

SF SIGNAL

2012 HUGO NOMINEE FOR BEST FANZINE AND BEST FANCAST

[GUEST REVIEW] Jenn Brissett on 'The Bleeding Man and Other Science Fiction Stories' by Craig Strete

By Jennifer Brissett | Wednesday, January 18th, 2012 at 2:00 pm

Jennifer Marie Brissett holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the Stonecoast Program at the University of Southern Maine and a Bachelor's in Interdisciplinary Engineering from the College of Engineering at Boston University. She has published stories in **Warrior Wisewoman 2**, **The Future Fire**, and **Halfway Down the Stairs**, for which her work was nominated for the *Dzanc Best of the Web Series*.



Jorge Luis Borges called the stories of Craig Strete "shattered chains of brilliance." Salvador Dali said, "like a new dream, his writings seizes the mind." First published in 1974 and then again in 1977, this book has its forward written by none other than the great [Virginia Hamilton](#) who dubs him "the first American Indian to become a successful Science Fiction writer" and says that "the writing is smooth and unassuming, and yet the fabric of it is always richly textured." **The Bleeding Man** and many other out-of-print titles by Strete are available in [eBook format for free](#). Reading this book has made me a true lover of eBooks, since they seem to have the power to bring a long-silent voice back from the great beyond.

The Bleeding Man is a powerful introduction to an author who is, for me, brand new. In this short book, peppered with tiny typos, I found a welcome dish for my hungry reading palate. Strete's words are not written in the clean overly-polished prose of today. They are sparse and firm. Strete says in his stories what he means and means what he says. And that is totally refreshing. Both mainstream and genre authors alike, I find, are too infatuated with the perfectly balanced sentence. It has relegated storytelling to the realm of the dead. Stories should be alive. Stories should haunt you and stay with you long after you finish reading them. Stories should, to quote Gioia Timpanelli, "show you the way."

In Strete's worlds, colonization is not idealized as it often is in most science fiction stories. He gives you the other side—the dark side—of capturing a land and its people and claiming them for your own. Yet, these are not the words of a victim. On the contrary, these are the words of a seer and a conjurer of dreams.

The story that opens the book, "**Into Every Rain, a Little Life Must Fall**," is a eerie prediction of the surveillance culture that we have now entered. A future police officer finds himself with the impossibility of encountering a person who cannot be found in the computer system. This makes for an exciting night for the once bored out-of-his-mind Wombcop.

"**White Brothers from the Place Where No Man Walks**" may be the most terrifying of the collection. In this story, Uzmea the storyteller tells a people that they have no future. Uzmea is of another race and speaks in a strange language to strange gods. He prophesies what awaits the people: "The white man will take your land. He will point you to the West, but there is no home for you there."

"**When They Find You**" is a bitter love story. It is a tale of loneliness and family and racism and conformity. A man lives alone on a new world, making money from a valuable commodity found only there. He swears he will never touch an alien woman until he sees *her*. She is traded to him for a shirt and they live together peacefully for a long time. They never speak a word that the other understands, yet they seem to understand one another. She even bears him a child after surgery allows her to do so. Are they man and wife? Is there love between them? I'm not sure. But one thing is for sure, their lives are forever altered when his people begin to arrive.

"**A Sunday Visit with Great-grandfather**" is, in my opinion, the weakest story in the bunch. It is about a

Search

Stay Connected



INSTAGRID

15330 readers
BY FEEDBURNER

8115 Followers
twittercounter.com

Podcast feeds



Tags

Analog Art Asimov's Batman [Book](#)
[Cover Smackdown](#) [Books](#)
[Received](#) [Book Trailer](#) [Catching Up on SciFi Movies](#) [Doctor Who](#) [eBooks](#) [Ellen Datlow](#)
fantasy [Free Fiction](#) [guest post](#) [horror](#) [interview](#) [J.C. Hutchins](#) [Jeff VanderMeer](#) [John Aneallo](#) [John Scalzi](#) [Kindle](#) [Kirkus](#) [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#) [Lavie Tidhar](#) [Lou Anders](#) [Mary Robinette Kowal](#) [Mike Resnick](#) [Mind Meld](#)

great-grandfather objecting to the teachings his great-grandson receives in school. I understand that this is supposed to be a humorous take on the forced re-education that indigenous children once had to endure from colonizing peoples. But the twist in the end comes across as obvious. This story pales in comparison to the others in the collection.

The story **"Mother of Cloth, Heart of Clock"** broke my heart and was my personal favorite. We are never told what kind of creature the protagonist is. I envision him to be a chimpanzee. In any case, it doesn't really matter. The point of view is what makes this a powerful tale. When he was young he was petted and adored, but no more. His fur has gotten matted. No one cares for him anymore. He is isolated and alone. The harshness of his existence among humans comes through strongly. He is a creature at our mercy. He doesn't understand us and the things that we do. He has given up trying to understand and now just wants to sleep and dream. He senses his own mortality. He has accepted his fate.

The title story, **"The Bleeding Man,"** is a haunting tale that is, at times, quite grotesque. As the title suggests, the main character bleeds profusely and has since birth. He doesn't speak. He only sits menacingly and bleeds. Researchers are studying him and when they fail to understand him, they decide to dissect him. This is *not* a good idea.

These are truly wonder tales and I totally enjoyed my first venture into the world of Craig Strete. But if the work of Craig Strete (or Craig Kee Strete) is so great, why is he a forgotten author? How is it possible that a writer such as this could disappear and be dropped from memory? Well, I did a little digging and the answer is kind of ugly. The short version of it is told in an [io9 article](#):

Two writers, Ron Montana and Craig Strete, collaborated for a time, and then Montana later accused Strete of ripping off his novel, **Death In The Spirit House**. The case became a huge brou-ha-ha, with writers taking both sides, but author Sheldon Teitelbaum investigated and decided that it was more a misunderstanding than a case of out-and-out theft.

I don't know what exactly went on here. This all happened when I would have still been a kid in high school, but I will say this, I personally don't believe Strete stole anything. The idea that Strete (or anyone) would ruin his successful career after two Nebula nominations* in order to steal someone else's work so blatantly doesn't pass the smell test. I do get a whiff of something, though, and it stinks. What makes me really sad about this situation is that an entire generation (possibly two) have been deprived of this excellent work. I have no idea how it would have affected me to have read the work of Craig Strete when I was younger. And I can only imagine how a Native American science fiction writer of this caliber could have inspired writers of color over the years.

So go rediscover Craig Strete! It's almost a sin not to...

* [Nominated for the nebula for "Time Deer" \(1975\) and "The Bleeding Man" \(1975\)](#)

[Share/Bookmark](#)

Related posts:

1. [\[GUEST POST\] James Bloomer On The Bleeding \(and Tedious\) Edge of Science Fiction](#)
2. [\[GUEST POST\] Stephen Gaskell on Riding the Light Fantastic: Ten Sun-Inspired Science Fiction Stories](#)
3. [\[GUEST REVIEW\] T.K. Kenyon on 'The Best Science Fiction and Fantasy of the Year Volume Five' Edited by Jonathan Strahan](#)
4. [\[GUEST REVIEW\] Athena Andreadis Reviews Shine: An Anthology of Near-Future Optimistic Science Fiction, edited by Jetse de Vries](#)
5. [GUEST POST: Jennifer Brissett Weighs in on the Writer Pay Rate Flap](#)

Tagged with: [Craig Strete](#) • [guest post](#) • [Jenn Brissett](#)

Filed under: [Book Review](#)













Like this post? [Subscribe to my RSS feed](#) and get loads more!

[Comments RSS Feed](#)

One Comment

Music [Nebula Awards](#) [new author](#) [spotlight](#) [podcast](#) [science fiction](#) [Short Film](#) [Star Trek](#) [Star Wars](#) [steampunk](#)
Sunday Cinema [Superman](#) [Tidbits](#) [TOC](#) [top](#)
[posts](#) [Trailer](#) [vampires](#) [zombies](#)

Recent Comments

-  Jeff VanderMeer commented on [MOVIE REVIEW: Prometheus \(2012\)](#) (3 hours ago)
-  Brad Beaulieu commented on [SPECIAL ROUNDTABLE: Bear, Beaulieu, Stross and Ziegler Discuss the Role of Modern Literary Speculative Fiction](#) (3 hours ago)
-  Casey Samulski commented on [MOVIE REVIEW: Prometheus \(2012\)](#) (4 hours ago)
-  Jeff Patterson commented on [MOVIE REVIEW: Prometheus \(2012\)](#) (4 hours ago)
-  Spaz commented on [SPECIAL ROUNDTABLE: Bear, Beaulieu, Stross and Ziegler Discuss the Role of Modern Literary Speculative Fiction](#) (5 hours ago)
-  tam commented on [MOVIE REVIEW: Prometheus \(2012\)](#) (5 hours ago)
-  Gary Gibson commented on [MOVIE REVIEW: Prometheus \(2012\)](#) (5 hours ago)
-  Gary Gibson commented on [MOVIE REVIEW: Prometheus \(2012\)](#) (5 hours ago)
-  Jeff VanderMeer commented on [MOVIE REVIEW: Prometheus \(2012\)](#) (6 hours ago)
-  John H. Stevens commented on [The Bradbury Effect > The Amazon Effect](#) (7 hours ago)
-  John H. Stevens commented on [The Bradbury Effect > The Amazon Effect](#) (8 hours ago)
-  Gerry M. Allen commented on [MOVIE REVIEW: Prometheus \(2012\)](#) (8 hours ago)

BlogRoll

- [All Things From My Brain](#)
- [Analog](#)
- [Antick Musings](#)
- [Asimov's SF](#)
- [Asking the Wrong Questions](#)
- [Author Blogs](#)
- [Auxiliary Memory](#)
- [Best SF](#)

Zachary Jernigan says:

January 21, 2012 at 9:29 am

Awesome, Jenn. Thanks for reintroducing a great author!

[Reply](#)



Leave a Reply

Name (required)

Mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

* Copy This Password *

* Type Or Paste Password Here *

[Submit Comment](#)

- ▷ Beware the Hairy Mango
- ▷ Bibliophile Stalker
- ▷ Big Dumb Object
- ▷ Blastr
- ▷ Concatenation
- ▷ Clarkesworld
- ▷ Club Jade
- ▷ CoolVibe
- ▷ Deep Genre
- ▷ Dragon Page
- ▷ Fantasy & Science Fiction
- ▷ Free Speculative Fiction
- ▷ Functional Nerds
- ▷ Geekend
- ▷ Gravity Lens
- ▷ io9
- ▷ Interzone
- ▷ Locus (Index/Awards)
- ▷ Locus Roundtable
- ▷ Mumpsimus
- ▷ Notes from Coode Street
- ▷ Pat's Fantasy Hotlist
- ▷ RevolutionSF
- ▷ SciFan
- ▷ SciFi Chick
- ▷ SciFi Songs
- ▷ SF Awards Watch
- ▷ SF Crowsnest
- ▷ SF Scope
- ▷ SF Site
- ▷ SFF Audio
- ▷ SFF Meta
- ▷ Slice of Sci-Fi
- ▷ Spiral Galaxy Reviews
- ▷ Staffer's Musings
- ▷ Stainless Steel Droppings
- ▷ Stomping on Yeti
- ▷ Strange Horizons
- ▷ Swivet
- ▷ Thrilling Wonder Story
- ▷ Velcro City Tourist Board
- ▷ Visions of Paradise
- ▷ Website at the End of the Universe

CATEGORIES

- ▷ Anime
- ▷ Art
- ▷ Awards
- ▷ Book Review
- ▷ Books
 - ▷ Free Fiction
- ▷ Columns
 - ▷ Be My Victim
 - ▷ Beware The Hairy Mango
 - ▷ E-Libris
 - ▷ Geek with Lots of Books
 - ▷ Roll Perception Plus Awareness
 - ▷ Stained Glass Gothic
 - ▷ State of the Art
 - ▷ The Bellowing Ogre
 - ▷ The Wayward Time-Traveler
 - ▷ To the Ends of the Universe
 - ▷ Words and Pictures

ARCHIVES

- ▷ June 2012
- ▷ May 2012
- ▷ April 2012
- ▷ March 2012
- ▷ February 2012
- ▷ January 2012
- ▷ December 2011
- ▷ November 2011
- ▷ October 2011
- ▷ September 2011
- ▷ August 2011
- ▷ July 2011
- ▷ June 2011
- ▷ May 2011
- ▷ April 2011
- ▷ March 2011
- ▷ February 2011
- ▷ January 2011
- ▷ December 2010
- ▷ November 2010
- ▷ October 2010
- ▷ September 2010
- ▷ August 2010
- ▷ July 2010
- ▷ June 2010
- ▷ May 2010

- Contest
 - Cthulhu
 - Events
 - Games
 - Humor
 - Interviews
 - Mind Meld
 - Meta
 - Movies
 - Star Wars
 - Music
 - Weekend Playlist
 - Podcast
 - Polls
 - Science and Technology
 - Computers
 - Space
 - Tidbits
 - Tube Bits
 - TV
 - Battlestar Galactica
 - Doctor Who
 - Firefly
 - Heroes
 - LOST
 - Star Trek
 - Stargate
 - Uncategorized
 - Web Sites
 - Zombies
- April 2010
 - March 2010
 - February 2010
 - January 2010
 - December 2009
 - November 2009
 - October 2009
 - September 2009
 - August 2009
 - July 2009
 - June 2009
 - May 2009
 - April 2009
 - March 2009
 - February 2009
 - January 2009
 - December 2008
 - November 2008
 - October 2008
 - September 2008
 - August 2008
 - July 2008
 - June 2008
 - May 2008
 - April 2008
 - March 2008
 - February 2008
 - January 2008
 - December 2007
 - November 2007
 - October 2007
 - September 2007
 - August 2007
 - July 2007
 - June 2007
 - May 2007
 - April 2007
 - March 2007
 - February 2007
 - January 2007
 - December 2006
 - November 2006
 - October 2006
 - September 2006
 - August 2006
 - July 2006
 - June 2006
 - May 2006
 - April 2006
 - March 2006
 - February 2006
 - January 2006
 - December 2005
 - November 2005
 - October 2005
 - September 2005
 - August 2005
 - July 2005
 - June 2005
 - May 2005
 - April 2005
 - March 2005
 - February 2005
 - January 2005
 - December 2004
 - November 2004
 - October 2004
 - September 2004
 - August 2004
 - July 2004
 - June 2004
 - May 2004

- ✦ April 2004
- ✦ March 2004
- ✦ February 2004
- ✦ January 2004
- ✦ December 2003
- ✦ November 2003
- ✦ October 2003
- ✦ September 2003
- ✦ August 2003
- ✦ July 2003

Copyright © 2012 [SF Signal – A Speculative Fiction Blog](#)

Powered by [Flexibility 3](#)