

GARDNER DOZOIS SF HALL OF FAME INTRODUCTION

By Connie Willis

When I was asked to introduce Gardner Dozois
on his induction into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame,
I thought I'd be telling all of you--
and the world at large--
all the things Gardner's done to deserve this wonderful honor.

But when I called to congratulate Gardner,
it was clear he was convinced he'd been chosen
A. because (and I quote) "I'll be dead soon"
B. "because I'm all washed up"
Or C. They had gotten him confused with someone else.

Which is a possibility, I suppose,
although I don't think so.
In the announcement
they distinctly mentioned 15 Hugos.
And a windup jumping penis.

So anyway,
what this conversation told me was that
I was going to have to tell you
AND Gardner
all the reasons why he is being given this honor
which he so richly deserves.

One, he's a wonderful editor.
As if his 15 Best Editor Hugo Awards aren't proof enough of that,
there are the 29 Year's Best Science Fiction collections
he's edited,
which are considered the gold standard of the field,

and there's the fact
that for every one of the nearly twenty years
he edited ASIMOV'S MAGAZINE,
he was THE editor to sell to.

He put an indelible imprint on every issue of the magazine,
published authors from Gene Wolfe
to Ursula K. Leguin
and Kim Stanley Robinson,

from Harry Turtledove
to Bruce Sterling
and Jack McDevitt
and Charles Stross.\

He published Joe Haldeman's first story.
And George R.R. Martin's
And Kage Baker's
And Allan Steele's
And Michael Bishop's
And Corey Doctorow's

And, back when he was working as an assistant editor at Galaxy,
mine.

My story was pretty awful,
but all the others he's bought over the years
were really good,
stories like "The Hemingway Hoax"
and "Enter a Soldier, Later, Enter Another"
and "Bears Discover Fire"
and "Beggars in Spain"
and "Seven Views of Olduvai Gorge."
Award winners, all,
I might add.

And, as Michael Swanwick put it,
Gardner's name will forever be associated with the magazine,
as Campbell's is with ANALOG
and Ross's is with THE NEW YORKER.

Two, before he was the best-known
and best-loved editor in the field
(quite a feat, when you consider nobody likes being edited),

Gardner was an acclaimed writer,
the author of memorable short stories
like "Chains of the Sea"
and "A Traveler in an Antique Land."

His stories "Morning Child" and "The Peacemaker"
were Nebula winners,
and his alternate-history novelette "Counterfactual"
won the Sidewise Award in 2006.

He's also written novels:
NIGHTMARE BLUE (with George Alec Effinger)
HUNTER'S RUN (with George R.R. Martin and Daniel Abraham)
and a solo novel, STRANGER.

Three, he's one of the greatest experts on science fiction there is,
the person I always go to
when I have a question like"
"Okay, there's this story--I don't know what it was called
or who wrote it,
but it's about the universe starting to shrink,
only there's no way to tell
because it's all shrinking at the same rate and--

"The Xi Effect," he says. "By Philip Latham. 1950."

But he doesn't just know the facts--

he's thought long and hard about the field,
how it developed
and where it's going
and why it's important.

He loves science fiction
and is utterly serious about it,

though serious is not a word always associated with him.

That's because
Four, he's a comedian and raconteur par excellence
with a unique gift for entertaining people.

Everyone in the field has a story--

--the time Gardner reduced everyone to helpless hysterics
with his readings from the slush pile

--and the time Gardner regaled everyone with his version
of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"
sung to the tune of "Gilligan's Island."

--and the dinner where everyone pretended
they were the Algonquin Round Table
and Gardner insisted on being Dorothy Parker,
even though I wanted to be Dorothy Parker, and...
well, never mind

--and the dinner where Gardner was being so funny
the waiter quit somewhere between the salad and the main course

--and the time he made me laugh so hard
I accidentally snorted a piece of lettuce up my nose
and nearly killed myself

--not to mention the cheese doodles
and the plastic jumping penis
and the...well, never mind about that either...

The point is that Gardner Dozois
is one of the funniest people on this planet or any other.
And the gift of laughter
is nothing to be sneezed--or snorted--at
in these grim times.

And finally,
Five,
in spite of all these accomplishments,
you don't have an ego the size of Montana,
and in spite of all the evidence,
don't think you belong in the Hall of Fame.

Gardner, you do.
You're a brilliant editor,
a brilliant comedian,
and a brilliant writer.
And you deserve not only this place
in the Science Fiction Hall of Fame,

but also an honored place
at the Algonquin Round Table,
where you'd get to be Robert Benchley,
Harpo Marx,
and Dorothy Parker.

Welcome to the Science Fiction Hall of Fame.