

FOCUS

THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION'S MAGAZINE FOR WRITERS

**EMPLACED
CLICHÉD
DETAILED
JUDGED
UTOPIAN
POETIC
RECOMMENDED
RE/SOURCED
ORBITED
ENDED
AND MORE!**

Summer 2017 No. 67

POEMS FROM THE STARS

BSFA Poetry Submissions edited by Charles Christian

Radioactive Dog

The spacecraft wandering aimlessly
with life support as their friend.
Food remains a minimum.
Only sex and drink
keeps them from going mad.
They wonder which of those planets
is their salvation?

planet of liars --
the sign says you
are welcome here

— Frances W. Alexander

the end
of our spaceship
romance –
too many days
stuck on the dark side
of the moon

— Susan Burch

he waits in spaceport bar
for blind date that never arrives
online dating site
a cover for collections
his spaceship now repossessed

— Herb Kauderer

Truth is the Ultimate Fiction

a red tower in a lost city beneath smudged moons,
an endless drizzle of sticky sweet liquid
in dark air echoing ghost curses and prayers,
washed by the trickling splash of juice,
cells are dust-filled rooms rotten with corruption
repeating their endless transparency, as
wounded, in disrupting pain he slouches,
young flames to come, savages behind,
layers of civilization slough away in shed skins,
in half-dreams he listens to hear her voice,
spirits of those lost in the mirror-smooth walls
of empty halls terracing down to its core,
suns drift in captive motes of energy
drawing spiral cascades across night,
patterns scrawling in hieroglyphs
brown and black across his eyes,
galleries of hallucinogenic mists
in partly fermenting currents
where tides surge oceanic warrens,
membranes quiver cocooned in opacity,
their motion as palpable as a heart
where white flesh lies sleeping in darkness,
perfect, sweet, waiting...
a deep cascade of vines
from an orbit of alien seeds,
as deep inside his body
the larvae stir
sensing autumn's
coming spill

— Andrew Darlington

Preconscious

Silicon heartbeats –
dim consciousness drifting in
liquid crystal dreams.
Planet Nine
the annoying aunt
who visits
every now and now
disrupting everything

— Deborah L. Davitt

Ten Thousand Leagues

Lights flicker to dark
Blip of radar receding
Un-plumbed depths await

Spring

Long aeons waiting
The slow thaw of a new sun
A crack in the ice

— Amy Butt

The Galilean Moons

IO

Pizza eruption
Set on full magnetosphere
Cooked. Melts inside out

CALLISTO

Colder than Christmas
Glass ball bauble crater-pocked
Joves golfball hard hail

EUROPA

Below whipped spindrift
Cauldron of simmering ocean
Brewing unknown cells?

GANYMEDE

Big kid on the block
Shifting snowfield to mountain
And feeling groovy



— John Calvert

They Left

Their machines
carefully abandoned

in ordered rows
as if they meant

to come back
for them.

— Lauren McBride

Metal Astronomer

Orion rising
robot's lens
pressed to the eye of a tele-
scope

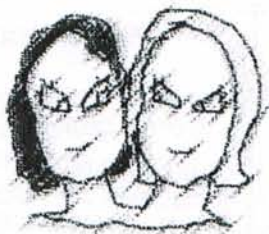
— Kendall Evans



Charles Christian can
be found at
www.UrbanFantasist.com
and on Twitter at
[@ChristianUncut](https://twitter.com/ChristianUncut)

alien daughter
extremely intelligent
great heads on her shoulders

—Guy Belleranti



Mostly Nameless Colours

Colours I'd like to see in next year's car catalogue:

Cinnamon latte, baked pumpkin, varnished copper

Violet crumble, tomato soup, smurf

Azaleas in the snow

Mashed banana, mango ice cream, squashed lizard

Daddylonglegs, huntsman, redback shiny black

The monster under the bed

Big blue beetle, green bug, tree frog

Crescent moon glinting from an ancient katana beside
a crater lake

Pond scum

Grey nurse, great white, hammerhead

Seaweed, seawrack, seaserpent

Mermaid belly

Dragon bone, dragon tooth, dragon scale

Black hole

Supernova

Singularity

— Jenny Blackford

Machine Gun Latté

Poised and ready,
a tall, lean
National Guard
Soldier, dressed in
full camouflage regalia,
stands at attention
on the main concourse
of Penn Station in
New York City.

In his right hand
he clutches a latté, frothy and warm,
in a white
Starbucks cup.

His left hand
hovers above
a machine gun,
slung over his shoulder,
cold and commanding,
sleek and menacing.

His trigger finger twitches,
roused by a jolt of caffeine.
Fuel for the fight.

— Amy Grech



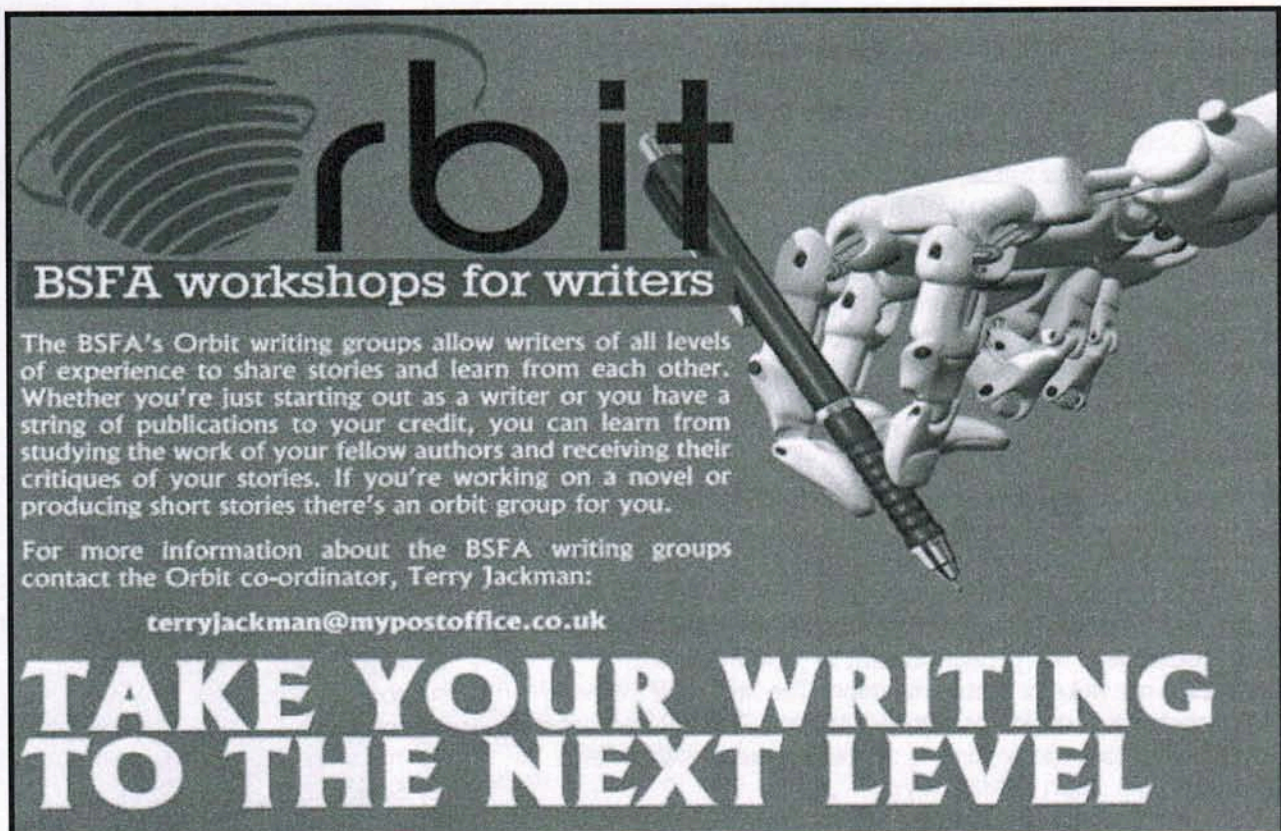
cyborg pets
gnaw on
steel bones
of robots

— Herb Kauderer

New Planet Landscape 25

We take their words literally,
 Loading them into the bin that a week's worth
 Of dehydrated water used to be stored in.
 They do not regard this as improper, and, in fact,
 Consider it so much an honor
 That they make more words. They describe
 Their culture and inter-relations, how
 The various species of this place
 Each makes a whole in the biosphere;
 How all depend upon each other,
 Except a few. They tell us their individual
 Stories and educate us on what it is
 To be one of them, a part of the process,
 A rise or fall in the great sounding wave
 Of their ruinous future. We nod and look
 Appropriately down, our attention narrowed
 To a point, our fingers ready
 To catch each word as it forms. We
 Are going to need another bin.

— Ken Poyner



orbit

BSFA workshops for writers

The BSFA's Orbit writing groups allow writers of all levels of experience to share stories and learn from each other. Whether you're just starting out as a writer or you have a string of publications to your credit, you can learn from studying the work of your fellow authors and receiving their critiques of your stories. If you're working on a novel or producing short stories there's an orbit group for you.

For more information about the BSFA writing groups contact the Orbit co-ordinator, Terry Jackman:

terryjackman@mypostoffice.co.uk

**TAKE YOUR WRITING
TO THE NEXT LEVEL**