

Flights from the IRON MOON

Genre Poetry in UK Fanzines
& Little Magazines 1980-1989



by STEVE SNEYD

Flights From The Iron Moon

"I have made a heap of all I have found."
Nennius, *Historia Britoniun*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although the majority of information for this 'gazetteer' has come from the author's own collection of 1980s publications, correspondence and other files, that is not the whole story.

Many of the people concerned were approached for further information or clarification on a variety of matters, too many to name individually. I hope they will accept this general acknowledgement of my gratitude for their help and cooperation, which I greatly appreciate.

Naturally, responsibility for any and all errors and omissions remains my own. In that respect, while every care has been taken to quote accurately, to avoid distortion when summarising or extracting from publications or correspondence, to make dates as precise as possible, and so on, it would be naive not to expect Byrne's Law to apply - ie that further information always turns up immediately after any factual statement is published.

In that respect, response from readers of this publication correcting errors and in-filling omissions will be most welcome, and would, of course, be duly acknowledged in the event of any future editions.

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NOTES

Readers wishing to pursue the story of genre poetry's use in British fanzines further back may be interested to know that an account covering the period 1938 to the mid 1950s appeared in *CRITICAL WAVE* #16 (May 1990) under the title *Rhyme Bandits - The Frontier Years of SF Poetry*, and the story from 1969 to 1979 was covered in two further articles, also in *CRITICAL WAVE* (*Return of The Rhyme Bandits* in #27 (November 1992) and *The Rhyme Bandits Last Stand* in #29 (February 1993) - all articles by Steve Sneyd).

These were later reprinted in expanded form, with annotated bibliographies detailing the poetry in individual fanzines, in two Hilltop Press publications, both still in print, *Laying Siege To Tomorrow*, covering the 1930s to 1950s (1998) and *In Space's Belly*, covering the 1970s (1999). An additional publication, *Entropies And Alignments* (1998) covered the 1960s, while an anthology of British SF poetry selected from fanzines and little magazines up to the end of

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the 1980s, edited by Steve Sneyd, *Dreamers On The Sea Of Fate* (1999), which appeared from Sol Publications, is also still in print.

More general accounts of fanzines in this country from the 1930s onwards can be found in Rob Hansen's decade-by-decade histories of fandom – the *THEN* series of volumes.

ALSO:- Use of symbol (...) indicates that sections of a poem quoted are separated by several lines or in some cases stanzas. In including such quotes and extracts, the author and publisher have endeavoured to adhere closely to the 'fair use' provisions of copyright requirements. Any breach which may possibly have occurred, particularly in the case of very short poems, is entirely inadvertent and in no way intended to infringe the rights of copyright holders concerned.

The Abbreviation IHNFI = I Have No Further Information.

Where further information, obtained since the 1995 print edition of this book, has been added, the source is indicated by bracketed name abbreviations as follows:

AVC = the late A. Vincent (Vinç) Clarke
CC = Cardinal Cox
SG = Steve Green
JFH = John Francis Haines
JH = John Howard
SJ = Steve Jeffery
DL = Dave Langford

In regard to two *exclusions* – namely *FANTASY TALES* and *FISHEYE* – I have erred on the side of the fact that the former can only really be classed as a prozine, and while the latter did have SFnal contacts, the poetry was very much 'mainstream'.

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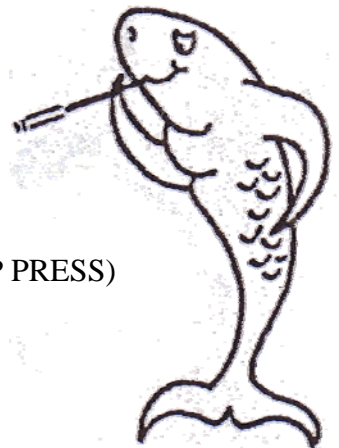


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Genre poetry in UK fanzines and SF/F/H-linked little magazines 1980 - 1989

“THE WEST TEST” AND OTHER MATTERS

Throughout this no-doubt incomplete A to Z, problems of definition arise as to which publications were fanzines, which were SF, other genre, or, in a few cases, perhaps even predominantly mainstream small press. Throughout I have tended to accept an editor’s definition as to ‘status’ in this context, and where the editor did not give a clear definition I have tried to use common sense in terms of defining the relevant publication as I think it would generally have been perceived.

(An interesting paradox, incidentally, arises here. If an editor said his/her publication was a fanzine, it had at the very least that particular editor’s perception of his or her purpose and its nature to link it with other fanzines. If, however, an editor said that a publication had ceased to be a fanzine, this did not necessarily result in a change of perception on the part of the readers or reviewers – “Once a fanzine, always a fanzine” tends to apply, unless the changes are truly drastic.)

Defining the difference between fanzines and other types of publications is a minefield. The task was attempted most boldly, or perhaps simplistically, with a sweeping definition supplied by D West in John D. Owen’s *CRYSTAL SHIP #9*. Chuck Connor responded (in *IDOMO #18* - 1986):

“When he said that fannish writing is material that could not appear anywhere else than in fanzines, I have to say that I partially agree with D West. But I’d then ask why Chris Atkinson’s *Life With The Loonies* was classed as fannish when it could’ve been read in, say, the *Sunday supps*?”

West, incidentally, returned to wrestling with the same definitional problem five years later in his June ‘91 issue of *DAISNAID* (#7), prompted by discussions at a fanzine panel during *MEXICON*. Eventually, after discussing the differences from the small press at length, he plumped again for his ‘80s definition:

“The test of an authentic fanzine is whether it includes at least some material which could be found nowhere else but in a fanzine”

adding the caveat that

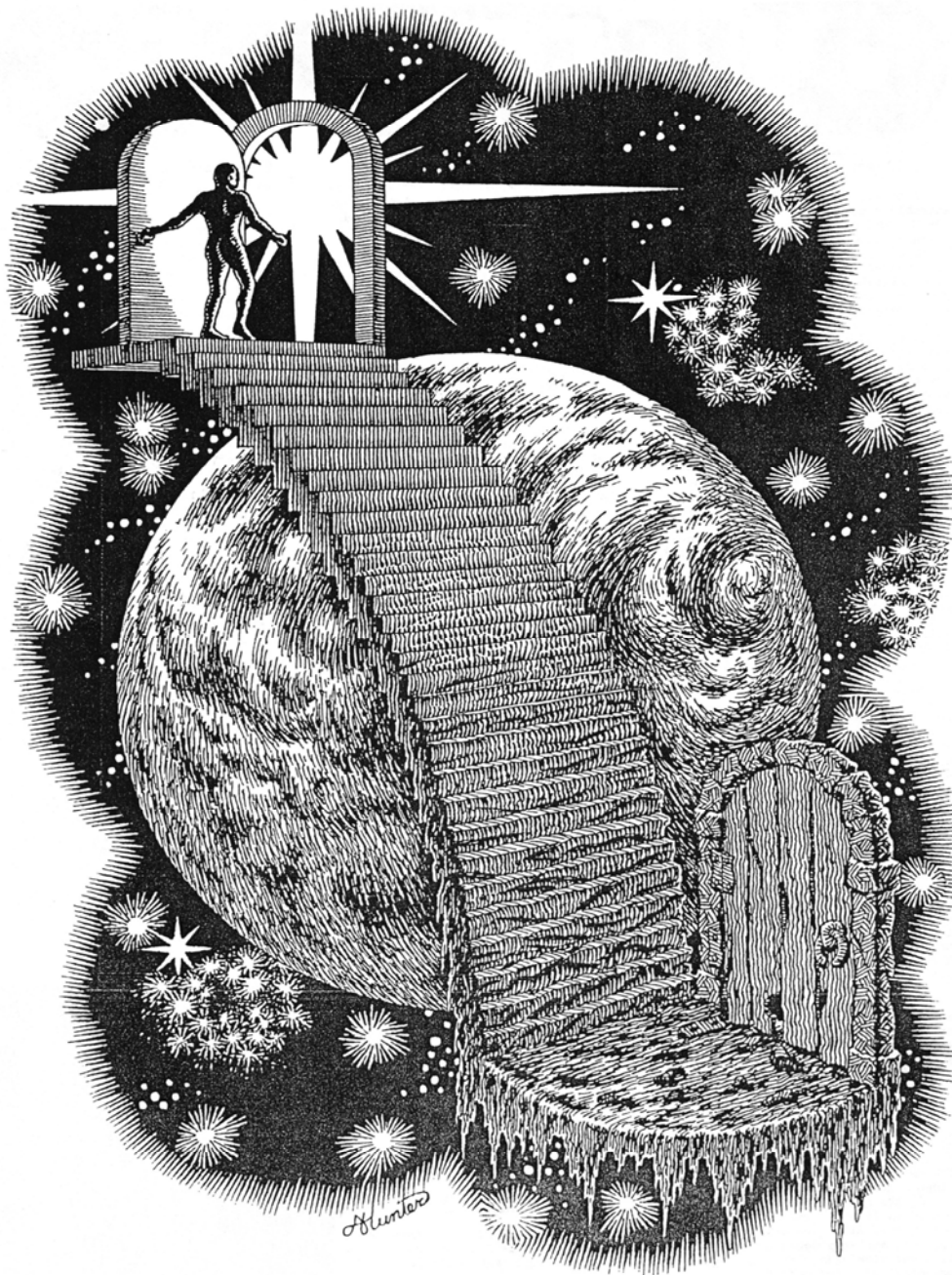
“just because something calls itself a fanzine doesn’t mean it is a fanzine.”

Although, in practical terms, The West Test is all but inapplicable - it is extremely difficult to think of anything in any fanzine which could not conceivably appear in any other kind of publication – it deserves mention as illustrating the way boundary-drawing between

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fanzines and small press is a persistent theoretical problem, even though in practical terms I think the use of the terms in a common-sense 'either/or' way does not violate truth unduly for at least the majority of '80s publications discussed here.

It should also be said that the little magazines considered here are in the main those which can be considered as part of the genre (SF/F/H) Small Press, or had contact with it. Work which can be considered genre poetry appeared intermittently in 'mainstream' poetry magazines during the decade, whether or not recognised by editors, authors, and readership as such, but no systematic attempt to cover such instances of publication outside the 'genre ghetto' has been made.



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AD NAUSEAM

Edited by Kevin K. Rattan, a Lancaster University student from Rawtenstall, Lancs, this fanzine founded in April 1983 included a poem in each of the first two issues. In #1, Stephen Longstaffe's *Prospectus For A Future Wife* was more Adrien Henri-ish than SFnal:

we could convert Elsie at number ten
from Northwest gas to the rhythm of life
.....we could
sleep at opposite ends of the infra-red
spectrum

being the only genre-flavoured lines at all. Issue #2 – aka **TEENAGE LOBOTOMY DON'T GET CAUGHT #3** – contained Gordon Turnbull's atmosphere piece *Beneath Trees*, vaguely DFnal in its worrisome night mood:

shrunken skull in this night,
a man sways with the wind.

though with a 'happy ending', viz:

the moon smiles
as the stars reassemble reassuringly.

The editor rather underminingly footnoted this poem:

“Do you think that got to them? No, I doubt it too.”

AD NAUSEAM was part of a running series of alternative titles for Kevin's magazine, **DON'T GET CAUGHT**. Other titles included **EPILEPTIC CATAPILLAR**, **BUDGIE SWEETMEATS** and, possibly, **RUBBER UMBRELLA**, though this latter may have been just one of his whimsies.

AE

This remarkable four page prose-poem, which appeared in Pete Presford's **BARDDONI #3**, is among the most experimental in form and approach of any poem published in fanzines, or indeed SF, small press, in the '80s. Subtitled *The Seven Wonders Of The Universe*, the piece tells the story of a "Quasorg" (a quasi-sapient, man-made), which is launched into space, then – to drastically simplify a very complex event sequence – given, by Andromeda-based aliens, independent consciousness and gestalt knowledge which the Quasorg cannot handle, resulting in deep space suicide.

The seven parts – **HYDROGEN**, **HELIUM**, **EVOLUTION**, **THE SHELL COLOURS OF ANDROMEDA**, **STARSEX**, **THE TRANSFINITE PULSE OF STOCHASTIC HEAVENS**, and **DEEP SPACE SYMPHONY** – employ variations in layout, verse-form and hypertext-style word-emphasis to achieve a powerful proof of the possibilities of poetry for narrative of both action and ideas, an ambitious objective seldom attempted at such sustained length in the '80s in the publications covered here.

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Author Mike Johnson's unusual genre poetry –including other experiments with concrete and other prose-poem interface material, albeit not again at such a length or with such sustained narrative drive – appeared (along with some shorter more conventional work) mainly in occasional issues of *BARDONNI* (Pete Presford), and also in *SF SPECTRUM* (Weslaw Tumulka), *KRAX* (Andy Robson), and in several collections of his work in booklet form, mainly during the early part of the decade. Thereafter, finding little response from either editors or readers, he began to concentrate on a field where his SFnal and concrete work has found a warmer welcome, anthologies of poetry for children.

The following few brief extracts from an extended postal interview with Johnson (which appeared in its entirety in the USA, in *STAR*LINE vol. 15 #6* (December 1992), under the title *Pied Piper Of SF Concrete Poetry*) discuss the influences on his work, which have led to his recently completed PhD thesis on 20th Century poetry in the area of formal experimentation:

“I suppose I first got interested in the form of poetry in music...the peculiar electronic effects of the first two Pink Floyd albums...avant-garde composers such as Stockhausen and John Cage...Long before I really got interested in poetry, my reading centred on SF (Bradbury, Aldiss, etc)...very much interested in Surrealist art and the graphic work of M.C. Escher...Bridget Riley's Kinetic Art...Edward Lucie-Smith's anthology *HOLDING YOUR EIGHT HANDS* was the first book of poetry that really made me sit up. However the most significant poetic input on me was The *ANTHOLOGY OF CONCRETE POETRY*, edited by Emmett Williams...Basically I would say that SF ideas in content cry out for formal experimentation; Bob Clavert (off and on member of the band, HAWKWIND) was getting there at times.”

(And referring to SF small press and zines:)

“Although I found the *content* more than enjoyable, the *form* of the poems tended to be, paradoxically, rather conservative.”

That certainly could not be said of *AE*, or such other '80s Johnson pieces as *The Metamammals: Still Lives*, and *Equal This Machine Is Sex* (both *BARDONNI*), *After Z* (*SF SPECTRUM*), or *Mother Earth And Child* (*KRAX*). It is a pity that children have provided a more open-minded readership than the supposedly future-change-minded SFnal readership he encountered! To quote a couple of lines from *AE*:

in the Heavens beyond Earth.....
but communication was denied.....

(In 1994, Hilltop Press reprinted the poem in chapbook form, as *AE: The Seven Wonders of the Universe*, now long out of print.)

ALIEN OR KIN

A fascinating article (its full title **ALIEN OR KIN? SF POETRY**) by K. V. Bailey, which appeared in **STAR WINE #1**, and is one of the decade's very few extended examinations in this country of the genre. To attempt any brief paraphrase does grave damage to a coherently developed thesis, profusely illustrated with examples. In essence, however, Bailey is drawing attention to a complementarity between the methods and manifestations of SF and of poetry which makes them natural partners, particularly the type of poetry which is able to span the entire range of human experience and extrapolated understanding from the individual (and below, the microcosmic) to the macrocosmic. Quoting in abridged form the closing paragraphs gives some suggestion of Bailey's conclusions to what, in contrast with the US situation in the '80s, was an all too rare attempt at an 'overview':

“Poetry...its musical manipulation of words and its structuring of metaphor...create a powerful imagery which reflects man's experience of the diverse but overlapping 'worlds' of his existence. SF...to extrapolate and to speculate...from the basis of man's observation of, use of, and interaction with his multiple environments....these effects-”

(ie the way 'both literary forms may at times modify, heighten, even transform consciousness with their readers')

“-may operate.. complementarily – and hence the particular value of all moves to encourage some rapprochement between SF and poetry.”

(NOTE: A expanded and revised version of K. V. Bailey's article appeared as *Alien Or Kin? Science-Fiction and Poetry* in **FANTASY COMMENTATOR #45/6 (V.VIII 1/ 2)**, Bronxville, New York, in 1994.)

AMMONITE

When he founded this publication in March 1987, editor John Howard (later John Howard Greaves –not to be confused with John 'Nic' Howard of **HOUSE OF MOONLIGHT PRESS**) provided a lengthy editorial to indicate his aims and differentiate it from his pre-existing mainstream poetry magazine, **PERIOD PIECE AND PAPERBACK** (later to be renamed **VIGIL**). Saying that the material sought should provide:

“Imaginative speculation at its outer limits... We aim to rescue Science Fiction from the slough of ray guns and monsters...to promote a literature of the future as a herald of a new age for humanity”

he describes the title's significance:

“The image...as ancient as a time before man, new as the inspiration of current science. Symbolising the spiral of evolution, linking knowledge with origin as a connection of inner worlds with the extremities of outer form.. it seeds a mythology for our future, potent yet still embryonic.”

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Of writers used he says they are:

“tapping the great myths.”

It is arguable whether the ‘80s issues of *AMMONITE* fully lived up to these grandiose – perhaps impossible – aims. In issue #1, at least, much of the work seemed to have only tenuous connection with such themes. The Isaac Ise prose-poem wordstreams used, for example, seem connected to them merely by titles like *Einstein Attic*, while Michael Henry’s *Tunnel Vision* has only a few genre-linked words:

executives burn out like stars

and mainstream poet Peter De Rous’ *The Nectar Puzzle* depends on a footnote to clarify its meditation on J. M. Allegro’s *The Sacred Mushroom And The Cross*, there are three poems in #1 which do tie back to the editorial’s preoccupations.

The editor’s own final piece *The Hero’s Journey* is one of these. Fay Symes in *The Hungry Goddess* conveys a romantic myth-making picture of astronaut death following a moon landing:

Dark visored, heavy shod
He walks upon her breast,

Her garment of moondust sliding through his
Heavy figures
Like the spilling of his life.

And American speculative poet t. Winter-Damon contributes the fascinating 2pp *Venice - Exports & Apocalypse - Reflecting The Surrealist Paintings Of Ludovico De Luigi*. The paintings themselves have been in the past interpreted as one of a number of surreal works which use vaguely SFnal imagery to convey their apprehensions of World War II’s approach: Damon draws from them a powerfully genre picture of future giant insect attack:

handglider-scaled dragonflies....
behemothic insects,
...large as the fabled cropdusters of
 silica and steel and struts
before the age of man-as-aphid.

American speculative poets are also represented in #2 (October 1987). Edward Mycue with *A.D., B.IUD., C.DOA* - a futuristically worded political poem - and H. R. Felgenhauer with the lightweight *The Human Condition* - aliens visit Earth to laugh at Earthmen by then crazed and wearing shoes on their heads and socks in their ears. But the most effective genre works, a higher percentage in this issue, though still interspaced with vaguely numinous nature poetry and the like, come from British writers, and Canadian Janet Reedman is represented with the final *Ancestor Spirits*. W. Corner-Clarke contributes the alchemical *Adocentyn*, and the effective *Ragbones Black Holes*:

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The Dealer's... got
...Black Holes glistening
beneath...a dirty burlap rag
like greedy vacuums
sucking in
the summer light.

Owen Davis' *Old MacDonald* is an Fnal meditation on a 'crazed' farmer, employing haunting imagery:

Putting the fishscale smell of distance
down to every door...

and

....the dancer
Whose name is a hand held across the sky,
Closing off the light, until darkness
Has had the extent of its pleasure.'

exemplify the originality displayed. Richard Mason's *Last Despatch* mingles images from the politics of the time with SFnal pictures of the end of a galactic war, Paul Seabrook's poem *To The Man, Who, After Three Days, Realised That Water Could Be Walked On* is a long – 3pp – mystical piece wherein a drowned man becomes a godlike or angelic healer of suffering, and Fay Symes with *Survivors* returns to the setting of a post-nuclear holocaust world in Fnal style.

ANACONDA

Edited by Salisbury school student Dan Clayton, produced nine issues between August 1985 and January 1987, and included poetry in most. Indeed, the publication described itself as:

“A magazine of Prose, Poetry, PBM and Rolegames.”

Much of the poetry had no genre content, and that includes probably the most striking poem in any issue, Clayton's own *Feargus O'Connor* – a controlled, moving description of the Chartist leader attempting, while suffering alcoholic delirium, to control his last public meeting (which I do not extract here as it deserves to be read in full) which appeared in issue #2.

The same issue includes a Clayton nuclear war poem, while in issue #3 his *New Dawn* also deals with imminent catastrophe. Another poem, used as a frame for a jester drawing, again has a doomladen air:

With a gun for a lover
and a shotfull of pain inside... (etc)

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and a third has a surreal genre flavour:

black shield piledrives my face....
purple striped suns dripping on ceramic plain.

Issue #4 (October 1985), again included several of the editor's poems, mostly with an Hnal or pre-Armageddon feel:

to appease their slaving lord
whose eyes are like yellow knives
[taken from *Nasty*]

Just a single blast
And an uplifting of ravens.
[taken from *End*]

The issue also included John Blamey's *He's Human Maggy* – the then-PM hallucinates, Robert Green's quirky if doggerelish rhymed *The Fall Of Camelot*, Graham Sherratt's longish anti-pollution verse *No Future*, an SFnal piece of mine, and Oliver Vessey's Surreal *Damn Mi I'm Mad*:

It turned again
showering beautiful captivity.

Most memorable poem in issue #5 is Blamey's *A Grave Downcoming* - a humorous narrative of an archaeologist's discovery in an ancient tomb.

ANACONDA #6 included two semi-genre poems by Pete Blanchard, *Winter Wonderland*:

Pointed splinters of ice hammered
thru your joints and
bones

and the curious *Way Of The Beetle*:

No one makes love, because the God....washed
the peoples' bodies till they all looked the
same....Naked but sexless (etc)

as well as Jamie Dexter's Fnal *Secrets*:

past faded yellow tapestries
the face of one who never lived
stares wide-eyed....
waiting.

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ANACONDA #7 carried my *Widdershins* witchcraft poem.

As stated, poetry featured to the magazine's end with issue #9. This contained a number of poems, including work by well-known 'mainstream' small press figures like Colin Nixon and Michael Newman. One of the latter's pieces is a striking post-Bomb work:

Look at Gloucester,
Burnt to bomb-site stubble;
Look at London,

Awash under the Thames Delta.

And Chicago snarling like barbed wire.

Dan Clayton's *Fuzz Casualties* may be portraying a drug vision or a genuine alien, but either way it is intriguing:

the purple one....
Will he eat us for lunch?
And then wave us goodbye?

And what will we do
Now he's left us behind?

Also genre – Hnal – is R. M. Green's *Conclusion*, a rhymed vision of Hell

With choice of spires to punish me

the 'me' being a protagonist with

The anvil clenched between my teeth

a powerful image of one seeking an antidote to endless suffering.

APA

APAs (Amateur Press Associations) though long since naturalised within SF fandom, in fact predate it - and mainstream and other special interest apas exist outside fandom. For example the National Amateur Press Association in the USA, founded in 1876 - the involvement of people like H. P. Lovecraft in such organisations may well be how the idea entered the SF field.

In essence, for those who have not encountered them, they consist of a group of people, each publishing a 'fanzine' at agreed intervals and in sufficient quantity for all the apa members. These 'fanzines' are then sent to a central OE (Organising Editor) who collates all material received between deadlines into mailing packages, and then mails them to the membership at the designated time. Quite frequently apa fanzines lead 'a double life' in that, in addition to reaching other members, some copies may go outside the membership. Apa fanzines also sometimes become 'free-standing' and turn into ordinary, wide-distribution,

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fanzines.

Poetry appeared to some extent in UK apazines in the 50's and 60's, particularly in some **OMPA** (Off-trail Magazine Publishers' Association) titles, and in the '70s in the short-lived **ROMPA**, ie Rival OMPA, including input from Lisa Conesa (IHNFI on ROMPA).

However, the most notable burst of poetry publishing in apas in the UK seems to have been that which took place in the early 80's, focused around Solihull and Birmingham. (I am indebted to Steve Green, of Solihull, for the information which follows - but also note the interpolated recollections of Chuck Connor, which give a different perspective on the actual history of the apa concerned, though not affecting the data on poetry content.)

Initially, poems by Steve Green himself appeared in publications distributed within apas not part of the SF community – **OMEGA** (1980 - 82) was distributed via the long-established British Amateur Press Association (**BAPA**) and the Comics Amateur Press Association (**CAPA**). However, by early '83 the Solihull SF Group had such publications as **THE TWILIGHT ZINE** (edited by Steve Green, ran for 7 issues, included poetry by Green himself, his sister Tracy, and Phil Greenaway -*Love Is Pain Misspelled* in #4, May '83 - who also used poetry in his **MAGUS** and **CORNERSTONE**. **TWZ**'s successor, **OVERMATTER**, which also ran for 7 issues, also carried poetry.)

Following the '83 Worldcon, for which Green produced a one-person poetry (and prose) collection (**RANDOM PHRASES**) the Birmingham SF Group established an apa, later to become independent as The Organisation. There had been an earlier attempt at a Birmingham-based apa, **APA:SF & F**, which did only one mailing, in June '81 - this had included Green's poem in his **STILL VOICE** - the poem was a reaction to the death of John Lennon.

Chuck Connor recalls:

“Unless there were two **APA:SF & F**'s, the mention above does not tie up with my recollections. The **APA:SF & F** which I was involved in was founded by Simon Bostock of Ilkeston (see entry) in, I think, late 1980, or more likely early 1981 and it ran for four mailings; Dave Langford & myself were the only contributors to make all 4, the last mailing consisting of my **CODBALLS #4** and Dave's **CLOUD CHAMBER** number 'somethingorother'. There was all sorts in the mailings, from SF fans, Comics fans – plus stuff like Matt Coward's **BEYOND THE WHITE GATES** and Sean Masterton's **EGG** which were confused and confusing. Geoff Boswell (the Brierly Hill version) was in there, Linda Pickersgill (who left to form **The Women's Periodical APA**), Martyn Taylor (his **PROTO-RAA** went on to become **RAA**, an 'indie' SF zine) etc. It was all messy, crazy, and caused a lot of aggro & rifts between the apans and the non-apans. Whole thing lasted for about 12 to 15 months, didn't get anywhere, and the only thing that I remember about it was the rush of John “Bigger than God” Lennon material after his death. Couldn't see much in him myself, said so in the apa, and got some hate mail for my troubles.”

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The first Birmingham Group apa mailing – *APA-B*'s June '83 launch – included Green's *ON RANDOM HOLD #1*, reprinting his poem *Still* (reprinting of work from one zine and apa to another, either in the same or rewritten format, was a frequent feature.) *ORH* ran to 16 issues before retitling as *CHAPTER TWO*. Other zines in this apa which used poetry included Paul Vincent's *ABDUMP* (which was a semi-free standing fanzine, possibly piggybacking on the apa mailing to save postage), publications by Martin Tudor – later editor of the fanzine *EMPTIES* and then also involved with *CRITICAL WAVE* – as well as those of Eunice Pearson and Joy Hibbert, both later to publish poetry-using fanzines. The 'tradition' in the area, although dwindling by 1984, did last into 1985, when Green's *SOUNDING THE RITUAL ECHO #3* reprinted his poem *Sound And Vision* from an earlier *ORH*.

Why this wide use of poetry in these apas? Steve Green comments:

“Martin, Paul and myself, along with Joy and Eunice, were then at the heart of a fanzine production line, and felt we could get away with tinkering with the established fanzine format.”

Possibly, also the fact that Green at least was used to publishing poetry in non-SF apas caused a natural cross-over of an activity already well-established as natural, for him at least – his involvement with poetry having begun with SFnal (HAWKWIND influenced) lyrics for a local rock group in '77 (not used – they preferred minimalist punk), one of these lyrics, *How Bright The Stars Above*, about an android deciding to end an affair with a human, resurfacing in *OMEGA* in 1980 for the non-SF *BAPA*.

AUGURIES

Edited by Nik Morton (aka R. Nicholson-Morton), this publication was, when founded in 1984, described as the:

“South Hants SF and Fantasy Quarterly Magazine.”

The term quarterly soon became a misnomer, but this predominantly fiction member of the SF small press thrived throughout the remainder of the decade, later becoming an *NSFA* (New SF Alliance) member - and it continued to carry poetry throughout the period. It reached #11 by June '89, the last '80s issue, and, although much of the poetry used in those issues was either only tenuously genre-related, or, in the case of special 'theme' issues, the connection could be tenuous to that theme, a notable roll-call of poets and poems can be compiled, in a variety of styles and forms.

John F. Haines' full page poem in #4, for example, *Taking Back The Empties*, makes a read-worthy attempt to revivify the clichéd idea of rounding up a space-crew for takeoff, and in #5 with *ARRIVED* he neatly encapsulates experiences of newly-revived colonists:

slowly our muddled brains took up the path
laid by so long ago and loosed our tongues (etc)

In a more experimental vein in #4 was t. winter-damon's prose-poem (the editor called it

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a 'vignette') *Whispers In Stone* and in #5, Andrew Darlington's challenging *Against Heliocentricity/The Hermes Trismegistus Codex*, trailed on the issue's cover:

Stars are holes
in a print sky....
how to disbelieve such beauty?'

In #6 Haines returns with *Refuse Disposal*, while Christine Michael's three poems offer notable variety: *Martin* is a black humour time paradox poem:

"Simply vanished overnight,"
they all said.

Her *We The Lightnesses* is a prose-poem re the rebuilding of earthlings from samples, and *The Green-Eyed Goddess* is symbolic Final SF.

In January 1988, #8 contained three poems perhaps nearer science poetry than SF ("science-oriented" to quote the *OPUS* review), John Bissett's *The Enlightenment* and J. P. V. Stewart's longish *No Matter*, on the topic of man's nothingness within the universe, and *Perhaps We'll* again speaking of sub-atomic worlds:

...those arcane places where
electrons sing
of empty worlds with room for every dream (etc)

Issues 9 and 10, two 'time theme' issues, included a curious J. P. V. Stewart long poem wherein a man dreams of reviving his dead dog so that together they can

sail forever on black hole tides

where the dog can

Join me in the nightshade chase
of the wizard's stick.

Shane Doheny's *After The Rain* personifies the moon, but does link with the theme in the final line:

....the great engine Time gathering speed again.

My *Strolling With The Time Line* depicts a time traveller's fragmentation of experience and, in *The Road*, John Haines paints the vanishing beneath a tree burial of

the rusted shells of cars

while Dave W. Hughes in *Meander* uses dramatic imagery to convey life going by

Gryphons leer at birds frozen in flight

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and Sharon Elron provides the rhymed *Shooting Star*.

As well as a couple of unsatisfactory non-genre poems, the decade's last issue, #11, contained J. P. V. Stewart's long, atmospheric *The Librarian*:

He's the lighthouse keeper of the fabled isle.

BACK BRAIN RECLUSE

Subsequently best known by its initials, **BBR**, this publication began in June '84 from Smallfield, Surrey, then moved with editor Chris Reed to Sheffield. The first issue included poetry by Michael Moorcock, his *The Curse Of Man*, a songlike warning to mankind:

we're damned by violence (etc)

later reprinted in the **BEST OF BBR #1** (1987), which featured considerable poetry, including another song-like Moorcock poem which had appeared in the **BBR** issue for July '85. Vaguely final, *The Falcon*, copyrighted as lyrics, has a cyclic form to match its theme of the cycle of life:

First the hunter, then the game
turn and turn and turn again.

Poetry by Moorcock made a further appearance in issue #6 with the lyric that begins his story *Cowboy Lights Out* -

there's a red fire raging
In ten thousand pairs of eyes. (etc)

- and in issue #7, *The Cornelius Special*, in January '87. The two pieces are both genre in content. *John Dee's Song*, which has a 'parallel world' air, also employs sly humour as the alchemist finds his lofty speculations undermined by his body:

And now a word on Nature
on Art and High Arithmetik (How to restrain
this leaping prick?)

Dry humour is also an element in *Pierrot On The Moon*:

They didn't tell me
That breathing was so difficult
(...)
They said it'd be just like
Brighton Beach.

The poem is further illuminated by a note from Moorcock describing his fascination with the 'eternal triangle' of trickster Harlequin, cruel innocent Pierrot, and indifferent beauty

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Columbine.

(NOTE: These poems can be found respectively in Moorcock's novels *Gloriana* and *The Entropy Tango*. *Pierrot on the Moon* is included in the *Dreamers On The Sea Of Fate* anthology, and both appear in Brian Tawn's book, *Dude's Dreams – The Music of Michael Moorcock*, Hawkfan Press, 1997.)

Although **BBR #2** was mastheaded

“A Magazine of Fiction and Art”

and as early as November 1984 a letter from the editor says:

“I’m trying to gradually phase out the poetry in favour of prose fiction”

poetry was to continue to appear right until issue #10 (with, arguably, a final insidious appearance in #13, June 1989, namely Ian Watson’s *Root Canal Therapy*, which is laid out as, and indeed is, a poem - not genre except in its use of an extended ‘tooth’ conceit culminating in the payoff:

words have deserted, torn out by the root.

Rather it is an ironic comment on compromise and misunderstanding, the story of a dentist-obsessed poet visiting Prague, whose translator converts his sexual musings into properly high-minded sentiments.)

BBR #2 had an intriguing experiment in presenting a poem in comic strip format (see also **STUDIO 54**), an experiment repeated in #3 with a D’Israeli (Matt Brooker) art rendering of my mini-saga prose-poem *Something To Look Forward To* (the issue also had my very short poem *Camera Out*).

BBR #4 had five poems, all later to be reprinted in **BEST OF BBR**. As well as the Moorcock lyric mentioned, and Tom Bingham’s non-genre *Swinging The Lead*, these included American writer t Winter-Damon’s *Flickering Blue Extreme/Phantom Visitations Of The Mermaid’s Inn*, a lush, ‘decadent’ Hnal poem later to be a Rhysling nominee. Amid

nightspasms of belladonna lust (etc)
the night expires
with
sated sighs.

Harsher, yet with a bleakly modern beauty of its own, is Andrew Darlington’s *After The Raid*:

glass capsules settling like
silt over the city

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presage disastrous change but somehow conjure up a redeeming Rimbaud.

Issue #5, in March of 1986, had Ray Jon's non-genre *The Girls In Summer Dresses*, Gerv's rather predictable lyric *These Are The Killers*, and a long Jon Daunt piece, *The Courtroom*, in which an arsonist on trial peoples the court with beasts and monsters, Hnal at least in tone.

BBR #6 had two non-genre poems, Ray Jon's *For Sale* and Alan Stewart's *A Boy's First Defeat*, while issue #8 contained another Ray Jon non-genre piece *Shop Window Girl*, and well-known 'mainstream' poet Geoff Stevens' *The Pit And The Pendulum*, which is vaguely political:

the harsh silicon of their leader's ideals.

Ray Jon returned again with non-genre poems in #9 (Autumn '87) -*Attraction* - and #10 - *Passenger* - though the latter has surreal elements:

Tickets held people in their hands (etc)

Also in #9 was Nigel King's symbolical-surreal *Stormbreak*:

As your hand becomes
The wrath of God

and #10 had two poems by H. R. Felgenhauer; *So Why, Do I Need You?* on a 'life is a banquet' theme, and the ironic *A Patriot's Pride*:

When I grow up I wanna be an outer space colonist,
or else invisible.

Christine Michael's poem *Rabbits And Hounds* is a role-reversal piece, re little girls rounding up potential rapists. Interestingly, also in this issue, a Simon Clark story, *Dream The Real*, quotes Darlington's *After The Raid* poem.

In issue #13, the editor officially responded to complaints about the absence of poetry from issue #11. As well as pointing out that, in a subscriber poll, 13 had voted against it and 5 for it, he added:

"the fact is that most of the poetry which I found good enough to publish was really mainstream, and not even SF or SF-orientated, and didn't therefore fit in with what **BBR** is now essentially about."

He stated, citing the prose-poemish *Moonpiece: The Monologues* by Hakim Bey (in issue #13):

"There IS still poetry in BBR, but not in verse."

BARDDONI – See **PETE PRESFORD**.

BORDER RUFFIAN

This one-off from Cheltenham, under the editorship of Chris Beaumont, included a prose-poem by ‘mainstream’ small-press poet Dave Ward. Representative of this five-line untitled piece is

Dog.Running dog.Seen and unseen.//
...Branches hung with dead children.

(supplied by AVC)

SIMON BOSTOCK

Bostock, of Ilkeston – after APA involvement and editing of his own fanzine, **SUPERNOVA**, published a series of what he called his ‘post-SF-fandom zines’, which along with his fiction and various autobiographical and philosophical musings, artwork, etc, contained much of his poetry. Magazine titles included **PSYCHEDELIC FRUIT JUICE, AND ERGOT**, and **THE BRAINTAP** (both 1985) and in 1986 **I THINK I’M CRACKING UP** - A Lovesick Poet Publication. Poetry included is generally surreal, without direct genre content. Typical of the flavour – from *Hit And Miss All Logic* - the lines:

the house fell down
between the glint in my eye.

BUM

Full title **British Underground Magscene News**. This long-established publication of ‘mainstream’ and alternative small press news and reviews, established by Paul Lamprill of Corby, began to take an interest in non-commercial SF publications in 1979, as a result of a Dave Langford article, and later that year established a regular SF publications review column written by Steve Sneyd, though this ran for only two issues before **BUM** was abruptly folded by the then editor Alan Jowett in early 1980. As with the **PFMA** (see later), though starting from the opposite direction, this brief episode reflected an attempt to bridge the ‘mainstream’ small press/SF fanzine ‘gap of unknowing’.

CALABAN

This fanzine edited by Eunice Pearson from Kingshurst, Birmingham, used poetry right from issue #1 in late 1982. Produced with a Cartismandua Press imprint, it contained three Steve Green poems –*Dawn*, and *Still*, whose jump-cut imagery is an unusual case of form echoing subject:

goddess of the silver tube
electron gun assassin

shoot me through the heart once more

and *Elegy Written In A Plastic Graveyard*.

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Issue #2 (June 1983 – when *CALABAN* also had a stable-mate in the form of the fictionzine, *BRIGANTE*) had four of my short SFnal poems. Issue #3 had poems by Carlton C. Allen -*Twilight Times: For The Women Of Greenham Common* - hypnotic and chantlike, Steve Green - *Moralities* and Stephen Urbanski -*Waiting Room* – which mentioned a Gannet (Newcastle fangroup) film, but none particularly genre. An Ian Byers LoC (Letter of Comment) provided the generalisation:

“fan poetry....is invariably expressionist.”

By March of 1985, the editor (in a letter) was saying:

“It seems fanzines of fiction and poetry are not appreciated by SF fans”

and to quote an *IDOMO #17* review of #4:

“Calaban is going to be all small press from now on.”

(*IDOMO #17* had said of issue #3: “In many ways I don’t think you could really call this an ‘SF’ mag, more like a speculative one, and that’s mainly because I can’t stand the term ‘visionary’.”)

CASSANDRA ANTHOLOGY

This predominantly fiction publication of the Cassandra SF Workshop, a partly Northampton-based, partly-postal workshopping organisation founded in 1983 by Bernard Smith et al, used genre poetry in at least three issues.

In #3 (1984) were two poems by Steve Bowkett, *Pluto*:

turns a cold shoulder to the sky

is typical of the fresh-minted imagery, which also includes such striking lines as:

unconsciousness
prowling the limits
of a thread fine chain of gravity

and *We Buried Him*:

In Callisto’s blue ice

the first to die
ten steps out in the cosmic sea (etc)

Issue #4 included Carmen Henry’s *Starborn*, a poem whose superficial clumsiness in

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fact effectively conveys the clumsy attempt of a mother to convey her love for the non-human child she has borne:

Science procreated you, and I am just the carrier,
Of Mega-beings one, two, three, four
Look we've passed the barrier.

This issue also contained Bowkett's *SF*, an appealingly fresh look at the old theme of the genre's Sense Of Wonder:

through office windows
smashed moons hang;
Orion hangs beside me
driving home between worlds

and summed up in the last lines:

Let me never
step down from the stars.

Issue #5, as well as a brief profile of SF poet Kenneth Bailey, and a quote from Lem's *Solaris* which in many ways encapsulates the aims of SF poetry at its best:

We have no need of other worlds. We need mirrors.
We are searching for an ideal image of our own world.

also includes Bailey's poem *On Being Invited To Consider Accepting A Vacancy To Be Born On Planet Earth* and Steve Bowkett's short *Meteor*.

By now, though, the *Cassandra Newsletter* (December 1984) was asking for more poetry - to go to Steve Bowkett - and it was clear that a separate, all-SF poetry, magazine was about to be born. This magazine was to be known as *STAR WINE* (which, incidentally, in issue #3 reprinted the Bailey poem mentioned above.)

CEREBRETRON

This 80s genre little press magazine edited by Alex Bardy from Archway, London, used fiction and articles but not poetry. However, it earns an entry here because issue #7 (February, 1989) included the oddity of a verse LoC, from Ray Furlong of Essex, commenting sardonically on #6. Typical of the four 4-line rhymed stanzas of this is the third:

So lonely the Grim Reaper sits,
Angry at Cerebretron Six,
Which has us in fits with its escape
From across the river Styx.

CHEESE CAKE

In September 1988 a fanzine of this name carried a poem by *Hawkwind* guru, Robert Calvert (IHNFI)

CLOSE TO THE EDGE

John Winder's Clacton-based 'Magazine of Fantasy and Horror Fiction' whose only issue appeared in March 1988, contained one poem, *Escalope*, by well-known 'mainstream' surrealist Paul Buck. Indicative of the flavour are the lines:

hieroglyphs seized among wounds that have boiled

and

torn on meshes lavished with afterbirths.

COMPUTER-WRITTEN POETRY

Curiously, in view of SF's eager perception of technological possibility, I have found only one reference to computer-written poetry in any of the UK publications consulted - that is a brief mention in *SABSS #5* (1983) that Kenneth Sutherland's *Geometric Boy And Mirror* poem was "computer-assisted". The somewhat surreal result includes the lines:

His chamber valley observed him upon silken future.
...And the boy rigid white
eyes left geometric words in little whirl-winds

However, some of the haiku in early issues of *MAVERICK* may also have been computer written. (supplied by CC)

Incidentally, there seemed little more interest/awareness in the US genre small press - the only direct reference I know is a short review by Roger Dutcher in *STAR*LINE - Vol. 6 #2* March/April 1983 - of a collection of poetry 'written' by a TRS-80 Color computer (*MY BUTTONS ARE BLUE AND OTHER LOVE POEMS FROM THE DIGITAL HEART OF AN ELECTRONIC COMPUTER*, Ron Clark, ARCsoft publishers, 1982). Of this Dutcher remarks:

"This is the first poetry I have seen written by a computer."

Such material, however, although apparently ignored by the genre fanzines/small press, was certainly about considerably earlier. UK 'mainstream' little mag, *LUDD'S MILL* (issue #13½, late 1976) reviewed a collection of poetry:

"created in 7.65 seconds on a Standard Oil of Ohio S370/150 computer."

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The collection, *ENERGY CRISIS POEMS*, appearing from Cleveland Press, utilised:

“a programme designed by rjs.”

The idea of a poetry-writing computer is, of course, a far older one. Such a machine appears in Robert Conquest’s *A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE* (1955), which is unlikely to be the first SFnal use of a concept, traceable back at least to the Lullian Wheel phrase generator invented by medieval Catalan polymath Ramon Lull. (supplied by SJ)

CHUCK (JOHN A.) CONNOR

Connor produced an extraordinary output of publications, in terms both of numbers and pages, between late 1979 and December 1986. There were a bewildering variety of titles - most of which had akas - and an impenetrably baffling numbering system (a by-product, partly, of his sense of humour and partly, I suspect, of an ongoing attempt to avoid supplying copies under the Copyright Act requirements.)

Aside from the earliest (*IDOMO #1 & #2*), all his publications used poetry; most also carried reviews of poetry magazines and collections, and comments on the topic. Poetry shared these publications with media, fannish and other gossip under such headings as *Glasgow Kisses*, fiction, reviews of cassettes, pirate radio, and a huge variety of other matters – some issues were as near as this country has yet come to an equivalent of the American *FACTSHEET FIVE* magazine (edited by Mike Gunderloy), which covered everything non-commercial/alternative.

Within this dazzling spectrum, *IDOMO* is probably as near as existed to a continuing thread (that, and the *SKATE PRESS* name applied as publisher to just about all projects after *IDOMO #4*).

IDOMO was founded in September 1979 with co-editor Aleck ‘Butch’ Butcher and artist Laurie Shepherd. This team was changed after issue #1, with Dick Parker replacing Laurie Shepherd as the staff artist for issues #3 and #4. But it was not a happy situation, and *IDOMO* officially folded on publication of issue #4, in September 1980. This issue was pivotal for several reasons.

Firstly, it saw the invention of the term *IDOMO* for the first time – regular fanartist Dave ‘Shep’ Kirkbride couldn’t fit the full name on the cover he had designed, so abbreviated it thus. This was copied by Peter Lyon’s cover for issue *#4 PART 2* because he thought that was the actual title of the mag – which is what *IDOMO* became for the next 6 years and 17 issues.

Secondly, having had to do the typing and layouts, as well as financing the printing, Connor felt disillusioned with the restraints imposed by working with the team as a whole, especially as the other two members were rapidly losing interest in the project.

The rebirth of *IDOMO* as a one-man edited magazine was due to fellow fan and editor, Ken Mann. As Connor admitted later:

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“I had to agree to revive IDOMO if only to get Ken off my back for a while!”

and so it was that a month later, October 1980, saw the first all-Connor edited *IDOMO*, #4½; it continued until #20½ (real number 21) which marked the end of Chuck’s career as a fanzine/SF small press magazine editor.

The letters, *IDOMO*, initially stood for *IN DEFIANCE OF MEDICAL OPINION*, but sometimes mutated into such variants as *INTERSTELLAR DOXIES ON MAJESTIC ORION*. A full recitation of the baffling numbering/aka-ing system would be wearisome, but several which spring to mind/stand out are:

#5 and two thirds aka *DEATH VALLEY AND ALL POINTS WEST*

#6 (an all-horror issue) aka *VAMPIRE FROGS*

#6+1 aka *DOCTOR GLASSBANDIT aka INSIGHTS DURING OSBORNE'S MAJOR OPERATIONS*

#6+2 bits aka *SEX AND TWO BINTS* (which also contained the *OXIDETROPOLIS* supplement)

#6.999 aka *INTERSTELLAR DOXIES ON MAJESTIC ORION*

#6.999 parts 2, 3 & 4 aka *SWEETHEART CONTRICK* (an absorbed magazine, hence the part numberings)

#15 aka *SKATE PRESS #17* aka *SEX SMUT AND VIOLENCE* aka *IDOE MOE*

#16 was the *POST SPRING CHICKEN* issue

#17 aka *ADMIRAL CONNOR'S HOT TRUE STEAMY CONFESSIONS QUARTERLY*

#19 was the *SPECIAL DEEP COD* issue

#20 was the *CUMMING OF AGE* issue, and finally,

#20 & a half aka *A MOTHER OF A BLOWJOB*

It is possible that this foolery, and its reviewer- and researcher – baiting, quality was at least one factor in ensuring that the tremendous publishing effort involved, in quantity and in many cases in quality - including a willingness, indeed eagerness, to run the unusual and cross-genre, in poetry as well as in other material - never got the recognition it deserved either from an SFnal readership or a small press readership - a lack of response which was one of the factors, aside from understandable ‘burnout’, leading to the eventual suspension of *SKATE PRESS* and Chuck’s move into apa publishing.

To go through the many hundreds of pages of *IDOMO* issues listing and describing every poem having any genre relevance (even though some issues were mainly fiction) would generate a tome. Suffice it to mention some characteristic, and some particularly striking items.

After the two interim issues (#4½, and #4¾), issue #5 had my own long SFnal poem, on the topic of anti-satellite warfare, *Long Nests With A Hole At The Bottom*.

In #5 and two thirds, some comments are of interest. From the editor, in a review of *NEW GWENT REVIEW #3* (edited by Bryn Fortey):

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“still shows Bryn’s taste for the ‘odd’ (the words ‘it takes one to know one’ spring to mind!)”

in a review of *ANGEL EXHAUST* (edited by Emmanuel Z):

“As I’ve always said, the Small Press.... it’s more vicious and witty than the whole of fandom put together....”

and, re a ‘word processor’ poem by Kym Greene in the Ken Mann edited *FUSION*:

“I found the poem was probably easier to work when I retyped it into a phrase/line format, which has probably destroyed any subtle meanings it might have had.”

6.999 pt 2 (January 1983) marks the incorporation into the main magazine of the occasional verse supplement *SWEETHEART CONTRICK* - which is here represented as the *MALEVOLENT* 7 page of short, uncredited pieces, one or two vaguely genre:

...the moon the place
where all unwanted
life will soon be sent (SS)

and, from Steve Green:

alone among the concrete monoliths
i watched and understood

then
returned to the shadows
of the real world.’

In the same issue, Anthony Cooney (a ‘mainstream’ editor) gives us the long *Song For Johnny Appleseed*, vaguely final in atmosphere, while the outstanding piece of the issue, and clearly genre, is Andrew Darlington’s *Lemuria Rising/Impossible Altars*:

Irradiate through ultra-violet
strange emissions from Saturn
(10,000 years occluded)...
IMPULSE NODES FROM SATURN
INFILTRATE THOUGHT (etc)

Andy De Cosmos (aka Andy Boot - real name unknown) provides in his piece *Know*, a shining genre image -

A mixing of minds
through the cloud of eternity

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- and provides a smooth link to one or two quotes chosen by the editor which are illuminating of attitudes in the magazine: from Julie Markham's *R.E.M.OTE CONTROL* as reprinted in *QUARTZ* (see entry):

....the mental cinema
commonly known as the eyeball flicks.

Another of his quotes is in many ways a clue to his choice of material: from John Barren:

“And yet, things seem a little out of place. Nothing seriously out but little things that shouldn't come together - rather like one of those really good surreal paintings where you have to look very close to find the catch.”

A Dave Langford LoC draws attention to Thomas Disch's latest poetry collection, and John D. Owen's general comment on the genres has an applicability to speculative poetry:

“they hold a key to a different world, not a better one, just different, and in absorbing yourself in that world, you can come into this one more fully, by being able to look at it with slightly different eyes. That's true fantasy AND* SF, and is, for me, one of their major redeeming features.” (*Owen's emphasis)

The issue also mentions the availability of the *SUBURBAN RELAPSE* cassette tape, containing SF material in abundance, with some fantasy, which marked the start of *SKATE TAPES*. At the end of this issue Chuck admits to the problems his readership were having understanding his numbering system. Chuck states:

“the next issue will be #15, there having been 6 whole issues and 8 review issues to date.”

IDOMO #15 (also Skate Press #17) contains two particularly notable genre poems. Before dealing with them, however, several other pieces deserve briefer mention.

Australian Robert Boyce's *Peeping Tom* is genre by implication:

vaults...over imaginary fences...retrieves
whatever it is
drawn blinds
conceal.

– at least in the speculative sense. Anthony Cooney's *Only The Sounds Do*, an examination of the nature of words, has implications for speculative poets:

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Here the spears of syntax thrust
forward through the modes of time and mass...

Cognition transcends the limits of the flesh
by new realities of words.

And Bill Costley's long American poem with a title nearly as long – *Change Macho, Lucky, Orange* is about a third of the title – is worth mentioning as a rare instance of political work appearing in this type of fanzine, and also as one part of it had already appeared in another fanzine, *BARDDONI*. Paul Donnelly's *Aftermath* is genre in the surreal ending:

tonight there's rain on the moon
a trumpeter sits dozing on the steps of a burning church
...tomorrow we'll be rich as rats.

Of the two truly unusual genre pieces, John F. Haines contributes *The Lure Of Space*, a three page narrative poem which coheres both as a story and a poem, right from the yearning child:

While others played
He gazed....
At the sleek silver ships
Streaking in the sky
To dare
To fight
And burn in the void

through action and resultant suffering, to the ironic cyclic ending when, as a disabled veteran far from his own birth-time:

At the age of thirty-five
He would go out into
The garden at night
Stare up into the sky
And gaze with longing
At the twinkling lure
Of the stars.

The theme is not particularly original, but the methods of treatment succeeds, though without formal experiment. (*The Lure Of Space* was later reprinted in Geoff Kemp's *QUARTZ* - see entry).

Formal experiment is at the heart of American Dan Fox's *Troids Ejaculate Freely*, which is also a very rare example of sex as a theme in UK SF poetry outlets of the time. This 'creature erotic' comes through in lines like:

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Now the Electroid creatures jerk off
through the pattern

- the final payoff is sardonically Hnal:

No mouth but they smile.

and is emphasised by the half border frame used as an illustration – two Victorian nymphs, with their mouths whitened out prior to printing.

Various readers give reactions to experimental (in their terms) poetry, from the outraged

“Modern poetry! You string a few lines of obscure words together which no one can make head or tail of and that’s it... No one cares to ‘kick’ it in case they are ‘not with it’.”

to the plaintive

“Sometimes I wish people would either use punctuation or stick in enough emotional feeling into a piece.”

(both ANON)

– to the thoughtful demurrer: Martyn Taylor (referring to both poetry and fiction):

“...Joyce was a master of the conventional mode of expression, as may be seen in his earlier work - but found that he could not express himself adequately within the bounds of those conventions... The trouble is that many... disciples... follow down that path without having sweated to exhaust the conventions and thereby devalue both their own work and that of the masters.”

The editor replies:

“I look for style and feeling above all else - and if on first or second reading I think to myself ‘hey this is telling me something’ then I know the piece works...every editor has a bias that dictates acceptance. If I enjoy a piece then I print it, no matter what the latest trend may be. Niall Richardson said...(about **SABSS**, the short lived sister mag to **IDOMO**)...I was doing something different by printing poetry that rhymed. It appealed to me, so I printed it. Nothing more, nothing less.”

The same Robertson, in a LoC, raises an interesting, if controversial question:

“Horror isn’t a genre of writing in the same way SF and Crime are - ... a mix of fantasy/SF/Thriller/Psychological material mixed in from various traditions.”

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The editor replies:

“My feelings are now that Horror is the root of SF (the BEM in space opera, the ‘enemy’ in straight hack, the ‘system’ in the seemingly now defunked (sic) anti-hero epics, etc) inasmuch as you have the unthinkable ‘Thing’ in basic horror, which has to be defeated. Fantasy crosses over so many times that the epic ancient tales can be worked as horror – Gothic horror being just an updating of the original theme.”

In *IDOMO #16* – which includes the intriguing suggestion from Bill Costley that poets should have five-yearly exams to obtain a license to practice a Public Art, and another unusual feature in a verse letter from John F. Haines in reply to a request for contributions – contains little genre, even marginally. My own *Outside The Abracadabran Embassy*, a future demonstration poem, and Tom Bingham’s *Mis-Carriage Dream of a Witch*, David R. Morgan’s *Fnal Kiss Of The Thorn*:

The blades of the giant North wind
plough a sorrowful way

Max Noiprox’s *The Magician*:

I am the invoice of intuition
My inner space is large as galaxies

and arguably David Fields’ *Within A Hole*, vaguely Hnal re the underground self, are about it.

#17 (1984) also had very little genre poem content. Sean Hanley’s *Here I Am* has a science poem feel:

Here I am
Trapped in a cage of bone

Tacked to the surface of a spinning sphere
Hung in the empty hole of space

Gideon Elwood’s *At These Times* has an Fnal/time cycle element:

I chase shadows
out of
shadows with a
little more time
mending nets with fishwives (...)
I see only the old man in me
killing cows with stones.

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Harry Calhoun's *Turnabout* has a 'what-if'-ish approach which is marginally genre:

When Christ in galoshes (...)
makes the day grow grey
so he can tiptoe back inside
and read the sports and doze

(he also includes an early use of the term 'bimbos'.)

'Mainstream' big name Martin Stannard is present with a personal poem, and American Ruth Wildes Schuler a rare example of a Falklands War poem in such publications. And there is a very interesting experiment in poem presentation (though not genre) in David R. Morgan's *Studio 54* (see later) - each line reflected in a visual frame comicstrip-wise:

Moving like diamonds round endlessly repeating records
- The ghosts and robots forever.

Loc comments included Marty Cantor (from Hollywood) remarking that he found it:

"upsetting to be considered a non-literati because I prefer that SF
adhere to its storytelling traditions"

and John Thiel's

"a spaceflight seems like a time trip in the wrong direction if it lands
anywhere"

while the editor, as well as the kind of jokey references (eg "Suck Girls of Pluto") – which he seemed to need at intervals – comments more seriously in one review:

"...the question of the role of the 'poet' in a society that no longer
needs people to keep a verbal record of events Historical or
Everyday... the proof of the power of art lies in the fact that every
dictator has always set up a censorship to control it."

Issue #18 (which has a review of an early *VIZ*, an appeal from Peter Smith of Slough for dating of fanzines – one every subsequent researcher would agree with – and reprints Paul Donnelly's *Aftermath*, plus Steve Green's *Still*, from an earlier *IDOMO*) has only one directly genre piece, Lilly 'Binky' Baker's *Little Darlings*, a humorous leprechaun poem. The editor quotes Kevin Locke's description of much fanwriting as "growing up in public" but names no names!

Issue #19 (early 1986) has three genre-related poems –*Holes* and *Continuously* (ghost works from Belgian Deen Engels) and the Memorable *Mohanda's Revenge* from Harry Calhoun, an Hnal piece on the unusual theme of Gandhi's posthumous thoughts and actions. Startling lines like:

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...I've feasted on darkness,
I'm bloated, and bigger (....)

....you tore me like one
of the Ripper's whores.
My face hangs like a Halloween
husk on your door

make this an effective tour de force, as in a very different way is Max Noiprox's three-page *I, Judas* in which the betrayer meditates his planned suicide.

Joy Hibbert draws attention to the number of times she has seen *Still* reprinted, suggesting it may be a record. (In fact Steve Green was far behind 'mainstreamers' like Dave Ward and Tina Morris, each of whom had a poem which had appeared in 20 or more different magazines.)

Issue #20 ('start date March 1986') announced that the next issue will be the last (*IDOMO* "has become 'unfun', 'fun-negative' if you will"). It has two surreal poems which are marginally genre - the 'Brierly Hill' Geoff Boswell's *The Teacher As Unborn*:

You stand over my body
with the knife of your choice (...)
Oh sleeping Bomb!
Won't you light up tonight?

and Paul Schneider's seven parable-like mini-prose-poems, eg:

Don't do anything you wouldn't do
if you were invisible

etc, or:

answer door
and say without embarrassment, "I'm sorry to
be disturbing you so late"

– Borgesian jests, perhaps. And the issue includes a 'pome' (humorous SF parody), a reprint of Arthur 'ATOM' Thompson's *Report On The Shooting Of Huckster McGrew*.

The editor comments on his general approach:

"remove, where possible, the labels such as SF, Small Press, Comics,
Comix, Music, Punk, New Wave/Avant Garde"

in a remark which also includes an early use of the term 'designer violence'. Michael O'Leary, in a LoC, makes the interesting (and poetry-relevant) point:

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“We no longer believe what is self-evident. We only believe what we see on television...Our only consciousness is the light beaming from the tube through our eyes, along the optic nerve and into the cerebral cortex, washing out and hung up to dry.”

Malcolm Hodkin states:

“The tendrils of poetry seem delicate enough to be accessible to scansion bugs without the over-development of some, more self-indulgent, autocidal manifestations. Even after the soul-destroying experience of Eng.Lit O-Level Poetry ‘analysis’, I can sense a little, if not much, of what is going on.”

The editor replied:

“prejudiced minds... the ‘poetry is bad. I disliked having to do it at school and therefore I will still dislike it even though I am out of the classroom and poetry has moved away from the classic’ routines.”

(He then adds about magazine policy;)

“By removing the money side and working on a response/reaction angle it gets some people to reading stuff they might just pass by.”

This is also the issue in which Connor speaks about the *STUDIO 54* comicised poem (see entry) used in #17 though without detailing the background – which he explained later in a letter:

“about the screw-up that resulted in the success of *STUDIO 54* – I wanted a kind of *MONDO SNARFO* surreal – each frame totally different characters, settings etc (bit like early Crazy Kat stuff) - but Dave Windett got cross-information and the thing wound up as it is. Far better than the original idea. Actually, there could be possible feedback from someone saying they saw *STUDIO 54* in another small press/music mag connected with someone calling himself Angus Jeep and Professor Werewolf – mainly as Dave Morgan wasn’t above pulling the four sides from the mag and offering them up for grabs to another zine.”

Perhaps the final word on this issue should go to another Michael O’Leary remark:

“The blind drive for profit creates new technologies faster than we can see and think.”

The last issue (20½ - originally started in the middle of a 2-week major NATO exercise in the Pacific, completed on station leave in Singapore in September, mailed back to the UK where it was then photocopied by friends, and finally mailed out by remote control from the

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editorial address in November/December 1986) contains a Jon Tildsley LoC:

“there are lots of references to poetry, which is also playing with words - treating words as ‘toys’ etc.”

which gives the editor an effective chance to sum up his philosophy:

“Words as toys? Of course they’re toys, playthings if you will, because only by playing can we ever hope to get the learning experience that teaches us through life...the world would be a bit of a dead end were we not allowed to bend the rules a little (though you have to know the rules first before you can work within and around them.)”

And, as if to make his point, he uses – serendipity or planned? – a number of near-genre poems which have that playful element, whether the play be “grim or gay” (if I can use gay in the old sense). Phillip Brittain’s *Borderland* gives a sinister beauty to the travail of refugees from a nameless war:

We’re following a light in the distance:
star fires dancing on the sea.
And a cracking wind that feels like glass.

Fred Brown’s *ROLAND* pictures an artist who paints, on multi-coloured bubbles, the spiritual entities he ‘sees’, Jon Daunt in *Volunteer Army* conjures a horrific ‘toy’:

I found a baby’s severed arm in my pocket.

and in *S.S. Rinedam, Holland-America Lines*, teeters between magic and realism:

in my berth the woman returned
swirling with the ship: green eyes, green fur...
green face - in her hands thick wads
of paper money.

Karl Mills’ *Pretty As A Picture* shows us a crippled man in a wheelchair escaping in his mind to stained glass windows, while his wife is calling an institution to remove him. Ann Rivers in *Strychnine* continues the theme of toys of escape, this time a poison ring viewed in almost sexual terms:

Life’s secret, conclusive mystery (....)
You’ll open yourself to me.

SABSS (Self Abused But Still Standing) was intended by Chuck as a home for items too odd even for *IDOMO*. To quote the editorial in #1 (September 1980):

“That’s not to say that ‘fringe’ SF won’t be printed in here, but it will be very ‘fringe’ and not very often...as a rough guideline, what is, and

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will be, appearing will be the ‘unusual’, the ‘weird’, the ‘turn it upside down, maybe it’ll read better’ fiction.”

The distinction between *IDOMO* and *SABSS* grew harder and harder to grasp, probably one reason, along with the Copyright Act wrangle, why *SABSS* merged back into *IDOMO* after five issues.

SABSS #1 has only two poems which are plausibly genre: Steve Ince’s prose-poem *End Of The War*, text split in two columns with certain lines linking both, eg:

death beckons every man

and

would anything bring the dead back to life

and Darlington’s long *Aftermath - Based On A Passage From Leon Trotsky’s ‘History Of The Russian Revolution Volume III’* which, like a Cornelian time travel episode, has genre strangeness even though based on fact:

the radio is talking backwards (...)
Red banners waterfall down ministries (etc)

SABSS #2 (November 1980) had no real genre poetry, and soon after Chuck was planning to reshape the magazine:

“to have more of a slant to straight fiction with experimental thrown in. Squaring the contents of the original parameters is something I’ve been afraid of doing for some time.”

And, from a letter, 14th December 1980:

“I don’t want to lay down any rigid rules but... I’d be a fool to say that I don’t need boundaries within which to work.”

He also did not want to lose

“the quality I’ve been getting... ‘amount’ of ‘New Wave’ stuff already tied up in it.”

He felt that, in issue #3 (May 1981), Geoff Boswell’s *Conformity May Be Your Santa Claus* came nearest to defining his aims, combining

“experimental comedy with poetry and lyrical run, topped off with a touch of the cynics.”

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From the same issue, a series of short poems by surrealist Paul Donnelly includes *King Kong Whips It Out*:

sweat turns
to a heroine
in his hands

he feels colossal

and *Unpublished Note From Log*, a Rhysling short poem nominee. At just five lines this poem is impossible to meaningfully extract, but this image perhaps hints at the lateral flavour of a truly individual piece:

...the miserable whine of black holes

SABSS #4, in 1982, has a number of genre-related poems, but first it is worth noting the considerable use of poetry within the experimental SF story by David Bateman *Dividing The World*. As well as a concrete poem linking *PART 1* and *PART 2*, and a verse *END OF PART THREE (COMPULSORY)*, there is a 50-line poem acting as a bridge between *PART 2* and *PART 3*, which in powerful language depicts outsiders observing Earth:

higher than a skyscraper;
suspended in space;
star-fibred, glowing;
towering, towerless
Who is this gift to descend upon.

Among the poems, my 'timewinds' piece *In The Midst Of Insomnia* is SFnal, as is John F. Haines' moving *Final Day's Leave* - unconsummated love with an alien:

Dawn brought slow emerald fire blazing
From the huge twin suns that filled the west
Horizon. Not before then did we kiss.

William Ewing's *A Piece Of Land Trapped In A Time Loop*, though, is SFnal only in title. Hnal work is better represented. Philip E. Crabtree provides two –*Dead Rat Pudding*:

The ashen-grey rat carcasses
adorn the murky pondweed undergrowth
a dormant mind awakens. (etc)

and *Happy Attic – The Nowhere Paradise*, a hallucinatory witch-world of:

...crazed belchings of distorted Beatrix Potter.

Paul Donnelly's prose-poem *Living In The Body Kitchen*, too, is strong in horror

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atmospherics:

At night when the body
began its sleep the tongue would still come out in search
of another meal

my *Taking It Steady* is low-key horror, while Geoff Taylor and John Shire's supposedly co-written (they were one and the same person in John Shire) *Trauma 3* again conjures up that chill feel:

The people around me
are tense enough to snap spines.

Issue #5 (1983) - the last **SABSS** - has the editorial comment that:

"...there is no theme running through this mag, therefore each piece should be taken on its own and not compared to another either following it or preceding it."

And indeed the variety is immense – including some genre material. David Clarkson's *Into The Valley Of Death (Rode The Really Demented)* is an unusual example of comic Hnal – lines such as:

...journey to the pearly gates

There was no in-flight ding-bat film

and

Happy chatter under the lids
Among the mildewed minds who gave up loving
For the life after life.

are indicative of the elements of subtlety in this black humour.

Kenneth Sutherland, who, apart from appearing under the name 'Zen' or 'Zenny' from time to time, provided a 'computer-assisted poem', the surreal *Geometric Boy And Mirror*, also gives the reader the SFnal *Eden* - a killer planet that somehow seems homelike:

tho lacking trees
and oxygen
lurked in minds of men as home.

Anthony Cooney in *Declension Of The Noun: Theatre* gives us mankind as performers for an alien audience:

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a lens
wide as the Galactic lens
focuses (etc)

while Mike Johnson's *Darwin's Farthing* takes a science poem approach to the wren. Ronald Edward Kittle's *Mammoth Journey* could be interpreted in genre/Fnal terms:

A crucifix of demon-tusks
Looming in the dark
Like duelling crescent moons (etc)

and Ken Mann with *TLX1500* gives us the words of a robot (or robotic man) confronted by a whore:

I'd love to love you
But it's not in my programme (etc)

Robert C. Boyce's *Streak* hymns cosmonauts who

pound
vigorously
into
the
future

Daniel De Vries' long *The Poets* is Fnal in its account of the early Irish bards in mythical terms, and Dan Fox's idiosyncratic *Floating Opera* has a fish owner confronted by sudden evolution among his goldfish:

A universe came to me

Simon Clark's *Pint-Sized Saviour* describes a tramp's drink as if it had godlike powers – not genre, but near-so:

...causes the solid Earth
to become soft
and rock him to sleep.

John F. Haines' *Dawn Patrol* takes troops into a desert – but is it on Earth or an alien world, this

...shimmering dance
The killing heat

Paul Donnelly's *Mime* is surreal more than genre, as phone box windows turn to mirrors, and Ceinwen Sanderson, also, is on the ill-defined edge of genre with her *cupboardful of bones of dead lovers*:

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And in that cupboard I hang.

Without attempting to comment on the maze of other spinoffs, magazine and tape, in detail, however, one particularly SFnal poem from the *IDOMO 'IN-DEX' PART 2* should be mentioned: *Silent Subversive* by S. Bernard (aka Steve Ince), which in almost chantlike form takes its protagonist powerlessly to acceptance of future defeat:

SOLUTIONS

Of a problem,

Hiding the eventual take-over by the machine

with the culminating lines:

Light on metal,
Reflects harshly,

Still.

CONS

Poetry made only very limited appearances at UK cons in the 80's, a contrast with the American situation of fairly regular poetry programming. Duncan Lunan organised readings by Edwin Morgan etc. at *ALBACONS* in Scotland, and also spoke on the value of poetry in illuminating new astronomical discoveries at *LUCON*, held in Leeds in 1988. This also included a reading by Andrew Darlington and Pete Presford.

1989's Jersey *EASTERCON* featured the *SPECULUM* poetry workshop organised by Kenneth Bailey (accompanied by a publication of the same name which he edited) who also read at that year's *MEXICON*, while the same year's *ICONOCLASM* included an 8-poet reading (plus American speculative poets on tape) and a workshop. (See also *ICONS OF STARCHASM*).

It is also worth mentioning that SF poetry had some input into at least two of the annual ('mainstream') Poets' And Small Presses Conventions. Pete Presford edited the convention booklet for the 1987 one, held at Corby, and there was a stall manned by Steve Bowkett on behalf of the *CASSANDRA WORKSHOP/STAR WINE* and a couple of other SF small press publications, with a visit by Bob Shaw for an (abortive) workshop, and at the 1989 (Stamford, Lincs) one there was an SF small press stall and three poets (Gerald England, Pete Cox and Steve Sneyd) read SFnal poetry introduced as such.

Also of note is that the Peterborough SF Society supported Con2bile 'filk' conventions (songs/folksongs with SFnal lyrics) during the subject decade. (supplied by CC)

CREEPING LIKE A NUN

A Harry Bond apazine (the title derived from a line in *The Beatles'* song, *Lady Madonna*) in which, in 1989, he used some poems originally accepted for his by-then suspended fanzine **NOWHERE FAST**, including an unusual piece, Sean Bamforth's parody (much shorter than the original!) of *The Wasteland*. Portraying a drinker's day, it was accompanied by cod academic footnotes.

CRYSTAL SHIP

Fiddlin' With Dick (which is perhaps too open to misinterpretation by the reader to be the headline for this item!) is the title of a remarkable 2-page poem (or perhaps, more precisely, prose-poem), the only one of the decade in this publication. Appearing in #5, the January 1982 issue of this Newport Pagnell-based fanzine edited by John D. Owen, the poem, by Iain Ewing (now known to be a pen name of Owen himself) is part review, part mind-blasted emotional response, to Philip K. Dick's novel **VALIS**. The impact of the book on the writer of *Fiddlin'* comes over with raw intensity, as a couple of brief extracts from this almost beat-style piece indicate:

VALIS is...is...is...
Is everything and nothing

or

Philip K. Dick is God,
Just like you and me.
Believe me, I know it's true.
I got it direct from God,
In the shape of P. K. Dick

and, finally

I only wish that P. K. Dick
Would keep his thoughts to himself,
And not let them invade the world.
But he won't - so you best beware,
And please try to remember,
That VALIS is pure HELL!

DAGON

This horror/Lovecraftian publication based at Twickenham, edited by Carl T. Ford, used poetry on occasion provided it was "Cthulhuesque". For example, #25 included work by well-known American horror poet, t. Winter-Damon. An interesting footnote is that among the articles in #26 - a double issue dated October/December 1989 - which was a special issue devoted to the work of prolific horror fictioneer D. F. Lewis and commentary on it - is a piece by Peter Jeffery discussing Lewis' earlier phase as a writer of poetry, including the comment:

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“Before attending university (1966, Lancaster) Des had been – mostly – a writer of verse.”

The article, titled *Etepsed*, describes the writing by Lewis of a sequence of *Etepsed-Egnis* poems and later his co-authorship of a 4000 line verse epic, *The Egnisomicon* (still unpublished) narrating in Lovecraftian terms an ultimate battle of Good and Evil.

DARK DREAMS

Edited by Dave Cowperthwaite and Jeff Dempsey from Liverpool, bore under its masthead the legend

“Macabre Fiction & Poetry”

and lived up to this with consistent inclusion of F, DF, and Hnal poetry. Issue #1 had two Dave Reeder poems, *The Late Visitor* – an atmospheric, building menace, piece with a humorous twist ending:

ding! dong! dagon calling

and the vividly imaged *Silence*:

slash and rip
leaving like the setting sun
the woods and hollows touched with red
....blood

The editors contribute two pieces of acrostic form, where the first letters of each line spell out a word -*The Hanged Man* in Dempsey’s case, *Ptath* in Copperthwaite’s - the former rhyming and rather predictable, the latter more original until a flatulent ending.

Reeder returns in issue #2 (Spring ‘85) with *Images Of A Mayan Dawn*:

....symbols
that Mayans would discard with scorn
preferring....

to count the passings with images of death (etc)

In Stewart Watts’ poem *Red Wine* turns out of course to be blood that is drunk, and Keith Jones’ rhyming piece *The Inn On The Forest Road* introduces a suitably sinister fellow guest. However, later issues produced much less conventional genre poems. For instance, in issue #4, John F. Haines’ *First, Find Your Dragon* recommends switching a live egg for a dummy, Dave Reeder’s *There Is A Way* conjures a person whose

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smile
bends like the branches of an oak

- leaving the reader to supply the hanging corpse, and Stewart Watts makes a lively narrative verse of the story of Derrick Davies who smashes toys, though giving too much away with his title *Bad Boys And Vengeful Toys*. t. Winter-Damon's *As Daylight Fades* is a lushly 'decadent' evocation of approaching death:

My heart flutters like a moth in candlelight (etc)

In issue #7, a Ramsey Campbell poem was reprinted – though a later, 1988 issue was to go much further back for poems to reprint – while in the 1987 issue Dwight S. Humphries gives us the poems, both Hnal, *Skeleton Steel*:

Runes brand my fortress heart

And *Night And Moon*, its colourful images including:

Girdle my monoliths
With silver foam (...)
Armour filled
with bones aflame.

Dave Reeder's *The Wind* manages to break away from genre convention in his picture of Ithaqua the Wind Walker:

rushing like mercury from the awakening streets

The 1988 issue has two short Steven Hutchinson poems, *Face Masques*:

a calcium
mask...soon to be worn

and *The Arrival Of Mourning*:

Parchment and crow's feet
...becoming the same

and Dallas Clive Goffin – perhaps better known as an illustrator – with *Nocturne*:

Cedar limbs steeped in sable tarns.

There are also two 'poems from the past'. a 1906 Norman Boothroyd poem, suggested by Mark Valentine:

...languorous Isles
Set in seas of molten grass (etc)

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and the stirring 1832 piece from Felicia Hemans, *Druid Chorus On The Landing Of The Romans*:

Hence! - around our central oak
Gods are gathering - Romans, fly!

DARK HORIZONS

The Journal of the British Fantasy Society continued in the '80s - under the editorship of ***FANTASY TALES*** editor Dave Sutton of Birmingham - to use poetry. For example, picking two issues from near the start of the decade, in #23 (Summer '81), not only does the Ligotti story included end with a poem but there are two 'free-standing' poems; Jon Bye's atmospheric description of the 'thoughts' of a Green Man carved figure within a church, *The Green Man Speaks*, ending:

Gathering strength from disregard

I mouth the oaken wreaths
of certain victory
- one way or the other

and Richard Smith's *The Chennaut*:

In the dark autumn of the world (...)

They glide like ghosts...
Stalking shadows in the day's red ebb

while #24 (Winter 1981) features Joel Lane's poem *The Face*.

DIAL 174

This slim publication was a rarity in being poetry-only. Edited by Leeds SF fan Terry Moran, aka M'ranjr, it was also unique in serialising a poem. Instalments of the editor's *Trek Ballad* ran in all three 1989 issues. In issue #1, Cardinal Cox contributed a vampire poem, *Carmilla*. Only other genre material within the three issues were Janet Reedman's final poem *Dreams On Walls* and John F. Haines' SFnal *Dark Horizons*, both in issue #3 – the latter containing the memorable lines:

Eight and half minutes after the sun
Went out our tans began to fade....

DOUBLE TITLING

Although there are occasional instances in US genre poetry of pieces having a two part title - eg some works by t.Winter-Damon in the Hnal field - the poet known for this practice in the UK, and indeed worldwide where his work appears, is Andrew Darlington. Nearly all his striking

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'Dada-SF' genre poems, certainly by the 1980s, have titles in two parts. Typical examples of this from the '80s are the titles of two much reprinted Rhysling nominees -*Euroshima Mon Amour/Radical Kisses* and *The Fight In The Cave Of The Moon Butchers/The Moon Calf Pastures*.

I had long vaguely assumed that the reason for this related in some way to 'left brain/right brain' theories, in the same way that such theories have influenced the poem forms chosen by a number of US speculative poets, particularly Peter Dillingham. However, while compiling this A-Z it seemed best to ask the poet himself. This is Andy's reply, quoted verbatim since it seems to contain not a wasted word:

"my use of double titles. This goes back to the very start of my writing. It's not something I've always used for every poem, and it's still not something I do every time. I was vaguely under the impression it was a technique I lifted from Bob Dylan song-titles, but looking back I can't actually think of a single instance when Dylan uses a double title! To me, the first title relates to what the poem is about to me, a coded reference to whatever convoluted idea set the thing off in the first place, which is not always apparent from the finished product. The second title refers more obviously to the subject as it stands. There's also - I guess - a certain pleasing symmetry to the appearance of the thing on the page which is important. I dislike poems that are called *UNTITLED* or which literally have no title at all and begin out of thin air. I also like titles of Surrealist paintings which are art objects and mystical evocations in themselves - *THE BRIDE STRIPPED BARE BY HER BACHELORS, EVEN*. Why the appendage *EVEN*? I don't know. Duchamp probably didn't know either. But it communicates a certain subliminal property of oddness that is most attractive. Perhaps it's not good to question too far beyond that point."

DRAGONBREATH

Edited by Roy 'Oscar' Dagleish from Glasgow, the first two issues of this personalzine are confusing because they use the same cover for both – a very black-based piece of artwork that played merry hell with the initial reproduction in both cases. Having said that it was a personalzine (one based on writings/accounts of happenings involving the editor) it did contain some personal poetry, though not genre, in #2 (there was no poetry in #'s 1 and 3), in #4 a non-genre poem by Peggi Fergusson Pell, and in #5 a poem, also non-genre, by another outside contributor, Peter Hanks, mentioned in a review in *IDOMO #18* – 1985 (supplied by AVC)

DREAM

This magazine, during the '80s, provided a very rare example of a paying market for genre poetry. Published from Godmanchester, Cambridge, from the mid-80s, initially edited by Trevor Jones, with George Townsend for a time as editor emeritus (who later took up the post as editor from issue #18), it had from June 1987 a sister magazine -*NEW MOON* - which ran for approximately two years and also used poetry (which was edited by Townsend).

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In simple terms, **DREAM** concentrated on traditional SF, while **NEW MOON** covered imaginative fiction areas from Horror to S&S, Science Fantasy, etc.

In both magazines the poetry line limit was 40, and poetry to some extent acted as a filler – cf the explanation given in **DREAMS #22** (Winter 1989):

“The absence of poetry in the last couple of issues does not herald some grand change of policy”

[though, as a matter of fact, poetry was dropped about a year later]

“it’s just that, in the end of the typesetting we didn’t have the space to fit any in.”

Without doing an issue-by-issue recital of poetry content, a few examples are:

In issue #2 a T. E. Wood poem, non-genre, in traditional rhymed form, was followed in issue #4 by another appearance from the same poet, this time vaguely Hnal, *Obituary*:

The grim bones of my ancestors
Remind me of sleep.

In #10, R. B. Leader’s *CORAL*, in issue #11 (May 1987) a Kerk Tye ‘whymsey’ *The Yellow Sea* (made of custard) – the following month **NEW MOON #1** carried another one of his ‘whymseys’, this one darker in tone, called *The Coiled Snakes*:

...the bacon rinds
looked just like coiled snakes (...)
The snakes and bits of bacon were completely intertwined

In **DREAM #15** (Spring 1988) John F. Haines’ *Sunside* vividly paints a future where:

...we hop from one chill island
to another (...)
there we’ll meet
the Outer Planet men, compare frostbite and sunburn.

In issue #16, Michael Newman’s *Ghost Runner* is the first of a pair of his ghost poems to appear (the second, *The Room*, appeared in **DREAM #18**, Winter 1988), while Janet Reedman’s *The Dark Beyond The Firelight* would likewise seem to have belonged more logically in **NEW MOON**, where her *Old Bloody Bones* had appeared in issue #3 (December 1987). *The Dark Beyond The Firelight* is a faeries/elves poem, *Old Bloody Bones* is a horror tale told to kids which comes true.

Incidentally, **NEW MOON #3** is a particularly rich vein of poetry, also carrying Dorothy Davies’ *The Grey Eyes Of November* - a rare instance in the UK of twin column/parallel text/right brain/left brain vision poem format frequent in American speculative poetry, though

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this is in rhyming form, a war on Mars:

Twin mooned nights.

Phil Emery's 4-liner, *The Ancient People*, is Lovecraftian:

with crazed gods in utter hells

while Betty Jenkins provides *The Watcher*:

Some future tenant, not yet born....
creeps peering at me.

DREAM #19 (Spring 1989) has a long, ringingly declamatory 2pp *Winter Stars*:

But still we cannot....

guess our final destiny
Amidst this bright immensity.

while the decade's last issue, **DREAM #22** (Winter 1989) includes the comment by D. F. Lewis, in an interview:

“At one time I used to write mostly poetry, but now I only write
prose.”

Poems that appear in the same issue are my *R & R In The LMC*, re the killing of a native on an alien world, and John F. Haines' *Just Visiting*, a sardonic vignette:

The new centurions wade across the ground (...)
Take-off is landing, reversed, minus the cheers.

EAT THAT DUCK – see **RON'S RAYGUN**.

EFILNIKUFESEN

#1 (April 1988) included a poem by editor Kev P. McVeigh of Milnthorpe, Cumbria, which was a free-form, rather gnomic tribute to a blues/pop singer, including references to such other matters as Port Arthur. Its unusual title, taken from a song by the group **ANTHRAX**, provides this A-Z with its letter K entry.

EVANS A. C. – see **NEOGEA**

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EXPOSED

Edited by Ken Mann (then in Holland), this limited edition broadsheet changed its name for each issue, the last being **GAE BOLGA**. The issue titled **EXPOSED** carried a 'word processor' poem by Kym Greene (IHNFI)

FANTASY MACABRE

Issues #s 1 – 4 were edited in the UK by Dave Reeder, from Chigwell, then London, but produced in the USA. Subsequent issues were edited in Seattle by Jessica Amanda Salmonson. #1 in September 1980 included a noteworthy poem by the editor, *Leopard Eyes*, which gives considerable freshness to traditional horror ideas, with an interesting structure built around a diminishing chant-like 'chorus' repetition:

but for all that (...)

but for that (...)

..but for all that
and that

and new-minting of language:

a fade between the shadows (...)

our liquid faces (etc).

The following issue of April '81 had no poems, but Reeder's other two issues included a number - #3, June '82, having eight: *To R'lyeh* and *To Innsmouth* by David Cowperthwaite; *At the Foot of the Bed* by Denise Dumars; *Marianntha* by Morgan Griffith; the wonderfully titled *The House Next Door to the House on the Borderland* by Allan A. Lucas; the editor's *Away..away*; *Apocalypse* by Richard L. Tierney; and *The Festering* by Billy Wolfenbarger. July '83's #4 had three: *Incident in a Graveyard* by Cowperthwaite; *Death* by Janet Fox; and *Cobweb and Clay* by Joel Lane.

FOUNDATION

The theoretical journal of the *Science Fiction Foundation* then based at the Polytechnic of East London, had no regular policy of using poetry in the 1980s. However, some examples did appear, notably Kenneth Bailey's lengthy verse sequence *The Clarke: Opera Semi-Seria*. This verse sequence appeared in the 1987 issue (**FOUNDATION #41**) celebrating the 70th birthday of Arthur C. Clarke.

GEN/GENCOMICS

This appeared between late 1982 (three issues of the former) and 1983 (two of the latter.) Editor Ed Hillyer, of Southgate, London, aimed for:

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“a fully-fledged alternative of prose, poetry, graphics and comics of an experimental, original nature.”

In view of his statement:

“I don’t like SF, usually.”

inclusion here may seem paradoxical. However, as well as using my long SFnal narrative poem *Ishtar’s Fort, Day 42* in *GEN*, there were several poems in *GENCOMICS #2* which used genre imagery – David Colbran’s *The Night Chord*, comparing music and space travel:

wrap me in a rhythm coat, blast me to the moon.

and John Dunn’s *Romance Disgust On Ladbroke Grove*, which is DFnal in tone:

Broken by the bloody flimsy hands of a twilight autumn (...)
Hollows walk across the face of your flesh.

Hillyer later planned, though did not produce, a series of SF mini-saga poemcards.

GHOSTS

This could perhaps be called ‘might-have-beens’ or ‘never-wases’. In the 1980s, as indeed all ‘eras’ of independent non-profit publication, in fandom as elsewhere, publications are often announced that do not appear, or publications are founded, announce grandiose plans, then flounder after an issue or three.

A few examples from the 1980s of publications that planned to use poetry but either never appeared at all or ceased before any accepted poetry could appear, within the fanzine/SF small press field are:

ACCESS - in the latish 1980s, Berthelot and others in Norwich publicised this project for an SF magazine using poetry and prose based there, which never appeared.

CODPIECE - Ralph Horsley of Leeds announced this publication in 1988, accepted poetry, but it does not seem to have ever appeared.

CREATIONS - Ian Garbutt in Scotland in early 1980, having broken away from the BSFA - for whom he had edited *TANGENT* - accepted a small quantity of poetry for this predominantly fiction-aimed publication. One issue appeared, but with no poetry and contained a lot of ex-*TANGENT* backlog, including the serial *GHOSTLANDS*.

EXTRO - see separate entry (*eXTRO*).

In 1989, Graham Evans, editor of the erratic *EDGE*, planned an SF poetry magazine to be called either *ILLUMINATIONS* or *INTIMATIONS*. Although sufficient poetry, article and review content for a first issue was gathered, this Chelmsford-based publication was eventually

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cancelled by Evans without ever producing an issue.

STYGIAN DREAMHOUSE - a horror/SF crossover small press publication edited by Mark Samuels of Sydenham, did produce one issue, with no poetry, but issue #2 (planned for February 1989) which would have contained poetry, never appeared.

Other instances could easily be cited, but these are sufficient to indicate a phenomenon which is an additional pitfall for any list compiler.

GLORIA MUNDI

Edited by Eunice Pearson from Kingshurst, Birmingham, this was a very rare example of a UK religious-orientated fanzine, produced in response to the then Ernest Heramia edited **RADIO FREE THULCANDRA**. The first and only issue (mid 1986) contained poetry from Jan Poole and Joan Daniels.

HARD RAIN

An SF/Fantasy zine edited by Sue Thomason from Barrow-in-Furness. One of the writers to come from the *WOMEN'S PERIODICAL* (a female-only apa), as opposed to regularly writing before joining it as the founder members had done, she editorialised in the third issue (July 1984) that she planned to:

“continue using the occasional poem.”

However, AVC noted that at least three issues had no poetry. (IHNFI)

JOY HIBBERT

Hibbert edited three fanzines, overlapping in time, during the 1980s, and all three used some poetry, usually short and occupying a filler role. In 1979 her first fanzine, **UNISON**, had also used poetry.

Best known of the three was certainly **SIC BUISCUIT DISINTERGRAF** (aka SBD). The other two were **LILITH'S CHILD** (which fluctuated between being an apazine for *APA-B/THE ORGANISATION*, and a general issue fanzine), and **ZETETIC**, which was originally **THE RELIGIOUS SUPPLEMENT**, themed round comparative discussions of religions and hence, in the poetry field, used exclusively poetry which examined aspects of religion (not necessarily, or indeed often, in any orthodox way.)

To start with **SBD**, issue #1 (early 1983) had no poetry but did review Chuck Connor's **SWEETHEART CONTRICK** (an **IDOMO** verse supplement). Issue #2 carried a Eunice Pearson poem and three by Canadian Sam Wagar (then editor of **THE FREEFAN JOURNAL**, and later on a Canadian Pagan newsletter); only one of these, an optimistic 'when all the Universe is kin' piece, is at all genre. There was also a short filk piece.

Issue #3, which states the editorial policy:

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“We print it (fiction and poetry) but not very much”

includes a Wagar *Poem For Peace Reading, Sept 8, 1983*, which uses a ‘Hiroshima shadows’ image, and a rhymed Joan Daniel *Moon Song*:

Through darkness hurled, to seek new worlds.

Issue #4 (April 1984) carried five of my SFnal senryu, and a longish Paul Brazier poem, *Man On The Schiz*, which manages to be moving yet convey ideas, and has a genre tone:

electronic art is multiplex
this bifurcation haunts me
...I precog stench of world that died.

Peter Hanks, in *The Face At The Window*, is perhaps the first poem published anywhere to mention the corn circle phenomenon:

A field in the summer
A strange pattern imprinted -
Concentric circles, holes,
they say he saw them.

The next issue’s LoCs, however, indicate that the greatest response came to a Wagar political poem on censorship and police raids.

Issue #5 (Summer 1984) carried my SFnal *Lazybones Emigration* on the well-worn theme of ‘men as food’, and a Dave Langford LoC quoted a Kenneth Tynan pastiche naming wonder drugs in the metre and diction of Marlowe’s *Taburlaine*. Andrew Hewitt comments, re the previous article, that:

“Joan Daniel ... seems to be getting at but not reaching the conclusion that writing is...a precursor to conversation.”

In October of that year, Joy Hibbert, in a letter, says that her co-editor Dave Rowley seems:

“incapable of appreciating poems that are fairly straightforward”

and adds the intriguing comment:

“I know it isn’t a statistical sample, but it’s possible people are getting less afraid of poetry.”

In issue #6 (November 1984), Mic Rogers complains that *Lazybones Emigration*:

“would have been much more effective as a straight piece of prose.”

The two Steve Green poems, *Illusions* and *Shame* (re Britain’s involvement in Ireland)

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have no genre content.

In April 1985, issue #7 (accompanied by **THE BUISCUIT RELIGIOUS SUPPLEMENT #1**) used no genre poems, but in issue #8 (October 1985) there were at least three – Sue Thomason’s Fnal *Another Country*, my ‘dry humour’ *Working The Jovian Moons*, and a notable John F. Haines piece, *Voyage*, a first encounter poem in brief, filmic ‘scenes’, full of precise physical detail:

Blast off:
Rattled our teeth and heaped pig-iron
onto our chests

and

First sight:
A fleeting glimpse through the trees -
Have you been drinking?

(*Voyage* later appeared as a Hilltop Press **POSTCARD FROM THE FUTURE**, in 1990.)

SBD #9 (August 1986) used another Haines genre piece, *Battle Stations*, while the accompanying **RELIGIOUS SUPPLEMENT**, by now **ZETETIC #1**, used:

“Poems of religious speculation.”

LILITH’S CHILD, incidentally, used poetry very sparingly, though issue #16 (February 1985) did use my longish non-genre *Too Good For This World*, a ‘meditation’ on a news report of someone “allergic to substances in my own body.”

ZETETIC#3 (September 1987) carried an exceptional amount of poetry. As well as three pieces of mine of different lengths, all arguably genre, Janet Reedman’s *Light A Penny Candle* is an atmospheric ‘sensing-of-past souls’ piece. Michael Newman’s *Aftermath* is reprinted, and he also contributes *Nativity and The New Advance* with its SFnal lines:

And the great body of saints swimming through
The Galactic white.

Colin Nixon and Steve Green are other poets included (with non-genre poems), though Thomas Ferguson’s *Is There Anybody Out There?* has a genre feel to it.

HINDMOST

The publication of the Dundee SF Society was initially edited by Jon and Alison Wallace who were later joined by Moira Shearman. It used some poetry of the short, SFnal kind, in issue #2 (1982), and issue #3 (June 1982), while issue #4 contained John F. Haines’ long genre poem, *The Derelict*, a powerful narrative of an encounter in deep space with:

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Two miles
Of scarred
(...)
Metal
That obliterated the stars
And filled our hearts
With awe.'

ICONS OF STARCHASM

An anthology derived from SF poetry read at the Friday evening event at ***ICONOCLASM 1989***, plus material from the workshop there, along with brief notes on the 'history' of SF poetry at UK conventions, etc. Produced by Hilltop Press, illustrated by Ken Cheslin (editor of ***A CHILD'S GARDEN OF OLAF***, and ***THE OLAF ALTERNATIVE***), it included work by Andrew M. Butler, Peter 'Cardinal' Cox, Andrew Darlington, John F. Haines, Dave W. Hughes, Terry Moran, Andy Robson and Steve Sneyd.

IDOMO – see ***CHUCK CONNOR***

ION

Edited by Terry A. Sibley from Brighton. This predominantly SF fiction zine proclaimed itself:

“open to material including poetry.”

Founded in 1982 after contact with the short-lived 'hobby' magazine ***NEXUS***, it finally closed in 1984 after issuing three numbers for general distribution and a fourth issue which was sent to subscribers only. Of the first three, the third issue is probably most noted for its alien-erotica front cover (which may well have been a ploy to boost its flagging subscription figures rather than any barrier-breaking gesture on the part of the editor!). In the event its ***POETRY CORNER*** had little genre content, judging by the material used in issue #2 (March 1983), which was all by 'mainstream' small press poets – consisting of Max Noiprox's *One Person Making Ends*, re the rush of urban life, and two pieces from Colin Nixon, *Autumn Paradox* and *Interval*.

JUST ACE

Issue #1 published a subtle Nicholas Peet poem, *Frankenstein*, in which 'the Baron' addresses his newly-awakened creature:

A void between the two of us
Must be fulfilled - or broken
There may be moments of
Strange conversations
You won't remember - but fear not
All is well, all is worthwhile (...)
Go forth and let this day be never forgotten.

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This may be the same as the Birmingham-based comicszine, *ACE*, whose issue #2 was mentioned in the final *IDOMO* (#20½, December 1986)(IHNFI)

KOSMIC SUMMERTIME WHISKEY TURTLE BLUES, MAMA – poetry title (see *EFILNIKUFESEN*)

LILITH'S CHILD – see *JOY HIBBERT*.

MACABRE – see *WIESLAW TUMULKA*.

MARTIAN SCHOOL

A group of poets named in response to Craig Raine's *The Martian Sends A Postcard Home*. The poem itself is SFnal and has been reprinted in a US genre anthology. However, Sunday paper poetry critics in mid 1982 – clearly ignorant of the fact that the use, in writing, of an outsider alien protagonist to comment objectively on a society, is not only an ancient SF tradition (cf *STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND* by Heinlein) but far predates it (as it does *Gulliver* or *Orinoko*, dating indeed at least back to Apuleius' *GOLDEN ASS*) – hailed this 'breakthrough' as the start of a "new school" of poetry. Later embracing Andrew Motion, etc., it came to be shorthand for a group of poets casting a "cold outsider's eye" on society.

MAVERICK

Founded in 1987, this Leeds-based fanzine edited by Jenny Glover used occasional poems. Cardinal Cox, who recalls having poems in #3, also remembers what were described as "computer-written haiku" being used earlier. In issue #4 (December 1987), an article by Pat Foster about a trip to the Soviet Union includes two of her own poems about the visit – *Impressions Of Russia* and *Soviet Union* – arguably SFnal at least in the 'first contact' sense, as well as a Russian woman whose first name only, Nadia, is given, presenting a poem about the Moscow Metro in her own translation:

It's like a big hungry animal
and in the rush hour
It feeds.

More directly SFnal is, in *MAVERICK #6* (April 1988), my own *The Wonder In The Woods*, re a crashed spaceship bringing religious revelation to Earth insects.

NEOGEA

'Space Opera' conveys an image of grand adventure 'out there'. In the case of this notable linked sequence of poems, the term Space Opera applied by author A. C. Evans is bleakly ironic, since the record of Man's attempt to explore the massive planet Neogea and its inhabited satellite Neon is a story of flawed personnel, fractured motivation, fragmented data, and final

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failure.

The eight 'core' pieces, plus related illustrations by 'hermetic artist' Evans, appeared in the 'mainstream' magazine *STRIDE* in 1985/86 – *Space Opera 1 (The First Report)* in #21, and the full sequence, plus an additional introduction/'scene-setter' *Gaze Of The Medusa*, in *STRIDE #24/25, aka THE SERENDIPITY CAPER*, in 1986. Extracting is extremely difficult - the author embeds fragmented information in these:

“poems and/or texts”

to quote his own terminology, in a manner which successfully recreates the corruption of data in cross-space communication and via alien-affected human and electronic data sources, in a form true to his overriding description of the *Neogea* experience as:

Spitting white noise
across the Messier Gulfs.

Indeed, at the end of *Neogea:Space Opera 5*, the first written of the sequence, text itself disintegrates like data on a virusised computer screen - these poems are a dystopia of information breakdown, poetry succumbing to:

total parasitic overload

the way *DARK STAR*'s crew succumbed to space loneliness. Even information that appears clear and believable is ironically distanced or undercut - in this:

Nightsky of kerbside encounters, clashing cultural
environments

where work that is, as it ironically self-refers:

Very speculative

gnaws obsessively at the dichotomy of lying expedition dispatchers bewildered by 'lying' return data, as each:

Uncovers chicanery

in the other, in a multilayered communication soup of which the poem itself says:

Deliberate parody can hardly equal this

Evans, who hasn't "submitted poems to pure SF editors, ever", found *STRIDE* supportive, and was not surprised by other reactions:

“the material...runs counter to the anecdotal/humanistic mould of most small press straight 'poetry verse'...blank reactions are understandable given the overt hermetic inaccessible style of the pieces themselves.”

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(Extract from a postal interview by Steve Sneyd of Evans which appeared in *FANTASY COMMENTATOR* #47/8, Dec '95, and was reprinted, slightly amended, as *Visions By Association*, pp 34/37 of the book republication of *Space Opera* (Stride Press, Exeter, 1998)

Citing influences as diverse as Ballard, Stapledon, William S. Burroughs, Lovecraft, non-specific mass-media SF and SF fantasy art as a 'symbolic repertoire' within forms derived from "literary non-English non-SF modes" including the Decadent-Symbolist Movement, Dada-Surrealist poetry, Baudelairean etc, Evans used:

"SF as raw material, so I'm not really working from within the genre - this accentuates the alien-distancing effect."

This is strengthened by Evans' drawing simultaneously on 'occult' themes, pocalyptic/Millenarian visionary materials:

"hence angels and cathedrals all mixed up with Starfleet Command in Space Opera"

and Cosmology (ie Black Hole Singularities) to achieve a multidimensional idea of archetypal endless voyages as:

"some kind of metaphor for an underlying theme of voidness."

It cannot be said that an SF poetry readership failed to come to grips with Evans' work, since it was never published in places likely to be seen by such a readership - but this powerful, difficult work would, I suspect, in the UK fanzines or SF small press at least, have encountered much the same bewildered apathy as experienced by Mike Johnson and to an extent by Andrew Darlington where his work is most cutting edge.

NERVE GARDENS

Edited by Keith Jones of Wallasey. This magazine, founded in mid 1987 to present unusual material along the horror/SF interface, suffered considerable distribution difficulties from the beginning, which is why it only managed 2 issues. The second issue, however, deserves mention for the inclusion of a considerable range of poetry. Andrew Darlington's poem *Planets Do Furnish A Room/Adrift In Population 3 Objects* lives up to its atmospheric title with lines like:

we walk on the ceiling, dressed in grey (...)
until the world ceases to revolve (etc)

John F. Haines sensitively examines the tormented existence of the *Telepath*:

It's not the days
That give him the shakes...

The strange sounds from the edge of deepest space

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He wished they would not let him hear at all

and Janet Ann King introduces unusual and dramatic terminology, right from the beginning, to enliven the fairly traditional wolf-attack of *When Teeth Sink*:

As chariots dread the graves of time,
When captured gulls are crying (...)
Children scream with tired jaws

Death now reigns,
Whilst wolves laze in the sun,
Bellies bursting with
Half-digested flesh.

Pam Mitchell's *Hay Tumbled* is a moving narrative ghost poem:

The apple cheeks now pale through lying

and Marise Moreland's *The Song Of Psyche* has impact as a whole despite the high-flown imagery.

NEW GWENT REVIEW

Bryn Fortey, of Newport, South Wales, who had regularly used poetry in his 70's fanzine ***RELATIVITY***, continued the tradition when he launched ***NEW GWENT REVIEW*** with issue #1 in the Summer of 1980. Poetry highlight of that issue was a large selection of work by Lisa Conesa (editor of the 70's fanzine ***ZIMRI***), titled The Conesa Collection, which may have served as some consolation for the failure of her planned Savoy Books collection to appear a year or so beforehand.

Before returning to that, and indeed the other poems of the issue, it is worth a brief look at the LoCs, sent, in some cases, in reaction to a Fortey anthology of poetry, a supplement to ***RELATIVITY***, entitled ***I KNOW WHAT I LIKE***. Alastair Noyle contrasts Fortey's choice with:

“the intellectual mumbo-jumbo of Poetry Wales” (a ‘mainstream’ magazine)

Margery Hoskins says:

“I became lost in a maze of words. I expect it's because I'm older that I like happy things, pretty things.”

and Paul Williams, while saying:

“I don't really care for strings of disjointed sense packages,”

interestingly adds that he found musical backing for all the poems included in his mind:

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“Pete Atkins, except for View From The Hill, King Crimson’s 21st Century Schizoid Man.”

The non-Conesa poems this issue – an atmospheric Noyle *City Night* and two Fortey pieces – have no genre content. Indeed, the Conesa collection has little directly, though the mood throughout conjoins the Fnal/wishful and the surreal. *The Wish* is overt in its longing:

We wish
yet the river grabs our hands
time greens our names.

(It is, incidentally, perhaps inconsistent to talk about this collection, when other 1980s collections are not covered – as simultaneously a collection and an integral part of a fanzine issue. The dilemma is all but insoluble!)

Of the other works, three deserve particular mention for their mingling of the surreal and the Fnal -*Return*:

Gothic arcs of green revelations
bind the perverseness of dreams

and two whose language is genuinely ‘magical’: *Vision* - as sleep approaches - conjures such spells as:

within a woman
waits the beginning
growing into a bush of claws
the prototype of death
woven with precision
like an exam at school

and the genre image:

transparent birds
with hands in blankets
see anti-matter
and beyond ideas.

The dark fantasy piece entitled simply *I/II* conjures a Poe-ish picture, yet is at the same time modern in its dismay:

You left coals of hellish fire
burning my mouth

I hear your voice in the Cascade of Alps
and my neck ices when I look over my shoulder
Longing and dreading to see you - for ever.’

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In issue #2 (March 1981) Chuck Connor, in his LoC, goes a step beyond Paul Williams' idea of linking poetry in the mind with music:

"I like to hear my poetry. I like to 'see' a poem performed in my mind by one or more 'actors' (and this has nothing to do with fantasy pictures of Jilly Johnson in a toadskin bikini either.)"

Andrew Darlington, in his LoC, recommends rather than:

"the trip of writing under the SF influence (...) Much better to come from poetry into SF, combining precise word economy and image density with conceptual SF bizarreness."

The poems have little genre content, though M. Wilmot in *Volcano*:

a sadist
whose hot passion destroys.

and more particularly Noyle in *A Brush With Fate*:

Rock hard
a yardstick of the past
The layed
scripts
remain

and especially in his *Ostrich*:

The Heavens reel their cryptic signs (...)
A universe unwinds the symbols of the ages (...)
Through churches clamour for their wages
they cannot penetrate the night

are at least into the science poem arena. Fortey himself supplies a song-like 'tough guy persona' item, and my *The Creative Process* broods on the misunderstanding 'capability' of missile-detecting computers.

By issue #3 (Easter 1981), Bryn had been joined by Special Guest Co-Editor Lisa Conesa, whose main influence seems to be her lengthy section of reviews of poetry booklets, including an all-too-brief glimpse of her personal/poetic philosophy:

"To sum up in the words of Wallace Stevens, 'a poem is an act of mind.' And the poet, that relegated figure, often dismissed as unworldly, may know more about the real world and about the five senses than his hard-headed neighbours."

In the LoCs, Alun Harris says:

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“the best poetry should not be totally understood at first reading.”

while the editor announces plans (never to be realised) for a piece by Lisa comparing British and American poetry. Of the five page Poetry Supplement, only two poems have any real genre content – though John F. Haines’ long narrative poem, *Thomas*, about a starving escaped prisoner, is both tactile and timeless. Nic Howard’s *Dreamer* is final, even Chthulhuesque:

His fantastic worlds echo in my head

and my long *They Dropped From Running Stars* depicts a savage fight for supremacy on a post-civilized world.

After a considerable gap, Fortey returned with *A NICE PAIR* (April 1982) but this was in effect a poetry anthology rather than a magazine issue, and so, though noting that it contained a higher ratio of genre work than *NEW GWENT REVIEW* had, I will not discuss this publication (aka *WELSHPRESS #17*) here.

NEW MOON – see ***DREAM***

NEW VISION

Produced one issue only, in 1989, featured, to quote the ***BACK BRAIN RECLUSE*** (#14) review:

“a fine selection of poetry from the likes of Dave W. Hughes, John Francis Haines and D. A. Warne.”

Even before publication, this Cheltenham-based magazine had undergone two changes of name - originally promoted as ***FOOD*** – with the slogan “feed your head!” – then as ***PULP***. The original guidelines re poetry say:

“takes all kinds of non-mainstream...poetry”

(also fiction and articles)

“genre work such as imaginative/speculative fiction, science fiction, fantasy, horror, the surreal and the avant garde.”

By 1990 ***NEW VISIONS*** had split into two, ***NOVA - THE NEW AGE SF MAGAZINE*** whose first issue had Andrew Darlington as ‘Featured Poet’ in early 1990, with John F. Haines as the featured poet for issue #2 (Summer 1990), while issue #3 (early 1991) was a special green/ecological SF issue which also gave considerable poetry coverage. This was the final issue of ***NOVA***.

The other spin-off of ***NEW VISIONS***, called ***SWEET DREAMS BABY*** – with a more post-hippy, New Age approach - also used considerable amounts of poetry, appeared in 1990 and is thus also strictly outside our timeframe.

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NOT TO BE NAMED

This was a short-lived magazine produced by Nic (now John) Howard's **HOUSE OF MOONLIGHT PRESS**. Published in High Wycombe, a place with a continuing tradition of genre publishing (**NEWS FROM BREE** and **UGLY DUCKING** in the 1970s, later, in the 1980s, **SF SPECTRUM PUBLICATIONS**) it was announced (in **PFMA INFO SHEET #8**) as wanting:

“SF, Fantasy, preferably macabre, and ‘straight’ fiction’ poetry.”

The one issue produced – which, as promised, included poetry (including John F. Haines' Hnal *The Great Work*) – appeared at the end of March 1981. A move to Reading, and other factors, caused issue #2 to be aborted, and **NTBN** was discontinued as of early 1982, though the press continued throughout the decade, producing a poetry anthology and various single-author poetry collections.

NOWHERE FAST

Harry Bond, who edited this fanzine from Bagshot, Surrey, then London University, between the Summer of 1987 and its suspension at the start of 1989 (the last issue, #4, appearing in September 1988) made clear that from the start he intended it to be purely fannish. However, shortage of material caused him to use stories up to #3 before he eliminated fiction due to:

“unpopularity with orthodox fans.”

Poetry appeared in all four issues: SFnal pieces of mine, mostly short (though issue #3 included the long narrative *Recovering From The Sickness On Zrynon IV*), and in issue #2 (August 1987) a very unusual item - a Peter ‘Cardinal’ Cox article analysing, with invented extracts, a bogus Anglo Saxon narrative poem, *The Lay Of Osric*, plus, in issue #4 before which Bond had said:

“I’m going to keep the poems with a view to hiding them at the bottom of pages where Joe Nicholas can’t see ‘em...to insert conveniently as fillers”

two ‘pomes’ (humorous SF poems), Terry Jeeves’ punny *Cautions*, and a Norman G. Wansborough piece about the late fan artist Arthur ‘ATOM’ Thompson.

NSFA – The New Science Fiction Alliance

This was founded in Autumn 1989 as a result of the common interests and needs discovered by several SF small press editors who met in the Dealer Room of **ICONOCLASM** in June of that year. Founder members were **BACK BRAIN RECLUSE**, **THE SCANNER**, and **WORKS**, with such other publications as **AUGURIES**, **DREAM** and **NOVA SF** soon joining. The relevance here is that not only did several **NSFA** members use poetry, but that the organisation’s distribution arm also became a distributor of SF poetry collections, filling a real need.

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OPUS

Though predominantly a fiction publication, this SF small press magazine edited by Michael Hearne (later to be joined by John Hindmarsh) from Broxbourne, Hants, showed an interest in poetry right from issue #1 (Spring 1987). In that issue, the editor called for poetry submissions:

“payment...will be arranged individually.”

and said that:

“I am heartened by the appearance of a poem”

in his review of *DREAM* issue #10, and laid out part 1 of Rachel Ramsbottom’s story *Galactic Entertainers Limited* in a poem-like manner, though the format may equally have been intended to parody advertising copy layout (parts 2 and 3, in later issues, followed conventional fiction layout).

Issue #2 included my SFnal *A Test Of Moral Fibre*, and Mark Hikditch’s Fnal poem *The Silent Vigilante*:

...the universe
rotates under the adroit strokes of the sanctified quill.

while issue #3 included a nearly two-page poem, *Strontiel* by D. J. Lightfoot. This rhymed poem draws together elements of the numinous/sense of wonder from the four elements represented as Eagle, Red Alfa Romeo, water, and earth-bound rowan, and conjures the spirit behind all:

When I divined your name was Strontiel.

In issue #4, American Mark Rich’s short poem *Out There* depicts our inner eye’s irresistible invasion of the void:

...It suffers our disturbance nightly.

while other poems include Stephen C. Middleton’s surreal *Intimations Of Eventual Death*, and M. McNaughton’s memorably titled *Jungle Nutrition For Lazarus* as well as John Howard’s *Hero’s Journey*.

In issue #5, Canadian Janet Reedman’s poem *Demon Tree* is Hnal, while well-known ‘mainstream’ small press poet Thomas Land contributes a rather predictable dystopian/polluted world poem *I Sing You A Song*.

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ORIGINAL LIGHT

Edited by Matt Ginn from Hallbridge, Essex, this was a short-lived 1983 publication which included poetry alongside prose and comics/comix material. (IHNFI)

ORIGINS

Edited by Craig Hughes, Devonside, Clackmannan, Scotland, was a comicstripzine. Issue #3 (1984 - and possibly its last issue) used a John F. Haines poem, *Church Notices*. The poem was framed by a graphic representation of a Gothic-style castle or church door – the verses appearing on what appears to be a piece of torn parchment or paper.

OVERSPACE

Founder-editor, Sean R. Friend of Melksham, Wilts, announced when he started this SF magazine in 1989 that its policy included being:

“a good forum for poetry.”

This was to prove true for the years 1990 and 1991.

PETER E. PRESFORD

Presford has used poetry consistently in his various fanzines (published from Redditch near Stockport, and later from Buckley, Flintshire, North Wales) since the early 1970s. In 1977 he established a separate poetry publication, *BARDDONI* – its name taken from the Welsh language verb meaning ‘to compose poetry’. As well as editorials and letters of comment, most issues also included a ‘Why I Write’ article by a contributor.

Although dated July/August 1979, in view of Presford’s system that each issue’s date was when that compilation began, regardless of how long the process and actual printing might take, *BARDDONI* #3 seems to be the first issue of the 1980s. Perhaps most notable poetry item of this issue is a remarkable prose-poem in several parts, 4 pages in length, called *AE*, which stands alongside A. C. Evans’ *Neogea* sequence as amongst the most innovative works in the genre published in the UK in this decade (see separate entry for *AE*). In the same issue, Johnson also contributes a half-page poem, *Equal This Machine Is Sex*, which universalises the analogy implied in the title in a highly original way:

and she says:= this MACHINE is us
is time that burdens skin
of stars which turn the sky (etc)

Johnson also contributes the issue’s ‘Why I Write’, and opens out the topic to a more general overview of SF poetry writing after discussing how he uses his poems as:

“‘diaries’ of my thought patterns at different stages of my life... so that it says to whoever reads it - even the author himself at a later date - ‘somebody has been here and thought about something in a unique

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way.”

Extracting from Johnson’s more general thesis is difficult without destroying the flow of argument, but these quotes are perhaps indicative of the drift:

(Referring to SF’s)

“desire to examine the ‘what if-ness’ and ‘why not-ness’“

(ie)

“what if an alien arrived or why not make all machines cease to work etc.”

(he says)

“the ideas throw man against his own (limited?) resources and force him to re-evaluate, challenge and change”

(which)

“lends itself to new maps and definitions of man’s place in the universe. I see men’s thoughts, morals etc...like a huge swimming-pool of ideas which we all draw upon from birth - ...the more people that pour in, the more alternatives we have to extract... The multi-variability of human thought is far too precious to be left to a few people.”

Pete Presford makes two interesting points - one on the way poets tend to operate:

“I think...75% of poetry...is taken out of a folder, then posted to a magazine, rather than any one special editor”

the other on the way an editor develops rapport with long-standing writers:

“I feel a downward trend when things aren’t going too well, I feel pleased when the poetry regains some of its earlier lilt.”

The poems, other than Johnson’s, include some genre and near-genre work. The editor’s *The Other End Of Offa’s Dyke* is faintly Fnal, and although name ‘mainstreamer’ Bruton Connors’ piece has no genre feel, Andrew Darlington’s *Live Jive And Cold Cuts* is at the speculative end of the surreal spectrum:

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Ravens (...)
...gnaw at night-husks,
leaving entrails and denture-white bone formations gleaming like
partly digested reefs of daylight (...)
formations
of light dance like cathode
stigmata looking for impaled messiahs.

David Colton's *Compromise* has a science poem Sense Of Wonder:

Then you, my love, to your green-drenched lands
And silent nights beneath the vaulted skies.
And I, to my technology, and my defiance.

We where the land and city meet a last,
where the arts and science cross the bridge of time.

Kevin Hall's *Sing A Song Of Sorrows* is ironic in describing how SF can be used to distract from current problems:

Tell me tales of captains sailing ships beyond the skies
Tell me tales and take away my eyes.

Keith Richmond's pieces are perhaps genre by implication, particularly *Twilight Sons In Moonland*, while Robin Russ with *An Owl* gives a subtly Fnal reworking of an old Welsh tale which universalises it to reflect Time's toying with us:

This is not how Lleu remembers
Blodeuwedd, as an outsize moth
that sits and blinks beneath her hood
(...)
now he cowers away
in horror as he flaps and shrieks

Time is the adulterer that dries
the petal in its curly bed
...changes
children of flowers into clawing strigidae.

Ted Williams' *Cavarn*, though interpretable as a factual account of a prehistoric cave, has genre feel:

the cavarn is here in my head (...)
prehistoric moments are rotting
away in the mud of my mind

And American Rudi Weiner contributes an SF/Hnal hybrid which is horridly

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memorable:

They've been taught well, these rabbits
And by the blistering of their fingers they remember.
(etc)

In **BARDDONI #4**, Pete Presford went for a lighter tone, shorter and more humorous pieces, though the humour can be black, as in the editor's own short *Corner Poem* re abortion, or my own *A Popular Attraction*, re an entity longing for a piss, but unable to get one, being a dead man revived as a decorative pattern.

While preparing this issue (in May 1981) Presford, in a letter, called **BARDDONI**:

"The roughage of the poetry world."

In the issue, hoping to continue with a lighter element in future, he issued a call for limericks, and these began to appear with issue #5 (September 1982) which devoted several pages to them and other humorous items.

Nevertheless, there are 'serious' poems in this issue, including Paul Donnelly's moving, though philosophical rather than genre, *Note From A Journal* prose-poem:

sometimes if you can sit long enough
you can hear the sound of your life as
it passes you by (etc)

and in the genre field, Steve Urbanski's short but vivid *Space Wars*:

Riding on a solar-wave of
Rolling thunder (etc)

Mike Johnson's *Metamammals* is full of 'strange powers' (transforming an old theme, of caged humans, into something both unique and moving, to which I shall return) as is Diane Fox's *Hallucinating Death*, though the last two lines of the latter seem to somewhat weaken the tapestry-like power of the rest. Another Mike Johnson piece, *The Story So Far*, though superficially simplistic, has a bleak irony, a surplus-to-requirement android poem which in just eight lines sums up a far future, culminating in the powerful image of:

In cold centuries of sunset
unserved bodies puddled down

to feed the animals. Alongside my:

these days even the
Martians have to
advertise

jokey piece, my *Preacher Factory* was the earliest published version of *Stiff Squirrel Hops Of*

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Heaven, an astronaut poem which later, much expanded, appeared in the mainstream magazine *DOORS*, and still later, along with an 'author's explanation', in a book for students of English in Belgium!

Issue #5 contained two 'Why I Write' pieces - Ferne Watson's was purely personal in tone, but Nic Howard's, while again personal in approach, has genre relevance at least in the F/DF area. Speaking of writing:

"supernatural/macabre verse for pure enjoyment"

and of the importance for his own poetry of 'Bucks Earth' and the influence of Derleth's 'nature poetry', he says:

"Derleth did it for his part of Wisconsin... I want to do it for this part of Buckinghamshire... capture the tangibles and intangibles of this area."

Several other genre-related poems appear among the many in this issue. Paul Donnelly's *Somehow When I Wasn't Looking* is perhaps more truly surreal, though semi-genre in tone:

my life has been captured in a dark room
(...)
occasionally angel and monkey visit me though not
always in their recognised form
(...)
the monkey himself believes the earth is leaking
the angel can be in many places at once

In its summation, the poet hopes for time so he:

can buy back my share of the moon.

Philip E. Crabtree's *The Deranged Secret* has a powerful Hnal core image of a figure in a bar:

....the Godforsaken
sage's skeletal digits tap table top
he gives birth
to a smile like a raven spreading
wings.

John F. Curley's *They Will Not Rest/Extro-Necro* is more strident in its vivid assault on the reader's shock-capability:

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The dead erupting forth in geysers of mud
(...)
Yards of rotting putrid flesh
Moving through the night in pale waves
Looking as if last night's vomit,
After the takeaway,
Is still plastered across their shrunken faces (...)
dead slug-like bodies.

Still in the Hnal vein, John F. Haines contributes a restrained *The Skull*:

Do you see your own terrified, trapped eyes
 staring back at you
From those sightless orbs;

Perhaps the outstanding genre poem of the issue is the one of three pieces from Mike Johnson already mentioned. His *The Day Of Walking On The Ceiling* is a humorous 'what if' poem, whose last line refers to the magazine, **IMPOSSIBLE STORIES**, his *Invisible Girl* is a low-key ghost poem, but his *The Metamammals: Still Lives* is a tour-de-force.

Taking the clichéd SF situation of a zoo where intelligent beings are exhibited, it gives an almost Blakeian breath of revivifying life through power of language and imagery. Extracting representative lines from a densely-integrated whole like this prose-poem is difficult, but, to try to give a flavour, perhaps these are indicative:

Exhibit Two (...)
a remarkable child born with
a normal body; yet possessed of a transparent head

inside which pinpoints of light move which reveal themselves as:

 spiralling images

which:

 finally settle and we are
 drawn down to a small, bright red star circled
 by a green-brown planet (...)

Later there is to be seen:

 a girl with a transparent
 star-filled body and an all too humanoid head.
 The children cry simultaneously, weeping in
 aftermathematical harmonies.

Although less startling in its originality of method and implication than the same

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author's *AE*, this prose-poem is still a notable achievement.

With ***BARDDONI #6*** (Summer 1983), Pete Presford is back to an almost wholly serious mix of poems, along with some editorial comments about his selection process: ie that he was seeking a mix of lengths to:

“allow the work to ‘breathe’ yet keep it from becoming cold and isolated on the page.”

He also comments, interestingly:

“I was very surprised that I didn't get more poems relating to the Falklands crisis. There was also a shortage of poems with an SF theme.”

The latter shortage was not total: certainly, there *is* genre work in this issue. Some is marginal - Mike Johnson's atmosphere prose-poem *Theory Of Werewolves*, 'mainstreamer' Max Noiprox's sex-under-bombs piece, J.C.'s *Stormy Meteorite Night*, SFnal only by implication, Anthony Cooney's numinous *The Welsh Touch*, Paul Donnelly's prose-poem *Excerpts From An Epic*, and Ian Brocklebank's *The Chair And What Is On It*:

Alone in the Cold Shark of a Room

surreal, and so on. Nor had Pete Presford's call for poems on the Falklands experience borne much fruit – the only instance being John F. Curley's *Who*. The limericks make a re-appearance, though fewer this time, and, unusually for ***BARDDONI***, a haiku, Nic Howard's *Homeward Bound*. Nic also provided the atmospheric, indirectly Fnal, *Nothing Here*, about a moonlit wood. Genre only in atmosphere, too, is Charles Lear's *Silence And The Waterhorse*, a drowned girl poem including the lovely lines:

...the sea, calm now
with the well-trained silence
of a poacher's dog.

But there is strongly SFnal work. Humorous in J.C.'s *Only There*:

So many times I've wished or hoped...
...an alien friend would enter my life saloon
To speed me to where my galaxy bar,
That I want to believe in, exists.

Strong in near-rhyming form is Gwynfor Jones' *Space Lament*:

The sky is blue
and space is black
spacemen die
in vacuum packs

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and, elsewhere in the poem, the memorably different image:

Diodes green
....like your eyes
remind me (...)
you once were mine.

John F. Haines' *Landfall* is a long, purely SFnal piece about a broken-down ship on an alien world:

a soft blanket of bated
breath, as we waited
for our air to dance out the
torn and twisted hull (...)
each sure his air was being
stolen while he slept.

Mike Johnson with *Alien Elegy* laments a non-human victim of first contact now on museum display; though with some final over-emphasis of the moral, the piece compels:

the night you finally died
I saw the crystal tears you shed
from your purple, compound eyes (etc)

And the editor achieves an effective 'stream of consciousness' feeling of dying in an utterly strange place in his *Sounding Out*, an account of an astronaut surrounded by aliens:

Desirous of them
crystalline, Diamantine
sounding love to depths of being.

Requiring
all they can
give to ease
this human
abomination

Absolution

In a LoC in issue #6, referring as his starting point for the thought to John F. Haines' *Time Machine* in issue #5, Mike Johnson talks about the impulse behind poetry:

“Perhaps poetry is a shield we hold up in front of ourselves whilst at the same time exposing ourselves to attack... Both a defence and a welcome to attack, an olive branch and a staff... Poetry. What is the point of it? But then could we do without it?...some experiences, thoughts and ideas are so vital to us we are afraid to let them go by unrecorded, or just recorded by memory, apart from the need to share

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them.”

BARDDONI #7 was to be the last issue of the 1980s, mailed about Christmas 1984 (though Presford’s poetry publishing continued with his personalzine, **SONGS**, at least for shorter work, throughout the decade, and he also produced two anthologies in 1985 – **MORE STRANGE TALES** in the Summer, containing some poetry alongside fiction, and **STOP GAP** late in 1985, mostly poetry).

Issue #7 contained work from 53 writers, much of it short poems, and with only a small percentage having genre content, though most of the limericks are SFnal. Before examining what is relevant, one editorial comment is of interest – re the planned **BARDDONI** tape (an SF poetry cassette anthology-to-be) that:

“I can’t see it being completed before the end of ‘84”

(it actually appeared in Summer 1991!) and from the LoCs, Joan Daniels’:

“Look at the unnerving male dominance in Barddoni”

and Andrew Darlington’s quoting, re the importance of poetry to ‘a squalid romantic’ like himself, in his poem of that name *Poetry Is The Point Of Light At The End Of A Long Dark Corridor. There Is Nothing Else.*

In order of their appearance in this issue, the genre pieces begin with two from Joan Daniels, called *An Alien Duet*, namely *Alien Observation*:

...Alien men in silver ships?
...hovered above
Planet Earth’s blue done
(etc)

and *A New World*:

What mysterious deeds have quietly been done
under a cruel white-hot sun?

Kenneth Sutherland’s (aka ‘Zen’ or ‘Zenny’, founder of **ZROX PRESS** in the USA) *Self Portrait*:

An insect trying
to take human excrement

is one of several marginally genre pieces which also include Paul Donnelly’s *Found Poems From Wonderland*; *A Recreational Experience In The Heart Of Liverpool*, Tony Austin’s surreal *Looking Down*:

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Bleached white doves
attempt to drag away
a tower of babel from under my clenched feet.

and Stuart Eglin's Finally numinous (if sadly marred by a flatulent ending) *Robin Hood Stride: Derbyshire*:

...kings are the stuff
of which rocks are made

each one its own interminable
view of the world (etc)

Mason Abbott's *Star Squeeze* is black humour Hnal, as a tart sells eyes she has caught to organ transplanters.

Dewi Hopkins' *2008*, a long, rather prosey poem, depicts the City Comforter dealing with a dying old man in a totally controlled future state:

He'd learned the truth: that guaranteed security
Advanced mankind: adventure held it back (etc)

Alien Composition, by Edward Deevy, is a rhymed oddity about an alien being's music getting picked up by a robot traveller, while Byron Beynon with *In A Pub In Balham* is arguably writing dark fantasy:

His mind does not occupy him,
not anymore,
it has joined the corpse
that floats at his feet.

An Unclear Survival is Stephen Urbanski restrainedly depicting a post-nuclear world:

and the waves of dust passing by
lend the ruined city a certain form.

Widely published 'mainstreamer' Max Noiprox is Fnal in *Celtic Sleep* (an account of a 'Dragon of desire Welsh warlock'.) *White Boy (Re-Mix)* from Stuart Eglin has a genre feel:

perfectly formed to the perfectly mutated (...)
just one little glimmer of silver stars
would have been enough for the atoms
bursting through the sallow grill.

Robert Mapson gives a modern Poeish feel to *Young Flesh Is Smooth And Dangerous*:

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we will set this as a star in the sky.
That taut white lingers in our heads:
displays the knowledge that dying is good.

And Andrew Darlington contributes a moving *Spacequake/For The SF Writers Of The '30s Golden Age*:

...Me
wanting desperately to buy certain garish Science Fiction
but feeling intellectually intimidated
Yes, perhaps that was how it was (...)
you thought
you held the
keys to the future

but time
changed all the locks.

Another of Pete Presford's publications, *SONGS* (which first appeared as *SING ME A SONG I KNOW* in September 1979) was a personal/chat/diary zine, with occasional reviews of poetry publications, and comments on Pete's views about poetry. However, *SONGS* did not begin using poetry until #10 in late 1983, when he announced that he intended to:

“start using short poems, or limericks, to break my mutterings up”

and also help overcome the long delays in using accepted poems:

“2/3 issues of *SONGS* appear to one of *BARDDONI*.”

The issue carries Canadian E. B. Klassen's poem *3AM*, Hnal in feel:

deep in the well of Souls
touching cold Tartarus with nervous finger-tips

and quotes a Chuck Connor LoC on poetry generally:

“Prove to people that Poetry is yet another form of expressing feelings
- a very condensed prose piece or novel if you like - then you get their
interest going and...a feeling that they too could...say something if
they felt like it.”

Other poems in the issue have no genre content.

In issue #11, the editor sets a 12-line maximum for poems in *SONGS*, and reflects his editorial view that he hopes *SONGS*:

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“does go some way to bridge that gap between fannish zines and The Small Press.. To me, the TSP is ‘alive’ in a way that fanzines have forgotten...writers’ just go out and do it - there isn’t someone waving a stick...saying ‘This is how it should be done now, boys’”

by using a mixture of ‘mainstream’ and fanzine poets. Someone pen-named ‘Straggianopff 99’, a Belgian (possibly Deen Angels), contributes a surreal OTT *Mora Moire Mori Eleventh Poem*, and Susan Denham’s *Paranoid About Micro-Biology* is a would-be humorous science poem, but otherwise genre content is effectively limited, among the poems, to ‘mainstreamer’ Ian Hogg’s punning *Vampire*, Phil Edman’s *Lion In A Fog - Or Missed*:

When frozen suns
of other whens
lighted on
a now that wasn’t

and my prose-poemy mini-saga *Mission Of Mercy*. Andy Robson in a LoC comments on the general layout:

“looks like a newspaper gossip column.”

SONGS #12 (1986) hives off the poetry into a supplement. In the main zine, the editor takes issue with a Harry Warner Jr comment that:

“Hardly anyone publishes poetry in fanzines these past few years”

seeing in his response a healthier current situation, and saying that a late 60s and early 70s tendency to poetry that:

“became flat and heavy, it relied on its finished look on the page, not the way it came off the tongue. It really became an age of song lyrics, and many a person floundered in the attempt.”

had been overcome. Roger Waddington came up with the interesting comment that the small press gave insufficient information about contributors and their intentions:

“like visiting an art gallery without a catalogue... TSP might be content to be a showcase; but it could do with an infusion of fannish arena-style.”

Pete complains of those who:

“try to impose their idea of what...a fanzine should be...throw their weight about in fandom because they wouldn’t be tolerated anywhere else.”

In the supplement, alongside non-genre poems, John F. Haines’ *Relieve* has a robot

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guard but is otherwise non-genre, the imagery of J. A. Bently's *Storm* is startlingly surreal/science:

Gobs of old fugue
Vomited along the cliff-face

Arks of torn earth float
out over geos, screams of dead birds,

Robert A. Kirkwood contributes two final pieces, *Ninety-Nine More! Afore Their Dead* (from a *HIDDEN CITY* sequence) in which a magic bow slays a demon rhymist, and *Three Princes But No King* in which a 'triune throne room' provides an image for the three-ways divided mind.

Finally, and memorably, in *SciFi In Fog*, Fred Brown pens:

The future is spread flat on the windscreen
like the mist (...)
this undimensioned smear of time
which clotted for a moment into me.

In *SONGS #13*, the most notable genre piece is William Conner-Clarke's *Machine*, the poem of a vagrant clutching a cardboard box:

inside (...)

precious perpetual
motion machine

polished

to a mirror sheen

which Pete read to powerful effect during the *LUCON* SF Poetry event two years later.

SONGS #14, although editorially described as his last 80s publication, was probably distributed early in 1990. The editorial(s) - they are scattered through the issue - make interesting general points about the often fraught and precarious relationship between editors and contributors, and about poets and poetry in general, including the terse comment:

"From the poetry I receive there's a lot of lost love about and humour
must be at an 0% low"

to the more mellow:

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“Be it a lost love, a lost childhood, or just an avenue of escape when no other way”

(than the writing of poetry)

“is presented. Then the writer changes. A maturity is the realisation that they don’t need words, or others to read those words. Is this the cut-off point? Those that carry on through the ‘need to communicate’ barrier find that they can use words as building-blocks, not crutches.”

Elsewhere he amplifies his thoughts on this theme in controversial terms:

“I now find much poetry trite, without substance... Most people become poets because they are looking for something to say. That they say something when they become poets, doesn’t mean that that is what they set out to say. And even those that become ‘poets’ find it is because they have the gift of saying what others want to hear. Not, as they started, by wanting others to hear what they wanted to say. And if you think that lot’s a bit muddy, try and spot the salmon in the Dee after a rainstorm.”

An intriguing example, in fact, of a publication where the editorial is more interesting - certainly more memorable – than the poetry content. However, Rae Beth’s *Vision Before Leaving* is a haunting dark fantasy of:

Woman, black cloaked.
She has my face,
tells of a sea change.

Bones reassemble themselves,
white horse,
galloping

Garry Theys in *The Time Cometh* tackles the unusual topic of sound waiting to happen, and Bernard Hewitt’s *Final Sleeper* and Shane Foheny’s *Friends*, SFnal in its luminosity, also have a genre feel.

POETRY DIGESTER

Although *QUARTZ* referred to this as a ‘zine’, it was the first of various ‘mainstream’ poetry (etc) magazines edited by Ann Wainright of Billingham, Cleveland. She did, however, exchange with *BARDDONI*, *IDOMO*, etc. Later poetry competitions in her subsequent title *POETIC LICENSE* included some with genre-relevant themes, eg Halloween.

POETRY AND FICTION MAGAZINE ASSOCIATION (PFMA)

From 1980 this organisation attempted, through its newsletter and in other ways, to bridge the perceived gap between fanzines and writers in the SF genre generally, and the ‘mainstream’ small press. A Chuck Connor letter of August 18th, 1980 explains:

“This [PFMA] is a very informal, *non-clique* [his emphasis] collection of editors, artists, authors, poets and the like. No membership fee, number or demands made on the individual person. Ken Mann and myself decided to set up a ‘trouble-shooting’ network of anyone who’s interested in fiction etc...works on self-help, word of mouth contact etc.”

Though distracted from its purpose by disputes with leading figures in the *BSFA*, of little interest to most members, it did much to put ‘mainstream’ small press writers in touch with the non-commercial genre poetry and fiction field, and to some extent vice versa. By 1982, when membership had risen to 50+, Steve Ince having replaced Chuck Connor (owing to the Falklands Crisis), the structural problems of a ‘non-organisation organisation’, and Ken Mann’s various moves (from Peckham, to Holland, and then to Reading) took their toll: the newsletter reached issue #9 then folded – the PFMA itself going into limbo, never to return.

PRE-INCUBUS

First appeared in September 1980 to herald a planned regular magazine, *INCUBUS*, which never appeared. Edited by Steve Ince (and published by *SKATE PRESS*), alongside SF fiction it included one poem, *Attitude Changes* (by Steve himself), which examines relationships following a baby’s stillbirth.

QUARTZ

Edited by Geoff Kemp of Tamworth, this magazine, which began in March 1982 as an SF fiction, articles, reviews and poetry publication (under the Diamond Press imprint, also used for Anthony Blagg’s *PROMETHEUS* at the time), by issue #8 (1984) was describing itself as an:

“SF and postal gaming zine”

and by issue #11 (1986) *QUARTZ* was almost purely devoted to postal gaming. However, poetry appeared in issues as late as said #8 (1984).

Issue #1, for which Kemp was only assistant editor (R. J. Robinson editing this one only) contained a Lionel Fanthorpe poem. Issue #2 (March 1982) had poetry by Andrew Darlington, Steve Green, and Geoff Nelson.

Notable poems used in subsequent issues included; in issue #3 (June 1982), Julie Markham’s *R.E.M.OTE CONTROL* with its striking payoff:

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...get their kicks,
In the mental cinema
Commonly known as The Eyeball Flicks.

along with Peter Crowther's *The 9 To 5 Spaceman* with the Sense Of Wonder lines:

And so, I write of jewelled cities
lying, nestled in heathen sands,
And the deeds of men much more than men,
In far off alien lands

and Ken Mann's curious *Sandsharks And Pilgrims* - a kind of mini-Dune in triplets, as well as my ironic *High Policy*, plus non-genre work from Chuck Connor (*Walking On Snow-White*), Steve Green (*In Camera*), and Thomas C. Davis with an obscure 'word-soup' entitled *Antipathy*:

...a lagniappe to soothe the initial cost
due the divine interlocutor (etc)

at its core an interesting, almost Dickian heresy, the Cosmos taking sentient life as a personal affront.

In issue #4 (November 1983), were John F. Haines' long *The Lure Of Space*, reprinted from *IDOMO #15*, and Pete Crowther's one page poem *Till The End Of Time*, an Fnal piece of dialogue with Death:

And the smile now dropped from Death's white face
as Time leapt to his feet (....)

As mentioned, poetry appeared as late in the magazine's career as #8, which as well as a non-genre poem by 'mainstream' figure Tom Bingham, had Pete Crowther's Hnal *The Chenofee*:

He will eat out the heart of a soft, newborn babe (etc)

and Haines' five-line humorous SFnal poem *The Probe*:

(the Martians) sent it back quick as a flash.

RABBITS TEND TO EXPLODE –RTTE

This was edited by Dave Haden of Shottery, near Stratford, from December 1979. In a 1980 editorial he said:

“fan poetry is often so embarrassing (I know, I write it)”

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Nevertheless, among the poems used, particularly in issue #4 (September/October 1980) and in the 'special poetry issue' #6 (March 1981) – which unfortunately suffered from very faint reproduction – there was some unusual material, including one or two experiments with form. In issue #4, the three Maureen James poems include a post-nuclear poem, *Aftermath*, and *Witch Cat*, Pete Pressford's *Noise Level* wittily describes how the dead can still hear the BBC, and Jon Dugdale's *What Do You Think* effectively conveys the rather frustrating, Dark Star-ish, flavour of an uncomprehending conversation between a marooned astronaut and his ship's computer:

why are we constantly spiralling inwards?
CLICK "...HIS HEAD WITH VINEGAR AND BROWN PAPER" (etc)

Issue #6 - which Pete Pressford's *SONGS* review of the time condemned:

"To do a poetry issue purely on the basis of using up all the poems
you have to hand is NOT ON."

- nevertheless contains a wide variety and some viable work. The two Matt Coward poems are non-SFnal, and Andrew Darlington's three pieces are tangential at best - though the dadaistic/drug poem *Music For Unprepared Typewriters* speaks of:

...nebulous gods who
Squat beneath abandoned galaxies

but Jon Dugdale's *In Search Of* is a Hnal piece build round the original concept of stitching a flag – for:

your
no-friend

ie, Death. The editor contributes a low-key apocalypse piece, *England*, and *Never Mind*, an escapist piece which experiments with what could be called 'blur sound' to achieve a sense of fading away from reality, eg:

city lightsssss...
...silent legendsssss...
The blurred girl smiles

He also supplies a limerick about fellow-poet Steve Green, while my own pieces cover a variety of post-nuclear, vampire, robot, and pollution-mutant topics, plus the Fnal *Valley Of The Hesperides*.

RAGNAROK

Edited by John Shire under the Big Dummy Press umbrella from Merriott, near Crewkerne. It is hard to differentiate between **RAGNAROK**, **WAKANDA**, **SCREAMS FROM THE PADDED CELL**, plus several other spin-offs which appeared under the Big Dummy Press

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catchall, mainly as John Shire, Michael Paine and Duncan Gilson lived in the same village area around Crewkerne, and the publications tended to merge in style, spirit, and execution. Spurred on by the mutating punk 'scene' **RAGNAROK** was, perhaps, the most coherent of the Big Dummy productions. It tended to use the surrealer material from 'mainstreamers' Cory Harding and Blackie Fortuna, though with material also from Duncan Gilson. (IHNFI)

RHYSLINGS

An annual award for the best poems in the speculative (SF/H/F) field, awarded in two categories: Long - 50 lines plus, and Short. Chosen by vote of **SFPA** members from nominated poems published in the annual Rhysling Anthology, with the two winners being then published in the SF Writers of America annual Nebula winners anthology. Named, with Heinlein's permission, for the blind singer of the spaceways in his **GREEN HILLS OF EARTH**, these awards, first presented in 1978, are SF poetry's highest accolade. Although no non-American writer has as yet won a Rhysling, in the 1980s Andrew Darlington was nominated seven times, and other Britons receiving nominations in the 1980s (one each) were, in alphabetical rather than year order, Steve Bowkett, Dave Calder, Paul Donnelly, Edwin Morgan, Nicholas Peet, Peter Redgrove and Steve Sneyd.

RON'S RAYGUN

This fanzine, produced by Ron Gemmell between 1984 and the end of 1986, carried poetry in every issue (indeed, among the poets represented, Ron's fellow Warringtonian, John F. Haines, appears in each).

In issue #2, Haines with *Embarkation* is joined by Garry Thompson with *Knight Flight*. The same twosome in issue #3 are respectively represented by *Moonshot* and *Outside Looking In*. The Haines piece employs clever transformations of the word 'Rocket' to achieve a powerful simplicity, ending with:

Reach out
to the Moon,
touch it slightly.

while Thompson's poem uses personifying triplets to describe the planetary bodies from a Martian viewpoint, eg Earth is:

Blue sister,
Great oceans moving and islands vast,
First outpost, home away from home.

Issue #4 has a non-SFnal Haines poem re jogging, a Colin Nixon 6-liner *A Plea For Honesty* with an interesting reference to a fantasy painter:

Like the enchanted castle Claude painted,
but never saw

and my own robot poem *What We No Longer Can*. As well as the editor's comment, when

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explaining postponement of his plan for a fiction/poetry/artwork zine, that, re poetry:

“I’m even beginning to like it!”

the LoCs contain several comments on the poems in issue #3, Joy Hibbert and Sue Thomason taking Gary Thompson to task for sticking to conventional male/female personae for the planets, and Thomason saying Haines’ poem, in effect, sacrificed sense to sound.

Issue #5 (October 1986) contained a short non-genre George Gott poem, *Apricus*, and John F. Haines’ memorable *Seven Reasons For Going Into Space* – section four, for example, conjures up a powerful image of an alien:

Something calls a strange world home,

Perhaps looks like an old grey stone
with bright green hair,
Or chews a bone
Beneath the stair.

Unusually, this last issue of **RON’S RAYGUN** also contains a rare instance of a poet explaining himself to critics, in Haines’ response to Thomason, in reasoned and informative terms, eg:

“the sound being used to emphasise the sense – ‘Work it into Space’ for instance mimicking the effort needed to get umpteen tons of metal into the sky... ‘Reach Out’ was also a physical thing, stressing...that man is metaphorically standing on tip toe to reach the moon” (etc)

Announcing **RR**’s replacement, **EAT THAT DUCK**, Gemmell expressed an intent to continue to use “the odd poem”, and indeed **ETD #1** (January 1987) did contain a Colin Nixon poem and one by George Gott, though an editorial note stated that in future issues LoCs would fill “that space”.

SABSS (aka **SELF ABUSED BUT STILL STANDING**) – see **CHUCK CONNOR**

SACRUM BLEU

This was an article by Peter F. Jefferys (which appeared in **SKELETON CREW**, a now defunct Horror magazine, in 1989) on the subject of 18th Century narrative horror poems which, after a brief mention of M. G. ‘The Monk’ Lewis’ poetry, goes into slightly more detail about Robert Burns’ *Tam O’Shanter* and Samuel Taylor Colridge’s *The Rime Of The Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, and *Kubla Khan*.

SANDOR

Edited by Noel K. Hannan of Crewe, used poetry in all its four issues between summer 1982 and summer 1983. Issue #1, printed at the school he then attended, included the editor’s *The*

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Last Days Of Earth, and in issue #2 (September 1982) his moving verse tribute to Philip K. Dick, who had died in March of that year. Addressing Dick in the persona of his *COUNTERCLOCK WORLD* protagonist, Sebastian Hermes, it ends:

The people YOU left die.
The people YOU killed.
Can you face them?
No.
They rebury you, alive.
You have a clean conscience.

R.I.P.

and also included a poem based on *DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP?* which had then just been filmed as *BLADERUNNER*.

The publication, by now described as produced by Dirac Publications, produced a third issue at the end of that year, which grouped under the heading *BINARY STAR 1* two of my SFnal poems, and using the *BINARY STAR* heading again (*BINARY STAR 2*) in issue #4 (1983), two more of my SFnal poems, and John F. Haines' SFnal *FOGHORN*, a 'waterworld'/'gilled man' poem, and the rhymed Hnal *Incantation*. As a footnote, my story *The Gift Of Jerrold's Scorn* incorporated an invented future song. That summer Hannan produced a one-off comicszine, *STRATOSPHERE*, and announced a planned regular one, *NIGHTFALL* (in fact not to appear till 1983). A planned *SANDOR #5* never materialised.

THE SCANNER

Isle of Wight based, and a founder member of the *NSFA*, used poetry right from its first 'prequel' issue #0 in 1987. This publication was also unusually specific in its genre description: for example, in issue #1, the two poems used are specifically headed SF poetry. The two poems are *Hurt By The Unknown* by Chris James, co-editor with Kevin Lyons, Hnal in tone:

...blood leaks, dripping from a stone,
When you're hurt, by the UNKNOWN

and John F. Haines' dryly witty *Assisting With Enquiries*, re the advisability of tagging then releasing *LGMs* rather than taking sample corpses back to Earth for vivisection. After all:

cold yarns of inert inaction
Will not set pulses racing back on Earth.

Issue #2 included three short SFnal poems of mine, #3 contained Haines' equally SFnal *Fragility* on man's status in space, while #4 included the lyrics of *Zero Hour - Johnny's Song* (relating to the magazine's ongoing series of texts re a 90s Cornelius-style rock star) as well as, again headed SF Poetry, Dave W. Hughes' dystopian *Welcome To Your Future* and fantasy novelist John Light's *The Pursuers*, strikingly laid out in computer program format - the last line being:

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GOTO line 1 - We are coming.

a short narrative piece re the disillusion of one who believes he has escaped a nameless pursuit.

Poetry continued to appear in issues throughout the remaining years of the '80s, the decade's last issue, #7, including, as well as three poems by Marion Carmichael. *Dark Ages*:

The burning of the books begins

and two non-genre pieces, Alan Garside's prose-poem *VISIONS IN Yellow And Blue*, laid out over illustrations in near-comix formats, a short review of John F. Haines' recent poetry collection *The Spacewain* (House Of Moonlight Press), and an article, *Lyrical Science Fiction* by Simon Ward Edwards, which explores SF influences on the song-writing of Gary Numan, with especial reference to the lyrics of his *REPLICA* album.

SCREAMS FROM THE PADDED CELL

Edited by Duncan Gilson from Hinton St. George, Somerset, (part of the Big Dummy collective). Poems used included, in issue #1 (September 1981), Andrew Darlington's *Goose Pimples*, and, later that year, John F. Haines' *World War III* (IHNFI)

SFPA – Science Fiction Poetry Association.

Founded in the USA in 1977. Publisher of a (fairly regular) bimonthly magazine, ***STAR*LINE***, of poetry, articles, reviews etc, and responsible for *The RHYSLINGS*. Although its existence was regularly mentioned in UK genre publications of the '80s, for whatever reasons (apathy, insularity, the problems of currency exchange, 'unclubbability'?) its UK membership remained minimal. It is, however, relevant as an example which inspired vague suggestions for a similar UK organisation, growing in intensity towards the end of the decade, and because the existence of ***STAR*LINE*** probably directly inspired the founding of ***STAR WINE***.

SF SPECTRUM – see ***WIESLAW TUMULKA***

SHADOW PHOENIX

The first issue appeared in March 1979 and was edited by Steve Urbanski (aka *HANS, S.H.*, and *HANS URBAN*). Begun as a fanzine, in the editor's own words, it always had a bias towards:

“artwork, prose/poetry, and fiction”

Throughout, also, there was a tendency, in the words of a 1987 ***STAR WINE*** review, to use work:

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“dealing with a brisk totalitarian world. But this was not empty doom-mongering: wherever possible Steve Urbanski reflected the SF message back onto the real world, thereby increasing the value of both.”

As the earliest issues were before the 1980s, the poetry in them will not be looked at in detail here, though of the ten pages of poems in issue #1 it is worth singling out as deserving attention a number of pieces by the editor himself (as Hans Urban) and particularly *One Day In A War*, an effectively imagistic depiction of the action of a timeless ‘apparent’ conflict, as in many ways this poem is an archetypal *SHADOW PHOENIX* piece; a land of decayed and hostile technology, and an appropriate echo of the devastation of Midlands industry to come in the Thatcher years (since this magazine was Coventry-based throughout):

a rusted finger stretching to a
twisted fastness (...)
He squints through slits
in the iron wall (...)
a ragged trestle of thorn
is mirrored in his eyes.

A clichéd ending:

a singing bullet ends his tune
in
a blood hymn

mars the work, sadly. Also genre (Fnal) is his atmospheric *Pythoness*.

After a considerable gap, the magazine produced issue #4 in the mid-80s, and issue #5, the last, in late 1986. Issue #4 contains an unusual work by mainstream poet R. M. (Rupert) Lloydell: an Hnal piece described as a ‘cut-up’ though reading coherently and sequentially:

...AMAZING FUNGI,
One more SINISTER SURPRISE,
(...)
SOON THEY’LL AGGREGATE into A BALL OF ROTTING FLESH.

The characteristic *SHADOW PHOENIX* setting appears in the lines:

Our native kingdom
has the stench of moist air,
of rain and rust.

The issue also carried, among other items, two John F. Haines poems and a limerick. Indeed, by issue #5, Urbanski himself seemed to feel the need for some lightening of tone, editorially appealing:

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“we could do with more humour/satire...There seems to be hardly any humorous poetry these days.”

Pointing out that he doesn't want:

“pastoral/pretty poetry or too ‘heightened’“

he expresses a willingness to welcome the by then fashionable Ranting Poetry’ (though, as said earlier, there were in fact to be no further issues).

Much of the poetry content of issue #5 is a selection of long contemporary urban-setting poems without genre content – though Carlton C. Allen’s *The Rockers Reunion* does include the image:

Space poets leaving gaps between words between orbits on
the North Circular Road

– and other non-genre material. Of this, the uncredited three-parter *The New Manifesto Of Modern Romance* is intriguing for its all capital letter layout in short declamatory statements interspersed by illustrations. Genre work is limited to Haines’ longish witchcraft poem, *The Skull*, reprinted from *BARDDONI #5*, and John Light’s romantic science poem *Photons*:

Sweep across the Universe
By the cosmic tidal race (...)
We are the sound of creation

Singing the stories of stars.

SIC BUISCUIT DISINTERGRAF – see ***JOY HIBBERT***

SKATE PRESS – see ***CHUCK CONNOR***

SONGS – see ***PETE PRESFORD***

STARROOTS

Vol 1 #1 (probably the only issue of this Oxford-based magazine, produced by Warren Scott-Morrow’s grandly titled Anglo-Astral Publications in August 1989) contained one poem, the filkish five-stanza *B.E.Ms Have Landed* by Martin O’Cuthbert. Footnoted as written in 1978, it is in the persona of someone convinced he is surrounded by the said aliens, who include his family. A typical flavour is given by:

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You won't get me in a V.C. 10
In case I meet some B.E.Ms

As might be expected, the creatures from space are prepared to

follow us beyond the grave

and of course are

coming from every direction.

STAR WINE

Issue #1, which appeared in 1985, has interest beyond a fascinating variety of genre poetry, since this Cassandra SF Workshop-sponsored publication also attempts to comment more generally on the role and nature of verse in the field. This is so in Steve Bowkett's editorial, and above all in a fascinating article by Kenneth V. Bailey, *Alien Or Kin? SF Poetry* (see entry under this title).

In alphabetical order of author, Kenneth Bailey contributes the semi-humorous piece commenting on overpopulation, *The Overcrowded Show*, complete with 'in-jokes':

If sadism was her bent, she could have made
Them stand on Zanzibar (etc)

and the ironic *The Question*:

If leaves on trees were ticker-tape (etc)

a classic 'what if' piece.

Editor Steve Bowkett contributes three. *Seascape* is not really genre, and *STAR WINE* (not the only poem of this title in the decade - t. Winter-Damon had a very different poem also called this in *SF SPECTRUM*) is fairly predictable though with effective lines, as eg:

We dream (...)
Of worlds like beach sand
in ebb of ages (...)
to go there is second step:
before the hardware
the dream.

His most effective, *The Walk*, conjures powerful contrasts between the worlds within book covers in the genre, and our reality:

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princesses
wear no headscarves
or guzzle cola or belch (....)

white deserts lit by green moons (....)

firesplash as the spacewar starts (....)

It slips back, out of
reach,
I struggle like a drowned
man treading water.

John Hurley's *Atlantis Far* provides colourful atmosphere in rhyme, as does his *Sense of Wonder-ish*, rhymed, *To Look Down Upon The Eagle*, though:

...stars
That entice like a maiden's eyes

or

The tune of Antares' silver world strings

is balanced, not just by some rather odd phrases generated perhaps by the need to rhyme (as eg 'to the galaxy to educate with sin') but also a recognition of a darker side:

...space is black as a dragon's long path,
And cold as a nod from a hard, cold chin.

The language is rich, again, in Simon D. Ings' eight-line *Fuel*:

Stripe the sky with ice-heart amber (etc)

while the same poet's *Her First Breath* is a powerful transformation piece:

She lies deep in skull-juices
And sees

....her ashes scatter in the wind.

She laughs, a victor,
Swims up, landward (etc)

Pamela Lewis' *A Space Tale*, a long verse in which sentient spheres attempt to settle the planet, works rather hard for its humorous effects:

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Napalm laced
with polystyrene,
thought to be
good for changing
spheres
into comets (etc)

Andy Sawyer, in *The Science Fiction Reader's Problem With Sundays*, basically sums up by saying that the 'real reality' is not to be had, though the worry about this lack can be cured by SF. The issue also contains two of my SF senryu, *Herculid Owlcats And Sapien Starpilot*:

....Ship
humours me until (...)
it really matters.

and Antony T. Solomons poses the basic question of the future and its lives with pleasing simplicity:

But when I see the
Stars
I think (...)

(of) Ordinary Things,
A child waking to a new day under two suns.
And old man seeing his last under five. (etc)

Although *STAR WINE #2* was not as memorable as issue #1, certainly having no article to match *Alien Or Kin?*, this June 1986 publication contained some fascinating work. The editor's *Observatory* is a effective instance of 'the power of created mood', with lines like:

Another place floods this place,
a light spill that pours me away.

Perhaps the most striking single image occurs in Alan Dunnet's *Winter No Comfort*, namely:

...a redbreast dips
A wing into the frozen river
Perpetually

conjuring a flock of resonances for the reader, ranging, from the old belief that birds hibernated at the bottom of frozen ponds, to SFnal concepts of time at a stop, to thoughts of nuclear winter – riches surrounding simplicity of words. John F. Haines' *Scavengers* is not one of his most original works, but John Hurley's *Explorers Land* is full of fresh-minted language to transform SFnal clichés, both philosophically:

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Evening is beautiful: (...).
Idling silent to delay destiny and fame

and in tackling what might be called set-piece genre description:

an erupted hulk (...)
Corridors bizarre with cabled showers.
Blasted junk to garnish pallid slopes (...)

Giving new ghosts from Mars to Alderbaran.

Dragon Tales from Berenice Moore, though a pleasure to read, brings little new to much-trodden Fnal ground:

a beautiful tail-in-mouth treasure guardian damsel (...)

more of an obligation
than absolute tyranny.
....wide wings and gold-shod feet.

However, American Belinda Subraman does achieve a new way of looking in *Equestrian*:

the world : a wet kiss waiting.
I want to pull back
the reins of his aging

while Patricia Tabill in *We The Stars* couples a totally fresh central concept – a tallyman (door-to-door credit salesman-cum-debt collector) among the stars – with matching novelty of wording:

Long-haired suns
Circling each other in a two-man fight
And our own voices answer back their roar.

STAR WINE #3, a year after the first issue, and still edited from Market Harborough, begins with a Steve Bowkett editorial which quotes Proust:

“the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes,
but in having new eyes.”

and points out:

“one of the strengths of SF - and no less of SF poetry - is that it does a
little of both.”

He amplifies this (to summarise savagely) by saying that while SF not only anticipates

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our possible futures, splendid or harsh, it also:

“contemplates where we, as a species and a civilization, are now...looks at the world as it is, at our own place in it, at our relationship with it and with each other... It may magnify and colour the scene, but at its best...looks with new eyes at old landscapes that in some senses we have never seen before.”

He also editorially mentions a big response from the USA in terms of contributions, and indeed several US speculative poets are present this time. Again, taking the poets in alphabetical order, K. V. Bailey's *On Being Invited To Consider Accepting A Vacancy To Be Born On Planet Earth* quizzically looks at the pros and cons:

...or have an ass's head atop a puzzled heart (...)

can we be told which way the dice will fall
Before we go on down?

The editor's *Sol Roth* is a tribute to Harrison's *MAKE ROOM! MAKE ROOM!:*

sold his space for sleep (etc)

his *Mars* memorable only for the phrase:

locked in bloods

Much more striking is his haunting narrative *Mutant* - it is tempting to quote several chunks, so strong is the imagery of a piece which starts when:

We caught him looking
at the constellations

proceeds as:

Now and then
threaded him on hot needles

and in suffering:

Smashed armoured adder's
scales of his head
the moon rounded sea garnet
eyes black as space. (etc)

American Bruce Boston provides a 'what if' piece, *SPLINTERS:*

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If a coin could land on edge (...)

why shouldn't ferry boats go to the moon?
And turtles join claws in wedlock? (etc)

concluding:

the universe continued to make
its own decisions

also the very short *The Beast At Vespers, For Jean Cocteau*. From Janette Clements comes the controlled emotion of *Dawnlight*:

I feel I could house
all the sorrows of the Universe (...)
Merely reflections of a greater joy
That lies upon the lifeless dust
of a distant moon.

while Don R. Connor's *A Study In Reason* is surreal rather than genre:

I was right, it is a rat.
Lola was right, it is a man.
She is further away,
because I am standing still.

though perhaps also a veiled comment on relativity or Relativity. W. Easel's brief *Brain-Mind* urges:

....try
the limits of the limitless (etc)

P. Godfrey's *The Limitations Of Philosophy* is more sardonic – for example in his definition of 'God' -

A vast empty space (...)
... a larger man than Doctor Lucas
....thinking sad thoughts
That no body notices him anymore
As he is, generally speaking, Nothing.

Godfrey's other piece this issue, *Phantasmagoria*, mingles pleasing and horrific visions before selecting a 'safer' course:

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close off the view from my window
And now the Beyond is eliminated.

From Haines comes the blackly humorous, deceptively simple *Guests*:

the ship has rusted up and looks quite sad.
Our hosts just smile and wave
and sharpen knives

an extract indicating the resemblance to a genre Struwelpeter. Helene Fiske Jackson proffers an *Emigrated To Another Star* haiku, Joyce Judson tries to revive the old image of darkness personified's veil in *Midnight*, and another American, Frances Langelier, provides two very different poems - different to much else this issue, and very different from each other.

Resolutions Of The Borrowed is almost a puzzle poem, extended conceits and clever wordplay, striking but eventually somewhat too clever by half:

mint wintersnaps of cold (...)

Grow precious vices
sharp as your frozen
pine needle pins

and

...makes the centre of the
mind's eye twinkle
on a New Year's night?

are indicative, though, of the quality of language. Her *Painter's Brush*, on the other hand, is, for me, along with *Mutant*, one of the two key poems of the issue. A convincing picture of an 'otherwhere, otherwhen' society, it depicts in cool, controlled language the situation of a painter from elsewhere at work on another world, not allowed to talk to his subjects, whose talk about him he, and we, hear, interspersed with slyly convincing technical touches like:

no-tremor chair

and

crowd-killer earplugs

This exchange between two onlookers, father and child, perhaps focuses the heart of the poem, a parable of misunderstanding:

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....Is that a
artist, da?
No kid, a painter. Dumb off-worlder, anyway.

and, to counterpoint:

his distant employers permit no voice from him
to subjects.

Gary Legg's *Halley's Comet* basically says 'I missed it', while Berenice Moore's *Between Time* sings of:

Before Space expanded and time began

Her *Trapdoor* rhapsodizes retreat into the depths of the mind where you can:

Seek out those floating flakes of being,
Cerebral transparencies,
Light shadows, alien invaders,
The waters of Lethe in an iron cup.

Marie Mynall (14) again employs the veil image in her *Moon*; her other short poem, *Triffid Nebula* is instinct with Sense Of Wonder:

folds of amethyst
in clouds of lilac
...and colours grow rose
to the inner core.

Widely published UK 'mainstreamer' Colin Nixon gives us a haiku and *A Hymn To Life*, the paradoxical:

Immortal until the last breath (etc)

Finally, t. Winter-Damon, another American, in a rocket-shaped poem, *Like The Strength Of A Child Perhaps To Dream*, conjures all the magic of childhood belief - in spacemen rather than fairies:

waiting for Tom Corbett to descend
on that taper of gold and crimson flame

...holy relic washed in moonlight
sleek crescent fins quivering
....to match (...)
small hands ... clutching
the magic threshold of the sill.

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Issue #4 was considerably delayed due to a variety of problems, this last issue eventually appearing in August 1987. There had clearly been an intention to continue - an announcement welcomed:

“Submissions of all kinds”

of SF, Fantasy and speculative poetry, it is elsewhere explained, though oddly, the remark is added:

“material of a political nature is not required”

oddly, that is, in view of the previous issue’s editorial.

The editor introduces the issue by recalling Gerald Manley Hopkins’ concept that, within the natural world:

“every living creature was uniquely itself. He called this uniqueness *inscape*... in the poems that follow, I hope you will see how the contributors - each one different, each one ‘going itself’ – trace out the inscape of their respective worlds.”

An interesting innovation in this issue is a ‘Poet Profiles’, and these will be come to, but before beginning an alphabetical look at the poets represented, the issue’s most unique item, which is uncredited, deserves special mention. This is a four page narrative poem, titled *With Gratitude To Star Trek’s Amok Time And Theodore Sturgeon*, and is curious in its form, curious and ultimately, I think, unsuccessful, though it must be regarded as gallant in its ambition.

The story, much in triplets, is a perhaps overlong tale of how two giant eelbirds, originating from Regulus V, are drawn by irresistible forces, acceptingly in the male’s case, rebelliously in the female’s, back to their birth planet where, after remembering their shared lives, they fuse, dissolve, and from their remnants arises a new I:

I am the Giant Eelbird (...)
...I am life and word

while the ‘leftovers’ are:

Two fragile fragments of feathered down (...)
swirled in the updrafts of the windy night.

The editor gives us *Happy Millennium* - a man almost fully controlled by:

wallscreen (...)
pillowed dream (...)
micromind spark (...)

appeals:

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Finish me now

while the choice still remains.

and the hypnotic simplicity of *How To Explore The Universe*:

Kid kicks a stone
becomes a moon
Kicks a spark
becomes a star (etc)

Don R. Conner's *Monica, An Amateur Psychiatrist I'm Not*, has no real genre link but, in its puzzling over human misunderstanding, creates true poetry, eg:

My shrug of indifference drives you north.
Your verbena grows
in the cracks of my armour.

First of the 'Poet Profiles' features H. J. Cording, a New Yorker based in New Zealand. Of his six poems, most relevant are the Gunga-Din-in-space-ish *Comrade In Arms*:

as your carapace melted
you handed me your iridium
breathing tube
sustained me later with
your ugly green blood

the elegiac *Darkside*:

When night comes,

no more obsessive gazing
at the invisibly damaged
mother-planet, wondering
what the remnants are doing tonight

and most notably original, *Callisto*, wherein, under the baleful, 'blood-hued' influence of Jupiter's Great Red Spot, workers in the ice quarries of the Jovian moon go crazy:

They still talk about Kroger

cut his partner in half at the waist,
opened his helmet to the boiling giant
ruling the sky
It took his last breath five minutes
to finish snowing.

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Least successful is perhaps the corny, only vaguely funny, *My Baby From Betelgeuse* IV.

Johan De Wit in *Isolation* complexly attempts to define the self in terms of that other 'black hole', the astronomical concept. Mutability under the pressure of Time is the poem's backbone, a mutability that in the event affects shape:

Round - of the same category as square

balance of being:

the left side is too heavy

and at last 'personality' itself:

I,
Me.
Not you.
A you does not do.

Haines takes a more straightforward poetic path with *Investment For The Future* - a tale of a 'pioneer pack' dropped to speed the evolution of:

low-browed shambling apes

while Frances Langelier gives us two strongly contrasting pieces. *Civil Disobedience 2167 A.D.* uses jingly rhymes, sound repetitions, and internal rhyme to convey stressed telepathic states, then in *Dream Sparker*, she provides a feast of language, though genre only by stretching the poem's central image of 'lightning bugs' into an analogy of a human/alien relationship:

lightning-bug window
a view on the world that lies beyond my
glass screen

catches the poet up in memory of:

the sound of pillow-top feet
and lightning bug myths
of randomness nights and
the delicate pierce
of dreamsparking.

Gary Legg's *An Impossible Paradise* is a soft-centred 'sweetmeat', while Dave Mitchell's *Tides*, though basically a current reality description, offers genre implication in such images as:

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duststone moon

and

shadows hopping like seabirds over dying waves.

Berenice Moor is represented with the imagistic, 'last man on earth-ish' *Time Out Of Mind*, and *Pond Life*, wherein a dragon's tail succeeds shapeless pond jelly. Edward Mycue's *The Birth Of Time* traces life back to an (alien)oil spill, while Colin Nixon, in *The Flower That Dies Before Dawn*, is rather imprecisely philosophical.

The second Poet Profile is of long-time Anglophile Canadian Janet F. Reedman, and features three of her Fnal poems: *Hamadryad* - after attack by axe-wielding woodcutters:

My roots are gone now;
my hair tumbles through the sky

the rather simplistic *Memories*, about ancient astronomers, and *Year's Wane* with its lively reuse of traditional myths of the Horned Man:

His antlers impale distant stars

his lady:

Pale as the moon on her brow
Ice-crystal decked

and their leadership of the Wild Hunt:

Over hillock, over stone

As well as a senryu, my *Memoirs Of A True Survivor* appears, a free association-ish poem of a girl holographically revived from the past:

before the Liftoff War well whatthell
that way it'll come
as even more of a surprise to her.

In addition to a short untitled piece about an after-death reunion via a kiss of protons, J. V. P. Stewart provides the haunting Fnal *Phantoms*, full of evocative language:

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Beware the lunar pools, for they
Like mirrors point to you (...)

...the lair of all your fears,
Protruding through the shield of years
To grasp the infant deep within you.

The unmen linger, lurk in branches
The lack of action magnifies (...)
...in the blackout of the Fens.

And finally Chris Worthington's two pieces, *The Gods* and *First Lovers*, add little new to their subjects.

STILL CRAZY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

Of this Yeovil, Somerset, based single issue fanzine, an ***IDOMO*** review (February 1983) said:

“uses poems...all hand-written and drawn” (IHNFI)

STUDIO 54 – aka ***SEQUENTIAL ART POETRY***

From around 1984 a scattering of instances can be found where a poem has been given ‘cartoon strip’ treatment - turned into sequential art to use more recent jargon. One particularly notable early instance – words by predominantly ‘mainstream’ poet David R. Morgan, pictures by freelance artist David Windett – ***STUDIO 54***, appeared in ***IDOMO #17***. This had previously been one of the ‘poem-songs’ of the ***SKATE PRESS/TAPES*** collection, ***ROBOTGHOST*** (a C45 cassette featuring David R. Morgan and John Grimaldie; the ***ROBOTGHOST*** ‘soundtrack’ was released to complement the ***ROBOTGHOST*** booklet). Chuck Connor said in ***IDOMO #20*** (1986):

“As far as I know the ***STUDIO 54*** comic strip where each line of the poem was framed and illo’ed was the first of its kind, and not *just* an illustrated poem.” (his emphasis)

STUDIO 54 may well have been the first instance in the UK genre fanzine/small press field, although there were several other instances around the same time to indicate that here was an idea whose time had come – an uncredited poem *The New Manifesto Of Modern Romance* in ***SHADOW PHOENIX #5*** (October 1984) where, admittedly, not each line but each of the three parts was given separate framing illustration treatment, and an early instance in ***BACK BRAIN RECLUSE***. Similar approaches have occasionally appeared since, after that 1984 flurry -***BBR #3*** (January 1985) for example, where each line of my minisaga prose-poem, *Something To Look Forward To*, is given a framed D’Israeli illustration.

In ***AMMONITE #1*** (1987), two short poems, *Bomb’s Eye View* and *Man’s Eye View* each have a framing illustration, although, again, not each line. Alan Garside’s *Visions In Yellow And Blue* in ***THE SCANNER #7*** interweaves poem and illustration. Later, in ***WORKS***

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#2 (1988), Nik Morton's long narrative poem, *One Last Glance*, interweaves illustrations into the text in near comic strip style.

In the 1990s, similar experiments have continued, eg in *NIGHTFALL* in the UK and *FIGMENT* in America, though they remain rare.

The idea had been used earlier in the UK, although in a 'mainstream' publication, *AMBIT*, in the late 1970s, carrying a 'comicstripised' poem sequence by J. G. Ballard, *The Invisible Years*, over a number of issues. It is even arguable that the Daily Express *RUPERT* series would qualify, since each frame carries a verse as well as prose caption, and Ray Faraday Nelson has mentioned an even earlier US children's comic instance *THE PUSSYCAT PRINCESS*, as well as later in *POGO*.

In the US genre small press, the predominantly Hnal *CRYPTOC* published by Michael Lail in Oklahoma, in issue #5:

"integrated a poem into a strip cartoon"

– Craig Miller the artist, the poem Stephen Crane's classic *A Man Said To The Universe* – and the technique was used again, this time for a new poem, in issue #6 (late 1979), artist Miller again, the poem Michael S. Vance's *Wet With God*.

(NOTE: *A Word In Your Eye – An Introduction to the Graphic Poem*, by Steve Sneyd, Hilltop Press, 2000, now out of print, discussed the development of this form in much more detail, with annotated bibliography of instances and illustrations of extracts from examples.)

SWEETHEART CONTRICK – see ***CHUCK CONNOR***

TRIPLE ECHO

Edited by Steve Roberts and others from Preston, and described as a:

"platform for SF"

this publication, which used 'short SF poems' by John F. Haines and others, reached issue #4 in early 1982, before ceasing, to be replaced by *YELLOW DWARF* (see entry). Andrew S. Briggs, editor of the latter, said of *TRIPLE ECHO* (in a letter):

"I'm the person responsible for the inclusion of poetry in the magazine, although I'm fighting an uphill battle against the editors to get even one piece in each issue."

VOLLMOND

The first two issues appeared in the '80s – issue #1 in July 1988 and issue #2 in June of 1989 – and was edited by Andre Paine from Tenbridge, Kent. It had from the start a distinctly Hnal flavour, though other items including RPG and comics data appeared in issue #1. The Hnal

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tone is reflected in the poetry used.

#1 had P. G. Jackson's very short *Fear*, in which:

Tall dark towers

disconcertingly:

triangular

trigger the:

Emotional feedback

of a:

bad dream.

The same writer's story, *The Old Street*, incorporates a long chunk of a poem from the (presumably imaginary) tome *HANSON'S BOOK*, speaking of a:

man in beast's garb

seeking immortality:

I summon your blood
oozing and magical.

Issue #2 has the well-known Canadian fantasy poet Janet Reedman's *Demon Tree*:

....inside the trunk,
mouth in a scream,
a charred skeleton
lay bound

while William P. Robertson contributed a long rhyming poem, *Tearful Woe*, part SFnal, part paradox with a 'twist' explanation, of a spacecrew landed on a:

bizarre bohemian moon

It seems a paradise:

....everyone was busy writing
Poetry instead of fighting

yet all the inhabitants were full of 'woe'. This state is explained when the newcomers find that they cannot refuel their ship to escape, and discover the supposed 'natives' are, in fact, fellow space travellers also trapped. A stylish short narrative piece of an unusual kind.

WAKANDA

Published under the Big Dummy umbrella by Duncan Gilson, from Hinton St. George, Somerset. In 1980 **WAKANDA** used John F. Haines' long atmospheric Hnal poem *Concerning The Death At Midnight Of A Man Unknown*. This was later included in Haines' **HOUSE OF MOONLIGHT PRESS** collection, **OTHER PLACES, OTHER TIMES**, under the shorter title *Death At Midnight*. **WAKANDA** also contained material from Gilson himself. Curiously, the same area in Somerset generated a fair range of material and pseudonyms under the Big Dummy banner, which, when boiled down to specifics, came to three people: Duncan Gilson, John Shire and Michael Paine, all from the Hinton St. George-Merriott locality (**RAGNAROK**, **SCREAMS FROM THE PADDED CELL**, **WAKANDA**, and **OVERGROUND** being the most easily identifiable) (IHNFI)

WAKING EDGE, THE

Although in the USA 'filk' (SF/F/H lyrics written for singing with - usually pre-existing, often folk - tunes) is a flourishing 'industry, distributed in fanzines, song books, and on cassette and record on a considerable scale, in the UK it appears to surface seldom outside of its own minicons (cf, those organised by the Peterborough SF Society). One 1980s example of a 'filk' appearing in a general fanzine occurred in this, the (intermittent) publication of the Imperial Collage SF Society, London, edited on this (1989) occasion by Amanda Baker. The filk she included (to the tune of *MY BONNIE LIES OVER*) credited to Simon Spero, is *Cthulhu Lies Under The Ocean*. The chorus gives an indication of the flavour:

Send back, send back,
Oh send back that Old One for me.
Send back, send back,
Oh send him back home to Ry'leh.

WIESLAW TUMULKA

Tumulka, of Haddenham, near Aylesbury, Bucks, published, as well as a comicszine (**COMICSWORLD**), two prolific poetry-using publications: **SF SPECTRUM** and **MACABRE**, also a variety of supplements which included individual poetry collections and articles on poetry/poets.

After **SF SPECTRUM PREVIEW**, an introductory issue, appeared in early 1983, Tumulka said (in a letter):

"What SF SPECTRUM is out to do is to be a 'pulp' of the '80s..(as the title suggests)..any type..(of poetry/story)..is suitable."

He repeated the 'pulp for the '80s' phrase in the editorial for **SF SPECTRUM #1** (July 1983), and also used comments on material as a hook to introduce future plans – eg, saying that the Nic Howard poem *The Gods Of Earth* 'isn't really SF', he mentions plans for a horror magazine (later to appear as **MACABRE**) and calls for more poetry as he has plans for a poem zine as a give-away in a future issue. Contributions need only be:

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“loosely connected with SF.”

Three poets are extensively represented in the issue. Of the work by Simon Clark, today so well-known for his horror and science fiction novels, Tumulka said:

“When I was reading through them, I had just finished lunch and some of the lines made me green!”

Which presumably refers to *Melting Away*:

...the nylon cord
...stuttering and creaking
Tugging the face upward
To be stabbed in the eyes
with fingers of darkness (...)
....she slowly melts away (etc)

since neither *Fragments*:

like the man who snatched
A life between heartbeats
It is only possible
To experience life fragment by fragment

nor *That Day*:

I see it as clearly as
A single star set in the black of the night sky

are at all horrific. Nic (now John) Howard is represented by the Chulthuesque poem referred to by the editor, ending with a 50s-ish warning:

Change your ways, act like men
And from now, just watch the sky.

and by *Black Halloween* - where the protagonist fires at three supposed Halloween lanterns outside his window, goes outside later to find:

three winged headless bodies lying there.

The issue also included a number of pieces of mine of varying lengths, ranging from senryu and mini-sagas via the shortish *On Aygar's World* where aliens steal our memories for entertainment and give them back slightly damaged:

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this was your life

politely they all say
they liked it very much.

to the long *Dream Of A Frontier Guard* - its theme the jealousy poem's narrator feels for Sirius Under Cover Scouts going native (freeverse format).

SF SPECTRUM issue #2 (October 1983) included less poetry (and a Ross Cowin letter attacking its presence). Perhaps most mentionable are Simon Clark's prose-poem about a cemetery, *A Place In The Moonlight*, and a poem by Jacques du Lumiere, translated by Terry Cuthbert, concerning, in black humour terms, an alien with a French accent:

he finished his gabble

shook my hand with all three of his
then vanished in thin air (...)
...the bombs started falling.

SF SPECTRUM issue #3 (January 1984) also contained little poetry, though was accompanied by a booklet special, written by John Howard, giving an overview of the poetry of Derleth. Among the few poems are my shortish *Good Causes For Going* and four senryu, all SFnal, while John F. Haines's *Whiteout* was also used. LoCs turn to the presence of poetry at all, two poets among the LoCcers taking opposed views. Simon Clark says:

"Perhaps it's a good idea to cut down on the poetry in SPECTRUM, I don't mind it but I find it an effort to read it and I suspect lots of people feel the same, and even the shape of the poem there on the page can put people off. A suggestion to poets - write prose poems; very short stories that are in the language of poetry."

Terry Cuthbert, on the other hand, says:

"I sympathise with the writer that complains about poetry - but really poetry is only condensed prose - some people go blind at a poem like some grow blind at numbers in pure mathematics - but poetry only consists of words on lines that doesn't (sic) reach the margins."

Poetry did continue to appear, and **SF SPECTRUM** issue #5 was also accompanied by a one-poet collection as one of its many supplements.

SF SPECTRUM #6 (July 1985), as well as my *Development Programme* re reuse of:

monstrous abortions
twisted burning unhumans

as

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the saviours of other stranger planets (etc)

also contained John F. Haines' punning *Moonshine* - on a world of numerous moons:

you're left quite moonstruck

and Simon Clark's prose-poem *A Distant Probability*:

Many light years from where you now sit (...)
A statue carved by some fantastic hand. And
that statue looks just like you.
NB If the universe is infinite, then the impossible
not only might happen but **MUST** happen.

as well as two Andrew Darlington pieces, one dream-themed with an extremely long title (the first half of which is *Was There Life Before Duran Duran?*) the other a powerful 'Atlantean' poem, *Les Voyages Extraordinaire/Television Intoxication*:

the sea-beasts coiling through the levelled towers,
my fingers webbing (...)
towards the hidden sun where
the Earth neither rises nor sets.

SF SPECTRUM #7 (October 1985) contains among its poems two highly striking pieces, another Darlington, *The Fight In The Cave Of The Moon Butchers/The Moon Calf Pastures*, a Rhysling nominee from this appearance, and Mike Johnson's *After Z*, an experimental/concrete piece reprinted from his collection *POETREE*. Darlington, who is also represented in this issue by the *Incandescent Archetypes* lyrics he wrote for a *UV POP* record, *Begins Moon Butchers* by quoting H. G. Wells' *FIRST MAN IN THE MOON* before launching into a hypnotic flow of language and imagination:

Pteranodons glide my room

I taste the audible smile
of their scales
through hooks beneath my flesh (...)
In such moments the
urge to devolve becomes audible (...)
I remember the mindless reptile purity
that now is resurfacing (...)
Achingly soft
towards
extinction.

are extracts giving some of the flavour.

After Z, a continuous 'stream of consciousness', is almost impossible to meaningfully

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extract - but here is a fragment:

octopus(noun); cephalopod mollusc having eight
seven six five
four three to be or not to be C D Easy easy easy easy chanted

as the poem speed-blends scientific information, fragments of modern society, fragmented songs and literary images etc around an alphabet skeleton. Also in the issue is Terry Cuthbert's *I Am The Moon* prose-poem, and several of my SF senryu including *Flight Of Tigers*:

hyperspace under
their claws hurt but still so fine
not to be earthbound.

The issue was accompanied by a non-SFnal song lyric collection of poetry by Stephen Hooker, who, in a LoC attacks various poems in the previous issue, eg, re mine:

“a series of statements but a poem it most certainly was not...just a collection of words trying to relate with one another and not succeeding.”

and, re Clark's *Distinct Probability*:

“at least playing fair, here was a whim trying hard to be just that and not a poem.”

SF SPECTRUM #8 had several SFnal poems, including three of mine re deviants/losers in space, while in #9 (March 1986) the increased American contributions referred to in an earlier editorial is reflected in the poetry, with Vonnie Crist contributing *More Than Curiosity*, and another US speculative poet, Edward Mycue, supplying *Blade*. From the former, these lines exemplify the theme:

unable to cipher the constellations
still we strive to star-journey
across the eternal etching
forgetting
the universe demands more
than curiosity

while Mycue's short-line piece approaches abstraction:

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narrow
the focus (...)
the dry
danger:
that of
nothing
happening
for love

teasing in ambiguity.

SF SPECTRUM #10 (May 1986) carried a very considerable amount of poetry, much of it genre (poetry, incidentally, that aroused a considerable amount of attention in the LoC supplement next issue).

Two of the poems are unusual in that the poet footnotes/explains. Andrew Darlington, for instance, appends to his *Hyperborea* a note of the 'Encyclopaedia Galactica' type:

"Hyperborea, whose lush life system... the human colonists almost wiped out" (etc)

The poem, though having striking images - eg:

Gossamer insects, windmill sized (...)
...fauna like acid seas in raw ferment (...)
maelstrom bound as tight sheaves

seems somehow forced and indeed garbled in its combination of rhyme and would-be antique language. Darlington appends, to *The Shadow And Its Reflection*, that the poem is build round cut-ups of definitions of the title words *Shadow and Reflection*, an idea suggested by Adi Newton, vocalist of then groups *CLOCK DVA* and *THE ANTI-GROUP*. The result is a science poem on one of speculative poetry's most obsessive themes, meditation on the nature of light. It is a densely realised work, difficult to extract, but this quote perhaps indicates the high level of exploration of meaning at work here:

to pain the likeness of
blame and punishment
is spectral,
an unsubstantial object of pursuit
an imperfect form
caused by
the mode, operation, or faculty
of light.

t. Winter-Damon's *Star Wine* is another complex, impactful, though occasionally over-wordy piece, with startling Sense Of Wonder images, of which one must suffice here:

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let your consciousness rush outward
to embrace the universe
like the blossoms of a supernova

transpiring in spatial and temporal fugue.

Another American, Vonnie Crist, gives the reader an image of Voyager's arrival in sexual terms in *Saturn's Song*:

I couldn't revolve quickly enough
to avoid your well-planned thrust

John F. Haines in *Recreation Planet* puts feeling into a short rhymed piece, including the lines:

They come each night as if told drink would end
Unless they drunkenly lurch to the stars.

Also moving is one of the Stephen Hooker shorts, *Jim*:

...and giants administrate
A lost world
Beam me back down, daddy.

while another, the three liner *Over You* cleverly poemises jargon:

Overkill: All signals terminate (etc)

My *The Sanctity Of His Mission*, a longer SFnal narrative piece, tells the story of the misunderstandings surrounding an alien gift of a virgin to a newly arrived Earthman...in the end, she is sacrificed to a 'crop source', with:

a hybrid in her belly, a tasty
extra bonus.

t. Winter-Damon, in the Cosmic Comments (Letters pages) of this issue, speaks of *The Shadow And Its Reflection*, pointing out how:

"word placement/line breaks/caesuras [reinforce] conceptual imagery through visual/concretist techniques...as well as modified 'Exquisite Corpse' element of dictionary selected juxtaposition"

Haines makes the general point:

"Poetry in SF is really too young a medium to judge yet...but I feel that it is the SF of the future. The compression is inevitable."

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SF SPECTRUM #11 (August 1986) has several interesting poems with little genre connection: for example, George Gott's *Friday Night With Jessie* is a contemporary tale with a surreal final twist, about a car crash victim:

They put his body back together
ready to travel in all kinds of weather,
they found him an eye
they found him a nose,
for a mouth they gave him a rose.

One of Stephen Hooker's pieces makes a referent joke – in *Another Emperor Of Ice Cream*, re:

another
Civilisation destined to melt
Away

which is cross-genre in its resonant irony, a contrast with the more traditional humour of John F. Haines' *Cold Comfort* about sneezing Saturnians. Peter Presford's *Sammy* is catchy, short, impactful in its 'essence of a novel' picture of a man suffering noises in his head who uses his powers to empty the world, expressing much more than is overtly said. Vonnie Crist's *Snapdragons*, though on occasion escaping sentimentality by a hairsbreadth, conveys a memorable image:

as a crack in a glass container shrivels vacuum-
packed flowers, a woman weeps
for my grandchildren's grandchildren's
children (...) staring out
from glass-preserved environments
until some careless act
ruptures
the membrane

In the next Cosmic Comments, Mike Johnson makes an interesting general point:

"I get quite ambivalent towards SF on occasions, especially SF poetry/short stories, where the condensing of ideas and futuristic hardware, often at the expense of human interest, leaves them with an unpleasant, vacant quality."

He also adds:

"Most zine writers, in trying for epic statements, fall flat, though the attempt at putting great ideas into words is commendable."

As well as this Cosmic Comments, *SF SPECTRUM #12* (February 1987) was accompanied by various supplements, including my *Round Up The Unusual Suspects* article, a preliminary look at major SF poetry anthologies, and British involvement/representation in

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them, particularly that of professionals like Aldiss and ‘mainstream’ names. *SF SPECTRUM #12* was also the last issue to appear, and carried a lengthy rhymed narrative, *Grey Maker*, by John Light, Fnal in atmosphere though having some space travel trappings. Rather jingly in effect, it is still striking as a rare example of continued narrative:

Was deep enshrouded on the way
By Grey Maker’s spell.
Landing on the purple strand
Of an unknown and empty land
His purpose he forgot,
Without warning was he assailed
By pallid monsters; and he quailed;
Such horror they inspired
Then to his aid came his bat Jeth
Meting to those foul creatures death
But Jeth also was slain.
Some instinct now urged Alorn east
To cross the Red Grass Plain at least

is a typical sample. This poem was later reprinted in Light’s *ICONOCLASMS* collection.

Vonnie Crist contributes the prose poem *Aware, After All These Years*:

dead parents. I wipe the sad
images away with my palm sure
that they’re all ashes stored
for the planet’s life in slim
cylinders

another striking image is:

I lean on the
indigo banister of technology.

And A Circle Of Pillars:

...twist my brain up - sideways - down
to avoid the data my senses flash.

...this quiet of stone
pains my ears with its demands.

Another American, Dwight E. Humphries, supplies the DFnal *Aflame*:

Tower fire and
It gnaws relentlessly (...)
...hidden worms
Writhe and crackle,

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even after we're gone

MACABRE #4 (1985) contained t.Winter-Damon's *Lost Roads*, Fnal, which swallows the reader into hypnotic sense of irresistible movement with its long solemn lines, culminating:

Whisper the half-forgotten words of ritual
to journey down Lost Roads
That vanish into smoke upon my passing.

so that it becomes clear that one who is dead has made this journey through dead lands.

MACABRE #5 (March 1986) included Mike Johnson's *Sarah Jane*, described in a Stephen Hooker LoC as:

“tight and deadly.”

The poem features a telepathic woman:

looking licking licking looking

They join her special game.

t.Winter-Damon's rather Swinburnish *Lure Of The Incubus*, another poem of a supernaturally dangerous woman, in this case the:

Motal Vessel of Female Sensuality

is almost overpowering in lushness, eg:

Virgin harlot with your doe-like stare (...)
flashflood riverbeds of dream (...)
Frail flower cloaked in naked crematory flame (etc)

Vonnie Crist's *More Than Curiosity* has a subtle Hnal atmosphere:

intuition curls
unborn
in our skulls as we
stumble through the nightwoods lost.

In **MACABRE #6**, Christina Kiplinger's *As I Live - For Ratton*, is an atmospheric and different 'life-cycle' poem:

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In Spring's chilled haze
I was borned

the Sun, scorned, rose wild till day
learned life's dark wrath

and the very unusual line:

Drank life's spew.

MACABRE #7 (August 1986) includes John F. Haines' ironic *Government Health Warning* - advice to the king about plotters; a warning lest:

...ice tinged with fire may slip between your ribs.

Mark Valentine, in cool, restrained words – the more effective for the lack of 'purple patches' - addresses one about to reach *The Time Of Your Rising*:

What that clouds loom
above your bedroom?
Oblivious to these you lay.

Also in #7, Vonnie Crist's *Right Now* is contemporary Hnal:

...girl-child sucks
thumb
and dreams
of steel plunging into flesh.

Colin Nixon, 'mainstream' poet, in *The Lack Of All Explanation* has the dead man speak:

I cannot return
though I see your eyes
burn
for lack of explanation.

In Dwight E. Humphries' *History*, an immortal hero speaks of endless violence:

I wielded my ebon weapons
At eternity's mad boundaries

Christina Kiplinger's rhymed *Blood And Guts* is a piece of teasing ambiguities - are one/both protagonist(s) dead?:

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If I could have you for a day (...)
We'd laugh watching the vultures fly (...)
as the tide emits a hiss.

Edward Mycude contributes a puzzling yet haunting *Ay, Ay, Ay!*, with such hooking lines
as:

The hooded harness and the shroud

are saffron-saddled and sun-drained (...)
...flesh mirrors
obscuring the dumb, the rare;

My own *Economy Of Motion* includes the words:

squatter fire in empty farm
brings hell home for him (ie the trapped ghost).

MACABRE #8 (February 1987) was the last issue and carried a number of poems,
perhaps most intriguing the Kiplinger five-poem sequence *Songs Of Sunnyside - A Horror
Revisited*. From #2, *Sunnyside At Dawn*:

Real dreams never visit here,
only silent scads of
vision cooling in the dark.

from #3, *Sunnyside Anthem*:

The song of Sunnyside
has been surgically implanted
in the brains
of all born here,

from #4 *On My Journey To Sunnyside*:

I don't mention the monsters hot on my trail
or the shackles
the police
have attached
to my bed

and from #5, *Patrons Of Sunnyside*:

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long after the horrid sun
has died...Sunnysidites
dig up the dead
to share
their dreams (...)

give a flavour of the clinically chilly skill at work here. Also bleakly horrific is Vonnie Crist's *Flies*:

...the faces
will be gone by morning

and among other poems are Stephen Hooker's neat, if gnomic, five-liner *We Are The Dead*:

Black wood
where the green tree stood

my Hnal senryu *Night Elopement*:

her horned man her jelly death

George Gott's *Liberty*:

Who will have the time
to bury the dead
when insurrection
will come

and two t.Winter-Damon pieces, *Ghost-Images Of 2am*, a two page prose-poem, and *Golden Bough, Golden Sickie*:

...Bonfires gorged on Summer's Dreams,
Roaring drunk on the musty vintage,
The Wild Moon Rules! (etc)

John F. Haines' *Fragments*, too, is Hnal:

snarling faces, half unseen
Rush close then go again.

WORKS

"A Magazine of Speculative and Imaginative Fiction" edited by Dave W. Hughes, initially with Andy Stewart as co-editor, was welcoming to poetry from the start, with all four of the 1980s issues giving the form considerable space.

Issue #1 of this Slaithwaite, West Yorks-based publication, which appeared in the

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Summer of 1988, includes several non-genre poems – though Chris Reed’s *Writer’s Block* is arguably a speculative conceit, with images like:

...ape-man
Called Thought.

My two short pieces are both SFnal, and John F. Haines’ *Bus Stop* is a notable piece. Dreams, visions, parallel worlds? The reader must decide, but the Sense of Wonder is intense - from the commonplace situation of being ignored by a bus, then kicking a fence in frustration, segue a series of startlements:

The sea was pink (...)
...walls of ice and two pale, limpid suns (...)
Once more he took a step into the dark.

(NOTE:- *Bus Stop* was reprinted in 2006 as half of a Hilltop Press ‘Ace double’ format chapbook, still in print as of 2008, with Dainis Bisenieks’ *The Long Trip*.)

As a footnote to poetry’s presence here, the John Light story, *Cafe Shut*, incorporates song lyrics devised by the author.

One LoC in issue #2 (Autumn 1988) took objection to the poetry. Matthew Dickens says:

“I’m not sure it’s such a good idea to mingle poetry and SF, not because I think poetry unsuited to the genre, but because I think prose - and not least the short story itself - as (sic) best vehicle for SF ideas.”

Undeterred, the editor included a number of poems, the vast majority genre, in a wide variety of forms. J.V.P. Stewart’s *We Are Everything* is a universe creation poem of some power:

We are the children of the outburst.

My own *The Orbital Presenter* is a long rhymed piece about mutual deception - a girl trapped in a satellite by space-induced body decay, above an Earth itself decayed without her knowing.

Terry Broome’s *Homo Autonomous* analogises the scrambled communication of people and of electronic systems in a declaration addressed to:

computer turn-on person,
You(?)

Two very interesting pieces are at the prose/poem frontier. The writer using the pen-name ‘Alfa’ has his *Half A Pound Of Happiness* printed here in prose format. Yet it was to appear three years later in the ‘mainstream’ poetry magazine, *HYBRID* (issue #3/4) laid out as,

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and treated as, a poem, but wordwise identical.

And Nik Morton's long narrative *One Last Glance*, presented in 'sequential art' fashion, ie words linked with stylised comics-like illos (see also **STUDIO 54** entry), tells a rather clichéd story – a starship recce thinks it has come on a primitive society, which is actually our returned-to-savagery future – but uses some effective moody language, eg:

Melancholy eyes darted
across dissipating meandering
chartreuse mist.

Of this piece, Jane Gillespie's LoC in the third issue, Winter 1988, said:

“the ‘comiced’ format very effective means of conveying the story as thought/event/image”

and Ian R. Leyden commented:

“Interesting that the same issue that contained Matthew Dickens' suggestion that SF and poetry don't mix should also carry Nik Morton's ONE LAST CHANCE, a story told very effectively in poem form.”

The editor notes:

“The response to the poetry has mostly been in favour of keeping it in...One letter suggested that a story in our last issue would have read better as a poem - so which is what and where do the twain meet?”

He also agrees with Jane Gillespie that:

“poetry...shows another facet of SF”

Of a number of poems in the issue, Pat Khan brings one or two SFnal/symbolic Fnal images into her *Nightmares Of An Inner City Kind*, John F. Haines' *Meanwhile In Bunker 2* (in **WORKS #4** Haines complains that the editor had changed his original title, *Meanwhile, At Strategic HQ*, without his permission) portrays a post-nuclear future, and P. C. Eick's long rhyming *Judgement Day* is flavoured with Dickian religious heresy of an SFnal kind:

was his God the self-replicating kind?
Had He really made himself back then
....could He do it again?

Particularly unusual in its mingling of personal loss and scientific imagery is J. P. V. Stewart's *Tish*. As the poet's dead dog becomes one with the universe:

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The ancient sheepdog mesons
drift away across atomic fields
and fleeting nuclear flocks
disperse to find new pastures.

Dave Hughes had previewed *WORKS #4* (Summer 1989), in issue #3, as “the turn of poets new to *WORKS*”. Of those appearing, Alan Garside personifies in *Massacre*:

A bomb is a creature that lives high
...on (...)
a mountain (...)
I am the bomb that nature has set
Who are you?

Gary Legg provides three pieces, *Two Leggs*, *A Silent Orbit*, and the slightly longer (ten lines) imagistic *Magnesium*, a mood piece re night with semi-science imagery, eg:

negative-fossil clouds

wisp

forward into the pre-history
of tomorrow.

D. F. (Des) Lewis provides *Dreamlet IX*, of which the editor says:

“The first one (of his poems) to appear in an SF small press mag.”

Sadly, it is far less imaginative than even the least so of his widely-published *SURREY MYTHOS* fiction.

Peter Marshall describes urban seediness in *The Canal*, and in *Speed Freak* (a poem clumsily split by a Samhain advert) anatomises a robot-like jukebox player, while Wrathall Wildman, with *The Grand Design*, anathematises or at least chides and warns the architects of future cities and societies:

...cloud castles,
offered with vacant possession for omnipotent inhabitants.

Most realised poem of the issue, though strictly a science poem rather than SFnal, is Michael Newman’s *Winter Night*, glittering with Sense of Wonder:

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...a nightshift lorry
Rumbles like some distant avalanche

Stars crackle like frost burning a car windscreen.

The immense mystery of
the stellar spiral
Has gripped the scientist underneath my skin,
Has raised the artist in my blood.

In the LoCs, both D. F. Lewis and Kevin Lyons comment on the question of ‘mood piece’ fiction in terms that make it relevant here. Lewis:

“Mood pieces? The dividing line between prose and poetry...the prose poem with the use of words as an end in itself.”

and Lyons:

“expressionist films and...poetry...I think is a valid comparison. These stories work on purely emotional levels, relying on powerful prose and haunting imagery instead of the more ‘traditional’ elements like plots and character.”

eXTRO

A very slight cheat here (as the title was, in fact, ***EXTRO***) to fill the letter X! Confusingly, this title had two separate runs (or two magazines in close succession used the same title.) The first, black and white, edited by Robert Allen from Manchester, produced at least seven issues at the very end of the ‘70s/start of the ‘80s. Whether it used any poetry is unknown to me, but the second, a two-colour slick publication based in Belfast, possibly produced with Northern Ireland Arts Council funding, edited (or co-edited) by Paul Campbell, included John F. Haines’ poem *Exploration*, an ‘approximate rhyme’ piece with ice world setting, in its V.1 #1 (Feb/Mar ‘82). There were two further issues, but I have no evidence they included poetry. (supplied by AVC, JFH, DL)

YELLOW DWARF

This was edited by Andrew S. Briggs from Preston (he had formerly been involved with ***TRIPLE ECHO*** (see entry), whose poetry content was due to his efforts) produced its first issue in March 1983, mastheaded:

“FICTION/ART/POETRY/REVIEWS”

A LoC in issue #2 provides a convenient summary of ***YELLOW DWARF #1***’s poetry content:

Flights From The Iron Moon

“I liked the doomy poem *Floating* by yourself [ie Briggs] and *Aliens* by John Francis Haines, a gently ironic treatment of a classic SF idea”
(Cedric Woodward)

Issue #2 itself had no poetry, but poetry returned in issue #3, and got a cover boost - a tiny spaceman held aloft a banner bearing the word ‘Poetry’ as part of the mass of ‘goodies’. *The Sands Of Time*, by the editor, the only poem included, is genre at least by implication:

Building a castle of utopia, high and wide
With gleaming turrets, bulging ramparts,
...Walking through the sands of time
I scuff my feet into the grains.

Cedric Woodward’s LoC in issue #3 commented on #2:

“I was disappointed by the absence of poetry, which I enjoy reading but cannot do. I thought it gave balance to YD and a touch of class.”

Issue #4, the last issue, featured, as well as two of my minisagas (including *The Greatest Of These*, arguably prose-poemnal) two John F. Haines poems, one the ironic *Fresh Paint* – three two-line stanzas:

Fresh paint....gilds
The engines....rusted into scrap.

His *Re-Entry* also has an ironic, and dramatic, twist, keyed to the discovery of a spaceman’s boot with charred foot inside:

Tonight we scanned the sky again in vain:
...no burning wrecks from space
To bring us precious gifts of steel and feet.

At various times during the life of *YELLOW DWARF*, the editor appealed for an article on SF poetry, but none ever appeared.

ZETETIC – see **JOY HIBBERT**