

## TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL READERS' AWARDS' RESULTS

As anyone who regularly reads these columns knows, I love perusing the comments that accompany our annual Readers' Award ballots. It's refreshing to learn what an individual reader's response was to a story published in *Asimov's*. Not every reader has the same reaction, or even likes the same story. While one person called Suzanne Palmer's "Hotel" a "turkey," Jill Baringer said that the fourth place novelette "was my favorite story of the year!" The unimpressed reader of "Hotel" cast his first-place story for the winning novelette, "Over There," in one of our tightest races ever. This difference of opinion constantly reminds me that I am choosing stories for an audience with a wide array of tastes. Yet, most readers seem to welcome and celebrate the variety of material found in our pages.

This year's award for best novella handily went to Kristine Kathryn Rusch for "The Application of Hope." Kris had a very strong showing in novelette, as well, where she tied for second place one point behind our winner and also took fifth place. Voting in the latter category seemed to be an excruciating experience for many of our readers, owing to a wealth of terrific choices. Alan K. Lipton wrote "this year, without a doubt, my hardest choices were among the novelettes. Thirteen ended up on my short list. Narrowing it down to three ranked favorites was exquisite torture. Thank you!" Jeffrey David Powell wrote, "It's a very cruel thing too have put Will McIntosh's 'Over There' in the January issue because I had to wait so long to vote for it. The novelette had several serious contenders to fend off, however, none of them could quite match its power and depth as the story used its inventive and unique narrative structure to its fullest."

Many of the novelettes that didn't land in the top five positions still evoked strong reader reactions. Thomas R. Jones wrote, "While Kristine Kathryn Rusch is by far my favorite *Asimov's* author, Gwendolyn Clare's 'Stone to Stone, Blood to Blood' may be the best story I've read since my subscription began in 2004." Rogelio Gutierrez said, "The issues this year were moving. Many of the works in them kept me reflecting long after I read them. I felt like a little boy all over again when I read the novelette, 'No Others Are Genuine,' by Gregory Frost."

Readers seemed to respond well to technically challenging layouts. In addition to "Over There" taking best novelette, Geoffrey A. Landis's "Rivers" won for best poem. "Rivers" managed to convey its meaning as much by the image created via the text layout as by its words. Although it made use of the traditional format, our second place poem came in for its share of compliments. Jarod K. Anderson said he felt "particularly strongly" about it—"That poem always makes me a little misty eyed"—and Rogelio added, "It was a reality check that shed some light on seeing things for what they really are. Wow!"

While readers primarily commented on our poignant tales, some of the kindest words came from Dick Harding. "I am a Kindle reader and I am so grateful for your magazine. There were so many wonderful stories it was very difficult to pick out the best. My favorite story of the year, though, was 'The Fitter.' Written so delightfully tongue-in-cheek with the weird alien being the normal one and the humans coming off as a bit bizarre—and yet there is no negative judgment of anyone. A story celebrating how wonderful we all are in our own way. I don't think anyone could read this story without laughing."



**L. to R.: Seth Fishman (for Will McIntosh), Sheila Williams, and Naomi Kritzer**

Photo by *Locus*/Liza Groen Trombi

The awards were distributed in San Jose, California, at a breakfast celebration during the 2013 Nebula Awards weekend. We were fortunate that Naomi Kritzer, whose time travel tale about a young college student and the fall of “The Wall” tied for best short story with David Erik Nelson’s time travel tale about why “The New Guys Always Work Overtime,” could join us. Naomi was having a terrific weekend. A novel, *The Golem and the Jinni*, by her college friend, Helene Wecker, was a finalist for the Nebula award, which gave the two authors a chance to stage a mini reunion.

Although none of our other winners were able to attend, Will McIntosh asked his agent, Seth Fishman, to accept his award in his place. Seth read Will’s speech, which seemed to channel many of our readers’ thoughts: “Thank you Sheila, for being willing to publish a story that was a formatting nightmare [*I’ll say!*], and thanks to *Asimov’s* readers for sticking with a story that didn’t provide much guidance on how to go about reading it. It’s an honor to receive this award, especially given all the powerful and well-received novelettes that appeared in the magazine in 2013.” As always, our breakfast was combined with *Analog’s* AnLab Award celebration. Other attendees included Connie Willis and her daughter Cordelia, Trevor Quachri, Stanley and Joyce Schmidt, Amy Thompson, and Rachel Holmen. We are indebted to Liza Groen Trombi of *Locus*, who dragged herself from her sickbed to report on our ceremony and take photographs.

Two of our second place finalists, Henry Lien and Vylar Kaftan, were also on the Nebula ballot. I was pleased to dine with both of them at the Nebula banquet later that day. Although he’d already lost the award for best novelette, the irrepressible Henry clapped and cheered along with me when Vylar won a Nebula for her novella, “The Weight of the Sunrise.”

Back in New York City, credit this year for the time consuming job of tabulating our Readers’ Award data goes to editorial administrative assistant, Deanna McLafferty. Deanna is currently pulling the 2014 Index together in preparation for next year’s award. The ballot will appear online and in our January issue. Don’t forget to vote! We look forward to hearing *your* thoughts and perusing *your* ballot next year.

# READERS' AWARD WINNERS

## BEST NOVELLA

1. **THE APPLICATION OF HOPE;**  
**KRISTINE KATHRYN RUSCH**
2. The Weight of the Sunrise; Vylar Kaftan
3. Precious Mental; Robert Reed
4. The Other Gun; Neal Asher
5. Feral Moon; Alexander Jablovkov

## BEST NOVELETTE

1. **OVER THERE;**  
**WILL MCINTOSH**
2. Encounter on Starbase Kappa; Kristine Kathryn Rusch (tie)
2. Pearl Rehabilitative Colony for Ungrateful Daughters; Henry Lien (tie)
3. Hotel; Suzanne Palmer
4. Skylight; Kristine Kathryn Rusch

## BEST SHORT STORY

1. **THE NEW GUYS ALWAYS WORK OVERTIME;**  
**DAVID ERIK NELSON (Tie)**
1. **THE WALL;**  
**NAOMI KRITZER (Tie)**
2. The Family Rocket; James Van Pelt
3. The Oracle; Ken Liu
5. The Golden Age of Story; Robert Reed

## BEST POEM

1. **RIVERS;**  
**GEOFFREY A. LANDIS**
2. Ponies and Rocketships; Leslie Anderson
3. Marie Antionette, 2125; Bruce Boston
4. Three Charms for Recovering Lost Data; Peter Chiykowski
5. Indefensible Disclosures; William John Watkins

## BEST COVER

1. **SEPTEMBER;**  
**KINUKO CRAFT**
2. December; Alexandra Manukyan
3. October/November; Larissa Morais
4. January; Michael Whelan
5. August; Les Edwards

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**Editor's Note:** Dell Magazines invites you to take a peek into the publishing world. Join our four fiction titles at the **Brooklyn Book Festival**, NYC's largest free literary event, for author signings including **James Patrick Kelly** and **Jay Werkheiser**, giveaways, subscription deals, writers' guidelines, and more.