

THIRTY-SIXTH ANNUAL READERS' AWARDS' RESULTS

It was gratifying to peruse the comments on the 2021 Readers' Award ballots. I'm only sad that I can't fit them all into this editorial. Phillip Crawford of Indian Land, SC, told us, "I loved all of the novellas, novelettes, short stories, and poems in *Asimov's* this year. It was really a great year for short stories; The graphics on the covers were spectacular! Thank you *Asimov's* for being the go-to place for great science fiction." Oleksandr Zholud writing from Kyiv, Ukraine, took the time to let us know that he found "a lot of great choices in novelettes and shorts! If only I had more nominations for there are like six to eight very good pieces in each category!" Philip and Jill Baringer of Lawrence, KS, said, "Thanks for another great year of science fiction. Our favorite story of 2021 was Suzanne Palmer's 'Table Etiquette for Diplomatic Personnel, in Seventeen Scenes.' It was a tasty meal! As usual it was hard to narrow the selections down. to just three. We had to leave off great stories by favorite authors like Ray Nayler, James Gunn, Michael Swanwick, Alex Irvine, Leah Cypress, Jack McDevitt, and R. Garcia y Robertson."

More compliments came from Austin Chapman of Columbia, SC, who wrote, "*Asimov's* delivers the goods without fail! I had a great time looking back over the stories that impressed me this past year. While it was sad to learn of James Gunn's passing, it is also encouraging to see such powerful talent in the current generation of writers." Some of his favorites were Ray Nayler, Leah Cypress, and Gregory Norman Bossert. Jeffrey David Powell of Youngstown, OH, said, "Thank you Sheila Williams and staff for another great year of *Asimov's*. Sometimes a story really bites into the reader and doesn't let go; 'Filaments' by Mercurio D. Rivera did that to me and was my overall favorite story this year. I like when new authors such as Taimur Ahmad make it onto my ballot. 'Tweak' was a thought-provoking story and the type of tale that will always keep SF an important literary genre. See you next year." "Imaginative, thrilling, and entertaining reading. Another wonderful year!" wrote Marie Grimes from Stockton Springs, ME.

Dick Harding of Schenectady, NY, let us know that, "as always, an agonizing time trying to pick the best from so many exceptional stories. I love that so many often looked at sometimes-raucous current events through a wonderful Sci-Fi lens—lending new insights, thoughts, and even humor. Thanks for keeping my mind open and questioning." Alan K. Lipton of Berkeley, CA, said, "So many hard choices, as usual. I began this year's selection by looking at the titles on my running list to see which ones left a memorable impression. Next, I sorted by happy or satisfying endings. And let's not forget fascinating ideas (it's SF, after all) and quality of storytelling. Even then, my picks felt a bit arbitrary. With so much outstanding material, one must compromise to choose just three from each category. You should be proud that you always make it such a challenge." Writing from Bogota, Colombia, Guillermo A. Plazas said, "Congratulations on another year publishing excellent content. It was very difficult to select my favorites, specially in the short story category. I devised a system to grade the stories according to five criteria. Nevertheless, I had problems selecting the "finalists" because I assigned five points to so many stories!" John Haworth of Reseda, CA, appreciated "Looking Backward," my January/February 2022 editorial. "This allowed me to refresh my memory for the voting, since I pass my copies on to my sister when I finish reading them." Kay Slama of Spicer, MN, said, "thanks for another good year! You should provide a link to your website where we can rate all the entries as soon as we've read an issue. This would provide more better remembering for all of us." Fortunately, she keeps her own data base.

Andrea M. Pawley of Washington, DC, said, "I've been especially enjoying Robert Silverberg's column this year, and I found Kij Johnson's piece about her time with James Gunn particularly touching. What a generous person Gunn was and an amazing writer." Marianne Harris wrote from London, England, that there were "many enjoyable reads this year—another difficult year! Elizabeth Bear and Ted Kosmatka always delight. Clever, and thought provoking—just the best!" William Powell from Houston, Texas, wrote, "A great year for reading, especially about troubled toasters. Thanks to all." Jeffrey Lee Powell of Youngstown, Ohio, said, "Thank you for once again delivering *Asimov's* to my door. An entire year's worth, and on time to boot. I wanted to think of something witty for my comments this year. But after a second year of Covid, my witty no longer functions. Much like my sense of taste. Here's to hoping for a better year ahead."

Margaret Leanne Clark of Bello, Colombia, appreciated our curating. Ken Papai of Walpole, MA, "loved all three of Ray Nayler's stories; however, short story is the one category with the stiffest competition. The Facebook fan page group is so full of good information, story reviews, complaints, and praises, and questions. Here's to a wonderful 2022 (more hard SF)!" Olav Rokne of Edmonton, Canada, also "thought Ray Naylor had a very good year. 'Rocket For Demitrios' was a blast." James Van Pelt of Grand junction, CO, said, "What a good year! I loved the richness of talent in the novella category in particular, but I also was pleased to see how often Jane Yolen and Bruce Boston showed up in poetry." And last, but not least, Piet Nel of Cape Town, South Africa, wrote to tell us, "I bought my first issue of *Asimov's* from a newsstand in 1982. I'm an electronic reader now, but in 2022 I'll have been a fan and reader for forty years. May *Asimov's* continue to bring me the best science fiction—in 2022 and beyond."

READERS' AWARD WINNERS

BEST NOVELLA

1. **A BLESSING OF UNICORNS;**
ELIZABETH BEAR
2. A Rocket for Dimitrios; Ray Nayler
3. Glitch; Alex Irvine
4. Light Up the Clouds; Greg Egan
5. The Realms of Water; Robert Reed

BEST NOVELETTE

1. **TABLE ETIQUETTE FOR DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL,**
IN SEVENTEEN SCENES;
SUZANNE PALMER
2. Año Nuevo; Ray Nayler
3. Billie the Kid; Rick Wilber
4. Philly Killed His Car; Will McIntosh
5. The Hazmat Sisters; L.X. Beckett

BEST SHORT STORY

1. **MUALLIM;**
RAY NAYLER
2. My Heart Is at Capacity; T.J. Berry
3. Alien Ball; Kristine Kathryn Rusch
4. Flowers Like Needles; Derek Künsken
5. (tie) Bread and Circuits; Misha Lenau
5. (tie) Sentient Being Blues; Christopher Mark Rose

BEST POEM

1. **MARS ROVER, CURIOSITY;**
JANE YOLEN
2. When I'm Thirty I Receive a Box Full
of Your Steel Bones; Avra Margariti
3. In the Library Annex; Bruce Boston
4. Your Memories Are Sponsored
by a Fossil Fuel Company; Matt Thompson
5. Chalk and Carbon; Marissa Lingen

BEST COVER

1. **JANUARY/FEBRUARY;**
DONATO GIANCOLA
2. September/October; Eldar Zakirov
3. November/December; Maurizio Manziari