

Editorial

TRANSITIONS

Sheila Williams

As the Greek philosopher Heraclitus might have maintained, the process of creating a magazine is one of change and becoming. We are fortunate to have long relationships with authors, but we are equally as fortunate to welcome new writers into our pages who bring fresh ideas and worldviews to their stories. We deeply appreciate the exceptional prose of our long-time authors, but these writers sometimes disappear as they work on novels, follow dictates of other career tracks, raise families, or are lost to mortality. We have the same appreciation for those who work hard to create the physical magazine. *Asimov's* has benefited from the creative work of gifted long-time staff members, but we are thrilled to welcome new people into our fold. In this editorial, I want to celebrate the life of an SF Grand Master as well as introduce a new book reviewer and an art director to our readers.

Carly Iwanicki joined our parent company, Penny Publications, in 2020. She now oversees the cover design of all Dell puzzle and fiction titles. After graduating Summa Cum Laude from Western Connecticut State University in 2017, Carly worked in interior design and print production before settling down and moving to Stratford, Connecticut, where she now resides. When she's not hiking or drawing, you can most likely find Carly at home watching a movie and snuggling with her Aussie pup, Sprinkles.

In addition to our cover design, as our new art director, Carly is in charge of the interior art that accompanies our poetry. She tells us, "I really enjoyed the Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings series as a child. The books along with their movie adaptations sparked my inspiration as a kid to want to create and design. I'm also very interested in space exploration and travel."



Carly Iwanicki
Photo credit: Carly Iwanicki



Sheree Renée Thomas

Photo credit: Jackie Banyon

Many readers may not need an introduction to our new book reviewer, Sheree Renée Thomas. Sheree is an award-winning editor and an exceptional author. I loved her new collection, *Nine Bar Blues: Stories from an Ancient Future*, which came out from Third Man Books in May 2020, and will be reviewed by Peter Heck in our next issue. She is editor of the two-time World Fantasy Award honored *Dark Matter* anthologies. Widely anthologized herself, Sheree's work has appeared in Marvel's *The Black Panther: Tales of Wakanda* (February 2, 2021), *The Big Book of Modern Fantasy*, and the *New York Times*. She's also an accomplished poet. In 2020 she received her third Pushcart Prize nomination for her poetry. Sheree is the Associate Editor of *Obsidian: Literature & Arts in the African Diaspora*, founded in 1975, and she is the editor of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, founded in 1949.

A book reviewer in her early career, including reviewing Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Talents* for the *Washington Post*, Sheree is thrilled to return to her book review roots and help signal boost great books for *Asimov's*. A former *New Yorker*, Sheree now lives in her hometown, Memphis, Tennessee, near a mighty river and a pyramid. You can visit her at <https://www.shereereneethomas.com>.

One delightful aspect of my job is working with talented people like Sheree and *Asimov's* other columnists. In the future, I hope I get to see stories from her, too.

It's a great honor to have the opportunity to work with so many of our field's remarkable writers. Yet, I can't deny that there is a special place in my heart for authors like Samuel Delany and Theodore Sturgeon who captured my teenage imagination and helped engender my early love of the field. Alas, I never had the chance to work with either of these giants, but I was incredibly lucky to become the editor of another of my teen idols: James E. Gunn. Jim was born on July 12, 1923, and he died

on December 23, 2020.

I was swept away by Jim's 1972 novel, *The Listeners*. For years it was my favorite SF novel, and I even shared it with my Unitarian minister. Although I didn't know it, I had already discovered Jim through *The Immortal*—which was adapted as a Movie of the Week in 1969 and became a TV series in 1970, and which my brother and I watched avidly. Last spring, I was pleased to see that other people remembered the show. I wrote to Jim to let him know that the weekly Slate News Quiz had mentioned that the series was “about a man whose blood was in demand because it contained all known antibodies, making him immune to all diseases.”

It was a joy to work with Jim on his tales from the Transcendental universe. Before I hit upon the idea of doubling up stories in some issues, I told Jim that it would take at least two years to get them all into print. His plucky response was: “I'll be ninety-five when [the series] gets published :-), but I'll be ninety-five anyway. I can't imagine a better way to spend my time or a better way to celebrate it and science fiction.” In response to the news that the first contract would be coming soon he wrote: “Great!, Sheila. Looking forward to a long-time relationship.”

Although he was having a lot of difficulty with his vision, Jim continued with his writing. On December 11, he sent in biographical information for this issue's Thought Experiment and his final “Stars” story. On December 14, I received his last submission. “Singular” will be appearing in our September/October 2021 issue.

Jim spent his career as an educator encouraging new writers. I look forward to carrying on that tradition in *Asimov's*.