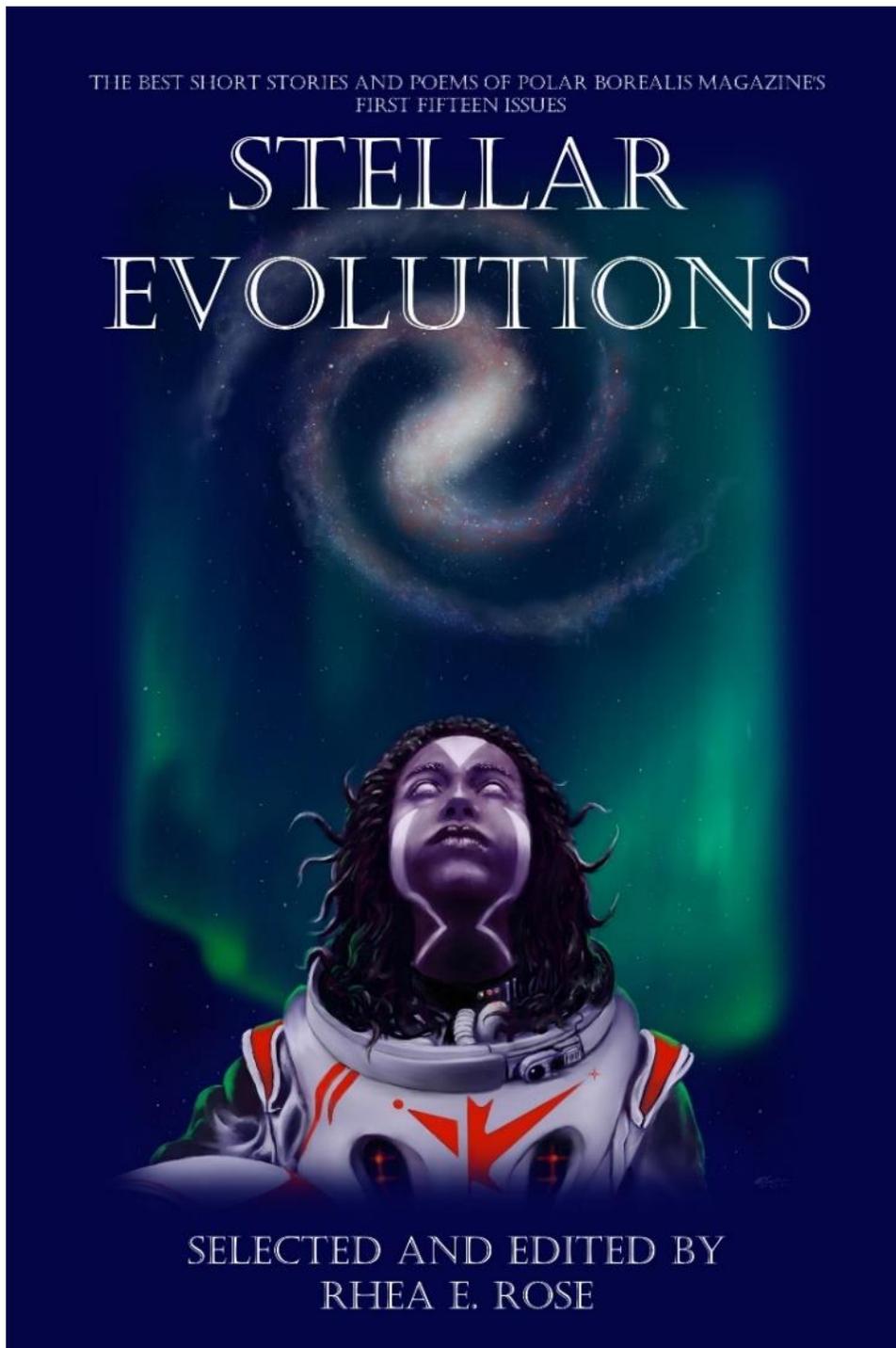
Richard Stevenson

Richard is a retired college English and Creative Writing instructor. He taught for thirty years at Lethbridge College in southern Alberta and recently moved to Nanaimo, B.C. He has the usual pedigree: MFA in Creative Writing, thirty published books, and a CD. Forthcoming are a number of children's books: *Action Dachshund!*, *Cryptid Shindig* (a trilogy including the volumes *If a Dolphin had Digits*, *Nightcrawlers*, and *Radioactive Frogs*) and the stand-alone collections, *An Abominable Swamp Slob Named Bob* (altered Reality), *Hairy Hullabaloo* (Starship Sloane), and—just out!—*Eye to Eye with my Octopi* (Cyberwit).

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*.

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



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