

# The Seventh Week

clarion west writers workshop • spring 2019

## Jack Dann & Jonathan Strahan

Our 2019 Editors  
Interview Each Other

*Jack Dann and Jonathan Strahan will be teaching at Clarion West during Week Five, also known as Editors' Week. Here's a glimpse into their writing lives as they trade questions and words of wisdom.*

**Jack:** How the hell did you — do you — do [what you do]? Do you winnow through the huge yearly output of genre writers? Do you read everything or do you have a system that facilitates prioritization? Are you a fast reader? But whether you're a slow or a fast reader, does the sheer number of stories become a burden to read? Does editing such a fine, comprehensive anthology to an annual deadline take some of the pleasure out of reading? Frankly, I don't think I could do it. I once had the chance and, knowing my impatience and limitations, gave a polite "no."

Jonathan: Three questions, Jack! Three. There's a million in there. I'm a medium-slow reader, so doing all of the reading I need to do for Locus and my various anthology projects means that I have to be organized and methodical. I keep a batch of spreadsheets which I use to track what's coming out and what's out, and I annotate those to record what I've read, what I've not read, and what I need to find.



Jack  
Dann and  
Crimson  
Rosella

I also always keep in mind that I'm reading for the best of the year. I don't try to finish all or even most of what I read. I can usually tell if something is working in the first page or two and if it's likely to be a contender in half its length. If I get halfway through it, I mark it as a possible, and then depending on how I feel, I either finish it and write it up, or set it aside. That gets me through a lot. I then come back in the final part of the year and start re-reading. Anything that makes it into the *Best of the Year* has been read three times by me, on average. That first full or partial read, an audit read of likely inclusions, and then a final read through to be sure the stories are the ones I want and that they fit together.

Doing this for the past decade and a half has impacted what I read and how I feel about it. I read very few novels, which I feel terrible about. There's a whole part of the field I've just lost track of as a result, and one day I'm going to set that to right. I try to read a handful of novels in the first part of the year, but it's not easy. What keeps it pleasurable and more

than just endurable is finding new writers, unexpected viewpoints, and bringing them together. That never fails to keep it fresh and alive for me.

**Jack:** You have one of the best overview perspectives in the business. Do you see positive trends in the genre, or are we in an idle period? Is there a zeitgeist happening, a movement that could electrify the genre such as the New Wave or Cyberpunk did in their times? Is this a difficult time for what we used to refer to as mid-list writers, given that we seem to have moved toward an author-pays publishing paradigm, if indeed that is the case? Or have electronic and self-publication outlets opened the field to opportunity?

Jonathan: This is a better time for writers and readers, arguably, than it is for publishers and editors. The readership for the English language short science fiction, fantasy, and horror seems to have been fairly static for some years, while the number of outlets for fiction has grown ►►

► and grown. It's easy to find a lot of high quality short fiction, and it's pretty easy to find more than you can possibly hope to read without having to pay for it. That's great for the reader in the short term, but it means a significant portion of the short fiction market, especially the online fiction market, works on the assumption that the people working to bring fiction to readers don't need to get paid. I think that's ultimately unsustainable. We either need to expand the readership or see a reduction in markets. There are some readership outreach activities going on, but I think markets closing is probably inevitable.

On the page, I don't really see any new movements arising in science fiction, fantasy, or horror at the moment. We're all deeply weary of seeing a new -Punk being bandied about and there seems little appetite for it. The main thing happening is a broadening of perspectives in fiction. There's an enormous interest in seeing fiction from people of color, the LGBTQIA+ community, and from people who write in languages other than English. This is hugely important and very exciting. I suspect we'll see this continue for some time, and then slowly those points of view will be absorbed into the whole as a permanent part of the field. At that time, we'll see something else emerge. In terms of what we're writing about, though? It's all climate change. All the time. It feels like any SF story that isn't at least based in it, even if it doesn't address climate change directly, is missing the point. We're living through the Anthropocene and it's the driving heart of SF right now.

**Jonathan: I know you were an active part of the Milford Workshop group. What was that all about and how did you get involved with writers' workshops?**

Jack: Although I only attended one Milford Workshop, Milford formed a large part of my early career, what I think of as my Green Years. That was because the two workshops that I was involved in — the Guilford and Philford Workshops — were modeled on Milford. Damon Knight and Kate Wilhelm were central to science fiction in those days, and Gardner Dozois and I used to visit them at their labyrinth of a mansion in Milford, Pennsylvania. The Milford Workshops were held there, and it was a meeting place for writers involved in



Jonathan Strahan

that heady zeitgeist called the New Wave. These writers were sometimes referred to (in nasty fashion) as the Milford Mafia.

It was in the early seventies that Gardner took me to the newly formed Guilford Workshops, which we nicknamed the Guilford Gafia. We revived the workshop in Philadelphia and called it the Philford Writers' Workshop. What

Climate change  
is the driving  
heart of SF  
right now.

a time it was to be a writer, to be part of it all... to be workshoping, talking shop, partying, living the life! I went to Damon and Kate's Milford Workshop when it was held in Michigan at Gull Lake. I was broke, but had a car. We did a road trip fueled by good whisky, shoptalk, friendship, and youth, and Damon and Kate gave me a break on the room charge. And there I was, and I knew, even as I sat in that dorm room, that I'd remember these moments, these times until I couldn't remember anymore. Gardner fencing with Fritz Leiber. Harlan Ellison yelling at me. Eating beans heated on a radiator with Gardner and Joe Haldeman and Jack Williamson. We were writers, and to my mind there could be nothing better! And a hundred cynical years later...I still feel the same way.

I might add that during those New

Wave days, women were breaking in, breaking out, and doing some of the most brilliant, interesting, and influential work in the genre: Carol Emshwiller, Kate Wilhelm, Sonya Dorman, Ursula K. Le Guin, Pamela Sargent, Joanna Russ, Kit Reed, Vonda N. McIntyre, Pat Cadigan, and I could go on and on. These were writers I knew and respected... writers who heavily influenced my own work in those heady days of discovery and zeitgeist. If you want to get a feel for the genre-bending work of the time, take a look at Carol Emshwiller's collection *Joy in Our Cause* or Kate Wilhelm's frightening, Jungian novellas in *The Infinity Box*. (Oh, and look out for the forthcoming two-volume Masters of Science Fiction collection of Kate's work, from Centipede Press, which I had the honor of introducing.

**Jonathan: You've been a writer, an editor, a workshop organizer and attendee. If you were pushed to say, what's the one thing that you think a student should take away from an experience like Clarion West?**

Jack: Well, you're going to be stuffed into the most compressed time period you'll ever experience. You're going to make your bones, write a story a week, live with other writers, work with other writers, criticize other writers, be criticized by other writers, and you'll keep being surprised at what you can do (all this, it might be said, will be perceived through a haze of exhaustion). You'll meet tutors who speak directly to you, who absolutely understand what you're doing; you'll also meet tutors who seem to go about the craft with a completely different mindset from your own. Take what feels right for you and stay in the mix. You're building your karass. You're meeting writers and editors, mentors who you'll know through the green and gray days and years ahead. You'll become part of a special community... a family. You're one of the lucky ones. So now... keep in touch and write your asses off for the next fifty years! ♦

To see the full interview, please visit <https://www.clarionwest.org/jack-dann-and-jonathan-strahan-our-2019-editors-interview-each-other/>.



# In Memoriam

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Vonda N. McIntyre, 1985

Vonda N.  
McIntyre  
1948 – 2019

NISI SHAWL

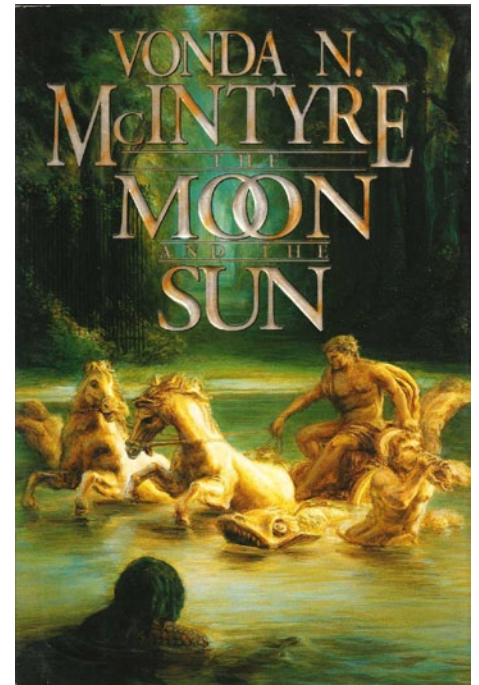
Award-winning Seattle science fiction author and behind-the-scenes powerhouse Vonda Neel McIntyre died in her Wallingford home on April 1, 2019. This was a little under eight weeks after her diagnosis of pancreatic cancer on February 7. Fifty-three days. That's not much time to prepare to die; McIntyre spent most of the rest of her life revising her final novel, *Curve of the World*, a book as gorgeously imaginative as her 1998 Nebula winner *The Moon and the Sun*, or her 1979 Nebula and Hugo winner *Dreamsnake*. She also managed to purchase dozens of boxes of Girl Scout cookies and donate them to the Family Works foodbank and complete a few other generous, Vonda-like tasks. The accompanying photo shows the result of one such task: a brightly painted neighborhood traffic circle.

Eight weeks is not much time to



prepare yourself for a friend, colleague, and mentor's death, either, but McIntyre's various communities rallied 'round. Clarion West alumna and longtime volunteer Jane Hawkins put a series of schedules together: first for escorts for McIntyre's shopping expeditions, then for the solitary running of her errands, and finally for a round-the-clock bedside watch. Each schedule sparked jealous competition for available slots. We graduates and staff of the Clarion West Writers Workshop, which McIntyre founded in 1971, shared news of her deteriorating health with each other online; members of Pacific Northwest science fiction fandom, which for decades held parties in McIntyre's home, offered each other necessary mutual sympathy.

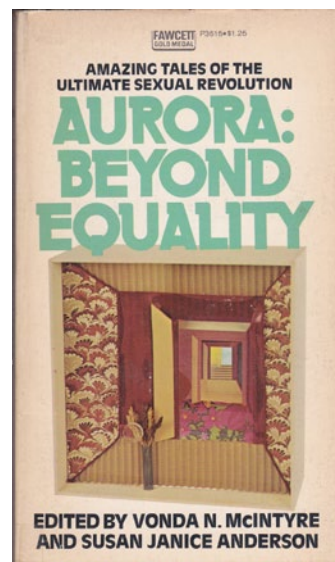
The sympathy was and



is necessary, because we've lost so much. McIntyre was at the forefront of the feminist science fiction movement of the 1970s. Like her friend and collaborator Ursula K. Le Guin (the two created several chapbooks and Christmas cards together), she challenged the unacknowledged sexism rampant at that time in literature in general and science fiction in particular. Stories by Le Guin, Joanna Russ, and other feminists included in the 1976 anthology *Aurora: Beyond Equality*, which McIntyre co-edited, envision a world free from gender bias. With the success of *Aurora* and her own writing, she inspired hundreds of other classics of the field, such as Pamela Sargent's *Women of Wonder* series. She made a difference in what sort

of stories were available in the '70s and '80s, and in who could reasonably expect to write and sell them.

Today's strongly surging wave of women and nonbinary people writing speculative fiction owe McIntyre a debt — and not just because of her efforts to broaden inclusion within the genre in decades past. More recently, she built and ran websites for many of these authors. She organized and administered Book





► View Café, <https://bookviewcafe.com/bookstore/>, a publishing cooperative with decidedly feminist members. To the very end of her short, illustrious life, she donated money in support of feminist and other social justice causes: the James Tiptree, Jr. Literary Awards; the Octavia E. Butler Scholarship Fund (she was Octavia's Clarion classmate); the ACLU; Planned Parenthood.

And many others. In the wake of McIntyre's death, anecdotes are surfacing which reveal more and more shining facets of the gem she was. Often these facets surprise her admirers. Those who knew her mainly as the author of five *Star Trek* novels aren't automatically aware of the beautifully beaded sea creatures she crocheted; not all those who received these sea creatures as gifts realize their importance to the mathematical field of topology.

Two women belonging to McIntyre's "posse" — the circle of friends



Vonda shares a laugh with Ursula K. Le Guin

who took her to her last doctor appointments and bought her last ginger beers — will assemble into a book many of these highly personal stories of joke kruger-



Beaded hyperbolic jellyfish

lands and toenail trimming sessions and other gloriously insiderish specificities. Hopefully these slices of life will be holographic: though flat themselves, they'll give a three-dimensional sense of the depths McIntyre contained. Quite a few who'll read this have contributed to Jeanne Gomoll and Stephanie Smith's print-on-demand book. All of us should read "Remembering Vonda" as soon as it becomes available — watch for a posting on the topic at her CaringBridge site, <https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/vondanmcintyre>. We should also make a point of reading and rereading every Vonda N. McIntyre story and novel we can find.

What else can we do to commemorate the life of our founding fairy godmother? We can write our best, as she would have wished. We can support each other, as she would have wished. And we can attend the public memorial planned for her

*Sunday, June 9  
from 1:45 to 4:30 p.m.  
7700 Sand Point Way NE  
Seattle, Washington*

See you there. ♦

## Clarion West Writers Workshop

### Board of Directors

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## Steering the Craft

There's no sea chart for a boat in a hurricane. But there are still some basic ways to make her seaworthy and keep her from capsizing, going to pieces, or hitting an iceberg.

— Ursula K. Le Guin

Sunday, September 8  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

MOLLY GLOSS



Using *Steering the Craft*, Ursula's book on writing, as a guiding text for the day, this workshop will focus on discussion and practice in the fundamental skills of storytelling —

syntax, rhythm, voice, point of view, and the “expository lump.”

As we work our way through five of the exercises Ursula created for her book, we'll discuss the particular element of craft that each exercise is designed to practice, and read examples of it from notable writers (asking, as she suggests, “what is the writer doing, how is she doing it,

why is she doing it, do I like it?”). And by focusing all of the exercises on a particular character or set of characters, you may come away with five (or more) related scenes and thus, at the end of the day, the rough beginnings of a coherent story.

**Molly Gloss** is the author of several novels including *The Jump-Off Creek*, *The Dazzle of Day*, *Wild Life*, *The Hearts of Horses*, and *Falling From Horses*, as well as the story collection *Unforeseen*. She writes both realistic fiction and science fiction, and her work has received, among other honors, a PEN West Fiction Prize, an Oregon Book Award, two Pacific Northwest Booksellers Awards, the James Tiptree, Jr. Award, and a Whiting Writers Award. Her story “Lambing Season” appeared in *The Best of the Best: Twenty Years of The Year's Best Science Fiction*. ♦

## Harvesting Stories from Your Imagination Orchard

Saturday, October 26  
9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

KEN SCHOLES



Join award-winning author Ken Scholes for a hands-on writing workshop designed to send you home with a brand new short story to write. The only requirement is to show up with nothing at all in

mind and be willing to start something fresh.

Ken's personable presentation style on the creative process combined with small group, large group, and individual exercises will take you through the process of choosing the ingredients for your short story in an organic way. You'll create a character, setting, plot, and rough bullet-pointed outline of a short story on the spot based on prompts and exercises given over the day.

You'll also spend a long working lunch break in Seattle's bustling University

District, where you'll “take your muse for a walk” and see what is to be seen through the eyes of Story. Then, to add a bit of extra value, Ken will be joined by a Not-So-Secret Secret Guest Author (his bestie John J.A. Pitts) for a robust business and craft Q&A to close out the day.

**Ken Scholes** is the award-winning, critically-acclaimed author of five novels and over fifty short stories. His work has appeared in print since 2000.

Ken's eclectic background includes time spent as a label gun repairman, a sailor who never sailed, a soldier who commanded a desk, a fundamentalist preacher (he got better), a nonprofit executive, a musician, and a government procurement analyst. He has a degree in history from Western Washington University.

Ken is a native of the Pacific Northwest and makes his home in Cornelius, Oregon, where he lives with his twin daughters. You can learn more about Ken by visiting [www.kenscholes.com](http://www.kenscholes.com). ♦

These intensive single-day workshops are available to anyone aged 18 or older. Class fee is \$150. Write to [director@clarionwest.org](mailto:director@clarionwest.org) for scholarship information. Classes are open until filled. The workshops take place in Seattle's University District.

<https://www.clarionwest.org/workshops/oneday/>



# Clarion West... on reddit!?

## Highlights from Two AMAs

If you're a regular on Reddit.com, you may have noticed over the past year that Clarion West has been making a couple of surprise appearances — in the form of AMAs (Ask Me Anythings). In February and December of 2018, we braved the internet to answer the questions of any and all.

Taking place on one of the largest

our upcoming instructor lineup, while some bemoaned their previous rejections from the workshop: "Why were you guys blind to my searing genius not once but twice!?". GulDucat asked "Can I bring my kids?" — to which our Workshop Administrator Huw answered: "I suppose a writer carries all who are dear close in their heart always (cue sentimental music), so in that sense, yes, bring your kids, your parents, your lovers and dogs and turtles and spouses. In all other senses, no."

More insightful were the torrent of questions about writing, art, finances, vacation time, and how to make the most of an experience like Clarion West. User gracebatmonkey asked: "What is the greatest impediment to reaping the values of the Clarion experience that workshopppers tend to have in common?"

"I don't think there's an easy answer to the question, but burnout can be an

demoralizing. Especially when it's week 4 and you're running on caffeine and fumes at that point! (And everyone is sick... and you're tired of the same food... and you miss your family/pets/hometown, etc). But I think the people who take the most out of the workshop are those who remember that they are there to learn and improve, and who welcome the criticism because they know their classmates are trying to help them be better.

"The other thing is being too competitive or focusing too much on the writing. That sounds a little bit weird since it is a writing workshop, but the best advice I received at Clarion was to spend as much time with my classmates as possible, because you're never going to get the time back. No matter how well you orchestrate future reunions, someone will not be able to make it. So make sure you deepen those relationships while you can! :)"

[-] EditDrunker 8 points 1 year ago

Can you tell Yoon Ha Lee and Kij Johnson I want to silently read books beside them in a rustic specialty coffee shop?

permalink embed save give award

[-] ClarionWest [S] 20 points 1 year ago

We would, but we are currently silently reading books beside Karen Joy Fowler and Daniel Abraham in a swanky urban tea bistro.

writers' forums on Reddit, /u/writing, our two AMAs drew about 200 comments and questions from new writers around the world. Representing Clarion West and our sister workshop Clarion were our Workshop Administrators, Jae Steinbacher and Micaiah "Huw" Evans, Communications Specialist Jeremy Sim, 2018 alumnus Ted Mahsun, as well as Clarion staff Patrick Coleman and Isabel Yap.

Many of the questions centered around the Six-Week Summer Workshop, with inquiries about the class size (18), the applications process (secret), and even the food. A user named tossedunder asked: "1) Is food provided as part of the cost 2) Is it pizza?" Some expressed excitement about

issue," said Workshop Administrator Jae. "We stress selfcare to our students. It is necessary to make time to sleep, to make sure to get out of the workshop space and take walks or go kayaking or do whatever you need to do to give your brain some relief from that mindset. Also, you've got to make time for fun ... And don't forget to check in with your loved ones back home. ... Don't forget to maintain those bonds during the workshop."

Clarion Secretary Isabel Yap gave her take: "I think coming in with an open mind and a willingness to learn is really important. It's difficult to take a brutal critique (it happens), and stories are so personal that receiving negative feedback on a piece can at times be really

Ultimately, there was a sense of goodwill and cheer as the Qs and As trickled slowly to a halt. "After this AMA, I'm undoubtedly sending in my application. Thanks so much for this!" said user jasonhussong. "I sent in my apps to both on Saturday afternoon. I'm super nervous!" said zorromaxima. User Sheogorothian said: "I never knew about this and I have to go here. No question." ♦

If you'd like to read the full AMAs on Reddit.com, you can find them at:

[https://www.reddit.com/r/writing/comments/7yytvn/ama\\_were\\_clarion\\_west\\_one\\_of\\_the\\_oldest\\_writing/](https://www.reddit.com/r/writing/comments/7yytvn/ama_were_clarion_west_one_of_the_oldest_writing/)

[https://www.reddit.com/r/writing/comments/a31o1s/ama\\_were\\_clarion\\_and\\_clarion\\_west\\_two\\_of\\_the/](https://www.reddit.com/r/writing/comments/a31o1s/ama_were_clarion_and_clarion_west_two_of_the/)

## Building Bridges

Clarion West at the Wing Luke Museum and Hugo House in 2019



photo credit: Hugo House

Students at Hugo House's Scribes workshop

We're partnering with the Wing Luke Museum and Hugo House in 2019 for a couple of special programs for young writers.

At the Wing Luke Museum, middle-schoolers attending the museum's annual Teensway camp will work with CW alum Jeremy Sim (CW '11) to unlock the mysteries of graphic novel writing and illustration. Their creations will be featured in a [special exhibit](#) at the museum starting late June.



At Hugo House, legendary CW alum Nisi Shawl (CW '92) will lead

high schoolers in [Sci-Fi Scribes](#), an intensive week-long introduction to the craft of science fiction writing. Students will participate in arts-driven field trips, writing activities, craft exercises, and be exposed to a diverse range of genres, forms, and writers. At the workshop's conclusion in early August, the students will share their work at a community reading. ♦



photo credit: Wing Luke Museum

Students at the Wing Luke Museum's Teensway camp

[http://www.wingluke.org/single-exhibit/?mep\\_event=671](http://www.wingluke.org/single-exhibit/?mep_event=671)

<https://hugohouse.org/store/camp/sci-fi-scribes-at-hugo-house-one-week/>

## Join the Write-a-thon!

June 23 – August 3, 2019



The Write-a-thon is Clarion West's six-week-long annual online fundraiser. Participants set public writing goals on their personal Write-a-thon page, then work toward them. Friends and family can pledge donations in support. It's like a walkathon, but with writing. All donations for the Write-a-thon go to support Clarion West workshops and outreach programs — we can't do it without you!

How can the Write-a-thon help you? Studies show that setting goals as part of a community is a powerful way to motivate yourself to achieve your goals. In a solitary field like writing, that community can sometimes be hard to find. That's where we come in: the Write-a-thon brings together past CW alumni, instructors, Seattle-area writers, and new friends from around the world in one big happy puddle of writerly support.

Learn more and sign up or sponsor a writer online: <https://www.clarionwest.org/writeathon/>.

Thank you to our 2019 Write-a-thon Sponsors!



Bill Speidel's Underground Tour • Pegasus Book Exchange  
 • Dr. Thomas Bridgman, DDS ♦



# 2019 Summer Readings

7:00 pm • Free of charge • Tuesdays in Seattle



**June 25**

Elizabeth Hand

Hugo House  
1634 11th Avenue

**New location!**

*Supported by the Leslie  
Howle Fellowship*



**July 9**

Amal El-Mohtar

Hugo House  
1634 11th Avenue

**New location!**

*Supported by the Sally  
Klages Memorial  
Fellowship*



**July 2**

Stephen Graham Jones

University Book Store  
4326 University Way NE



**July 16**

Ibi Zoboi

Seattle Public Library,  
Central Branch  
1000 4th Avenue



**July 23**

Jack Dann and  
Jonathan Strahan

University Book Store  
4326 University Way NE



**July 30**

Ann Leckie

Seattle Public Library,  
Central Branch  
1000 4th Avenue

*Supported by the Susan  
C. Petrey Fellowship*

photo credits: Stephen Graham Jones by Kevin Richard Schafer; Amal El-Mohtar by Jessica P. Wick; Jonathan Strahan by Cat Sparks; rosella by dianecutting44

## CW Summer Reads

Publications by our alumni this year



### NOVELS

*Tiamat's Wrath*,  
Daniel Abraham (CW '98),  
writing as James S.A. Corey

*The Raven Tower*,  
Ann Leckie (CW '05)

*The Adventure of the Dux Bellorum*,  
Cynthia Ward (CW '92)

*The Migration*,  
Helen Marshall (CW '12)

*A Spectral Hue*,  
Craig L. Gidney (CW '96)

*Five Unicorn Flush*,  
TJ Berry (CW '16)

### CHILDREN'S/MIDDLE GRADE/YA

*The Mystery of Croaker's Island*,  
Linda DeMeulemeester (CW '01)

*Peasprout Chen: Battle of Champions*,  
Henry Lien (CW '13)

*Manual práctico para viajar en ovni*,  
*Cecilia y el dragón*,  
*No es hora de jugar*,  
*Pronto por la mañana*,  
Lawrence Schimel (CW '91)

*The Girl With the Dragon Heart*,  
Stephanie Burgis (CW '01)

*Little Apocalypse*,  
Katie Sparrow (CW '05)

### COLLECTIONS

*The Boughs Withered*  
(*When I Told Them My Dreams*),  
Maura McHugh (CW '06)

*An Agent of Utopia:*  
*New and Selected Stories*,  
Andy Duncan (CW '94)

*Ghostographs*,  
Maria Romasco-Moore (CW '11)

### GRAPHIC NOVELS

*Halo: Lone Wolf*,  
Anne Toole (CW '11)

*Chronin Volume 1: The Knife at Your Back*,  
Alison Wilgus (CW '14)