

Ribbons

*A Journal
By and For
the Readers
of C. J. Cherryh*

*Volume One,
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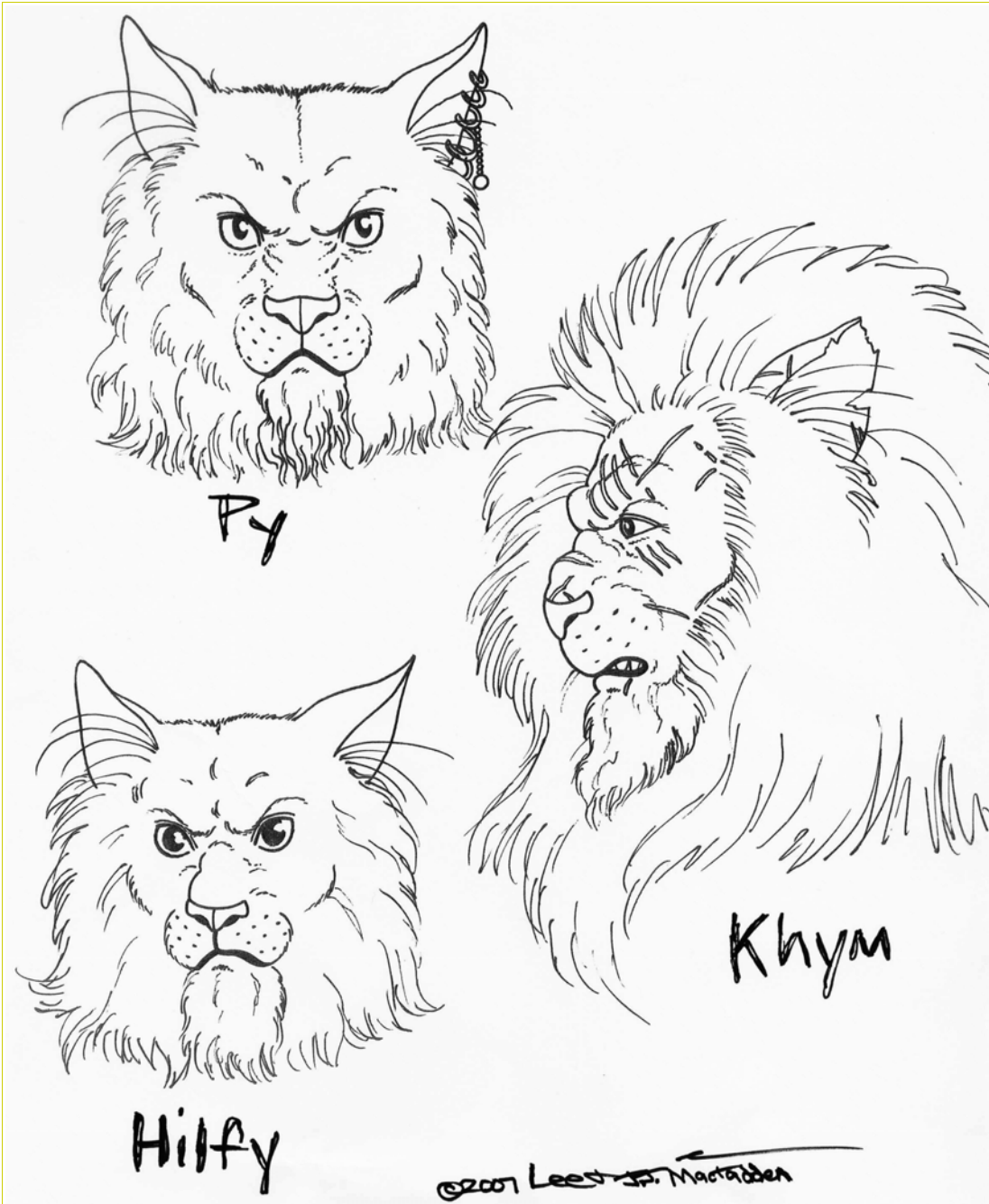


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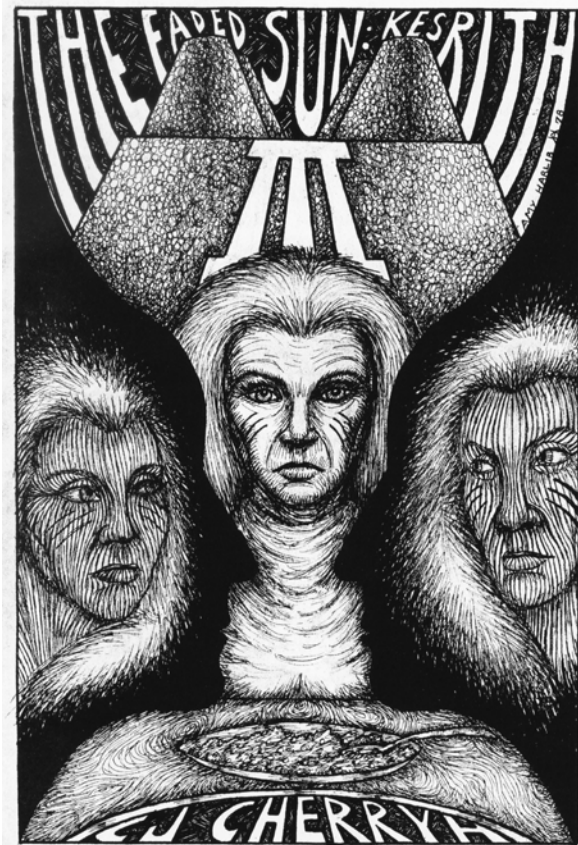
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A Conversation with Amy Harlib

interview by kelanth56



Of herself, artist and fan Amy Harlib writes that she's "is a 50-something, lifelong, avid reader of SF and fantasy literature, and graphic novels -- retired with plenty of time to indulge in her passion for reading and cinema. She was born in and lives in NYC and



wel-comes intelligent feedback and discussion about the genre. Other enthusiasms: cats, archaeology, anthropology, paleontology, folklore and mythology, genre films, science for intelligent laypersons, memoirs, narratives as literature and freelance SF & F illustration since the late 1970s, both fannish and professional. I did have two cartoons published in a mass market paperback (*Startoons*, edited by Joan Winston [Playboy Press, Dec. 1979])."

The artwork used in this article comes from a series of illustrations she did for *The Faded Sun: Kesrith* when it was serialized in the now-defunct *Galaxy*, a science-fiction magazine, in February 1978.

Ribbons: How did you come to have your art used in commercial magazines, and which magazine printed your work first?

Amy Harlib: I made my first professional

contacts and sales at SF & F conventions, the best places to network. I had a portfolio I took with me to show to other artists and publishers and art directors. The very first magazine to pay me for my work was the very obscure and short-lived *UNearth Magazine* in Fall



1977. I also met J.J. Pierce, editor of *Galaxy Magazine* at that time at the same con where I made my sale to *UNearth*. He also liked my work and commissioned me to contribute regularly from 1977-78 when *Galaxy*, alas, folded.

R: What was your experience working for *Galaxy*? Did you ever get paid?

AH: Mr. Pierce was totally reliable about paying writers and artists and he became a friend to me as well as a professional contact. My favorite job was the work I did on C.J. Cherryh's *The Faded Sun: Kesrith*, which even included one cover painting! I still have every publication with my artwork in it.

R: For the *Faded Sun* illustrations, what did you



use for inspiration -- just the text, or something else?

AH: C.J. Cherryh was gracious enough to send me some copies of her own sketches of characters and creatures to use as a guide for my illustrations and we corresponded a lot at the time -- a real thrill. She



even bought a number of the originals of the pieces that were published in *Galaxy* for *Faded Sun*.

R: Did those illustrations lead to more commercial art jobs for you? If so, which magazines/publishers?

AH: When *Galaxy* folded, I tried to break into book covers but my style was considered too uncommercial. I was still quite youthful and fit and decided [in 1981] to pour all my energy and resources into professional dancing, dance being the other artform I'd been practicing since I was very young. I stopped going to conventions then for financial reasons and have never been able to afford to attend any since. I have never lost my love for SF & F.

The Experimental Fiction of C.J. Cherryh

by Hugh Fisher

CJC is best known for her series of books, such as *Alliance/Union* or *Foreigner*. A long-running series is a sign of success, but it can also be a trap for a professional writer as fans – and publishers – demand more of the same. One of the pleasures of being a Cherryh reader is her willingness to write what I'm calling experimental fiction.* I don't know if they were intended only as such, but each of these books does

not fit neatly alongside her other work, has an unusual subject or theme, and regrettably is often difficult to find. All of them are interesting to read if you are studying her writing style, although there are some that I don't think reach her usual high standard when read for pleasure.

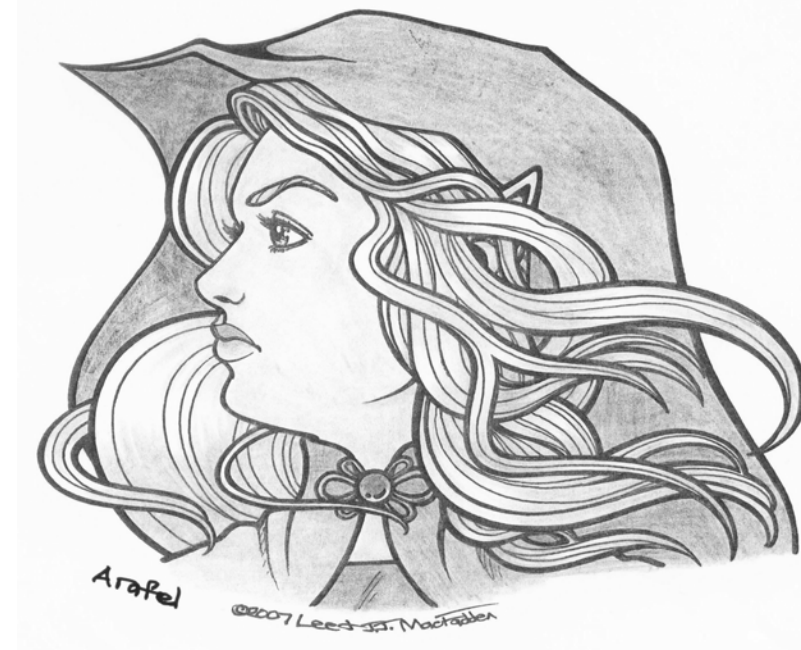
Wave Without a Shore is a science fiction story, with aliens and space travel and advanced technology, none of which is important. It is hard science fiction, a serious extrapolation to a possible future human society, but the changes are entirely sociological and philosophical rather than technological. *Forty Thousand in Gehenna* is the most similar of her mainstream works, but *Wave Without a Shore* is far more intense, throwing you into the deep end of strangeness without preparation.

Sunfall is six short stories in the same setting that were published together as a book. (A seventh was written for the *Collected Short Fiction*.) The setting is reminiscent of *The Dying Earth* by Jack Vance, a far-future earth conscious of great age and the sun itself soon dying. Some of the stories have a magical realism aspect, with ghosts and reincarnation prominent. The subject of the stories is character, choice, and fate, with a melancholic flavour.

Cuckoo's Egg is a single human living in an alien culture, learning how it operates and how to fit in, while the aliens themselves deal with the shock of first contact. Much the same theme as *Foreigner*, but ap-

proached from different direction. The aliens themselves are physically similar to the Compact Hani and I sometimes wonder if they were the prototype, even though the publication dates show that *Pride of Chanur* came first. More likely it is just because CJC is a cat person.

The Paladin shows that even CJC can slip up, the only book of hers which I've read once and immediately discarded. The setting is ancient/medieval period oriental, probably China. The story is about a once-great general reluctantly forced out of retirement into a civil war, and the young girl he trains as a warrior. Unlike her Russian and Celtic fantasies, there is absolutely no magic, and this may be a contributing



reason why it was such an ordinary read. For me, the book didn't work because I never felt "in" the setting, her writing just somehow not capturing the feel and atmosphere. *The Paladin* read more like the generic medieval Europe of countless other books, which clashed with character and place names.

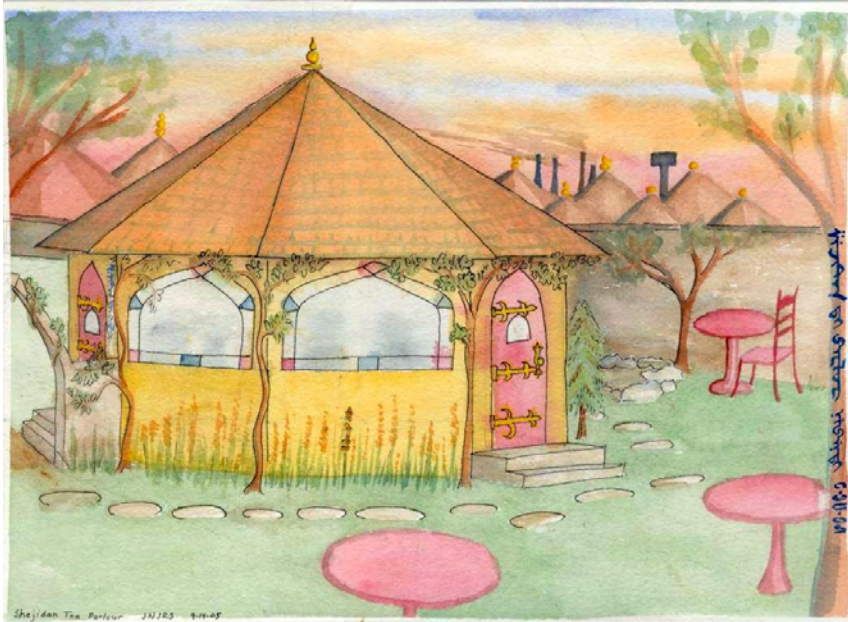
The Dreamstone/Tree of Sword and Jewels is technically two novellas, but published together as one book. It's a wonderful Celtic fantasy. Here CJC does transport you into this mythical world with plot, characters, names, and even the flowing and lyrical writing style. The names can be troublesome, but there is a vocabulary guide at the back, and after all it is a book not a script so you just have to recognise the names, not pronounce them. The humans must deal with their own destinies, both good and tragic, and the Sidhe are terrifying otherworldly beings, not the friendly elves of Tolkien and imitators. Unlike *The Paladin*, CJC succeeds here in capturing the distinctive feel of a Celtic tale.

Five books, all different from each other and from the bulk of her work. Not many authors can produce such variety. I hope you found this interesting and perhaps discovered a new book title or two to search for.

(* CJC once described such works as her "magic cookie books.")

Editor's note: Many of these books (if not all) have been reprinted within the last few years. Check with your local booksellers or online booksellers for availability. CJC may also have copies left, but be warned that she is often busy and difficult to reach; check her Web site at www.cherryh.com for details on how to order direct from her.





Moments in Time: A Brief Interview with C.J. Cherryh by Jan S.

Back in June 2008, I sent a request for a short interview to CJC via sk8tr, and Herself was kind enough to say yes. The questions are general and brief.

Ribbons: I've heard that *Cyteen II: Regenesi*s is scheduled for an early 2009 release. Why did you re-

turn to that world and the characters from the first *Cyteen* novel?

CJC: I always intended to: Jordan is such a potential toad I had to work with him again, and the rest are just interesting. I hope readers will find them so.

Ribbons: Is there a specific number of books that will comprise the *Foreigner* series?

CJC: I have not the least idea. I will never write a book I feel is beyond the potential in the people.

Ribbons: You've often advised your readers to write to your publishers if they want to see a particular story of yours continued. Have you ever received feedback from your publishers on what your readers want you to write (please provide examples)?

CJC: I have never, except for *Foreigner*: people seem happy with it.

Ribbons: If you received a sufficient amount of reader requests for another book in a series/universe that the original publisher wasn't interested in continuing, would you seek another avenue for publishing that book, such as Lulu.com?

CJC: I don't know Lulu, but I know Ex Libris. Possibly. But so far so good with my publishers.

Thanks to CJC for her time, and to Jane Fancher and sk8tr for facilitating the interview. Start your pre-orders today!

For the Associates

editorial

Well, here we are at the end of a wandering road. Because there's never been a consistent, persistent interest in this fanzine's appearance, I've decided that this will be the last issue of Ribbons.

If, however, someone else wants to carry on with it, you have my permission to use the publication's title. Copyright information should, of course, be changed to whatever name the new editor wants to use, and I'd advise leaving the rights statement in the colophon as-is, since it's the easiest one to use for fan publications.

Once again, thanks to all those who have participated in this fanzine's life: All the Shejidan crew, the writers and artists who contributed their talents, Ms. Jane Fancher and Ms. Carolyn Cherry. Although this publication never became what I envisioned it to be, it led to other things (such as *The Cherryh Odyssey*, in which I have an essay), and while it lasted, it was a pleasurable experience. Finally, thanks to the readers – you are, after all, the reason I started Ribbons in the first place.



Shon'ai!