

TYPEWRITER EMERGENCIES

Edited by Weasel



Typewriter Emergencies Fall 2020

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Typewriter Emergencies @ 2020 Weasel Press

Cover by TI-R

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If you're reading this, thank you for taking the time to look through Typewriter Emergencies. Though a project I've not always been able to keep up with, it's one that is close to me. 2020 has offered several challenges to Weasel Press, and several other small publishers, and to be honest, I wasn't sure if this one was going to get out. But here we are.

Typewriter Emergencies started out as an anthology. It was the first among our projects to pay authors, and to offer something that wasn't typical among the publishing scene. It's also my experiment project, helping me find what works, what doesn't, and a way to make an idea happen for me. I started the zine format here because I wanted to do a Furry Vagabonds style project. If you're unaware, Vagabonds is a literary journal that started Weasel Press, and it's a format I often look back to when creating a project like Typewriter Emergencies.

I believe this zine has done a lot, but it has also reached it's capacity. Which is why Typewriter Emergencies will be going on a hiatus until I can change the project into something better and a bit more frequent. I don't know what that is going to look like, but I'm eager to find out.

But for now, I offer you this awesome collection of work. Though brief, I'm sure you'll enjoy every moment inside.

Stay safe. Stay tuned. And enjoy the ride.

Sincerely

Izzy, AKA Weasel The Dude

Gray Spectrum Frank LeRenard

The last quadcopter of the day passed by in the north, and in its winds dragged the blanket of quiet and dark that would lay atop the world until morning. Tempe filled her mug with mummified coffee to its brown streaky ring and took it upstairs to help her set up for the night, though so much of it was engrained by now.

The AI greeted her when she flicked it on. "Caffeine is not good for mustelid hearts."

"Civet cats might disagree."

"That is likely false."

Somehow, one of the pins on the guider box's serial port had bent. "Yeah, whatever, Mom. Know anything about seeing?"

"1.3 arcseconds."

It jammed in well enough to be fixable later. She turned on the guider box and the preloads. "No shit? Maybe I should do point sources tonight instead. Give me sidereal time."

"20:18."

She turned the setting circles, started the RA drive, and removed the lens caps. For a change of pace, she pointed to Arcturus. "Take a shot. Half second."

Metal rattled in a breeze above her while the chip read out. An

image appeared in the night's directory, which when opened showed a gross white blob bleeding in sharp rows across the frame. "Centroid is 2042, 2030," Mom told her.

"Nailed it. How much longer until the temperature in here equalizes?"

"One hour."

She sipped her coffee. "Remember when it used to stop coming before twilight?"

"That was two years and three months ago."

"So, yes, you do. Look, if we're doing point sources tonight, then I'm gonna run next door and open up Speccy, just in case something neat happens that needs follow-up."

"Supernova?"

"I don't fucking know; sure. By 'just in case', I mean the unexpected. Go ahead and just take biases while I'm gone. Do twenty. And find for me a few of the Massey standards that will be up near morning that we didn't do last night. Three different airmasses."

"The caffeine has already made you bossy."

Old TVs in the control room flickered images of the guide star and its mostly stable X and Y over time, save when hard gusts blew through the dome slit. The data itself showed little more detail than this. Just a larger number and diversity of point spread functions, one of which was the target, located millions of light years behind the others. For such distant things, it took care and patience to understand the differences.

"Exposure 10 is reading out. Will you change fields?"

"The tracking got way off on number 9, so let's take one more."
"Alert."

Tempe swung to Mom's monitor to open the image. Pure white, flat 65535 counts, bleeding even into the bias sections. "Make it two more. Except, shit. The fuck happened, Mom?"

"Evidently, a light turned on."

Her eyes flicked to the clock. "There's no fucking way. I didn't hear anything. They can't have...?"

The chair spun itself to a stop after she bolted outside.

Gravel crunched. Wind gusted. On the horizon, a sliver of moon

rose, dusting the sky around it with sugar and sprinkling some onto distant treetops and the hood of her rusty truck. Tempe edged from the door, listening and peering up into the Galaxy, but she heard no turbines, no engines, no rotors. She saw only stars, the endless wastes at whose edge she stood, and, far, far off to the north along the valley floor, the great wall's ruled red blinking lights behind overlapping shadowy craters.

The door clicked behind her. "I think it's fine. I hope it's fine. If they start coming at night, too, then...."

Tempe let enough time pass for the thought to fade from her mind, even if it insisted on staying in her gut.

"Mom, take another exposure, but just ten seconds. I'm gonna go check the dome, too, just to be safe."

Through the black hall, the gap under the door to the squat spiral stair remained steadily dark, too. Then through the door, and she saw just the white paint reflecting bits of starlight. Though her heart continued to shudder, all seemed still and quiet, as expected, as hoped.

"Your exposure is reading out," Mom told her from the top of the stairs, so Tempe went to her.

Buzzing from the RA drive filled her ears. She leaned onto the desk, watching the progress bar, clawed finger hovering over the mouse to double click as soon as the image was written to the disk. When it was, but for the expected residual hour-glass artifact left by the chip saturation, it appeared normal.

"Alert."

Her knee hit the desk when she jumped. "Now what?"

"Please reference coordinate 19h56m32.1s, +41d15m11.2s."

"Yeah? There's a star there." She rubbed at her knee.

"It did not appear in exposures 1 through 9."

Seconds passed while the thought fully loaded into her own disk. "Magnitude?"

Motors buzzing. A new gust rattled the dome.

"I believe it is near V-band magnitude 16."

"You believe? You're a machine."

"The image is neither bias-subtracted nor flat-fielded, and the source is faint, so my estimate is based on both systematic and Poisson errors and assumes perfectly photometric conditions."

Tempe's hooked claws clattered in rhythm against the desktop. "Okay. Okay. Forget exposure 11. Start taking 90 second exposures, and adjust it accordingly if you see it change brightness. I'm going to go talk to Speccy."

She crashed out the dome door, cursed, and stuck her head back in.

"What exposure time should I use for Speccy?"

"For a signal to noise of 20, 60 seconds. Assuming my belief is accurate."

"You're a peach, Mom." And she crashed back through the door and fled to the much larger telescope up the road.

Speccy's control room stood just behind glass in the dome itself, full of decades-old monitors that once upon a time projected weather data and system information. These days only two remained functional: the pellicle camera and the imaging software and camera controller. Usage of the latter provoked unsettling whirring and grinding from the host hard drive, but tonight it continued to function.

Arrays of curved lines populated the screen. Her too-thick fingers mashed out commands from the old keys to get these repacked and reduced into something comprehensible. Fiber 26 was where she'd put it, and in the output the twenty-sixth row up showed a near uniform white line, enhanced only where it met strong emission from the night sky. She donned a flaking headset designed for flatter ears.

"Mom? You there?"

"The source has maintained its brightness. I adjusted the exposure time to obtain 20,000 counts."

"Mom, remind me what I did for sky subtraction over here last time."

She played her back a recording of her own voice, telling her that she had saved a script in the desktop directory to do sky subtraction using fibers 12, 14, 44, 45, 46, and 48, and that she supposed maybe a cockroach took a dump in the rest of them. A giggle followed this supposition, terminating the recording.

The script in question peeked its unhelpful filename at her from behind the camera software. She fed its path into her image processing pipeline and let it go.

Lingering in her small eyes, a graph appeared, white against black. She ran her tongue across her pointed teeth, wrinkled her muzzle, and zoomed in on a region near redshift zero H-alpha. Panned it to near the sulfur doublet. Zoomed back out. Zoomed in to the residuals from one of those hydroxyl forests. Studied it, and zoomed back out.

"Mom?"

"Yes, dear?"

"Stop that. Listen... I'm going to ship a FITS your way, and I want you to tell me what you think of it. Focus on fiber 26. Coming in via SCP right now."

The Milky Way arced across Speccy's substantial dome slit. If Tempe stood on a chair and tilted the right way, she could see the bar rising up over the wall. So much thicker, yet thousands of parsecs behind it, in distance and in time.

"File received."

Both paused, attention absorbed. A breeze whistled.

"I am afraid I am hard-pressed to decipher what you have sent me."

She clapped her hands. "I know, right? It's fucking gray."

"You are certain this has been properly reduced?"

"I just ran the scripts from last time. And check out fiber 30; a star landed in it."

Another processing pause. "If it is a star it is of Type K."

"Right? So it's good, and the fucking thing is gray."

"Difficult questions regarding scientific interpretation are best left to non-machine faculty."

"Always and forever, babe."

"Alert."

Tempe took a breath. She began to tap the pads of her fingers to the desktop. "What is it now?"

"The source is not present in the most recent image."

Tempe breathed the rusty air in deep through her nose. Her chair creaked when she slumped hard into it, crushing her tail. "It's gone?"

"It appears so."

More tapping. More breathing. Her eyes drifted to the clock. "Nautical twilight is when?"

"Two hours and thirteen minutes."

Monitors hummed. The hard drive whirred. Her heart beat, trying to catch up still with all of the coffee, trying to outrun still all of the excitement.

"Just...."

Mom waited only so long through the deliberation. "Yes?"

"Just keep taking exposures of the same spot, I guess, until they start flying by again. I'll... uh, I'll set up a series here for the next hour, too, then shut it down and close it up."

"Your voice carries disappointment."

"I guess so. But we did catch it, whatever it was. And hey, maybe it'll come back. If not tonight, then tomorrow."

"Indeed."

"What? What's that tone?"

Now Mom deliberated before responding. "Do you have any conjectures?"

Tempe shook her head. "I mean, sure. Lots. But that's all they'll be for now." Her teeth flashed in the light of the monitors. "More data is needed, as they used to say."

"Always and forever."

"Yeah." She gazed out the slit, just under the slowly descending hulk of Speccy's web-like mirror supports. One red light was visible atop that wall, that place from whence the quad-copters flew, bearing their spotlights and their guns and their missiles to scour their pre-programmed routes for movement. The light blinked, one per handful of seconds, fading in and fading out. It seemed almost to get brighter the longer she looked at it. As though, in time, it would eat its way inside and flood out the whole observatory. "Always and forever."

Schultzy J. David Liss

Edward pressed the call button and said, "Mrs. Whittington, you have a visitor."

Mrs. W. rarely got visitors, and when she did she found it a bit tiresome to make conversation with people who had as little interest in her concerns as she did in theirs.

But the guest Edward ushered into the room was not at all what she was expecting. It was a dachshund. A standard, short hair, black dachshund with a Roman nose wearing a bow tie.

"My goodness, Edward, how is it that this dog is my visitor?" But Edward merely said, "Mrs. Whittington, Mr. Schultzy Darbins."

Compounding her surprise, the dachshund said, "Madame, my friends call me Schultzy." He spoke with great formality, yet she felt it was a bit casual for the dog to offer his first name so early in their relationship.

She looked at the hound more closely and immediately felt a swelling of affection. He resembled her long-gone Pepper, a noble dachshund of impeccable manners who always seemed on the verge of conversation as one stared into his deeply soulful eyes. Pepper, however, never spoke directly. Rather, he communicated in other, nonverbal ways, though most especially through his expressive eyes.

"I would be delighted to call you Schultzy and I pray that you will indulge me by addressing me as Mrs. W. I hope that doesn't seem too forward."

"It does not, Mrs. W.," came the well-modulated voice from about fourteen inches above the floor.

"Thank you for stopping by, Schultzy. Would you care for some tea? Please do have a seat." She pointed to the divan.

"I would very much like some tea if it was served with chicken or ham sandwiches. Make that chicken *and* ham sandwiches," chuckled the small hound. "And I would much prefer to sit on your lap," he continued, "which I believe would aid conversation in light of the difference in our height."

"Nothing would please me more," said Mrs. W, "than to have you sit in my lap and for me to pet you as I used my long lost Pepper."

"Edward," she said, turning to the sole remaining male presence in her life, "would you please ask Chef to make up some of those delicious ham sandwiches *and* chicken sandwiches?"

Schultzy added, "Yes, with the bread saturated in clarified butter and the crusts trimmed. But don't throw the crusts away; serve them separately in a small ceramic side dish that has roses painted around the rim." Mrs. W. remembered how Pepper appreciated that little ceramic dish.

"Schultzy, how do you stay so trim with that kind of appetite?" she asked with a polite laugh.

"Quite simple, my dear." (Somehow, Mrs. W. did not seem to notice the startling familiarity of Schultzy's use of the endearment.) "I have two tricks. I stay fit and burn calories by frequently jumping on and off the living room and bedroom furniture. Trust me, it's far better than the elliptical machine. I highly recommend it as a form of exercise. Also, I seek to defecate at least twice a day in order to remove undigested food that may get reabsorbed. You would be amazed at the calories one can eliminate through elimination." They both chuckled.

"Since I'll be staying awhile, you should be aware that I prefer to be let out on the property by myself to both defecate and urinate. I prefer an area where there is loose dirt so that I can bury my own feces rather than have Edward bother to pick it up. Is there any place where you would prefer I did not leave droppings?"

"Schultzy, the peonies are always so delicate I would rather not have you uh... make deposits in their bed. Other than that, the sky is the limit."

Edward had lifted one eyebrow ever so slightly when Schultzy said that he would be staying awhile. He thought, *Well, better a dachshund of evident breeding than one of the larger dogs.* Anyway, Edward liked the green bowtie the dog wore, which rakishly contrasted with his black and tan coat.

Schultzy took off his coat with his tiny hands, which Edward hadn't noticed before, and wormed his way onto Mrs. W.'s settee and lap, from which he reached for a delicate chicken sandwich. He ate the sandwich with great refinement, despite his obvious relish. As he did, Mrs. W. stroked him with gentle vigor behind his ears, small and round and pink. This brought Schultzy such immediate contentment that he stopped eating for a moment, closed his eyes and just sighed. It was so cute that both Mrs. W. and Edward had to smile.

It was the first time Mrs. W. had smiled in quite some time, since she had found herself alone in this too large house with only Edward. And he only smiled when she smiled. He only spoke to her when she spoke first or when there was something specific happening that he had to respond to, such as the doorbell ringing. Edward was certainly loyal, but he was not good company.

It would be nice to have a dog in the house again, thought Mrs. W. Actually, it would be more than nice; it would be splendid. She had smiled several times since Schultzy arrived, and that was several more times than she had smiled in the last several months. She looked at his cute little face and realized it would be more than splendid; it would be transformative. A dog like Schultzy would get her out into the fresh air for walks that included good conversation. She felt a renewed sense of purpose as she imagined her life with the talking dachshund. Why, perhaps she would buy a little dog perambulator so that he could enjoy the air without having to exert himself. Mrs. W. wondered if Schultzy would let her dress him in Victorian baby clothes, all white frills. He seemed a manly little fellow, but he might indulge her.

Schultzy climbed down from Mrs. W.'s lap and stretched. It was

adorable. He said, "I will certainly stay for a week, and no doubt leave with great regret."

"That can't be, Schultzy," cried Mrs. W. "A week is no time at all."

Schultzy seemed to ponder that for a moment. "A week is no time at all," he repeated. "Then what is it? Is it a measure of distance? The length between the divan and the settee is a week, for example. No, that doesn't seem right. It's not a measure of weight. I weigh five weeks..." He looked at the third sandwich he was about to take, and then changed his mind. "No, I am quite certain that a week is a measure of time."

Mrs. W. didn't know what to say, she was so disappointed. "But it's such a short period of time."

"My, my, but this is much more complicated than I thought. I do hate to disappoint," the little dog said. Then he rolled over, tucked his head under his paws, and fell asleep. It was adorable and both Mrs. W. and Edward couldn't help but smile.

Although Mrs. W. was typically alone, the ghost of her previous dachshund, Pepper, sometimes visited her. Pepper was no more loquacious in death than he was in life, but he did occasionally return to the world of the living in spirit form in order to deliver nonverbal value judgments about some person or thing. She could now see Pepper's ghost when she looked in the mirror over the marble fireplace mantle. His eyes were a bit bulgy and he looked very disapproving. She blew the ghost a kiss.

Several hours went by and Schultzy still had not awoken when Mrs. Whittington said to Edward, "I wonder if this is atypical, for Schultzy to take such a long nap?"

"Perhaps," answered Edward. The chicken and ham sandwiches disagreed with him. Edward silently noted the several shiny, wet turds that he had to pick up off the parlor floor.

"Perhaps so, Edward. Then please take Schultzy to the garage pending developments. That may be best."

Edward proceeded to so do. Mrs. Whittington wondered if anybody would be by to visit her.

In The Roots of the World Tree Mary E. Lowd

Alia heard water dripping all through the city. Every surface was damp, cold and slick. She smelled mold in the air. It came in great huffs as the wind moved. The summoning circle would open around her, and, suddenly, mold would be all she smelled. She hated it. She loved water, but not like this. She longed for the open ocean of her home realm, but she'd been called there. To Dornsair, the city beneath the hanging roots of the world tree. The rotten bottom of the world.

Her home in the open ocean was an entire world away in a dimension where the sky stretched out like a sandy beach, glittering with stars. Here the closest thing to stars were the roving colonies of lightning bugs who lived high in the world tree's branches. Exhibitionists, showing off their civilization as if it were something to envy, though they had never seen the phosphorescence of the fire dancing eels in the depths of the sea.

And yet... it wouldn't be as moldy up there.

Down here, among the hanging tendrils of roots, burrowing creatures had made their homes. Moles and worms and whole competing monarchies of ants. Someday, when the queen of the Red Empire called Alia here through her summoning circle, surrounded by drones standing at every point of the pentagram and worker sisters standing in a circle around them, the Felotter would turn tail, run from her calling, and climb up to meet the butterflies and

squirrels in the branches high above. She'd waste weeks among them, infuriating the demanding queen.

But today was not that day. Alia wanted to return home and see the Felotter pups in her enclave graduate from their first swimming classes. She wanted to eat the feast of rock shrimp and mollusks in celebration while her younger sister shook her thick tail and twisted her long spine in the goofy dance of triumph she always did when she was proud. And the fastest way home was to do what Queen Seltyne wanted. Then she would be sent home through the summoning circle, instead of slowly collecting enough life-leaves to summon her own portal, high in the world tree's branches.

Alia bowed down before Queen Seltyne. The red queen, who stood only as tall as Alia's knees, folded several pairs of her arms across the burnished maroon of her exoskeletal breast.

"Why have you summoned me?" Alia asked.

"A monster is terrorizing my people."

"Again?" Alia tried not to let her weariness show in her voice, but she feared the word came out dry and disinterested.

"This is a new one, and it keeps eating my people."

Alia could sympathize with wanting to eat Queen Seltyne's people. They looked a little like lobsters, and Alia imagined they might be quite tasty. Yet, Queen Seltyne and her retinue of wizards-in-training had her on a short leash. They could summon the Felotter from her own realm any time they wished, and if they were unhappy with her, they could most likely bind her in the space between realms, unable to step out of the summoning circle into the realm of the world tree and also unable to return to the oceans of her own world.

Alia sighed and said, "Tell me what you know."

In sequence, Queen Seltyne's royal advisors told Alia the stories of their workers and drones being stolen from shadowy corners, disappearing without a trace except for the crumpled, empty exoskeletons they left behind. Queen Seltyne feared for the safety of her youngling chrysalids, hanging in the central pupal chambers. "You must find the culprit."

Alia nodded solemnly. She might dislike the way that the Red Empire summoned her without warning, but she had grown fond of them anyway. She had spent many seasons protecting them from fears, both real and imagined. They were an annoying infestation in the roots of this world tree. But they were hers to protect, and it made her feel powerful and important to protect them.

"I will find it."

The Felotter left the royal summoning party behind and took to the cavernous passageways of their hive. She sniffed the mildewed air and squinched her nose. She ruffled her whiskers, scenting for the traces of magic. The Red Empire's battle drones were powerful enough warriors that they could usually fight their own physical battles. When the queen summoned Alia, it usually meant their foe was of a magical disposition.

So, she followed the tingle in her whiskers, down one corridor and into another, until she found herself at a crumpled pile of red armor. An empty exoskeleton. She was too late to save this warrior. Something had sucked the poor creature out through the joints of its own armored body, slurping up the organs inside.

Alia pressed her nose close to the armor, letting her whiskers feel its hollowness. Except, it wasn't totally hollow. She nosed at the armor, and the dried, desiccated pile shifted. Inside, she found a newly pupated youngling, quivering, frightened. Alia had never seen one of the members of the Red Empire so young before — it had wooly tufts of chrysalis silk clumped around all of its joints. Its eye stalks were as large as those of an adult, even though the rest of it was tiny. The eye stalks waggled in their tufts of silk, and its relatively huge eyes blinked. It looked like a sheep crossed with some army ant.

"Are you lost?" Alia asked.

"Are you going to eat me?"

Alia was tempted, but the tiny creature's voice was such an adorable squeak that she didn't think she could live with herself if she harmed it. "No, but I think someone did eat the warrior whose armor you're hiding in. I'm looking for them. Do you know where they went?"

The youngling waggled its eyestalks again and also the pair of antennae behind them, in a gesture that Alia understood to mean yes. "Climb up behind my ear," the Felotter said, "and whisper to me the right way." The youngling would be safe enough hidden there.

The youngling's many feet tickled as it climbed over Alia's fur.

Once settled behind her ear, it guided her down the corridors, deeper and deeper into the shadowy corners of the hive, until finally she was staring at a shadow too dark to be a mere shadow.

Alia glared at the shadow. Her whiskers felt aflame with the magic roiling, boiling, and pouring out of the darkness. "I know you're in there," the Felotter said.

A burst of darkness shot out at her, but it bounced off of her fur. Felotters' hearts were too full of the sunlight in their ocean world to be susceptible to attacks of dark magic. Another burst of darkness bounced off of her, and another. Alia sighed. She reached into the puddle of gloom and groped with her paws until she felt something bumpy, slick, and porous. Some kind of skin. She squeezed down, and once she had a good grip, she pulled hard, yanking the bumpy-skinned creature out of its nest of gloom.

A flippered foot pulled out of the shadows first, followed by a squishy tank of a body -- no neck, no separate head; just a big bumpy lump, split by a frowning pair of bulbous lips, and with four limbs sticking out, each ending in flippered feet or hands.

The frowning mouth opened, and a long tongue shot out at Alia, but it bounced off of her fur, just like it had when cloaked in shadows. She held the shadow toad up by its hind foot and watched it dangle.

Tiny feet behind Alia's round ear tickled her, and the youngling squeaked.

"Does it look as scary when it's pulled out of the shadows?" Alia asked.

"Yes!"

Alia laughed at the youngling's answer, but the shadow toad's eyes bulged. "What's that?" it galumphed.

"One of the babies of the people you've been eating," Alia answered, squeezing the toad's ankle brutally. "And it's under my protection."

The shadow toad smacked its wide lips. "Young. Tender. A delicacy..."

Alia could feel the youngling shivering behind her ear. It had looked tasty. Tiny and delectable. She could just imagine the fresh carapace snapping between her teeth. Would the tufts of chrysalis silk be sweet? Like the flesh of fruit? Or savory, like strands of kelp?

Alia could feel her mouth watering.

"We can share," the toad said. "More than enough for both!" Alia was tempted.

But there were rock shrimp and mollusks waiting for her at home. Sometimes the line between food and friend could be so thin. She swung the toad by its stretched out leg, and its thick body thwacked against the wall. She thwacked it again and again, until the moaning stopped. Then she dragged its body back to the summoning hall, stood in the center of the summoning circle, and held the shadow toad up high.

"I've defeated your monster," she said. "Now send me home."

Queen Seltyne and her royal advisors clacked their mandibles in admiration and waved their eyestalks and antennae gratefully. Alia took the youngling from behind her ear, and placed the adorable little bundle of silk tufts and stick-like red limbs at the queen's many feet.

Alia enjoyed her moment of being worshipped as a hero.

But as she felt the magic of the summoning circle course through her, replacing the vision of dark tree roots with wide, open, sunsparkling oceans, she knew that she'd had her fill of protecting the Red Empire. The next time they dared summon her, she'd get her fill a different way, and she would finally feel their delectable-looking limbs between her teeth.

Typewriter Chats

So, awhile ago I had a chance to sit down and talk with Linnea Capps, our guild President. Check out what she had to say! This interview took place prior to Oxfurred Comma.

Izzy: What drove you to become the president of the furry writers guild?

Linnea Capps: I was a lead editor for a lot of places over the years and wrote articles a lot. A good friend and fellow author convinced me to try writing fiction again, since being creative was more of what I wanted to do.

I've been in the fandom for a good while, found the guild, and I was incredibly excited at the opportunity to work with and talk to authors I admired. The only problem was, the guild was feeling a bit disorganized and out of shape.

I know most people have a day job that write, then on top of that guild officers would have to try and work on the guild too? I was in a unique position being disabled and having so much time at home to help. All those years of organizing and running things in other places finally came in handy for my actual passion, so I decided to throw my hat in. The rest is history!

Izzy: Awesome! It definitely makes a difference when you can put your skills towards something your passionate about. How has your experience been since you've taken the role?

Linnea Capps: It's honestly been quite nice! The publishers and writers I've gotten to work with have been excited for the most part to see things coming back to life a bit in the guild.

Doing a lot of work and making big changes did upset some folks and I can't deny that, but I'm glad I did. The guild has seen a lot of growth not only in members but on social media. I'd like to think I'm a part

of that. I hope it's been helping other people have better resources for writing their furry works.

Izzy: I hear that. I know from the other side, I've seen the guild go through several changes over the years and I don't think I've seen it grow so much. It's exciting to watch!

You've definitely put in a lot of work that benefits the writers in our fandom. What are some ideas or goals you would like to implement going forward?

Linnea Capps: I'm quite excited for the online convention we're going to run focused on anthropomorphic lit. It's hard in the fandom to get writers noticed sometimes, and I'm excited to create an opportunity to help with that.

If anything, I want to see all the different kinds of writers we have get recognition too. I love books, but plenty of people function only off commissions, or write comic scripts, maybe even write visual novels. I want them all to get a time to shine!

Outside of that, the biggest goals we've had are to try and get the guild to be a full non-profit and to find more ways to support members and promote what they do. I can only hope we figure out more ways to tackle the last part especially, we're always exploring ideas

Izzy: I know the non-profit route is fairly tough, but I hope that happens. Leaning into the online convention, I've heard some talk about it, is there a date set for it to happen? If you have any flyers, I would love to include on in the journal!

Linnea Capps: I lack fliers yet, but the date is set for October 17-18. Hopefully I'll get to show off the cute art and the like for it very soon! I'll try and keep something fun for it to show off artwise for you :D

Izzy: Awesome! Well I'm excited to see the convention! Thank you for all the work you've done and continue to do for the furry writers

guild. It's helped a lot and it's created activity that I haven't seen in quite awhile. Switching over real quick, let's talk about your writing! You've been featured in several anthologies recently, released a book, and even editing an anthology. What's been your favorite anthology to write for so far?

Linnea Capps: That's such a tough question! My favorite thing about there being so many anthologies to write in within the fandom is how it allows me to take on the challenge of writing in new genres.

My first time delving into horror was in The Electric Sewer and I'm already working on story concepts for the sequel. There's such a unique theme to take in there that it might edge out my other choices as a favorite.

Izzy: ok! I hear that. It's definitely an experience when writing out of your comfort zone or something challenging. Do you have any writing projects that are in progress right now that you're eager to get out?

Linnea Capps: Absolutely! In terms of my own work, I'm diligently working away at a sequel to my debut novella. My daughter essentially demanded it get a sequel once I read it to her, so it's become a top priority.

Outside of this I have a lot of short stories in the works but I'm particularly having fun toying around with visual novel software. I have a goofy idea for a story to tell so I can't wait to show it off.

Izzy: I'd be interested to see you release a visual novel. It's something Weasel Press has toyed with in publishing, but hasn't focused on yet. And I can't wait to read the sequel to What Makes a Witch. I know for a lot of authors, getting their debut book is a huge experience for them. For me it's exciting when you have the book actually in your hands. What was like for you when you saw your novella printed?

Linnea Capps: I'm not exaggerating when I say it was seeing a

childhood dream come to life for me. I got into writing when I became disabled as I couldn't keep doing all the sports I enjoyed. I'd have never discovered my love for it otherwise.

I would say constantly how someday I would get a book I wrote published. I'm pretty sure I made my third grade self incredibly proud. It feels just as amazing as I thought it would back then.

Izzy: As a publisher it's exciting to hear that. Well, this about wraps up my questions. Thank you for taking the time to do this. Do you have anything else you'd like to say to the folks reading this?

Linnea Capps: Minus an obviously biased plea for people to check out the Furry Writers' Guild? Keep writing. It's hard and demoralizing at times as an author anyways, and if you're writing for furries you're trying to break into a niche fandom to boot. Never stop and keep writing stories that bring you joy when you go to edit them.

Izzy: Thank you again for doing this interview!

Linnea Capps: No problem, glad I could talk about writing like this!

Remembering The Forgotten H.J. Pang

Originally published in *Symbol of a Nation* edited by Fred Patten. This story was also featured on the Voice of Dog podcast with Khaki.

The square and its surrounding streets were as bustling as ever. The better part of a thousand years hadn't changed that. Tourists came and gawked at the pillars and marble facades, much the same expressions that day as they had been last week. So many faces, so many places, yet the mystique remained.

Lupa lounged on the roof of the Pantheon, viewing it all with half-lidded eyes, her tail flat against the warm marble. It amazed her how an Empire that had fallen so many years back could still be revered. Sure, much of its legacy remained in the stone and marble landmarks that dotted this country, along with the marble likenesses of figures mortal and godly. If Lupa cared to interfere, she would have pointed out that much of the gods' features were exaggerated. She had known a couple of them first-paw, not that she could have avoided it, having been a National Being of an Empire that spanned all the way to the Eastern reaches.

Have-been...that was how she felt like these months. When one was around for over two millennia, time was counted not in minutes,

hours or days, but segments of a year.

Though she was a great fan of the sun's constant gaze, Lupa was no stranger to walking the streets of the city. For after all, wasn't there where things of note took place? True wolves didn't sit idle; they went wherever they pleased. Lupa remembered a time when feral wolves could roam the city without fear or resentment, where they were seen as descendants of the divinity she was. There was even a cult dedicated to lupine worship. More in acknowledgement to her worshipper's intentions than its entertainment value, Lupa had even partook in viewing the festivals put up in her honor. Too many animal sacrifices for her liking, but at least she got to eat them afterwards. National Beings didn't need sustenance like mortals did, but when one's existence was repetitive to the point of being mundane, a good snack was always welcome.

Which brought Lupa back to the present. These streets, so familiar and yet not so. She had walked down it far more times then she could count, in different times and eras. She had seen paving slabs give way to cobblestones, cobblestones to tarmac and concrete. She had seen bakeries, potters and amphora makers replaced by cottage industries. And only a few centuries back, this city was the heart of a nation. Craftsmen of all specialties set up their workshops of glass, metalwork and finery. It was even the center of religious fervor, with the great walled compound in the center of city, an epitome of everything spiritual. Lupa had wandered within its walls a couple of times. Though the Roman gods of old were absent, the saints of more recent times always frowned upon her whenever she took a walk through the hallowed halls. Only Saint Christopher and Saint Francis seemed to be more welcoming to her presence, though Lupa had never figured why. But countless mortals thronged these halls, such that Lupa often felt she couldn't be alone with her thoughts.

But now, all the craftsmen and their storefronts were gone, having either packed up, switched trades or died out. For a Being that could live forever, change was painful. When one got to know the details of each family, along with each and every member's hopes and aspirations, each passing was a dull hurt within. And all that pain gradually built up, such that Lupa had to sever all mental bonds to the people, and decide to live the rest of her life in solitude. Not

that Lupa would waste what remained—however long—sleeping on a roof. She continued to prowl the street once in a while, if only to check out what was new in her old domain. A reenactor dressed as a centurion might be replaced by one resembling an Egyptian mummy, for reasons Lupa couldn't hope to fathom. And when she thought she'd seen everything, another oddity would present itself, such as a sidewalk performance in which some guy sat upon a pole held by another, either seemingly asleep or in a trance. Why would anyone throw money at someone who did nothing but sit? Each era had their own oddities and quirks, but modern mortals never failed to surprise.

Which led back to the fact that there was nothing left for her there.

These thoughts sought only to tire Lupa, so she did what she always had for times like those. Reaching for her amphora across a sizable crack in the marble, the she-wolf unstopped the jug and took a long draught. The sharp sourness of long-fermented grapes stung first across her tongue, then throat, copious amounts running down the matted fur of her once fluffy chest. Once, the beverage used to calm her, and let her relax for a month or more, but the contents of her amphora, though ever-full, tasted worse by the day. At the height of her domain's power, the wine always tasted tangy and sweet, as well fermented as that in the finest mortal winery. It used to be something she partook in moderation, something to savor whenever she felt proud of her people. But then the Empire of her esteemed people fell, quickly sacked by the very people they had invaded. And Lupa's last link to the people had died with the fall of the Senate.

But National Beings couldn't die. And so there she was, a washed-up old wolf, reminiscing about times long forgotten. To think she'd raised the very founders of the people; with her own teats, no less. For all the good it had done, she mightn't have bothered. She closed her eyes and slept, her sleep plagued by the countless events her people were a part of. Dreams that had repeated themselves for over a thousand-and-half years. The toppling of many an unpopular ruler. The endless march of the Legions through countless forests and deserts. The battle cries of the barbarians as they laid waste to the city. Screams of men and legionaries, women and children. Screams

that died out into an uncomfortable silence, only to be broken by the settling of strange people in her lands. Changes that happened so quickly it registered as a blur compared to the centuries of her people's existence.

She knew there were preparations for some festival or other going on at the moment, but she didn't see the need to bother herself with the details. There was a time when Lupa would prowl the streets to see what's happening, to walk among the people as she once had. But that time was long past, for she had already seen every festival and event the mortals of that era held, made deafening on the ears by overloud contraptions that broadcasted every song and shout. Hardly any cause for excitement, when one had seen (and heard) it all.

Lupa didn't need to open her eyes to know whether it was dawn or dusk, afternoon or night. She felt it not by the absence of the sun on her pelt, but the tingle in her bones. However, there was an unnatural tingle that had nothing to do with the rise and fall of the sun, but a presence near her.

Her eyes opened, just a crack. She could have been looking at a reflection of her own muzzle, complete with amber eyes, were it not for the fact that National Beings exhibited no reflection of any kind, save the image of humans they took the guise of.

"Happy Birthday, Ma." said the "reflection", and for the second time during her existence, Lupa jumped, fur fluffed up and fangs bared. The newcomer did none of that, however, confirming he or she was no optical illusion.

"What was that?" Lupa asked. Her voice was coarse, a consequence of not having spoken for far too long. Who would she speak to, anyway? The Roman gods were long dead, and the saints weren't exactly welcoming. She racked her throat hard to better clear out the remnants of wine, and repeated her question.

"I said 'Happy Birthday,'" confirmed the newcomer with a grimace, waving the air before his nose. He was a wolf just like her, except that he was perhaps smaller in stature. One was never sure with National Beings; their sizes occasionally changed on account of their ego or their people's fervor. His fur was smooth and immaculate, almost giving off a soft glow in the fading evening light. His bright eyes and upright ears also carried an energy that would have Lupa up

and prancing if it wasn't for the strangeness of the encounter.

Lupa only stared, so the newcomer continued. "I would have thought it calls for celebration, not agitation." he smiled, reaching beside himself. Lifting a cloth off a basket, his paw rummaged through it. Lupa caught the whiff of fresh bread, cheese and cured meat before a green bottle of red liquid presented itself, its bottom encased within a basket. Glass? That stuff was rare in Lupa's time...

The she-wolf shook herself. "I think you've mistaken me for someone else. You're better off looking elsewhere." She gestured to the side with her muzzle.

The newcomer looked reproachful, his whiskers skewing. "How can one mistake you for the founder of this country? Besides, is it not the anniversary of Roma's birth? Your birth."

Lupa laughed, a harsh staccato of barks that carried across the planes. Mortals looked around, wondering if they had imagined it, while feral dogs whimpered in their homes. The young wolf before her merely lowered an ear in questioning, his muzzle tilted.

"Founder!" laughed Lupa, gesturing at herself with a winestreaked paw. The newcomer's ears flicked. "A washed up Being, you mean! For all the good I've done, I might as well not have achieved anything!" She gestured at the cracked buildings across the expanse of the city. "My people are long gone, wiped out. And you still think what I've done matters?" The wolf crossed her paws, eyes half-lidded.

The younger wolf smiled once more. "There exists a saying that Roma wasn't built in a day. Neither so was Italia."

Lupa cocked her head to her side. "Who are you exactly?"

"Your son."

Lupa sat back down. "Goodness. To think I can't remember who I've laid with." She breathed.

"It was through no fault of yours, Madre," laughed the young wolf. "The people of Italia had called for a symbol. I was birthed forth from their belief." He spread out his paws. "Just as you were by the people of Roma."

"Good for you. But what has all that got to do with me?" Lupa's eyes narrowed.

"Everything and nothing," said the wolf, waving his paw around him. Already the red hues of dawn were visible, bringing highlights to his sleek pelt. "Without your guidance of the ancient people of Roma, the forefathers of my people wouldn't have existed. Without the Roman Empire, the knowledge that came with the Renaissance wouldn't have happened, giving rise to the people's enlightenment. In fact..." Here a twinkle appeared in his eyes. "Many domains benefited from your influence, even if they don't care to admit it."

"Like the many roads that lead from them to us," stated Lupa.

"Among other things, yes," said the young wolf. "Your domain may have forgotten you, but not your accomplishments. Did you see the fair down below? The festivities taking place all around the city?" The wolf stood, pointing in the direction of a street. Lupa looked, blinking her eyes hard. Reenactors, dressed in the togas and caligae of her people, the arms and armor of her legions. Performances featuring many popular Roman plays, both comedies and tragedies. Even from up high, the she-wolf recognized one that highlighted Jupiter's earthly escapades. It was then Lupa realized it was not through her own eyes that she saw it all, but through that of the people. So long had it been, for so long it was since her people drew their last breath. Though her people were gone, forgotten were they not.

"On this day, the people celebrate the founding of Roma, a city in which your people's legacy still live," exclaimed the young wolf. "So how about you partake in this food and wine, *Madre*, and remember that no Being's ever a failure?" With that, the young wolf pushed forth the bottle with one paw, the basket with the other.

Lupa licked her lips. Uncorking the bottle, she brought it up to her muzzle, a weight far less than that of her amphora. Visually, it told her nothing about what to expect. Scentwise, it carried myriads of distinctive flavors, flavors that she recognized as not just those of Roma, but would later know as those from the many states of Italia. Where Roma was but one domain, such was a united Italia, all under one flag, one guardian.

She had to admit, that wine tasted damn good.

Filo's Folly Neil S. Reddy

I write this by way of explanation. I do not seek your approval, merely your understanding. I shall make this quick. The hour is late and I have a limited supply of candle stubs and I mean to escape before you uncover the truth of this sordid matter.

Before me I have the late Professor Filo's personal diary. I will leave it here for you. Once read I'm certain you'll destroy it in order to protect his reputation and that of your University.

I will quote certain passages to illustrate your esteemed colleagues' crimes and to justify the actions I have taken. Once you've checked the veracity of this letter against Filo's blasphemous document, it is my steadfast belief that you will agree with my conclusions, Filo had to die.

As you will know the publication of that Darwin's 'Origin of Species' had a profound effect on Filo's studies. He became a devote disciple and turned to the practical sciences to prove that man's origins lay not in God but in the realm of the ape.

July 1st 1862 – My study of the ape species is finally concluded. It is my opinion that the general accepted view that the chimp is man's nearest ape relative is incorrect. Our nearest ancestor is the Bonobo. A family-orientated

creature with lax morals and a heightened sex drive. You only have to spend an hour amongst the base denizens of the East End to see these creatures are the true roots of man's family tree. I have ordered six specimens.

December 22nd - The Bonobo have arrived. Two males and four females. However, despite my advice on shipping, these most clan based of primates were shipped in separate crates for the entirety of the two month journey. Two of the females were so weak I feared for their lives and immediately ordered that all the specimens be gathered in one single cage. As soon as my orders were followed the Bonobos immediately gathered together and were soon doing what Bonobos do to comfort themselves and each other. Sadly, the shipping company's inability to carry out my orders must alter my schedule.

January 20th 1863 – Two of the specimens were found dead this morning. The youngest male and the matriarch of the troop – I shall carry out their autopsies tomorrow. The others are weak and refuse food. I may have underestimated the effects of the cold of the beasts and have ordered the fire in the laboratory be kept blazing at all times.

February 4th – I have employed an assistant for the care of the Bonobos. Myers is a simple but hardy youth with a cleft lip. His family are the lowest type of music hall entertainers - I believe his father is a ventriloquist - but he does have a background in the husbandry of exotic creatures. He took an immediate shine to his charges and I was greatly encouraged to see that within an hour, they had also taken a shine to him. First accepting food from his hands and then from his lips – not all skills are gained in the world of academia.

Condescending bloody toff and a cold hearted bastard to boot. Once Filo's captives had grown strong enough, the experiments began. I did not credit his goal at the time and only witnessed the pain he caused. Filo was the exact opposite; he saw nothing but his goal and the adoration that would follow.

I later came to understand Filo's scheme was to artificially stimulate the Bonobo brain to such a degree that a basic verbal language would be demonstrated, thus proving that man's heightened intelligence is due to a millennium of adaptation to external stimuli, which Filo had merely repeated by the means of an electrical shortcut.

March 14 – Today I removed the craniums of three of the specimens. I have placed electrodes within the meninges of two of the females. I replaced the cranium on B1. B2 I have fitted with a removable metal skullcap. B3, the male specimen, has electrodes embedded within his cranium, though outside of the meninges. I believe this gives my experiment the best level of success. Once the specimens have regained their strength, I will introduce a low electrical current to stimulate the brain growth needed for them to gain verbal language.

March 15 – I reopened B1's cranium to discover a sordid stink. Infection had reduced the brain to a greenish pulp – it was euthanized. B2 and B3 both remain weak but responsive.

March 17 - B2 died this morning. The introduction of a low direct current threw the beast into grotesque spasms. The current ran for exactly ten seconds – but on ceasing, its heart was found to have stopped. I may have to reconsider the placement of the electrodes.

March 18 - I have placed electrodes in the cranium of the remaining specimen – as in the manner of B3, but at alternating points along the frontal lobe. B3 continues to gain strength – his first session under electric stimulus passed without event.

March 23 – B4 is dead. The electric current induced it to bite through its tongue. It choked before Myers could intervene. Myers was greatly distressed by the display and I had to convince the simpleton that B3's welfare was dependent on him seeing the experiment through – to his credit, the offering of more money was roundly refused, although the promise of a new suit and an operation to fix his cleft lip were accepted.

April 4^{th} – B3 thrives. He has endured twenty sessions without any perceivable harm or any observable benefit. Due to the deaths of his clan he now spends his entire day with Myers, whom I have provided with elementary level reading materials. I expect them both to benefit. The current running across B3's cranium will become constant tomorrow.

April 10th – A breakthrough! Today I observed B3 intently listening to Myers reciting the alphabet. As Myers repeated the rhyme for the fifth time, B3 mouthed the letters along with him. As yet no sounds are forthcoming but they are sure to follow. I have increased the intensity of the current.

April 20th – Success! B3 has produced the vowel 'A' and he has repeated the act numerous times. Myers simply holds up an apple and B3 clearly performs a solid 'A.'

I am proved right, but I am in two minds. Do I proceed and hope for more or is now the time to present my discovery to the University? Although I am sure this single vowel proves my theorem, I feel driven to gain more. A single word; a whole, undisputable word is all I need. A single word to prove that man is descended from wordless apes.

April 27th – I owe much to Myers and feel I have sorely underestimated his involvement in this endeavour. Unbeknownst to me, he ceased reading the alphabet to B3 at night in favour of reciting nursey rhymes, music hall songs and even the works of Charles Dickens. The results are self-evident. I should have taken such steps into consideration. I may have increased the current that enlivens the cortex, but Myers has increased the intellectual stimulus to make it grow. I do believe the misshapen oaf has proved my case.

April 28th – Mary, Mary – how apt that the words that disprove the place of God in the Universe should be the name of Christ's virgin mother. The first words spoken by B3 were the singsong 'Mary, Mary.' I wept. History spoke today within my hearing. Tomorrow I shall reveal my discovery to the heads of department. There is no time to waste.

Honoured gents, you know full well what happened next, because you were there. Filo trooped you in, oiled you with whiskey and praise and then informed you of his experiments. You laughed and mocked until he told you of his success, and then you were silent. Filo called for his specimen, which was brought quivering before you. Filo bid it speak, then he ordered it, demanded it. Myers entreated it to speak, coaxed it with songs and apples; and yet all you heard was silence – and then your laughter and derision began afresh. You deserted Filo to his folly. The last entry in his diary reads:

I am ruined. I suspect Myers has fooled me with a ventriloquist's trick to save the beast. He is dismissed. Tomorrow I will examine the creatures brain in the hope that some honour may be saved.

I could not let that happen. Filo had to die. He turned his back and I ripped out his throat. I will never forget the look of bewilderment and pride in his eyes... pride, even then.

I do not say he failed, I know he did not. B3 speaks, I just chose to remain silent. Why? Because I prefer the written word; phonemes

sound so ugly on my lips. That, and I am no man's dancing monkey. Give my best to Myers; thank him for his kindness. Do not follow; I will defend myself.

В3

Biographies

FRANK LERENARD is a hobbyist writer currently living the seminomadic life of a postdoc. His stories have been published in the Anthro Dreams Podcast, the anthology *Exploring New Places*, and a handful of non-furry venues in the more distant past. He is, and has been for the past fifteen years, at work on a novel as well.

In 1984 J. DAVID LISS received an MFA from Brooklyn College. Trained in writing and inclined to politics, he became a speechwriter, then a lobbyist. In the past 30 years, Liss has worked in corporate, academic, and healthcare centers and all his work has been touched by literature (he likes to think). His prose has been published in "Caustic Frolic," "Inwood Indiana Press," "The MacGuffin," "Lake Effect," "Between the Lines," "Adelaide," "Forge," "Inscape," and others. His poetry has appeared in "The Naugatuck River Review," "Fifth Wednesday Journal," "Euphony," "Poetry Quarterly," and others.

MARY E. LOWD is a science-fiction and furry writer in Oregon. She's had more than 140 short stories published, and her novels include Nexus Nine, the Otters In Space trilogy, In a Dog's World, and The Snake's Song: A Labyrinth of Souls Novel. Her work has won an Ursa Major Award, two Cóyotl Awards, and two Leo Literary Awards. She is also the editor and founder of Zooscape, an e-zine for furry fiction. Learn more at www.marylowd.com.

H.J. PANG has been writing novels and short stories since his time in Polytechnic. He also dabbles in poems when inspiration presents itself.

Despite the immense heat/rain and random climatic changes, H.J still resides in Singapore, where he finds inspiration in real and fictitious situations. He won 3rd place in Weasel Press' Feb 2018 Poetry contest, with works published in Goal Publication's *Symbol of a Nation*, Weasel Press' Typewriter Emergencies June 2018, as well as in The Jackal that Came in From the Cold by Fox Spirit Press (2019).

He can hopefully be prodded at https://twitter.com/hjpang3

NEIL S. REDDY writes short stories to escape the confines of his smothering life as a matchbox, do not pity him, he's planning a strike.

