Editorial

Sheila Williams

THIRTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL READERS' AWARDS' RESULTS

The comments that accompany the annual Readers' Award ballots are part of what makes editing *Asimov's* so rewarding. 2023's ballots didn't disappoint. Dick Harding of Schenectady, NY, told us, that "First I have to say that picking the best was like being in a fabulous pastry shop and trying to make up your mind . . . everything looked so good! I enjoyed the inclusion of authors from around the world who gave me a glimpse into different views and approaches to science fiction. I thought Mr. Ledbetter's story, 'The Short Path to Light,' was so much fun to read, combining intrigue, drama, religion, AI compassion, and a crime noir feel. Thank you for all the hard work you do." Ignacio Viglizzo of Buenos Aires, Argentina, said, "Another great year! Thanks Sheila and all the staff and authors! I voted for the most memorable stories, those that brought some image or idea that was hard to stop thinking about."

Ken Papai, of Walpole, MA, offered us "Congratulations on another fine year, ably helmed by Williams and Hockaday: *Asimov's* is rock solid reliable on its science fiction selections. Rusch's two-part short novel/long novella was absolutely superb. Picking the best short stories and novelette is difficult. I could pick five from each category as tied for the best. The best from *Asimov's* will rival or best any of the best from all of the other magazines." Holly Schofield of Galiano, BC, Canada, succinctly told us the magazine "Just keeps getting better!"

Several readers singled out their favorite works. Millie Grimer of Stockton Springs, ME, said, "Perhaps because I have always loved growing things, both at home and also in my work, I really connected with 'Falling Off the Face of the World' by Suzanne Palmer. The best story I have read in a long time." Kyle Rathbun of Ypsilanti, MI, told us his favorite short stories were "'Sparrows' for the Shakespearian and academic reference, 'The Lights that No One Else Can See' [because it was] a hopeful story, and 'The Rules of Unbinding,' which was a clever play on the three wishes scenario—one I've never seen before." Austin Chapman of Columbia, SC, let us know that, "*Asimov's* is the premiere source of short fiction for me, and 2022 has been no exception. How can I go wrong when my favorite author (Ray Nayler) is regularly published here and I almost end up pulling my hair out trying to decide which novelettes and short stories should get third place? Keep up the quality!"

Jeffrey D. Powell of Youngstown, OH, commented, "If there is one criticism I have of *Asimov's,* it's that it delights in the bleak." He added that, "The very best stories this year tended to be ones that could find hope in adversity—'Solidity,' 'Ugly,' 'Sparrows,' and 'The Tin Pilot.' Thanks for your hard work and the great stories." Cathleen Graf of Lakewood, OH, told us that while she didn't have access to all her issues, she had to vote for the poem she loved best—"I Recalled Old Earth Last Night in a Dream."

As usual, many readers complained about how difficult it was to choose from among their favorites. Alan Lipton of Berkeley, CA, wrote, "With *Asimov's,* picking the 'best' is always tough. A perfect example: selecting my favorite poems. I weigh them all by ideas explored, elegant or concise language, and feelings they leave behind. How to best determine which three hit all the marks? Meanwhile, fiction remains a balancing act between great storytelling (Rick Wilber's wild ride through alt.history) and deep humanity (Susan Palwick's poignant moment of grace in the teeth of disaster). So much excellent material." Jeffrey L. Powell of Youngstown, OH, said, "Thank you for another wonderful year of *Asimov's*. I usually have the most problems picking just three stories from the short story category. But this year, the novelettes posed just as big a challenge. Would vote for eight if that option existed."

All the way from Durbanville, Cape Town, South Africa, Piet Nel told us, "So many worthy stories will not get the recognition they deserve. Thanks to our intrepid editor and all the wonderful creators for another year of unflagging excellence—but oh, why must the Readers' Award ballot be so hard? Never mind . . . more, please!"

Michael Edwardes of Brampton, Ont, Canada, said, "Very hard to chose in most categories. Novelettes had the strongest stories this year, and I favored at least six of those equally, then I used pseudo-random number generation. Same with three novellas." Philip and Jill Baringer of Lawrence, KS, wrote to say, "Normally, our overall favorite stories for the year are at the longer lengths of novella or novelette. This year the short story category was incredibly strong. Our short list had fourteen stories and we struggled to get it down to three. So many great concepts that were well executed!" Phillip Crawford of Rock Hill, SC, told us, "I had quite a difficult time deciding on the best three novelettes and short stories—so many excellent works to choose from. This was another outstanding year for *Asimov's*. I would love to see some Hugo winners from the magazine this year."

Mark Pitman of Francestown, NH, explained that "This year I swore I'd do a better job of tracking the *Asimov's* stories. So I did. I created a database and rated each story in an issue as I finished reading them. It made my end of the year voting much more simple than thumbing through each issue. The Kristine Kathryn Rusch serializations were among my favorites this year. I love her storytelling."

John Haworth of Reseda, California, and Doug Lee of Halifax, NS, Canada, both wrote to thank us for another great year. In addition to enjoying all the fiction, James Van Pelt of Junction, Colorado, offered special praise to Dominic Harman for his January/February cover art. We appreciated all your comments and look forward to your opinions about our 2023 issues!

READERS' AWARD WINNERS

BEST NOVELLA/NOVEL

1. ***THE COURT MARTIAL OF THE* RENEGAT *RENEGADES*; KRISTINE KATHRYN RUSCH**
2. Goldie; Sean Monaghan
3. Snowflake; Nick Wolven
4. Blimpies; Rick Wilber
5. The Goose; Rick Wilber

BEST NOVELETTE

1. **FALLING OFF THE EDGE OF THE WORLD; SUZANNE PALMER**
2. Rocket Girls; Kristine Kathryn Rusch
3. Things to Do in Deimos When You're Dead; Alastair Reynolds
4. Grandmother Troll; Eleanor Arnason
5. Dollbot Cicily; Will McIntosh
5. Solidity; Greg Egan

BEST SHORT STORY

1. (tie) **DESTINY DELAYED; OGHENECHOVWE DONALD EKPEKI**
1. (tie) **SPARROWS; SUSAN PALWICK**
2. The Rules of Unbinding; Geoffrey A. Landis
3. Forty-Eight Minutes at the Trainview Café; M. Bennardo
3. The Empty; Ray Nayler

BEST POEM

1. **THE THREE LAWS OF POETICS; STEWART C. BAKER**
2. The Curious Machine; Jane Yolen
3. Planting Another Brazil; Jane Yolen
4. I Recalled Old Earth Last Night in a Dream; R.K. Rugg
5. Curse of the Clock; Joe Haldeman

BEST COVER

1. (tie) **JANUARY/FEBRUARY; DOMINIC HARMAN**
1. (tie) **NOVEMBER/DECEMBER; MAURIZIO MANZIERI**
2. July/August; Eldar Zakirov