



## Imaginarium 2012: The Best Canadian Speculative Writing

*Sandra Kasturi (Editor) , Halli Villegas (Editor) , Kelley Armstrong , David Nickle , Peter Watts , Rio Youers , Steven Erikson (Introduction) , Madeline Ashby , more... Cory Doctorow , Silvia Moreno-Garcia , Geoff Ryman , Gemma Files , Corey Lewis (Cover Artist) , Samantha Beiko (Interior Layout) , Ian Rogers , Camille Alexa , Rhonda Parrish , Amal El-Mohtar , Claire Humphrey , Robert Runte , Peter Chiyaowski , Susan Ioannu , Neile Graham , Rebecca M. Senese , Ada Hoffmann , George Swede , Carolyn Clink , Kathryn Kuitenbrouwer , Geoffrey W. Cole , Timothy Reynolds , Kelly Rose Pflug-Back , Lisa L. Hannett , David Livingstone Clink , Kristin Janz , Anna Mioduchowska , A.C. Wise , Derek Kiinsken , Helen Marshall ...less*

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At their best, these stories disrupt habits, overcome barriers of cultural perception to make the familiar strange through the use of speculative elements such as magic and technology. They provide glimpses of alternate realities and possible futures and pasts that provoke an ethical, social, political, environmental and biological inquiry into what it means to be human. Featuring stories by Camille Alexa, Kelley Armstrong, Madeline Ashby, Peter Chiykowski, Carolyn Clink, David Livingstone Clink, Geoffrey W. Cole, Cory Doctorow, Amal El-Mohtar, Steven Erikson, Gemma Files, Neile Graham, Lisa L. Hannett, Ada Hoffman, Claire Humphrey, Susan Ioannu, Kristin Janz, Kathryn Kuitenbrouwer, Derek Künsken, Helen Marshall, Anna Mioduchowska, Silvia Moreno-Garcia, David Nickle, Rhonda Parrish, Kelly Rose Pflug-Back, Timothy Reynolds, Ian Rogers, Robert Runté, Geoff Ryman, Rebecca M. Senese, George Swede, Peter Watts, A.C. Wise, and Rio Youers.

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## From Reader Review Imaginarium 2012: The Best Canadian Speculative Writing for online ebook

### **Matt Moore says**

Full Disclosure: I know a lot of the writers and the editors.

With that out of the way, this anthology is a mix of poems and poetry, offering up horror, SF, fantasy, bizarro, new weird, what have you. While some of the stories knocked my socks off, others didn't do it for me.

But such is an anthology. But, unlike other anthos were I disliked stories, every one of these tales will make you think, open your eyes to new possibilities, and leave you glad you read it.

A great anthology.

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### **Tara says**

This was great. Definitely going to look up several of the authors.

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### **Jill says**

Of the 37 short stories and poems in this collection, I only liked 9 (so 25%). Here are a few of the stand outs:

"Clockwork Fagin" by Cory Doctorow -- an interesting story of crippled orphans who kill their keeper and construct a clockwork replacement.

"The Kiss of the Blood-Red Pomegranate" by Kristin Janz -- a pseudo-retelling of the classic Persephone myth.

"To Live and Die in Gibbontown" by Derek Kunsken -- a tale of assassinations and euthanasia...and monkeys.

Even though I only liked a quarter of the stories in the collection, I would still recommend this book to anyone looking for science fiction/fantasy short stories. The stories I did like were excellent and I'll keep the book to give them a re-read in the future.

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### **Alan says**

I cut my teeth on the sf anthologies that appeared as if by magic on the shelves of my local branch library and biweekly bookmobile—those thick compendia of wonder, their spines usually broad enough to display all of their red and yellow rocket-ship-and-atom label. Great ones like Robert Silverberg's The Science Fiction Hall of Fame, Volume 1 and its successors, compiling the Nebula and Hugo Award winners;

Anthony Boucher's two-volume *A Treasury of Great Science Fiction* (with those striking dust jackets, on which another view of that classic finned rocket ship appears in red against contrasting black and white); Damon Knight's monumental *A Science Fiction Argosy*; the regular Judith Merrill compilations, Terry Carr annuals and *Galaxy Readers*... and too many others to remember or mention. I was a voracious reader in those days, usually checking out as many books as I was allowed, when not scouring the impoverished sf section of our local bookstore for something I'd overlooked, and when counting books, the variegated menu of even an obscure anthology often seemed like more of a bargain to me than the single-mindedness of a novel.

Later, the Gardner Dozois *Year's Best* series has of course provided much the same sense of value. But apart from those (and a *few* others), the sf anthology seems in recent years to've run out of steam... to have devolved into a splintering of too-precious themes and weary, rote retrospectives.

That's why it was so heartening for me to see how Sandra Kasturi and Halli Villegas put together *Imaginarium 2012*, which collects so many *recent* stories and poems (none have copyrights older than 2011), all of which deliver in one form or another a satisfying shock of the new. Not that the contents are very similar otherwise... the hook for this anthology is that it's "the best Canadian speculative writing," but Canada's a pretty big country, and the diversity of the horror, science fiction and fantasy on display here is continental in breadth.

Most of the stories that really stood out for me came towards the end of the book—the momentum definitely built—but the lead story set the bar, and the tone, for the rest of the book: "Looker," by David Nickle, a punchy tale that could have come from Richard Matheson's wine-dark pen. Others... although I'm not as enamored of his work as some, Cory Doctorow has a good steampunk entry here, "Clockwork Fagin." Lisa Hannett's rural fairy tale "Fur and Feathers"; "The Education of Junior Number 12" by Madeline Ashby; Silvia Moreno-Garcia's fresh twist on vampires in "A Puddle of Blood"; and the mashup of Greek myths in "The Kiss of the Blood-Red Pomegranate" by Kristin Janz were all impressive tales by authors whose names were new to me. And the book concludes with another strong story, "Malak," by Peter Watts, which reminded me of a more serious version of one of Keith Laumer's "Bolo" stories.

The short stories here were also intermingled with poetry, which—at least for me—afforded a nice rhythm and break between the stories. I don't have a lot to say about the verse in this volume, but I certainly didn't mind its inclusion; I'd actually like to see more sf anthologies willing to include poems amid their pages.

It says here (on the back cover) that *Imaginarium 2012* is but the first in a yearly series... now that's something to look forward to.

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### **Timothy Reynolds says**

A great collection and hopefully the beginning of an annual tradition in Canadian speculative fiction.

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### **Tyrannosaurus regina says**

I did like this anthology, I genuinely did, but there was nothing that stood out for me. And usually the very fact that something is Canadian gives it a leg up for me. Of course, this also means there was nothing that stood out for me in the bad way either, which was refreshing because usually there are at least a couple of stories that I actively dislike.

## **Janet says**

This was crazy good! I love short stories, and this collection of speculative fiction has to be one of the best collections I've ever read. Funny, creepy, scary, and thrilling - something here for everyone.

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