

FANZINES 23

By Ted White

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THEY MADE US DO IT #2, Autumn 2002 (Max, editor & publisher; probably available for “the usual” (letters of comment, contributions, or fanzines in trade) or send \$1 for a sample copy; 20 Bakers Lane, Woodston, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE2 9QW, England)

Max (who uses that name alone) is one of the brightest new lights in UK fandom, and won this year’s FAAN Award as Best New Fan. *They Made Us Do It* (subtitled “A genzine by Max”) is the successor to Max’s “perzine” (personal zine, written entirely by the editor), *They Made Me Do It*. “Some work really is crying out to be committed to paper, no matter how happy it is sitting there on the internet. This zine grew legs, but it’s definitely still the same fanzine. I think there will be more. I might even relent on the artwork and LoC [letters of comment] Column stance. They’re not here this time but next time, who knows?”

What *is* here this time is content, in an austere but attractively simple package: Ten pages of single-columned type with wide margins, without art or gimmicks. I’m reminded of the simple, straight-forward, all-typing mimeographed fanzines of several decades ago. Hardly anyone uses a mimeograph any more and Max is no exception. The pages are computer-typeset and printed/copied on canary paper. But there is a warmth which belies the simplicity of presentation.

There are four pieces in addition to the short inside-cover editorial from which I’ve quoted. Simon Bradshaw’s “Watching Falling Stars” describes watching the Perseid meteor showers with contrasting sections (in italics) which provide an objective description of the history of one dust particle in that shower. Ang Rosin provides in “Gathering Rain” what was once called a “mood piece” in one page, its perfect length. Max’s own “July 4th, Kenwood Beach” is the longest piece, a detailed narrative about swimming in the Chesapeake Bay at midnight (and, not surprisingly, getting stung by what we always called “sea nettles” – jellyfish), while visiting Nic and Bobbi Farey. And the final piece, “Life Without Anne” is by Douglas Spencer, whose wife died one year earlier. It’s heartfelt but free of sentimentality.

None of these pieces discusses science fiction, or, for that matter, fandom. Yet each is permeated with fandom in its own way: each is a personal communication from fans to fandom, a product of the *community* of fandom.

This is the innermost circle of fannish fanzines: writing about one’s personal experiences and concerns for one’s friends. It can be done well or poorly, depending on who is doing it. In this case it is done well. Max listed no price, but I’d suggest sending at least a dollar to help pay the postage.

—Ted White