

TESSERACTS SIXTEEN

PARNASSUS UNBOUND

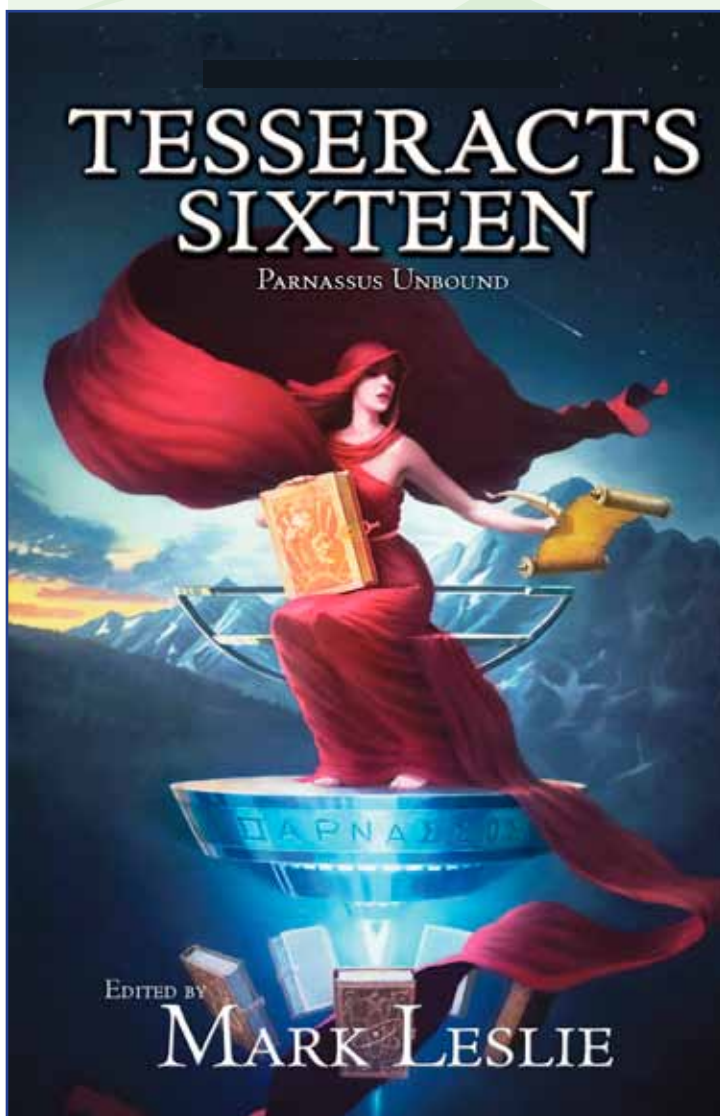
edited by Mark Leslie

The Anthology

This anthology joins a 25+ year Canadian literary legacy that features the writing and editing of more than 250 of Canada's best known authors. The theme for Tesseracts Sixteen is "Parnassus Unbound" and the stories focus on art, music, literature and cultural elements.

Authors

Neil Peart & Kevin J. Anderson
 Robert J. Sawyer
 Ryan Oakley
 Steve Vernon
 Hugh A. D. Spencer
 Sandra Kasturi
 Michael Kelly
 Rebecca Senese
 Randy McCharles
 Chadwick Ginther
 Stephen Kotowych
 Carolyn Clink
 J.J. Steinfeld
 David Clink
 Robert H. Beer
 Leia Getty
 Scott Overton
 Sean Costello
 Virginia O'Dine
 Melissa Yuan-Innes
 Derwin Mak
 Kimberly Footitt
 Matthew Jordan Schmidt
 Adria Laycraft
 Jeff Hughes



The Editor

Mark Leslie is a writer, editor and bookseller who has worked for Indigo/Chapters Books and the McMaster University bookstore. He currently works at Kobo as Director of Self Publishing and Author Relations. Apart from being published in numerous publications, he occasionally writes reviews and conducts interviews. He was the series editor for the North of Infinity sci-fi anthology series. Mark sits on the board of directors for BookNet Canada and is president of Canadian Booksellers Association. As an active member of the book industry Mark regularly speaks at about books, writing, and publishing.

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Short Stories / Fantasy

BISAC: FIC003000 / FIC028040

TESSERACTS

SIXTEEN

PARNASSUS UNBOUND

Mark's favorite writing quote: "If the desire to write is not accompanied by actual writing, then the desire is not to write."
— Hugh Prather in Notes to Myself



2

Who is Mark Leslie?

Writer, Bookseller, Book Nerd!

WRITER

It started with stick figure cartoons when he was really young, but Mark's passion for writing really began in public school when he would turn ANY opportunity for creative writing assignments and homework into epic tales and adventures. He started to get "serious" about being a storyteller and hammered out his first "novel" on an Underwood typewriter when he was 13 years old. That novel, an epic fantasy adventure (inspired by D&D characters) was epicly forgettable, but a good exercise and learning experience. Since then Mark has written hundreds of thousands more words and has been writing (and continually learning how to be a better writer) for more than three decades.

Mark's first published story was a short YA humour tale that was released in 1992, the year he graduated from Carleton University. From that point on, most of Mark's writing fell into the "Twilight Zone" camp of fiction - most closely associated with horror, but also including elements of science fiction and fantasy. His first published horror story "Phantom Mitch" appeared in *Wicked Mystic* magazine in October of 1993 and received honourable mention in *The Year's Best Fantasy & Horror #7* (Datlow & Windling). Since then, Mark has had dozens of speculative stories published in various magazines and anthologies including *Stardust* (edited by Julie E. Cz-

erneda), *Bound for Evil* (edited by Tom English), *Bluffs* (edited by Lawrence Steven) and *Fear of the Dark* (edited by Maria Cavicchiolo & Jason Rolfe). In 2004, Mark collected some of his previously published works in *One Hand Screaming*. In 2006, he edited *North of Infinity II*, an anthology of speculative stories for Mosaic Press. In 2009 Mark edited *Campus Chills*, a themed anthology featuring horror tales set on colleges & universities across Canada.

Mark is the editor for the latest in the award-winning anthology series *Tesseract* and will be releasing *Tesseract 16: Parnassus Unbound* in the fall of 2012.

He has a non-fiction "true ghost stories" book coming out from Dundurn Press in August of 2012 entitled *Haunted Hamilton: The Ghosts of Dundurn Castle & Other Steeltown Shivers*.

Mark's novel *I, Death* (which began life in 2006 as a serialized novella rolled out in a serialized blog) is coming in November 2012 from Atomic Fez. The first third of the novel is currently being pushed out "live" to the story's timeline at the following blog site: [I Death Novel](#) (please note this blog & novel contain extreme adult content, graphic violence and sexual situations)

BOOKSELLER

From 1993 until 2006 Mark worked for Indigo Books and Music, Inc. (previously known as Chapters; and prior to that known as Coles) in various roles and regions. He started as a part-time bookseller at Coles on Sparks

TESSERACTS

SIXTEEN

PARNASSUS UNBOUND

Street in Ottawa, then worked within The Book Company stores at Carlingwood Mall and Bank & Slater. He moved to Hamilton in 1997 and worked at Chapters in Ancaster as a Product Manager. In 1999 he took the role of Database Quality Manager for Chapters Online and spent 7 years learning the ins and outs of metadata, industry standards and SQL relational database systems.

In August of 2006, Mark retired from Indigo and began working at Titles - McMaster University's bookstore, which turned 75 years old the year he joined.

In September of 2006, after 5 wonder years at McMaster and successfully implementing an Espresso Book Machine into the Titles bookstore (under the "Titles on Demand" logo) Mark moved on to new challenges which included consulting work within the book industry.

In October 2011 Mark followed a passion that began as he toiled in the POD realm and became Director of Self Publishing & Author Relations for Kobo, a global ebook retailer that originated in and still operates its head office out of Toronto, ON Canada. And since early 2012, Mark can also be found haunting a Toronto bookstore; he is working part-time at the University of Toronto Bookstore, assisting them with their growing Espresso Book Machine and Print on Demand business.

BOOK NERD

Mark currently sits on the board of directors for BookNet Canada and is president of Canadian Booksellers Association. As an active member of the book industry (both as a bookseller and writer), Mark regularly speaks at conferences, conventions and workshops about books, writing, publishing and the use of Print-on-Demand technology, such as the Espresso Book Machine - McMaster's campus bookstore was the second location in Canada to acquire this technology

Mark is married not only to his writing but also to his beautiful wife Francine. In July of 2004, Mark and Francine were blessed with a little boy, Alexander. Apart from being published in numerous publications (under the name Mark Leslie), as well as having works occasionally appearing on his mother's refrigerator door, (under the name Mark Lefebvre), Mark occasionally writes reviews, conducts interviews and previously edited the non fiction content of Northern Fusion magazine (under the name Mark Leslie Lefebvre). When he's not playing around with his three given names, he can usually be found wandering, awestruck through bookstores or libraries.

Introduction

by Mark Leslie

Introduction: The Fountain

According to Greek Mythology, Mount Parnassus was sacred to Apollo (god of prophecy, music, intellectual pursuits and the arts) and home of the Muses. At the base of the mountain was a fountain named Castalia (a transformed nymph) that could inspire the genius of poetry for anyone who drank her waters or listened to her quiet soothing sounds.

Over the centuries, the term Parnassus has fallen out of common use. But when referred to it is often used in literature as a metaphor for the home of poetry, literature and learning.

The theme for Tesseracts Sixteen — *speculative fiction that was inspired by literature, music, art and culture* — draws heavily upon that modern referral. In selecting stories my goal was to attempt to capture not only the spirit of what might be found on Mount Parnassus, but to allow it to be released, freed from the mythological Greek mountain and expanded upon in a way that only speculative literature can "unbind" such a theme.

I am pleased to be able to present this wonderfully eclectic selection of stories and poems, chosen from hundreds of fantastic submissions received. In fact, I must pause and pay tribute to all those who contributed to Tesseracts Sixteen.

I could very easily have crafted together two or three volumes – the submissions themselves, therefore, took on a life of their own, and unbound me from my previous experience reading unsolicited submissions. As an editor, rejecting bad submissions is simple and easy. Rejecting good stories is tough; rejecting great stories is extremely difficult.

Without hyperbole, I can confidently say that selecting pieces for *Tesseracts 16: Parnassus Unbound* was excruciatingly painful.

TESSERACTS

SIXTEEN

PARNASSUS UNBOUND

4

What this experience tells me, however, is that there is no shortage of fine creative Canadian talent. I was honoured to be involved with this award-winning anthology series, and further honoured to have received such incredible submissions from so many great writers.

The tales and poems which made it into this book highlight not only the riches of what Canadian writers have to offer the speculative genre on this theme, but the unique manner by which the muses can be channeled.

Canadian writer, lyricist and musician, Neil Peart and his co-author Kevin J. Anderson (the only non-Canadian to grace this book's pages by way of his collaborative relationship with Peart) are an example of a unique cross-over inspirational feed between music and writing, which occurs more than once in this collection.

Anderson, who discovered Rush through an impulse purchase based on cover art that "looked cool" on the tiny stickers of the 1970's record club he belonged to, found himself inspired by the epic sci-fi concept album *2112* (which had been inspired by Ayn Rand's novel *Anthem*) and began following the band. Anderson was listening to the 1984 Rush album *Grace Under Pressure* which influenced him while plotting his novel *Resurrection, Inc.* So when the book came out he sent autographed copies to the band. Peart wrote back and the two discovered they had much in common, developed an ongoing correspondence and eventually found the opportunity to collaborate in "Drumbeats" a story involving a musician traveling through a remote African village who discovers a uniquely crafted djembe drum. That team effort sparked an ongoing desire to collaborate again, and *Clockwork Angels*, a novel tie-in to the Rush album of the same name, marks another unique collaboration between Peart and Anderson.

Other stories appearing here merge music and literature in a similarly interesting fashion. J. J. Steinfeld's "Gregor Samsa Was Never in The Beatles" for example, concerns a writer's attempt to create devolving into a deeply enveloping empathetic appreciation of literature. Robert H. Beer's "Artistic Liscence" is set in an Orwellian society and includes an entirely different sort of appreciation for the creative spirit.

In "Bemused" Leia Getty dives deep into the head of those inflicted with creative symbioses and Randy McCharles' "The Day the Music Died" looks at a future society desperately trying to reclaim music from a time and essence that has escaped humanity.

Virginia O'Dine's "Theatre of the Vulnerable" involves actors in a bizarre sort of reverse marionette role, while Kimberly Footitt's "I'm With The Band" explores an entirely different kind of puppeteer.

"The Faun and the Sylphide" by Derwin Mak examines the world of ballet enhanced by a special type of memory cloth while Rebecca Senese's "Language of Dance" concerns itself with an inter-species "dance competition" between humans and an alien race.

Language itself becoming sentient is the focus of Ryan Oakley's "Ghost in the Meme" and David Clink's cautionary "Sixteen Colours" explores the side effect of a parallel universe of people not able to experience more than intricate shades of colour.

If you continue to explore the threads and themes of the stories and poems you'll see similar linkages and how one author's work might effectively play off of the other. This involved placing a few reprints alongside original works; while the goal was to include as much original material is possible, it was important for me to assemble a mosaic of just the right pieces to get that desired effect; like a chief cooking with freshly sliced and ground ingredients alongside a few elements of the dish that had been previously prepared.

While many of the pieces here are meta-reflective works that refer to literature and culture itself or rely on the reader's familiarity with the cannon, such as Sandra Kasturi's "Mathom Measures" or to philosophical musings, as in Carolyn Clink's "Zombie Descartes Writes A Personal Ad" others delve into the process of writing itself, like Sean Costello's "Writers Block" and Michael Kelly's "Blink."

Allusions to the classical use of masks conjured in a frightening disturbing way come out in Matthew Jordan Schmidt's "Slava the Immortal" and the traditionally styled epic poem "Song of Conn and the Sea People" by Jeff Hughes that finishes off the book wonderfully not only ties in all the accoutrements of such a piece (such as epithets and calling on the muses) but is a wonderful ode to both the epic poems of the Greeks, Babylonians,

TESSERACTS

SIXTEEN

PARNASSUS UNBOUND

Romans and Anglo-Saxons of Homer, Gilgamesh, Aeneid and Beowulf and of the writing of Joseph Campbell while blending in a few standard sci-fi tropes.

And at this, I have barely touched upon half of the instances by which these works intersect with one another. So many more interconnectivities between all 27 pieces exist, but I'm sure you'd rather experience them yourself than continue to be delayed by my feeble attempts to describe them in my own words.

Chadwick Ginter writes in his story "Back in Black" about a music collector who seeks the *Holy Grail* of impossible boot-leg recordings that "magic is good music." He is right. But to extend Ginter's thought for this introduction: *magic is good writing*.

And Tesseracts Sixteen is magic.

As I have outlined, the stories you are about to read don't just concern themselves with the topics of art, music, literature, theatre, film and culture — they explode with them, reverberate with their very essence.

The authors whose works you are about to read are modern day Muses gifted with the ability to take the reader on fantastical journeys that are strikingly familiar in the references they draw from. They have sipped from the mythical fountain, gazed into the infinite reaches of the universe and of the endless depths of the mind and pulled together these tales of wonder and imagination.

So please, stop for a while, have a seat at the base of this mountain and listen to the hypnotic trickling water of the fountain . . .

Mark Leslie

About the Tesseracts series

The first Tesseracts anthology was edited by the late Judith Merril.

Since its publication in 1985, more than 279 Canadian authors, editors, translators and special guests have contributed 541 short stories and poems to the Tesseracts Series.

Some of Canada's best known speculative fiction writers have been published within the pages of these volumes - including Margaret Atwood, Susan Swan, and Hugo and Nebula award winning authors William Gibson, Spider Robinson, and Robert J. Sawyer.

The series has won the prestigious Canadian Aurora Award.

Each year a hand picked team of editors - which keeps the collections fresh, new and ever changing - is selected from the best of Canada's writers, publishers and critics.

The editors select innovative and futuristic short fiction and poetry from established and emerging voices in Canadian speculative fiction.

The entire series includes Tesseracts One through Sixteen, plus Tesseracts Q, which features translations of works by some of Canada's top francophone writers of science fiction and fantasy.

Marketing Plans

- Review copies sent (July).
- Ads: Online, LOCUS magazine, On Spec magazine, and the World Science Fiction Convention program. (September, October, November).
- Book launch events in Calgary, Chicago, Toronto. (August, October, November).
- Blog tour and interviews. (September - November)
- Direct mail postcard campaign to libraries, bookstores, readers. (September).