

Has Anybody Seen Junie Moon?

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 10 Apr 2000

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Adam Stephanides — 10 Apr 2000, 09:37

Some comments and a question on this story (in the anthology MOON SHOTS, ed. Peter Crowther).

First, Roy T. Laffer is of course R. A. Lafferty, whom Wolfe has praised in print. Laffer is described as a "cranky old man in Tulsa." Lafferty is from Tulsa, and "Cranky Old Man from Tulsa" is the title of either an essay by Lafferty or a pamphlet collecting his essays (my Lafferty collection is inaccessible to me at the moment). And the "big lug" narrative voice Wolfe uses in "Junie Moon" is one that Lafferty has occasionally used, though not often.

Second, "Junie Moon" is based on a specific Lafferty story, "You Can't Go Back." Just like Junie Moon, that story has a tiny moon named White Cow Moon so close to Earth you can get there by airplane. There are differences, though: Lafferty's Moon doesn't orbit, but hovers (though it can move around of its own volition) and there's no hint that it's made of a particularly light substance. It's an excellent story, incidentally, and a great place to start with Lafferty if you've never read him; it appeared in IASFM Sept. 1981, and was reprinted in BEST SF OF THE YEAR 11, edited by Terry Carr.

Third, though "Junie Moon" isn't equal to Wolfe's best short stories and novellas, I like it better than any other recent story of his I've read (I haven't read STRANGE TRAVELLERS, but I've read a number of the stories in it).

Finally, my question: at the end of the story Sam mentions seeing "the little woman with the baby and the old man with the stick in the cave," but says it was probably just a dream. Are these folkloric inhabitants of the Moon, like the man in the Moon? They sound like it, but I haven't heard of them, and I haven't managed to find a book or article on Moon-related folklore. Or are they related to King Arthur, another motif in the story? If they aren't what is their significance?

--Adam