

OUR GROUND AND EVERY FRAGRANT TREE IS SHADED

By Jack Cady

* * * *

ON MOST DAYS WE THOUGHT of him as reliable, if we troubled to think of him at all as we walked the streets of this small coastal town. Our northwest harbor lies mostly wrapped with rain. Wind swirls the hallmark-mist of Pacific beaches lying north of California. The reliable James would appear walking toward you from the mist, like a specter risen from distant waves and on its course toward the haunting of a maritime museum, or a moored ship, or to blow wraith-like above rain-filled and empty streets. There seemed always something moist about him. He gave the impression of being soaked, as though a sheen of water silvered the sidewalks on which he strode. He would only, in fact, be on his way to work at a general store where the main preoccupations dealt with groceries.

And groceries being what they are, and James being who he was— which is to say, reserved and distant —we townspeople could scarcely have realized how that moist man might herald eternal sorrow. We do not exactly blame the reliable James for our troubles; and we will certainly not blame ourselves, but blame looks for somewhere to alight. We can say that trouble centers around the store, and the center of that store expresses the 19th century. The store rises Victorian and fanciful and filled with whispering shadows.

Today the place seems only a fey notion from long ago, but in 1870 its customers delighted in cathedral stained-glass windows through which occasional northwest sun painted sacks of feed with roseate glow, or bluely and greenly illuminated racks of corn brooms, new harness, axes, flour barrels; the hodge-podge of items either useful or ornamental on which Victorian lives depended.

And, if there is a curse on this town — and if we are doomed in some peculiar way— (because we recognize that to be human is to be doomed, but not necessarily in ways peculiar) doom began when Able Andrewes came to these parts in the late 1860s. Guns of the Civil War stood stilled. Frontier spread before settlers. Tall ships swam in our harbor surrounded by a babel of languages: Italian, Chinese, Japanese, English, German, Norwegian, Swedish and French. Andrewes traced his ancestry to English gentry; thus acted as a very proper type of gentlemanly adventurer— a bearer of the white man's burden — and he existed comfortably among Oriental faces, Mediterranean faces, Blacks, Indians, Hawaiians, and Samoans.

His Trading Post, as he chose to style it, became the largest building north of San Francisco. It rose four stories, with peaked Victorian roof and fanciful gables. Although structurally a warehouse, ten cathedral windows offered the impression of a church. The trading post stood more certainly, and certainly more handsomely, than any of the town's several churches.

The main floor displayed foodstuffs in kegs, barrels, loaves, bundles, and boxes. Spices and teas perfumed the store, while gas lamps provided light. Stained glass windows portrayed frontier trades: Indians bartering skins of sea otter, Chinese working lime, and, in this town, master builders erecting Victorian mansions.

In the basement rested what was then a modern miracle, a pulley-operated elevator capable of lifting a ton. The elevator carried new wood-burning cookstoves, pumps, bollards, ship fittings, bull tongue plows, wrought iron railings to surround widows' walks; heavy merchandise: ships' anchors to carriage axles. Andrewes made claim that his Trading Post carried at least one of every item manufactured.

The second floor displayed hardware, rifles, steel traps for gathering pelts. The third carried furniture: Victorian love seats, armoires, beds with richly carved roses, dressers, commodes, pier mirrors, hatstands in walnut and oak. On the fourth floor Andrewes established living quarters.

There are still folk in this town who remember Andrewes as an old, old man greeting dawn above the eastern range of mountains. By then, any consequences of Andrewes' actions lived among us. None of us can say that he engaged in criminal acts, but all of us know that he lived comfortably among those who did. He financed ships that carried bond slaves as well as goods. He discounted large orders of merchandise to men who dealt in marginally legal business, or in business that was neither moral or legal. People who remember Andrewes picture him standing on his fourth floor balcony, and he is clothed in proper Victorian attire. His hands reach toward the mountains, beckoning in the dawn, or, as some grumblers complain, calling for rooming light to dispel his self-inflicted darkness.

By then and honorably, he was long married, siring sons Edward and Charles. And, by then, he was more wraith than man. The fine English figure became diminutive over years. Late one night he visited his sons in their rooms, spoke to his sons kindly, then departed. His physician suggested that Andrewes wafted away on winds because he weighed less than his clothes. Andrewes disappeared in 1935.

His sons, Edward and Charles, continued to mind the store and these two would, through the years, come to depend on their reliable employee James.

This is a Victorian tale, Gentle Reader, and I am thus allowed to take you by the arm as we stroll past echoes of horror. Although I tell the tale as if "we," the people of the town are speaking, it's obvious a single person pens these words. I introduce myself as Baruch, a modem scribbler of records. During those times when I do not scribble, I make my living selling old books from a storefront on Ocean Street. Local opinion holds me as surly, aging, irascible, crusty — in short, a curmudgeon — and I foster the illusion.

But, Gentle Reader, since we are unlikely ever to meet, I need not be curmudgeonly with you. In fact, I beg your indulgence.

For a long time no one knew or cared where James spent his sleeping hours. If asked, we might suspect that he never left the store. After all, did he not always range from cellar to fourth floor of that mammoth enterprise? Did he not continually move, nearly ghost-like, between bundles of fresh asparagus and cans of pie mix? The man and the store intermingled. Only recently did we townspeople begin to fear. Inquiry brought discovery. James walks as a symbol of fear more dreadful than any of us have, heretofore, owned the courage to imagine.

James, we now understand, steps nightly from his round of groceries, walks the short distance to the harbor; is then swallowed by the tides, only to be spit ashore half an hour before the store opens. James sleeps, or walks, or God-knows-what beneath those waves. He in no manner resembles the living dead, is not a zombie. Such creatures walk the realms of the fantastic. About that reliable employee James, there is nothing fantastic.

We turn now, you and I, to a burden weighing heavy in this tale. That burden is the entire Victorian period, and Victorian dreams that toil and churn and thrust from the past; the calamities and the curse.

They saw themselves, those olden Englishmen, as bearers of the lamp of progress. They, like Able Andrewes, set forth as missionaries to dark races, bringing Bibles and rifles and machines. They acted, sometimes unwisely, and did not understand the effects of their actions. Nations fell before them. In their grandest hours they bowed to the highest forms of duty, for “duty” intertwined them like strands of rope. The proper Victorian feared failure to his duty more than he feared dying.

They also spoke of purity, were sternly fascinated with sex, and romantically fascinated with death. They dreamed of progress as they fashioned the Industrial Revolution. It takes no scribbler of antiquities to note Victorian styles still alive within us. Are we not bound by duty, oftentimes obscene? Do we not bore the world with eternal tut-tuts and quacks concerning sex? Have we not turned technology into a hotly forged divinity? Are not most places close to them in spirit? Do we not now pilfer souls, whereas Victorians boldly stole them? Which brings us back to the reliable James.

Once the facts became known, our mayor, who administers the town after business hours, visited the store and asked James, “Whatever in the bird-brained world was he doing?”; which in this small town is the best we can manage in the way of diplomacy. James replied, but not distantly, that he “paid attention to his own business.” He added that he was “minding the store.”

The store has changed little during the 20th century, and to the store I went on behest of the mayor, for I am the town historian. James stood beneath soft light through stained glass. Fresh cabbages lay boxed at his feet. He made check marks

on a packing list. His employers worked elsewhere: Edward handling receipts and deposits, Charles, who in his age is still sprightly, attending the cash register. Fatigue lined James's face, but his erect posture denied tiredness that drove bone deep. Groceries encircled him. In the cellar, beneath our feet, ranged drill presses and parts for modern tractors. Above us the store held sofas and china; screws, turnbuckles, manila rope and fishing gear.

"The mayor is a proud though foolish man," I told James. "He is also vexed."

"The mayor runs a feed lot," James replied in a soft voice. "He fattens stock. Nothing foolish about it for as long as folks need beef." Always before, James carried a Victorian reserve. Now his voice held quiet compassion. Thin brown hair lay sideways across his skull in vague attempt to cloak a bald spot. Large hands with stubby nails carried callus from years of stocking merchandise. Brown eyes were guileless as a child's, though somehow moist. In any dry goods store he would be directed to ready-made shirts and pants marked "medium."

His reply slowed me for a moment. Although I'm in trade, I've never regarded my bookstore as a holy habitation. James spoke in Victorian terms. To him, the mayor's feed lot justified the mayor's ambitions. Victorians truly believed that commerce worked a missionary influence, and England was a great mercantile nation.

"Even were the mayor an angel," I replied, "you beg the question. You are presently the only subject of conversation. Our ladies suggest iniquities, our loafers make uncomfortable jokes, and our banker fears for business. You will soon be the subject of sermons."

"Business picked up last month." James folded invoices and looked across racks of foodstuff like a father regarding a favorite child.

"Because you are notorious."

"'Afflicted' is a better word. I could tell you more, but there's enough sorrow in the world, so I'll not add to it. Let us please allow 'afflicted' to be the last word." His was an anguished and weary spirit in a fatigued body, but only a sharp eye could uncover his distress. Victorians never blinked before a downturn in fortune. He lighted in me a spark of compassion.

"I am not as harsh as my reputation would have me," I told him. "It is not ungentlemanly to accept assistance."

It was he who viewed me with compassion, looking beyond me finally to our quiet streets. "There's enough trouble for everyone," he whispered. "I should say no more."

Momentary terror walked across my soul. I stood among cabbages burnished with light through stained glass windows. Only the banality of the store shone true, for all else seemed filled with threat. The terror passed. My mind changed from fear to hideous and alien knowledge that said I grow old in an alien country. I age in a shameless nation of strange language, which has no respect for old men.

“I do not understand,” I told James in parting, “but fear that I will.” I stepped from the store and into our streets.

Was James a modem Jonah— swallowed by the tides then belched ashore—and was not Jonah’s sin the sin of Pride? I walked toward the harbor, walking by congeries of houses and huts. Victorian mansions glowered in company with rusting house trailers. A few split levels nested beside two storey frames; yet Victorian houses dominated. Before the turn of the century this town lay awash in wealth. Its fortunes saw decline when the first transcontinental railroad drove to tidewater at a different port. These great houses rose from trade; but trade not always luminous. Irish serving girls earned fifty cents a week, plus stingy room and board. Chinese bond slaves cooked lime and died in thousands. Indian and Malay prostitutes fell ravaged before sailors and disease. Fortunes flowered from that infamous poppy, opium.

I felt the press of antique darkness. Andrewes’ spirit still touches here. Too many people died badly in these parts. Some townsfolk claim to hear spectral voices in the wind, or distant weeping at the beginning of each new day. Dirges moan beyond the cause of simple avarice. In the name of progress young boys died from shanghai to merchant ships. Indian children saw their parents lynched. When smugglers avoided apprehension by authorities, they bound illegal immigrants in chain and dropped them screaming overboard; while in these great houses sounded tinkling notes from harpsichords, sounded the assured voices of wealthy men, the lyrical voices of their ladies.

At the harbor water moved like restless spirits. We live precariously beside this sea. Darkness rises from all horizons, but it is dark waters that beckon us. Every year a boat or two is drowned. Many, many hulks of sailing ships, coal burning ships, and modern steamers moulder beneath these waters.

What must James see beneath the waves? Skeletons, no doubt, skeletons representing failed hopes. He must see fortunes in cargo, even cargo once destined for Andrewes’ store. Perhaps he wanders beneath crystal chandeliers waving in water above dance floors of ships’ salons. Our remaining piers stand above great darkness, and the pull of the sea draws that irrational part of our minds to self destruction.

“IT’S ABLE ANDREWES,” Mamie Worthy told me when I encountered her at our

Carnegie library. "You young ones have no notion of the weight of things." Mamie is as old as Edward and Charles, which is to say she is eighty; twenty years older than I. She takes her last name more seriously than she ought. In her case, duty asks inquiry into all of town life. She can trace the lineage of every cat and dog, can predict births occurring fewer than nine months after marriage, and knows when a preacher stumbles in prayer, and why. Mamie's is not the voice of mirth, the voice of gladness. At the same time she is honest.

"I do not like you," she told me, "but that's not news. The news is why I do not like you. You are a lonely man who protects himself with loneliness. The rest of the town just thinks you're a snot."

"Yet, I like you," I replied with all truthfulness. "With the length of your nose from prying I should not, but there it is. Able Andrewes disappeared three years after I was born and two years after James saw life. By then Edward was twenty, and Charles nineteen. How can Able Andrewes have aught to do with us?"

Brightness faded briefly from her eyes. Her black dress, clean pressed and ankle length, seemed more alive than she. Sadness overcame her face. "I do not give a holy hoot what people do," she told me. "If you think there's a contradiction I'll remind you that you are a grown man who digs at the past like a dog after small bones. You figure it out."

"I like you," I told her, "not because you offer pleasure or charm, but because until now you have always been honest."

"You chose to remain in this town," she said in a voice a little larger than a whisper. "Why?"

"It has always been my home." My response was not sufficient, but I had never pondered the question.

"No dream took you away. Your answer will be found in the realm of Able Andrewes' dreams. I'll say no more." She turned from me. Her black skirts whispered like the tears of widowhood.

Victorian secrecy caused loneliness, and I returned to Victorian streets. Mamie is acute, though I resented her comments. I reminded myself that a man with books is never lonely. Because a man chooses not to marry, or sit at the local cafe and talk crops or business spells nothing. And, all men age in a strange land because styles change and youth is ignorant. The landscape of memory becomes more real than modern landscape.

Mamie seemed inhibited. I sought one who is not. Our town drunk in no manner resembles the humorous Irishman so beloved by storytellers. He is Swede Andersen, a tall and broad man in his day, who in other days fisted sail. Vessels with

auxiliary sail coasted these shores into the 1930s.

“Mamie takes things personal,” he told me, “but it isn’t Able Andrewes, it’s the store. Come to think of it, it’s both.” His diminished frame anchored the corner stool of our only tavern. Beyond windows, gray light walked the horizon. It wrapped around a fishing vessel swimming moderately heavy seas. Swede’s hands swell large around a beer glass, his knuckles dislodged in old accidents and fights. The rest of him seems no more than a cameo.

“How inebriated are you?”

“As well as can be expected,” he told me, “but suds don’t make me talk. I’d tell you anyway.” Eyes of thin blue, decorated with lines of red, watched the fishing vessel. “Damn fools,” he said about the fishermen, but his voice was filled with longing for the sea. “This business of getting old sure makes a leila think.”

“I have all afternoon,” I told him, “and the will to listen.”

“So James pokes around under the harbor, and it’s a wonder most of us ain’t with him for the stroll. We’re part of the store. You think I drink for fun?” Swede watched a young couple with a small child as they passed along the boardwalk. “Kids figure the world got made an hour before they were born,” Swede said about the couple. “James sure thought that way.”

Swede’s tale meandered, but gradually told of waste and sorrow. It centered on a daily round of innocuous tasks and perceptions. At eighteen James left for college and found no joy. He returned claiming study as impractical. The reliable James took a job at Andrewes store. He became reserved and distant.

“So he made a punk’s decision at eighteen,” Swede said, “and never looked back. He became the world’s leading expert on that store; every nook and cranny and item in stock. To this day he can still find button hooks that ain’t been used since World War I.”

“Which does not explain his actions.”

“It likely does,” Swede told me, “if you think about the Andrewes store and Andrewes. You probably figure that store stays alive because of the town, and you figure wrong. The store is what holds all the power here. The town stays alive because of the store.”

For a moment it seemed I owned someone else’s memory, or someone else owned mine. Once, long ago, I wished to really study history, and really write it. Now I only record the events of a Victorian town gone stale.

“We all stayed too long,” Swede said, “we stayed too long. Check with Mad

Willie for the rest of it. He's the only sane man in town."

"And you are not?"

"I'm part of the store," Swede said, and said it sadly. "So are you, but Willie, nope." Swede returned to drink and silence as I departed.

Unlike most village idiots, Willie is not easily found. I walked, knowing a day or two might pass before we met. One generally discovers Mad Willie in search for mushrooms and roots and herbs, or conversing with cattle in a near valley. His Indian and Filipino forebears combine in his sturdy frame. He strolls costumed in ragtag clothing from charity bins of churches. Animals delight in his presence, and children follow him until called away by fearful parents.

Gentle Reader, some Victorians were honest men and true, as, sometimes, are we. I must not debase a hundred years of toil without exceptions. And, when the rapacious 19th century gave way to the 20th, only the century changed. Victorian minds and values did not disappear because of dates on a calendar. Notions of "progress" continued. Nineteenth century trading posts would be replaced by a beatitude of goods in 20th century shopping malls.

And we, like they, write history every day while horror walks. We plant gardens as ghettos rise in flame. We task over dry cleaning bills while statesmen name themselves honorable men. This augers ill. Able Andrewes, gentleman, did not intentionally join in corruption, but corruption reaches forth and implicates. Victorians killed hundreds of thousands, while Andrewes' trade built this town. Victorian houses, once gorgeous, line our streets. We live in them, preserve them, and our century kills millions.

I stood before dawn outside Andrewes' store. James would soon arrive, and through the early streets our people passed: Paul Stenkey trudging toward the post office where he will sort and curse colorful flyers advertising goods, Madge Plummer to the weekly paper where she will report quibbles from city hall, and Jason Preston, young developer who is always three dollars short and two days late. I thought of long nights of correspondence at my store. Much of my income derives from rare books sold by mail to collectors.

Lights flared from the store as the Andrewes boys prepared for the business day. The store towered in darkness, and stained glass windows seemed to leap toward the mist. The windows rose like candles, or like colorful lamps of Victorian pride. Red and purple and blue mixed with oranges, yellows, greens, and browns. Here and there a spark of crystal twinkled, and here and there other glass shone black as polished ebony. Figures in stained glass— fishermen and loggers, carpenters and peat miners, draftsmen and bartenders — seemed to move because of the mist, slowly counting days of endless toil. Far away a church bell tolled.

“Willie heard you calling,” a voice said behind me. I turned to find Mad Willie dressed as a harlequin; faded yellow pants, red shirt, green cap. Willie may be mad, but he is well read, having mooched my castoff books for years. His broad, olive-colored face shone with enthusiasm. He carried bunches of wild carrots and wild celery.

“I didn’t call.”

“You did,” he said, “or else it’s magic. But, just think of cows, just think of them. Cows don’t miss much. Some are even Methodist.” He fervently began to explain bovine doctrines.

“We have a mystery unlikely solved by cows,” I told him.

“Unlikely solved by anyone else,” he told me, “plus some are Presbyterian.” He watched through dark mist as a milk truck pulled up before the store. The driver stepped slowly down, as if in dispraise of cows. “Miraculous,” Willie breathed. “You put in grass, and out comes milk and cheese and ice cream.” His delight sounded as large as his wonder.

“Something dark stalks this town,” I said. “James has become peculiar in his way. His reserve is gone and he speaks most kindly. Swede drinks but doesn’t care for it. Mamie is indifferent to events, and yet she pries. No one claims to fully understand. If someone does understand, that someone isn’t talking.”

“James does his eternal job,” Willie said seriously. “You do yours. Able Andrewes does his, and maybe some of what happens is wonderful.” For a moment the man seemed sane. His lips lost their silly smile, and his broad forehead furrowed with concentrated thought.

“There’s wonderment to it,” I said with grim voice, “but other words occur. Horror and death, for two.”

“Celery,” said Willie, and not unhappily. “*Apium graveolens*. In the wild state it is as rank as me, but with broader leaves. It is indigenous to marshy places near the sea. With breeding and blanching celery tums tame. Three varieties are cultivated, green, white, and red. Green is best, but James is white. Very little of the red shows up around here.”

“You must be feigning madness,” I told him, “while playing court jester spinning riddles.” It is impossible to dislike Willie, but also impossible not to become impatient with him.

“James is a master of inventory,” Willie said with dignity. “Do not speak of sanity and riddles in the same breath. Your sanity disappeared when you stopped fiddling. When questions cease, people buy someone else’s dream.”

“As James bought Andrewes’ dream?”

“And Andrewes, no doubt, bought an even older dream,” Willie murmured, sounding his sadness. “Steam power was first used in 1698 by Englishmen, the same year Daniel Defoe suggested better roads and insane asylums.” Willie looked toward cathedral windows still illuminated by electricity, more than by the first thin light of dawn. “Borrow all good dreams,” he whispered, “but in the name of holy spirits don’t buy them. When you buy, you may own something good, but you also own whatever evil those dreams spawned.”

“James is not without honor,” I said, feeling somehow that I defended myself more than I defended James.

“James is in the thrall of the store,” Willie said. “He changes because he has nothing left to lose. And, the store is in the thrall of an elder dream.” He cocked his head as if hearing distant voices in the mist. “They sometimes wail at sunrise,” he trilled. “Sad spirits call from shallow graves where progress placed them. Oh, this town once produced evil, evil, evil, yes it did.”

“But Andrewes only bought and sold:”

“And Andrewes wished to honorably work, and honorably raise children, and honorably grow old, and honorably die. But when a man begins to slide it seems like all creation gets greased up for the occasion. Andrewes became implicated. The store became greater than he. The store became the dream.” Willie pointed to cathedral windows aglow with Victorian ideals, and with work of Victorian hands. His face wrenched with a silly smile, but his voice sounded low, bereaved, whispering horror. “And there he sits, there he sits, he sits . . . Andrewes.” Willie choked, and pointed to a small space high on one window, a window overlooking the harbor. “See how slowly he works because he is old,” Willie said bemused, though still muttering as if through pain. “He is old, old, old, and yet he will never die because his sentence is not death, but dying.” Willie continued to point. “Dying but never dead for as long as dreams that put him there exist.”

Like cattle, we do not look up, yet walk beneath the stars. I turned to those windows I have passed for six decades, seeing but not seeing; turned toward glass which held the small, black-suited figure of Able Andrewes, his soul become one with his windows. Andrewes, disappearing, but forever present. The dark figure hunched before an account book. A quill pen moved with glacial slowness, yet moved. About him other figures moved, but glacially.

It is the mist I told myself, only mist, and knew I lied. Did Mamie know of this, did Swede? How many knew, yet feared to give their knowledge voice? Did James know ? And Charles and Edward, working each day beside this grim eternity?

And yes, James knew, but with charity of newly discovered kindness kept quiet.

“Andrewes tends the store,” Willie said, “and so does James. The wild carrot, *Daucus carota*, a member of the family *Umbelliferae*. . . .”

I turned from Willie, knowing that I would soon be shaking; knowing also, because I am old, that this horror must soon pass into a greater horror. Andrewes’ quill pen moved, although one must concentrate to see it, for the life of the windows breathes slowly; ancient vapors; Victorian men and ladies caught in near stasis between half-known dreams.

And, yes, James knew. I thought of my own daily round, and the rounds of others in this town while understanding James; that master of inventory.

Who walked, I had no doubt, within the holds of sunken ships, and beside skeletons that once knew dreams. James, a creature of the store, inventorying drowned cargo destined for the store. James, a creature stepping always in behalf of the store, stepping more slowly each year; but always stepping. That genius of inventory.

And yes, I knew that all of us are creatures of the store. We bought Andrewes’ dream. The store could not have gained such power otherwise. Now a violent circle closes with quiet violence. When the store became the dream, it made the dream immortal. We are trapped. The future becomes a dirge, helling through heat of day and frost of night above the bones of our fathers.

I might have been a prophet instead of a scribbler, or a true historian rather than a recorder of facts. I might not have been lonely. And, my fellow townsmen, what might they have been? No matter. In a way I am not lonely, for all of my townsmen are encased like Andrewes in his stained glass -trapped with less grace than a bee embalmed in amber, for the bee is dead—while we are only, and eternally— dying. Mamie will eternally gossip. Swede will eternally drink. I will eternally sell old dreams as the newspaper prints old news. Able Andrewes, green grocer, will keep accounts. I turned toward the harbor.

The reliable James appeared, walking toward me through mist to become my comrade as we plod through time. From somewhere in the mist Willie hummed a hymn to morning. James stopped before me.

“It isn’t so bad,” he said quietly. “But it does go on and on.” His moist eyes dulled beyond horror, could no longer see horror. For a moment he trembled, thus still knew some emotion. “People do need things,” he said, and visibly controlled his trembling, “but I suppose we should warn the children.” Then he tasted the futility of his statement. “They wouldn’t listen,” he said vaguely, and moved toward the store.

I felt not fear, but anger, and the need to strike. It was a loathsome need. No man of honor, no gentleman, could answer this blow with cruelty. When there is nothing left to lose, one must at least answer as James does, with kindness.

Thin sunlight cut the mist, and stained glass windows dulled before me, Gentle Reader; dulled before me like slow movement through slow aeons. There was aught to say except give thanks — thanks — that — at least— you are spared: for surely you are wise, and do not buy other people's dreams. Surely you, unlike we, are not tending the store; are not, because of the store, enthroned by time forever, or, because of the store, forever perishing.

* * * *

Jack Cady's first story for F&SF, "The Night We Buried Road Dog" (January, 1993), just won the Nebula award for Best Novella. It is also a nominee for the Stoker award and for the Hugo award. His short story collection, *The Sons of Noah*, received a World Fantasy Award. "Road Dog" will be the title story in his next collection, to be published by Arkham House. In October, St. Martin's Press will publish Jack's novel, *Street*

"Our Ground and Every Fragrant Tree is Shaded" is a Victorian story with very modern sensibilities.