



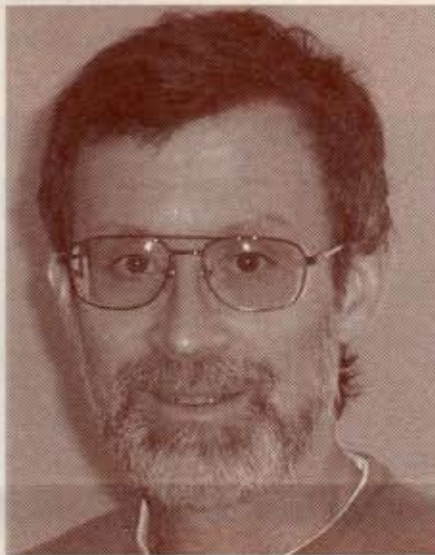
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News from the Jane Pope Geske HERITAGE ROOM of Nebraska Authors

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Q & A with Author Member Robert Reed

Nebraska native Robert Reed is one of the most prolific science fiction writers of the last quarter century. He is the author of over 200 short stories and twelve novels in the science fiction field. His books include *The Hormone Jungle* (1988), *Black Milk* (1989), *An Exaltation of Larks* (1995), *Marrow* (2000), *Sister Alice* (2003), and *Eater-of-Bone and Other Novellas* (2012). His story "A Billion Eyes," won the prestigious Hugo Award in 2007 and his recent story "Eater-of-Bone" was shortlisted for the Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award.



Since you are a prolific short story writer, what are the attractions of the science fiction short story for you as a writer?

I started writing by writing short fiction, and by stubbornly improving my skills, I reached a place where I seem able to do whatever I want, whenever I want. Second person point of view? Yes. Twisting the timelines? Absolutely. Centering my tales on difficult/unlikable people? That is a common interest of mine. I also have long-term relationships with magazines

and their editors. That gives me remarkable freedom. And because I am a commercial beast, I tend to gravitate towards work that will actually pay me. Short stories and novellas have been good to me over the years, both as playgrounds for my head and means of keeping visible to the reading public.

What are your personal favorites of your own work?

I have done good reliable work with my Great Ship stories and novels. The last few examples are my best, I believe. "Katabasis" and "Eater-of-Bone" were joys to write, and my soon-to-be-published twelfth novel, *The Memory of Sky*, is more epic than I ever hoped. That said, there's an older novel of mine: *An Exaltation of Larks*. It takes place at a small college and the world is ending. I wrote it as if I was writing one of my short stories, doing what I wanted in terms of language and relationships and the overriding puzzle.

Can you tell us a little bit about your background here in Nebraska?

I was born in Omaha in 1956. I attended Harrison Grade School, Lewis and Clark Junior High, and Benson High School, and then I spent four years at Nebraska Wesleyan University. I have lived outside Nebraska for one year in Dallas, Texas. The rest of my decades as an adult have been spent in Lincoln.

How did you first get interested in science fiction?

I saw movies that sparked my interest, and then I subsequently went searching for books to feed the need. *2001: A Space Odyssey* was a wonderful conundrum when I was a boy, with its giant concepts thrown across the giant screen at Indian Hills Theater. That movie woke me up in ways that I hadn't imagined, and I went searching for book versions of the same drug.

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Robert Reed Q & A continued

What does science fiction have to offer the general reader?

I would love to claim that SF is a fountain of great thought and unique narratives. It can be, yes, and I don't know how else to get that intoxicating mixture of science and bull. But most people don't want what I want. The general reader, as far as I can tell, lives far removed from the language of science and its underlying concepts.

Are there any current science fiction writers that readers should look for?

Kim Stanley Robinson. He is the kind of talent that straddles the field as well as those outside the normal market. His Mars Trilogy is big and epic and utterly science fictional, but the landscapes are populated with real people.

What projects do you have on the horizon?

My next book is coming out in a few days, actually. *The Greatship* is a compilation of my short stories from that universe, and I have cobbled them together, rewriting and adding new materials. This is one of those e-pub, do it halfway yourself projects, with help from my agent and Argo Navis.

My next novel is a trilogy made into one volume, due to a Barnes and Noble directive not to start a series that dies after the first book. Which is fine, I have decided. I loved writing *The Memory of Sky*, and it comes out next spring from Prime Books. And sometime later next year, a video game is released that has my fingerprints here and there. Which is different work for a writer like me, both challenging and financially rewarding.