

"Tracking Song" Underground

The Urth list — 2 messages, 2 voices, 02 Mar 1998

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David_Lebling — 02 Mar 1998, 12:18

alga,

The underground sequence with the robots and Mantru bothers me, too. One way out of it, a tortuous one I admit, is to say that the narrator has become a man, just as the riders of the sleigh have become angels, and the robots obey him for that reason.

Didn't the story first appear in an anthology called *_After Man_*? I think that in the literal, DNA sense there are no humans in the story. The angels are post-human, the narrator is just-human, Mantru is a-human, and the various humanlike animals are pre-human.

I'll have to spend some more time with the story, though, before I'm sure, but it just feels right to me.

Looked at in purely sfnal terms, it's a venerable trope. When humans leave the earth, literally or figuratively, the inheritors are often dogs. Think of Simak's *_City_*, Anderson's *_Brain Wave_*, Smith's *Underpeople* (not exactly inheritors), and so on.

As for writing it up, hmm, for whom? NYRSF?

-viz

(david_lebling at avid.com)

Mark Millman — 02 Mar 1998, 16:51 · follows David_Lebling

This is another quick bibliographic note. "Tracking Song" was originally published in *_In the Wake of Man_*, a three-story anthology edited by R. A. Lafferty. I've forgotten the third contributor. The book is from the mid-70s, maybe 1975. Again, I'm away from my library and can't check.

After Man, by the way, is the title of a book by Dougal Dixon which presents a look at the fauna of the earth after 50 million years of evolution in a post-human world. It's a fascinating and beautiful book, and, now that I think of it, it has charts indicating the probable positions of the continents (according to geologists' best guesses) at intervals from the present time to the period under discussion in the text. They might be of some use, though they don't include changes related to glaciation or global warming, or to more transitory shifts in rivers and so forth, in the continuing debate over the geography of Urth. I think I'll take a look when I get home; I urge anyone else who has access to a copy to do the same.

Mark Millman

David Lebling wrote:

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-viz
(david_lebling at avid.com)