

Rostrum, take up thy pitchfork (sorry, long)

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 21 Mar 2002

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Mark Millman — 21 Mar 2002, 21:11

Rostrum,

Here's some additional information about mantis' list of uncollected stories, which I've copied at the bottom of this note.

With the exception of "The River", I own copies of all of these stories and have read most of them (I haven't read "The River", and I don't remember reading "Going to the Beach", Remembrance to Come", or "Tarzan of the Grapes"). Some of the others I know I've read, but don't remember, so (as you suggest) they're probably not worth fighting to find.

First, the bibliographic information:

The Arimapsian Legacy CS

This is a typo; the title is "The Arimasian Legacy".

At the Point of Capricorn WT Spring 1988

The Boy Who Hooked the Sun WT Spring 1988, YBF #2

Both these stories appeared first as Cheap Street Winter Solstice chapbooks and were later collected in _Weird Tales_.

Empires of Foliage and Flower CS, Crank! #2

This story is also anthologized in _The Best of Crank!_ and should be fairly easy to find.

Lord of the Land Lovecraft's Legacy, BNH #2

There's another typo here--mantis means YBH #2.

Robot's Story ADV

This is a short-short collected with two others by Wolfe under the title "Mathoms from the Time Closet".

Slow Children CS

The full title is "Slow Children at Play".

With the exception of "Empires of Foliage and Flower", all the Cheap Street items were published as Winter Sol- stice chapbooks. "Empires of Foliage and Flower" was ac- tually published as a short book, much like _Bibliomen_ (another Cheap Street publication, before it

appeared in an expanded version from Bryan Cholfin's Broken Mirrors Press; Cholfin also published Crank!. The Winter Solstice chapbooks are very short; they're usually eight to twelve saddle-stitched pages, including front and back covers, a title page, and a signature page, in small octavo size (in fact, they were mailed in envelopes about the same size as ordinary greeting-card envelopes), and the stories published in them are correspondingly brief. (You can see on-line images of the chapbooks on Cheap Street's site at <http://www.cheapst.com/chapbooks.html>.) Of the Cheap Street stories, "Empires", "The Boy Who Hooked the Sun", and "The Old Woman Whose Rolling Pin Is the Sun" are Brown Book stories, and worth reading for their style alone. Of these, only "Empires" is actually mentioned in BotNS--I believe Thecla refers to it in Shadow. The remaining three chapbooks are modern fantasies, but I'm afraid I don't remember them well.

(Digression: The chapbooks aren't hard to find--they're all available from Cheap Street--but they're expensive, averaging over \$50 each for pamphlets, and "Empires" is only available in (a) very costly editions, again from Cheap Street; (b) the practically unavailable Crank! #2; and (c) the Best of Crank! anthology--easy enough to find, and reasonably priced, but it still means buying a whole book for a single Wolfe story. If anyone knows of a small publisher who might be interested (mantis?), a deal similar to the one that Cholfin must have worked out with Cheap Street and Wolfe could perhaps be arranged, by which a more affordable volume collecting "Empires" and the chapbook stories would be published.)

(Second digression: At this point, mantis' post "mantis picks the hits" arrived, and I read it. Herewith, my commentary on the remaining stories.)

My pick of the non-New Sun Cheap Street chapbooks is "Slow Children at Play"; I pick this by default, because I hardly remember the other two--clearly, they made less impression on me than did "Children".

I have a particular fondness for "Lord of the Land", although I don't think it's one of Wolfe's best stories. It's one of the three Sam Cooper stories (the other two being "The Nebraskan and the Nereid", collected in Endangered Species, and "The Fat Magician", in the anthology Such a Pretty Face); Cooper is a folklorist, and my undergraduate degree is in folklore. The story is an example of Wolfe's tributes, in which he uses materials characteristic of another author in his own fashion (for another example, see "A Traveler in Desert Lands" in The Last Continent: New Tales of Zothique); in this case, the author is H.P. Lovecraft.

"The Tale of the Four Accused" is Wolfe's second short story for the Arabesques anthologies (of which I know of two); it follows "The Tale of the Rose and the Nightingale (And What Came of It)", published in the first volume and collected in Endangered Species. "Four Accused" has much of the same flavor about it as the earlier Arabesques story, though it's not directly related, and is well worth reading.

"Houston, 1943" captures the suffocating heat of a summer night in Texas very well, and makes of it a horror independent of the story's events.

"Game in the Pope's Head" is reminiscent of "Parkroads: A Review" and "A Criminal Proceeding" in its superficial chaos and disjointedness, but rewards re-reading. It has an hallucinatory quality like that of "Lukora".

I'm very fond of "The Monday Man", which is one of the first-person character stories; it's set in the Depression, and is about role reversal.

"Read Me" is an Alice pastiche, and appears in an anthology of 100-word stories. As such, it's necessarily limited by its format, but if you see the book I recommend you pick it up, as it's interesting in its own right.

Mark Millman
(Nacre)

On Thu, 21 Mar 2002, Rostrum (Michael Straight) wrote:

On Thu, 21 Mar 2002, mantis
(Michael Andre-Driussi) wrote:

There's an awful lot of
uncollected short stories
out there, so I was wondering
if those of you
who have tracked them down
might suggest which are
the most worth chasing.
What are some of the best
Wolfe stories not found in
the common anthologies
(e.g., the ones I have):

Ah, this is the trickiest part of
your request. First we have to
find at least two people who have
read a fraction of these stories,
then we have to argue over rating
/ranking them. Big Job!

I'm sorry. I had the impression that you
and some of the other folks on the list
had read a lot of these stories in maga-
zines or elsewhere and might have a favor-
ite to recommend. I'd hate to go to just
pick one at random, work hard at tracking
it down, only to find it as forgettable
as...that one online about the new presi-
dent, the name of which I forget.

If you'd read something as wonderful as
"Tracking Song" or "Forlessen," you
wouldn't need to argue about whether to
recommend it!

-Rostrum

mantis' list:

The Arimapsian Legacy CS
At the Point of Capricorn WT Spring 1988
The Boy Who Hooked the Sun WT Spring 1988, YBF #2
Empires of Foliage and Flower CS, Crank! #2
The Friendship Light F&SF 10-89
Game in the Pope's Head Ripper!, YBF #2
Going to the Beach Showcase (Elwood)
Houston, 1943 Tropical Chills (Sullivan)
How the Bishop Sailed to Inniskeen Asimov's 12-89

It's Very Clean Generation (Gerrold)
King Under the Mountain WIF 11/12-70
Loco Parentis ADV
Lord of the Land Lovecraft's Legacy, BNH #2
The Monday Man Monochrome: Readercon Anth.
The Old Woman Whose Rolling Pin
Is the Sun CS
Read Me The Drabble Project
Remembrance to Come Orbit 6
The River Amazing 5-83
Robot's Story ADV
The Sailor Who Sailed After the Sun Grails: Quests of the Dawn (Gilliam) The Seraph from the
Sepulcher Sacred Visions (Greeley) Slow Children CS The Tale of the Four Accused Arabesques
2 (Shwartz) Tarzan of the Grapes F&SF 6-72, MWALB (Farmer) Thou Spark of Blood WIF 4-70 Try
and Kill it Asimov's 10-11/96

"ADV" = Again, Dangerous Visions (Ellison)
"CS" = Cheap Street
"F&SF" = The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction
"MWALB" = Mother Was A Lovely Beast
"WIF" = Worlds of If magazine
"WT" = Weird Tales
"YBF" = Year's Best Fantasy
"YBH" = Year's Best Horror