

Pandora/Gene Wolfe/Girl Who Owned a City

The SF-Lovers list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 09 Feb 1991

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Dick Smith — 09 Feb 1991, 08:30

Cynthia Teague wrote:

I have just finished *Pandora by Holly Hollander* by Gene Wolfe. This is a mystery, not sf,

What really threw me, though, is that the book is set in my home town.

Wolfe has taken the town, made some transparent and funny-sounding name changes, and used it as is. For example, Barrington becomes Barton, which is surrounded by Barton Hills (the rich part of town) and South Barton (still fairly rural); their counterparts surround Barrington.

Seth Alan Tissue responded:

I know Wolfe lives in the northwest suburbs of Chicago, probably in Barrington itself from what you say. (Doesn't Frederik Pohl live around there somewhere?) I'm from around there myself so I'll be especially interested in reading the book.

That's correct; Gene Wolfe does live in Barrington. Other Chicago area SF authors include A.J. Budrys (notice Evanston mentions in Michaelmas), Roland Green, and Phyllis Eisenstein. Fred Pohl moved here (Chicago Northwest suburbs) a few years ago, and has used some Chicago area color in several of his recent stories. Recently, Martha Soukup started selling, and moved away; I don't know if her Chicago area background will show in her future writing.

You might also notice Chicago color in Fred Saberhagen's vampire stories, but I don't know if he has/had any connection with the city.

I have a vague memory of some new-wave-ish writer who seemed to use Chicago as his prototype city; I had trouble suspending disbelief when he was writing about the tides. Can anyone remind me who this was. I'm sure the story collection is here someplace, but I cannot remember the author at all! I think the paperback was yellow-green?

More accurate, if only a little less scientific, is Daniel Pinkwater's Chicago references in the two Snarkout Boy's books. Pinkwater fans who attend the upcoming WorldCon in Chicago may wish to seek out the Number 22 bus, and see if it compares with the one which runs along Snark Street; I assure you that Clark Street is nearly as strange. And many Pinkwater fans will realize that the WorldCon's hotel is located at one end of Lower North Aufzoo Street.

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