

# Tightbeam 342

March 2023



City Slicker by José Sánchez

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March 2023

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Anime Reviews are courtesy Jessi Silver and her site [www.s1e1.com](http://www.s1e1.com). Ms. Silver writes of her site "S1E1 is primarily an outlet for views and reviews on Japanese animated media, and occasionally video games and other entertainment." Cedar Sanderson's reviews and other interesting articles appear on her site [www.cedarwrites.wordpress.com/](http://www.cedarwrites.wordpress.com/) and its culinary extension. Jason P. Hunt's reviews appear on [SciFi4Me.Com](http://SciFi4Me.Com)

Tightbeam is published approximately monthly by the National Fantasy Fan Federation and distributed electronically to the membership.

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## Editorial

We hope that you enjoy the issue. We keep receiving reviews from new sources, so the flavor of the reviews may change from time to time.

We have been faulted for not using enough artwork, so this time we have a bit more.

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## Letter to the Editors

Editors:

Years ago, fellow Neffer George Wells sent me a number of Nefzine back issues from the 1970s. Over the years, I've also obtained additional back numbers of Tightbeam and other titles which I'll eventually scan to fill in the gaps of our online archives and contribute to Fanac. Given that I recently received Tightbeam #340-341, I've been spending some time with the Tightbeam back issues, which range from 1964-1972. A few of them are addressed to Anne F. Ashe, then of Freeville, N.Y., and Wells, who lived at the time in Riverhead, N.Y. Wells, who now lives in Arizona, remains active on Facebook—and turns 80 next month. Happy birthday in advance, George!

Decades ago, the entirety of Tightbeam was composed of letters from Neffers, about any old thing. A true letterzine, it had more in common with round robins than the mailing comments of apae or fanzine lettercols because the letters were just that: letters in response to letters rather than other content—true correspondence. For example, Tightbeam #23 from early 1964 (#24 is dated March of that year) includes letters from Ken Kruger, Ron Ellik, Franklin M. Dietz, Donald Franson, Stan Woolston, Roy Tackett, Joe Staton, Albert Lewis, Edward E. Smith, Jim Harkness, Andrew Silverberg, Frank Hiller, Arnold Katz, S.W. Paul Wyszowski, G.M. Carr, John Boston, Eric Blake, Les Sample, Irvin Koch, Stephen R. Compton, John Kusske Jr., Edward Wood, Steven David Kasle, Mike Randall, George Nims Raybin, Len Bailes, George Fergus, Nate Bucklin, Lou Pochet, Mike Irwin, Walter Breen, Ronald E. Hicks, and Dick Finch. There are some delights and surprises among that list—Ellik! Franson! Staton! Smith! Bailes! Breen!—and each letter in the 25-page edition begins with their mailing address to encourage member interaction.

Everybody knew each other. Everybody was involved in the N3F. Everybody shared news about their lives, their local fanac, the N3F itself, and sf, fantasy, and horror more broadly. This issue is already available in our online archives—<https://tinyurl.com/Tightbeam23>—if you'd like to take a taste yourself. And it is in its spirit that I write to the readers of Tightbeam. I encourage you to do the same!

In Tightbeam #340, the January issue, there was one letter, from Lloyd Penney. In #341, published this month, there aren't any. So I suppose I write mostly to Lloyd. It's an honor for the N3F to receive your first LOC of 2023. You're one of the people whose names I scan for in lettercols the fanzine world over, and I wish you well in this year's FAAn Awards. I aspire to one day be worth considering for its Best Letterhack category. You earned such in 2000 and 2002, receiving the Harry Warner Jr. Memorial Award for Best Fan Correspondent in 2005, 2007, and 2009. Now that you're editor-in-chief of Amazing Stories, I look forward to ongoing correspondence—as well as future issues of the magazine. Even though I know your time will face greater demands.

I, too, miss Justin E.A. Busch. I hope he receives some well-deserved posthumous recognition in the above-mentioned FAAn Awards, and I will miss reading *Far Journeys* and working with him as a contributor to *Films Fantastic*. John Hertz of *Vanamonde* recently submitted a memorial to Busch that will appear in an upcoming Nefzine. He was indeed a bright light amongst our ranks. *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* is among my DVD collection, though I haven't yet seen it. I suppose I've seen most of the Harry Potter movies, though I only read perhaps the first few books by J.K. Rowling. My wife, however, read them in parallel with our son, who's now 19 and going to college in Tokyo—it snowed there recently, the first snow in the city for two years!—when he was younger, but I didn't join them. Now, I don't know if I'll return to them; there's plenty of other books to read, and I think the bloom is off Rowling's rose.

I don't have any books by John Michel or Ross Rocklynne in my personal library. I shall revisit Jon D. Swartz's bio-bibliographies in Tightbeam #338-339 and add them to my list of authors to explore. Most

recently, I've enjoyed the Judith Merril-edited SF: The Year's Greatest Science-Fiction and Fantasy (Dell, 1959)—Telegraphs & Tar Pits #45 and #53—and I've been enjoying the 1953 Frederik Pohl-edited Shadow of Tomorrow (Faculae & Filigree #18 and T&T #52-53).

And just last night, inspired by lettercol discussion in Alexiad Vol. 21 #6, I began reading E.E. Smith's Triplanetary. I've never read any of the Lensman series, and so far, it's an intriguing read, particularly the differences between and the machinations of the Arisians and Eddorians. Which side are you on?

From Tightbeam #340, we know what Jeff Copeland, Caroline Furlong, J.R. Handley, and Jessi Silver have been watching; what Swartz has been reading—I sent your Patricia Highsmith profile to a friend who's been working on a graphic novel featuring Highsmith—and what Cedar Sanderson has been eating. What have other Neffers been reading and watching? Write a letter to Tightbeam and let us know; it doesn't even have to take the form of a review.

Finally, I've been noodling on several N3F projects in recent weeks. After the success of our anime screening in June 2022, I've programmed another event, which will most likely occur in March. Watch the Facebook group for relevant announcements. I also recently came across a collection of fanart that Patsy Williams-King had sent me several years ago and wonder whether a chapbook featuring her artwork would be of interest to Neffers. And I'd like to take the pulse of the N3F for interest in a book discussion group. We'd pick a book to focus on periodically, and meet via Google Hangouts to discuss it.

I hope all is well with you and yours. Let's collectively rekindle the wonder of our letterzine. Write a letter to Tightbeam, or write me! My address is 4367 Globe Ave., Culver City, CA 90230. My email is kalel@well.com. I am on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/h3athrow>. You can even text me at 718-755-9840, and we'd welcome your presence in <https://www.facebook.com/groups/n3flist>. I look forward to getting to know you—wherever that might occur.

Putting it on a tight beam,

Heath Row

Editor: However, Tightbeam has rigid space limitations, which we have reached, so please send your letters to [phillies@4liberty.net](mailto:phillies@4liberty.net) for publication in the FanActivity Gazette.

## Anime

### Saga of Tanya the Evil Review by Jessi Silver

Tanya Degurechov used to be one of Japan's elite office workers, but because of a wrathful god, was reborn as a little girl. She has blonde hair, blue eyes, and nearly transparent white skin, and she flies through the air and mercilessly strikes down her opponents. She speaks with a young girl's lisp and commands the army. Tanya prioritizes optimization and career advancement above all, and she will become the most dangerous entity among the Imperial Army's sorcerers. – ANN

Streaming at: Crunchyroll  
Number of Episodes: TBA  
Source: Light Novel/Manga

Episode 1 Summary: In a pseudo-European world under siege, young mage Tanya Degurechov is the weapon that the Empire needs to fight off the various entities that would trample on her fatherland's borders. Tanya appears to be a young girl of ten years old, but her ruthlessness and ability to dole out orders





were at risk, and purposely sent them to their deaths.



Impressions: Even though there are a good number of anime this season that I'm at least a bit interested in, I decided to go off script a bit and watch something that I knew had aspects I probably was not going to like. Military fiction (and especially thinly-veiled attempts to rewrite World War I/II era military history) always make me a little bit uncomfortable, especially since Japan seems to maintain a kind of weird romanticism focused around Germany or the German-esque. There are many examples of modern attempts to recreate the aesthetics of that era (for example, some lolita fashion lines that incorporate recognizable Nazi motifs, or cosplayers who don replica Third Reich uniforms for fun) while sugar-coating or tiptoeing around the bulk of the bad things that happened and crimes that were committed during the time period. It skeeves me out and I very much question the motivation behind it.

Likewise, one trope of anime in particular that leaves me cold is the one in which very cutesy characters are contrasted with the unthinkable horrible acts they are made to commit. It didn't work for me in *Gunslinger Girls*, nor with the *Higurashi* series, and similarly I think it's mostly used to cheap effect here. While Tanya isn't necessarily what I'd call cute, in that her main facial expression seems to be "utter disdain" and her angular features make her look like something other than an actual kid, she still has the stature of a child and she's referred to as such more than once by other characters (though only in fearful whispers behind her back, of course). And look, she spends most of the episode barking orders, threatening others with bodily harm, literally tearing people apart and burning them to ash, and not demonstrating any actual emotions about it. Whoa, edgy! I find that portion of the premise to be very lacking, to be honest.

The bulk of the episode is seen from the point of view of a subordinate mage named Visha (Viktoriya) Serebryakov, who is the type of character one sees and thinks "how did this person happen to stumble into the military, make it through basic training, and not get kicked out immediately afterward?" She's the typical kind of audience helper-character who seems to not be very good at her job for the purposes of prompting exposition, and she's altogether pretty innocent-seeming and naive. She doesn't display a wacky, comedic kind of incompetence, she's primarily just mildly clumsy, timid, and in awe of Tanya's murderous actions, because shouldn't we all be dumbstruck by gratuitous mass-murder perpetuated by a ten-year-old? (Actually, yeah, we probably should). She and Tanya are also the only women thus far in the show who are named and not background nurses or other sorts of crowd-fillers. That's not necessarily bad in the sense that they're the most focal characters thus far and an anime featuring two women in important roles (where they aren't featured in constant up-skirt shots) is generally a victory (though considering the supernatural element suggested by the general plot summary and Tanya's reference to herself as a "salaryman," it's not clear whether she considers herself a woman or not, but this is making things more complicated than it needs to be to make a point). The problem is more that their character designs are both wildly out-of-place compared to the military men that surround them. The guys get to be young and brash, old and grizzled, sharp-chinned, weary-





looking, wrinkled, hairy... in one word, varied. The women look like, for lack of a more descriptive term, anime characters. Dewy eyes, soft features, and long eyelashes. It's not a complaint that's specific to this anime in particular, but it's part of a continually frustrating trend. They all seem to exist in the same harsh, unfor-giving environment, so why don't they look like it?

There is something to be said for the portrayal of the environ-ments and the general art direction in the episode, though. The background artwork is, in its bleakness, striking and gorgeous. What I really loved lingering on when I was taking screen shots were the gray-blue of the clouds above the battlefield, rimmed by hints of yellow in perpetual evening light. I began to recall bits of *Shirobako*, which I had the chance to re-watch recently. Though the shows that the Musashino team bring to life in the anime are not really what I'd call "high art," a lot of work goes into making them look their best, with art directors and background artists contributing to an overall visual appearance that ends up being greater than the sum of its parts. This episode of *Saga of Tanya the Evil* comes across as slightly better than typical to me; while the story



isn't appealing and feels almost cynical at times, it's easy to see the care that went into the art design, cinematography (by which I mean, the joining of animation, effects, and lighting), and get-ting the CG to look at least tolerable (which, in my opinion, is still about as good as you can expect). It helps to slightly obscure the otaku sheen and highlights the large amount of work that likely went into visually developing the adaptation. It makes it difficult for me to dislike it too much.

I'm mildly curious about the direction this show will take, if only to learn more about Tanya and her past life as a hard-ass Japanese business person (which I'm not treat-ing as a spoiler since it appears to be in every publicly-available synopsis of the plot), but at the same time I also find her pretty intolerable as a human being and I'm kind of repulsed by all the violence and destruction served up in this episode. War is terrible and I hear enough about it in real life; I'm rarely in the mood to see it fictionalized and glorified in a cartoon, especially so by a character who seems to be some sort of sociopath. I understand that alternate history scenarios may be interesting to some, but I lack that interest myself, especially when particularly controversial time periods are involved. I have a difficult time condemning this first episode fully taking into account its merits, but I do find the subject matter pretty distasteful and doubt I'll watch any more of it.

Pros: The background visuals are bleak but beautiful. The show features two non-sexualized women(?) in main roles.

Cons: There's a boat load of violence to slog through, which may not appeal to some. The character de-signs are inconsistent along gender lines. The titular character is defined by a cheap trope (young child does horrifying things).

Grade: C-

## Movies

### Freeze

#### Movie Review by Heath Row

I watched *Freeze*, a 2023 British production described by the Horror by the Sea Festival thusly: "On a rescue mission to the North Pole to retrieve an old friend and his lost expedition crew, Captain Mortimer



gets more than he bargained for when his ship is frozen into the ice sheet and set upon by bloodthirsty fish-creatures. Mortimer and his surviving crew flee the ship, beginning a treacherous journey to find safety in a frozen desolate wilderness. Suffering from starvation, frostbite and a slow madness, they find shelter inside a snowy mountain, but are they as safe as they think, or have they entered the heart of the creatures' lair?"

That's all well and good, as far as it goes, but director—and producer, and cinematographer, and screenwriter—Charlie Steeds's movie performs much more intriguingly than expected given that Creature from the Black Lagoon-like premise. Freeze is a period piece, set in 1905. The slow zoom, wide-angle shots of the snowy expanse are absolutely wonderful, and the matte painting- or other special effects-accomplished battleship in the distance is surprisingly good. It would be wonderful to see this on a large screen.

But what the festival didn't tell viewers is that this is pure, unadulterated Lovecraftian horror. The viewer isn't hit over the head with it—it's not even obvious or evident up front—but over the course of the film, details are offered: a Necronomicon-like book, dialogue references to the deep ones, a passing mention of Dagon as old friends reunite, suggestions of a book written in Arabic, and the use of the phrase "these mountains of madness."

Well produced for an independent genre feature that went straight to streaming and relatively well acted, the movie has a lot to offer. It's one of the most subtle Lovecraftian narratives I've ever seen. Even the rubber-suited deep ones are excellent, and much of their horror is accomplished through lighting—or lack thereof—and sound design.

If other features hosted by Horror-on-Sea come even close to Freeze, it's a festival worth taking seriously. The crew of the ship sent to rescue those who first ventured to the arctic find much more than they bargained for—or could handle. Most of the cast is solid, with a few shaky portrayals, but no actor stands out as sketchy throughout. Well worth seeing.

Heath Row also published this review in The Explosion Containment Umbrella #7

## Columbia Pictures Ghostbusters: Afterlife Review by Jim McCoy

You guys! You guys! You guys! I heard the sound! I heard the sound!

If you're a Ghostbusters fan you know the sound. If you're not, GO WATCH SOME GHOSTBUSTERS SO YOU CAN HEAR THE SOUND!!!

And trust me, the amount of pure, unadulterated AWESOME contained in the sound will make it obvious what the sound is. I know you're skeptical but it really is that cool. And when you point it out, you too can be known to your friends as 'Captain Observe, King of the Obvious.' I mean, it's a hard earned title that comes with a massive amount of responsibility, but it's worth it.

For those that missed it; I just got home from watching Ghostbusters: Afterlife.

So like, yeah totally awesome. But before I get to the awesome part (other than the unbelievably amazing sound of THE SOUND) I have a bone to pick with Columbia Pictures and it's writing staff.



Listen guys, you had to have known that there were going to be a bunch of old dudes watching this flick for the nostalgia value alone. (See, this is how you get to be Captain Observo.) And listen, I have a lot of love for young ladies with glasses who love things like science and math. (If you don't know, that describes both of my daughters. They are - being 100% serious - both in accelerated science and math classes and their daddy is so proud it hurts.) But DUDE - WHY IS THE SMART SCIENCY CHICK THE TWELVE YEAR OLD?!?!?!?!?!?!?!?! Or, I mean, maybe you could have made the junior high aged female smart and sciency AND made her mom the same way, because honestly, all of the former pimple faced freaks who went days without eating so that they could save up their lunch money to buy tickets to the first two movies would have LOVED a woman approaching their age that was, like, smart and stuff. Seriously, I'd compare nerdy girls to gold only I don't want to insult nerdy girls like that. As far as a worthy compliment, sorry ladies. I got nothin'. You're just that unbelievably awesome.

Why, yes I have been single for a long time. What brought that up?

\*SIGH\* Yes, Callie was a good character. I enjoyed her. I even get why she wasn't written to be sciency. I'm just that guy sometimes.

And while we're on the topic of girls:

I'm not telling you to kiss the pretty lady, brother. I'm just telling you that I went to high school with a guy who wouldn't and we still dog him about it. In his forties. Your call.

Anyway...

So yeah, I enjoyed the movie. It wasn't what I expected exactly, but that's okay because it's better than what I expected and people, I expected a lot.

There is a lot more to the latest installment in the Ghostbusters mythos than I thought there would be. The first two were popcorn movies. They were fun and engaging but somehow I missed just exactly how much lore there was. With something like Lord of the Rings or any D&D related world, it's all there and it's obvious. Somehow, I learned it all without knowing I learned it all with Ghostbusters. To be fair, I haven't seen the 2016 remake because the trailers were weak and everyone I know that saw the movie hated it. I therefore cannot comment on it directly.

I don't do the thing where I remember who produced and directed every movie/TV show ever. That's just not me. I'm thinking that whoever wrote Ghostbusters: Afterlife must have been related to Stranger Things somehow or is at least a fan, and I don't say that just because Finn Wolfhard is in both. Seriously, this movie feels like Stranger Things on it's best day only better. Kids in the lead, adults in support, kids get in trouble...



So much fun. Ghostbusters: Afterlife is the movie to take your kid who doesn't remember the original Ghostbusters movies too when you want to have a fandom to share with them. I can guarantee that any kid with an interest in geeky things will love this movie just as much as the old fart sitting next to them. And then you can be Mr(s). Sneakybutt and get the kid to watch the first two because they love the new one.

It's got the feeling of the first two movies as well. Not only do we get to see some old friends, there might be an old enemy or two along for the ride, and possibly not in the way you, or at least I, anticipated.

They kept a lot of the old ghostbusting technology and you would think it would look outdated but the way they presented it makes it work. Like, I

totally got behind the Eighties look of some of the props. Partially because I remember things that way but also because it works in the setting.

And about the setting: Most of *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* does not take place in the big city. I liked that about it. I'm a straight up city-boy who has spent his life thinking that driving fifteen minutes to get McDonalds was hardship, but I've also spent time in the country, riding in the back of pickups and heading out to the woods to get away from the old people. The feeling is right here. Writers, director, actors, they all get it. And if all this country flavored leads into something straight out of an epic fantasy novel, I'm with it. That was maybe the best part.

Any *Ghostbusters* fan knows that we lost Harold Ramis awhile back. If you've been paying attention to nerdish news and rumors it should come as no surprise that the Egon character that he played so well makes an appearance as a CGI construct. I don't want to say too much here and spoil things, but let me say that Egon's actions were in character, entertaining and necessary to the plot. If the CGI had a *Star Wars* feel to it, then that's good too.

Seriously, if you haven't seen *Ghostbusters: Afterlife* do so. Now. The script, the nostalgia, seeing our old heroes and the new generation all make this movie an instant favorite. You DO NOT want to miss it.

Bottom Line: 5.0 out of 5 Proton Packs (whiiiiine)

## Flesh Gordon Movie Review by Heath Row

I thought I knew what kind of movie *Flesh Gordon* was, for decades. Decades! And I was wrong. Yes, it's a nudie flick. Yes, there are portions that are downright pornographic. But that is far from what the movie is, on the whole. My inspiration for finally watching it, on the Henstooth Video Blu-ray, was that Bjo Trimble served as makeup designer in the makeup department for the film. As mentioned in her memoir *On the Good Ship Enterprise* (T&T #45) and confirmed by IMDb, she also played a role in *Superman: The Other Movie*, served as costume designer for *The Further Adventures of Major Mars*, and was uncredited as wardrobe mistress for *The Incredible 2-Headed Transplant*.

In any event, Trimble's makeup work is on fine display throughout *Flesh Gordon*, particularly in terms of William Hunt's portrayal of Emperor Wang the Perverted. I'm not entirely sure that it's the case, but it seems that Hunt's Wang wears more and more makeup, increasingly garish, as the movie proceeds. The makeup is notable.

What's even more notable, however, is how strong an homage the movie pays to the serials of yore, including the 13-chapter 1936 *Flash Gordon* starring Buster Crabbe. That is what it should be known for—as a loving tribute to serials—not as a nudie picture. (The producers even edited the movie to avoid an X rating, in the end earning a rating of R.) Given the removal of hardcore pornography, *Flesh Gordon* should be a midnight movie staple, right up there with *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and *El Topo*. In fact, the movie even utilizes traditional serial wipes, some of them quite elaborate, and the movie predates George Lucas's *Star Wars* by three years.



In addition to Trimble, the crew included other people noteworthy to sf media fen. Special effects artists included Dave Allen, Rick Baker, Jim Danforth (as Mij Htrofnad), Greg Jein, and Mike Minor. The set design is excellent, as are the models. George Barr designed and illustrated the

poster. Cornelius Cole III's animated opening title credits are amazing, reminiscent of the work of Terry Gilliam and Jiří Trnka Studio's *Fantastic Planet*. And fan and author Tom Reamy worked on properties for the art department. The movie also features stop-motion animation, including a creature called the Great God Porno, which special effects crew members named Nesuahyrrah as tribute to Ray Harryhausen. The other examples of stop-motion animation are also impressive.

In 1975, the movie was nominated for a Hugo Award in the Best Dramatic Presentation category. *Flesh Gordon* lost out to *Young Frankenstein* and ranked among other nominees including *Phantom of the Paradise*, *The Questor Tapes*, and *Zardoz*. The movie is impressively produced, almost overshadowing its script and the acting undertaken by Jason Williams as *Flesh* hisself, Suzanne Fields as Dale Ardor, Joseph Hudgins as Dr. Flexi Jerkoff (best character name!), and Mycle Brandy as Prince Precious. Hudgins and Brandy stand out as the actors to watch most intently, delivering solid performances despite the limitations of the script. Craig T. Nelson's voice for the Great God Porno was added as an afterthought and is delightfully lackadaisical for such an awe-inspiring creature.

Heath Row also published this review in *Telegraphs & Tar Pits* #53

## SerCon

### Cyril Kornbluth Bio-Bibliography

by

Jon D. Swartz, Ph.D.

N3F Historian



Cyril M. Kornbluth (July 2, 1923 – March 21, 1958) was a science fiction (SF) and mystery author and a member of the New York Futurian Society (the Futurians), the club that boasted many influential fen in SF fandom in the 1930s and 1940s.

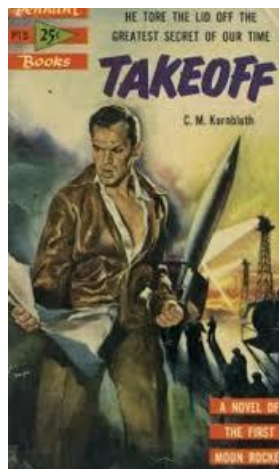
Kornbluth came into SF fandom through the Washington Heights Science Fiction League, but soon joined the Futurians, where he later lived at various Futurian houses. Richard (Dick) Wilson introduced him to the Futurians.

Kornbluth was one of the six SF fans excluded from the 1939 Worldcon in the infamous Exclusion Act. He was also a member of FAPA and participated in the Blitzkrieg, a 1940 effort by some fen to get other fen "to do their duty."

In 1939, he published the fanzine *Aaanthor Argus* with Donald Wollheim and Dick Wilson, when all three of them were active Futurians.

### Principal Publications

Kornbluth started his writing career in 1939 with "The Rocket of 1955," which was published in the fanzine *Escape*; but he then enlisted in the army – where he served as an infantryman and fought in the Battle of the Bulge (for which he was decorated) -- and did not turn to professional writing until the late 1940s. During his decade of writing professionally, he excelled in short fiction, but he also wrote and co-wrote SF novels.



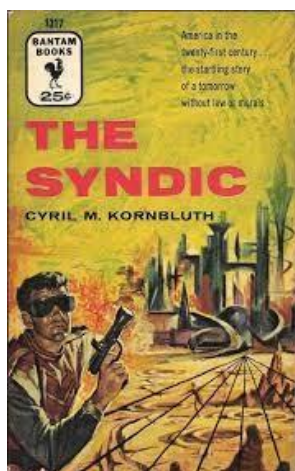
His novels included *Outpost Mars* (1952) [aka *Sin in Space*], with Judith Merrill (writing as Cyril Judd); *Gunner Cade* (1952), with Merrill (again writing as Cyril Judd); *Takeoff* (1952) [his first solo SF novel]; *The Space Merchants*, with Frederik Pohl [considered by genre critics to be a classic SF novel]; *The Syndic* (1953); *Search the Sky* (1954), with Pohl; *Gladiator at Law* (1955), with Pohl; *Not This August* (1955); and *Wolfbane* (1959), also with Pohl.

A number of Kornbluth's short stories remained unfinished at his death; some of them were eventually completed and published by Pohl. One of them, "The Meeting" – published in the November, 1972, issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* (F&SF) -- was the co-winner of the 1973 Hugo Award for best short story.

### Short Fiction Collections

More than a dozen collections of Kornbluth's short fiction have been published. Some of his early pseudonymous work was collected in 1970 in *Thirteen O'Clock and Other Zero Hours*, edited by SF author and critic James Blish, another former Futurian. Almost all of Kornbluth's solo SF stories were collected in *His Share of Glory: The Complete Short Science Fiction of C. M. Kornbluth* (NESFA Press, 1997).

### Mainstream Novels/Mysteries



In addition to his SF, he wrote some mainstream novels and several mysteries. His short mysteries were published in such popular magazines as *Dime Detective* and *Black Mask*. He usually used pseudonyms on his non-SF books and shorter mystery works.

### Classic Short Stories

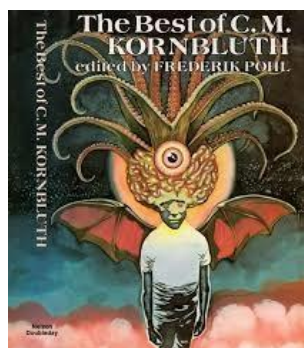
He wrote some classic SF short stories, like "The Little Black Bag," "Two Dooms," and "The Marching Morons." More than a score of his stories were reprinted in SF anthologies.

His most famous short story was probably "The Little Black Bag." This story tells of a derelict doctor who finds a medical bag from the future that contains advanced medical equipment; he uses this equipment to aid mankind.

### Radio/Television Adaptations

*The Space Merchants* was heard on the CBS Radio Workshop in two parts in February, 1957.

"The Little Black Bag" was seen on television in the UK in 1969, and the following year in the United States on Rod Serling's *Night Gallery*.

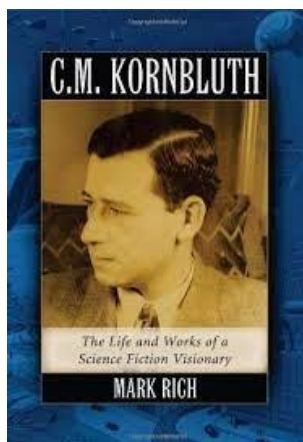


### Pseudonyms

Kornbluth used a variety of pen-names during his career, including Earl Barons, Gabriel Barclay, Cecil Corwin, S. D. Gottesman, Edward J. Bellin, Kenneth Falconer, Walter C. Davies, Simon Eisner, Jordan Park, Arthur Cooke, Paul Dennis Lavond, Martin Pearson, and Scott Mariner – often when collaborating with other members of the Futurians.

When he collaborated with fellow Futurian Judith Merrill, however, they used the joint pseudonym of Cyril Judd.





### Awards/Honors

In addition to the Hugo Award, described above, he was a recipient of The Prometheus Hall of Fame Award in 1986, and was elected to the First Fandom Posthumous Hall of Fame in 1995. He was also honored as "a memorial GoH" in 1997 at Readercon 9 in Westborough, MA.

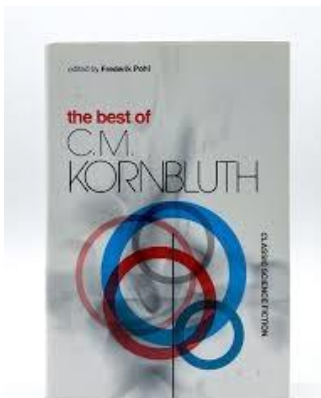
### Critical Comments

Many genre critics have written that, when Kornbluth died, he had only just begun to mature as a writer, and that the field lost much by his early death.

A couple of Kornbluth's solo novels (*The Syndic* and *Not This August*) were seen as a bit deficient by some genre critics (perhaps wrongly), and were revised after his death before they were reprinted. Pohl did the revisions.

In evaluating the two writers and their collaborations, one genre critic stated that Pohl "was less fluent and competent at the construction of raw story than Kornbluth."

### Some Concluding Comments



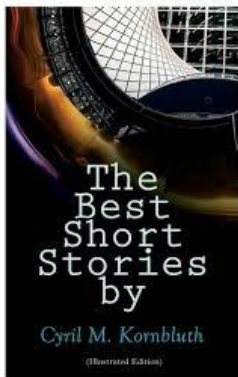
The "M" added to Kornbluth's name has been reported as a tribute to his wife, Mary Byers Kornbluth (1920 -- 2007); by adding the M he was acknowledging that she was a collaborator in his writing. Kornbluth's colleague, collaborator, and fellow Futurian Frederik Pohl confirmed Kornbluth's lack of any actual middle name in at least one interview.

Kornbluth's widow compiled an anthology, *Science Fiction Showcase* (1959), as a memorial to her husband.

Like several other members of the Futurians – Donald Wollheim, Jack Gillespie, Damon Knight, David Kyle, John Michel, Richard Wilson, and Robert A. W. Lowndes -- Kornbluth was a founding member of our club, The National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F/NFFF), in 1941.

Kornbluth's essay, "The Failure of the Science Fiction Novel in Social Criticism," published in *The Science Fiction Novel* (1969), is worth reading today. It is an excellent analysis of much of the proto-SF many of us have read and enjoyed.

### Trivia



Kornbluth's name is mentioned in Lemony Snicket's *Series of Unfortunate Events* as a member of V. F. D., a secret organization dedicated to the promotion of literacy, classical learning, and crime prevention.

Pohl once said that Kornbluth decided to educate himself by reading his way through an entire encyclopedia from A to Z. In doing so, he learned many things that he later used in his writing.

### Year of the Jackpot

Kornbluth died in 1958, at age 34, in Levittown, New York. Scheduled to meet with Robert Mills in New York City to interview for the position of editor of the

popular genre magazine, *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* (F&SF), Kornbluth had to shovel the snow out of his driveway, which left him running behind schedule. Racing to make his train, he suffered a heart attack and died. He was survived by his wife and their two children.

His death, along with that of other prominent SF authors and fans in the same year (including Henry Kuttner and E. E. Evans), led to fandom later referring to 1958 as the “Year of the Jackpot” (after the Robert Heinlein short story).

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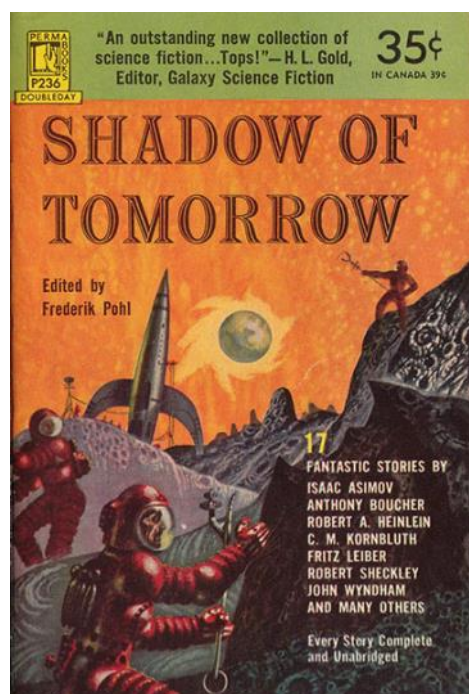
Swartz, Jon D. *Pseudonyms of Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Authors*, 2010.

Note: In addition to the above sources, several Internet sites were also consulted, including *Fancylopedia 3*, *ISFDB*, and *Wikipedia*.

## Short Stories

### Shadow of Tomorrow by Frederik Pohl

Reviewed by Heath Row



I'll remark on the final four stories here. *Shadow of Tomorrow* is one of the best anthologies I've ever read.

Richard Wilson's "Love" first appeared in the June 1952 edition of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Among the shortest stories in the anthology, it's a sweet little piece about a blind human woman who falls in love with a martian. They find the Valley of the Stars and its Cave of Violet Light, which can heal all injuries and ills. Is her love and resolve strong enough to survive seeing him? Or will she choose to continue loving him unseen?

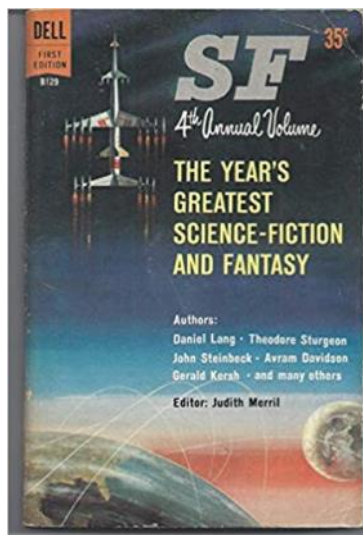
"The Misogynist" by James E. Gunn was published in the November 1952 *Galaxy Science Fiction*. A delightfully dark piece, it reminded me of Ray Bradbury and *The Twilight Zone*, and I could easily imagine it adapted for television. A man speculates to a friend that women are actually representatives of an alien race who are attempting to breed out strong, independent men. His friend laughs it off as a joke, but they are more correct than they realize. An author to look for.

Simon Eisner's "The Luckiest Man in Denv" was first published in the June 1952 *Galaxy*. Eisner is a pen name for C.M. Kornbluth, whose "The Marching Morons" also appears in the anthology. (T&T #53) It's a clever tale about a futuristic society in which one's self-promotion is dependent on cleverness and guile. Alliances are easily struck—and just as easily undone.

And "Not a Creature Was Stirring" by Dean Evans originally ran in the December 1951 *Galaxy*. A miner returns to town after some time, to find that everything has changed. It's a beautiful, quiet story that resonates slightly with Wilson Tucker's "To a Ripe Old Age" elsewhere in the anthology. (T&T #53)

Heath Row also published this review in *The Explosion Containment Umbrella* #7.

## SF: The Year's Greatest Science-Fiction and Fantasy (4th Annual), edited by Judith Merril. Review by Heath Row



I recently finished reading the stories and nonfiction. Theodore Sturgeon's "The Comedian's Children" first saw print in the May 1958 *Venture Science Fiction Magazine*. After a rocket returns from Iapetus, children begin getting ill from some sort of virus the ship and surviving crew member brought back from the moon of Saturn.

A popular comedian, Heri Gonza, airs a frequent telethon to draw attention to the plight of the sick children—and oversees the primary facility and group of researchers focused on developing a cure. But the most notable scientist refuses to work with him, and after a newly minted Nobel prizewinner becomes involved, the reader learns that there's more to the virus—and to Gonza—than initially appears. It's a wonderful story positioning scientist as hero, and Sturgeon's portrayal of the telethon, character interactions, and the source of the sickness are excellent.

"The Short-Short Story of Mankind" by John Steinbeck was reportedly initially published in the April 1957 issue of *Playboy*, but the Internet Speculative Fiction Database indicates it previously ran in the November 1955 edition of *Lilliput*. It's a speculative satire that focuses on the foibles of humanity that might lead to our extinction. It's a short piece, genre-adjacent enough to be included, and perhaps the most mainstream work in the anthology—especially because *The Atlantic* (then, *Atlantic Monthly*) didn't grant permission to reprint Peter Ustinov's "The Man in the Moon."

Merril's anthology ends with a section titled "From Science Fiction to Science Fact: The Universe and Us." It includes Daniel Lang's Nov. 7, 1958, *The New Yorker* piece "Man in Space," which offers a survey of the multidisciplinary research undertaken to learn more about space travel's physical and psychological effects on the people who undertake it. A wonderful article and one of the best pieces in the book.

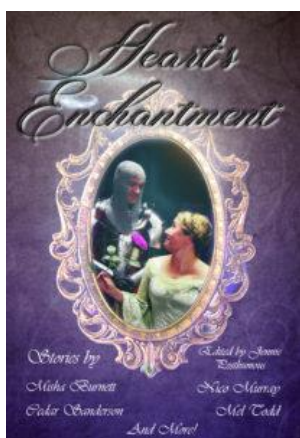
"Rocket to Where?" by Merril and Isaac Asimov's "The Thunder-Thieves" consider where sf might go—and what it might do—in the face of so much scientific advancement. Asimov draws on writing such as Robert A. Heinlein's "Blowups Happen," John D. Clark's "Minus Planet," Jack Williamson's *See-Tea Shock*, E.E. Smith's *Lensman* series, L. Sprague de Camp's *Viagens Interplanetarias* stories, and even L. Ron Hubbard's "To the Stars" to indicate how science and sf can parallel each other. In the end, Asimov proposes that there's still plenty for sf to explore.

Finally, “The Year’s SF: A Summary” considers the growth of more mainstream sf as the traditional prozines ceased publication—something we see even today, despite growth in online periodicals publishing short fiction. Merrill discusses established sf writers’ interest in publishing mainline fiction, the death of C.M. Kornbluth and Henry Kuttner, and editorial changes at The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction before listing honorable mentions of magazines, books, and stories from the year. Interestingly, general magazines publishing sf at the time included Adam, Argosy, Cosmopolitan, Esquire, Playboy, Rogue, and Swank—among others.

Heath Row also published this review in Telegraphs & Tar Pits #53.

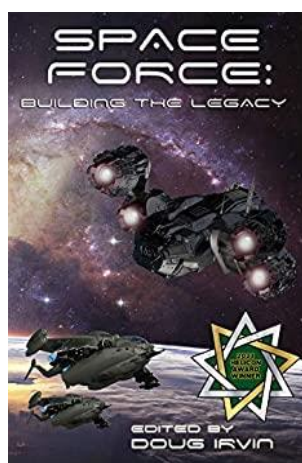
## Food of Famous Authors

### Brena Bock: Creamed Dried Beef and Ice Cream



I’m very pleased to be able to write this post. Since this post is celebrating Brena’s first two publications, near simultaneously, it’s appropriate to do it with a double-header. I don’t think I’ve done this before, so buckle up, this is a long post! But I don’t think you’ll be sorry.

First, there’s the tale she wove for Hearts’ Enchantment, an anthology of romantic fantasy stories. Then, there is the adventuresome Marina in her story for the Space Force Anthology. Two very different experiences, two very different recipes evolved from them. When Brena told me what she wanted me to do for her stories, I had to think about it. (Full disclosure: I also have a story in Heart’s Enchantment.) She asked for the classic military food: Creamed Chipped Beef. Also known as SOS, which stands for... S\_\_t on a Shingle. That was a tough call. I could have gone with the military recipe (you can find it here, if you are nostalgic or want to experience what generations of GIs in mess halls have endured) but I opted to make it glorious. Like the fiction version of a non-fiction life. Then she asked me to make homemade ice cream for the sweet romance. Suits, both stories!



So! Go pick up a copy of Hearts’ Enchantment, and the Space Force anthology (you don’t think you can read all that? Well, just start with Brena’s stories while you are cooking. You’ll have time later with the ice cream!)

Cooking for authors is a lot like reading an anthology. You are never quite sure what you’re going to get. Delightful surprises, mostly, but sometimes you have to subvert your expectations. I grew up with a father who served in the USAF. I married a man who had served in the Army. Both of them have always had the same reaction, separately, to SOS: sheer abject horror.

Which is why I made it my way. The way it ought to be, not the way it is if you are mass-producing the lowest-bidder quality slop that the fighting men get. The way they ought to be fed, for the sacrifices they make that we may live freely.

This. This is what Creamed Chipped Beef ought to be like.

Creamed Dried Beef

As a Sunday Brunch, this is divine. If you are on Keto, simply put it over your eggs and omit the, ah, shingles.





It's also incredibly easy to make.

You will need:

2 c heavy cream (no, you cannot make this with milk. If you want to, refer to the military recipe)

1 tbsp coarse ground mustard

1 oz (about 1/2 cup) dried chipped beef. Or use Biltong. I used Biltong, because it was what I had on hand.



Put a cast iron skillet on med-high heat. Warm the meat in it, then slowly pour in the cream, and add the mustard, stirring constantly. Continue to stir occasionally as you bring the mixture to a simmer. Don't try to heat this too quickly – you want your beef to rehydrate. Simmer for about 10-15 minutes until the beef is somewhat tender and the sauce has thickened enough to coat the back of a spoon. You will likely not have to add any salt, you may want to add pepper if you didn't use the biltong. By the way, for an excellent biltong recipe, check out Kim du Toit's blog. Serve over toast points, or scrambled eggs.

Low-carb meal for the diet. Yeah. I'm not depriving myself of nuthin'.

It's that simple. It's so good. The First Reader, who was highly dubious (as in: photograph the high carb plate and give it to the dog) was entirely won over by this. And as I pointed out, this is what it should be, before the mess got ahold of it! He's already looking forward to having it again. We got the stuff to make our own biltong, too.

Once you have recovered from brunch – and it's not a fast process, that meal sticks to your ribs – then you'll be ready to start the next recipe. This one takes a while. Perfect for a hot, steamy summer day while you read an anthology of love stories. Right?

And don't feel guilty. You can have the chocolate, if you're on that kind of diet. It's incredible. Lo-Carb Chocolate Ice Cream, and Vanilla Custard Ice Cream.

#### Chocolate Ginger Low-Carb Ice Cream

2 1/2 c heavy cream

1/2 c water

2/3 c cocoa powder

Scant 1/4 c xylitol

Scant 1/4 c erythritol

3/4 tsp ground ginger

3 egg yolks

1 tbsp ginger liqueur

1 tbsp glycerin

In a heavy saucepan whisk together the dry ingredients: cocoa powder, sweeteners, and ginger.

Whisk in the cream, and half the water (about 1/4 c). Place over med-high heat and allow it to come to near boiling with stirring.



In a separate bowl, put the egg yolks. Whisking briskly, pour about a half cup of the hot cream mixture slowly into the bowl to temper the eggs. Return the cream and egg mixture to the pan and bring just to the boil.

Remove from heat and allow to cool for a few moments. Whisk in the remaining water, the glycerin, and the liqueur.

In order to make this plain chocolate, omit the powdered ginger and the liqueur, using vanilla extract instead.

Serves about 10-12 with half-cup servings that contain about 4 net carbs.

The glycerin, alcohol, and mixture of sweeteners allows this ice cream to freeze much softer and more like classic ice cream, which contains sugar and therefore alters the freezing temperature of the mixture.

To make ice cream:

Chill the custard mixture as much as possible. Leaving it in the refrigerator overnight is best, I have found. Simply using an ice bath is insufficient.

I use an electric countertop model, with a liner that can be frozen. I simply set this up with the motor and dasher, and poured in the mixture just as I have turned on the motor. It will take about 30 minutes, and then be milkshake-textured. Put into a lidded container and freeze for at least 30 minutes. If you have frozen it longer, allow to thaw a bit for 10-15 minutes before scooping.

#### Old-Fashioned Vanilla Ice Cream

2 c cream  
1 c milk  
3/4 c sugar  
3 egg yolks  
1 tbsp vanilla



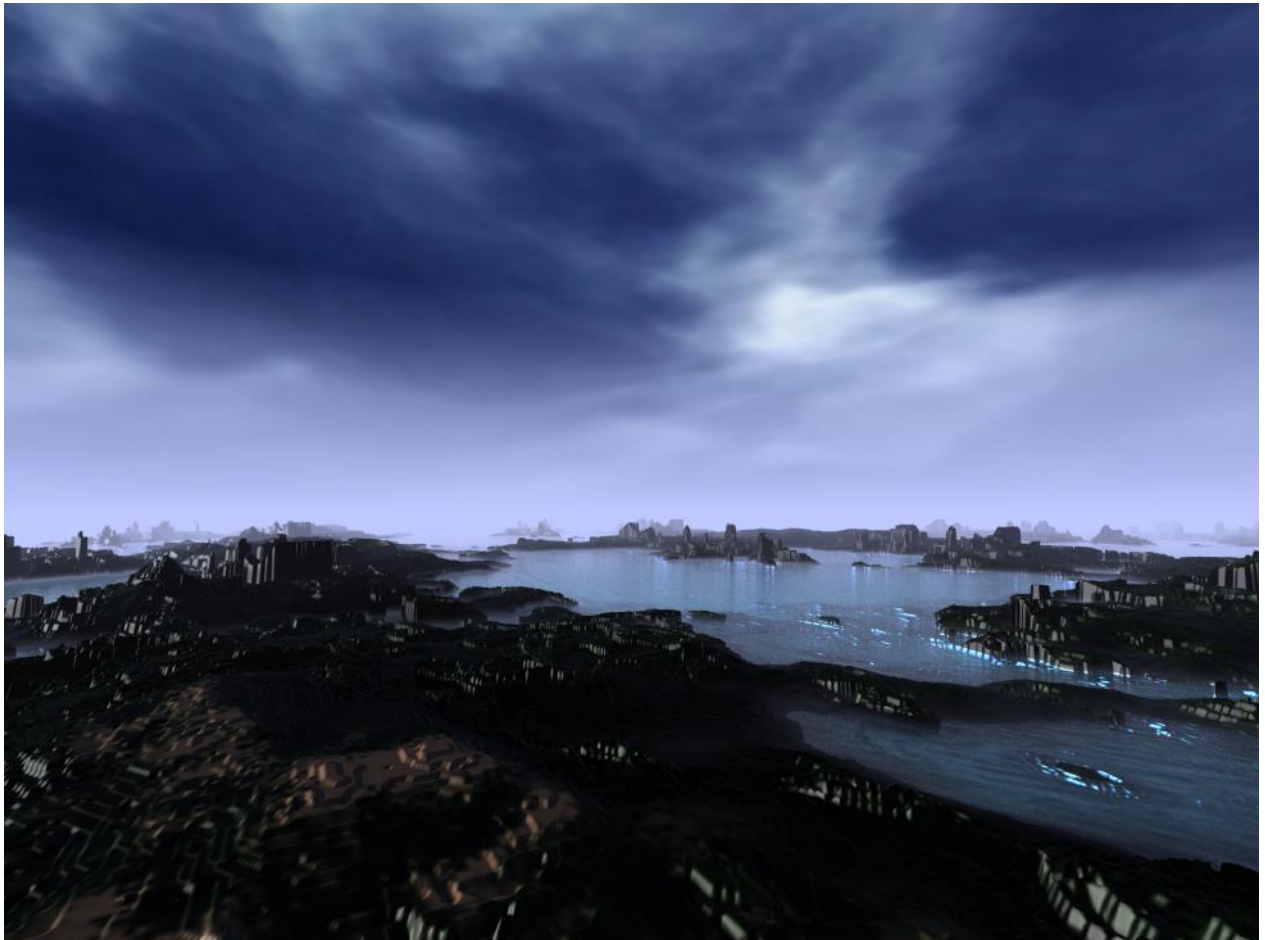
In a heavy saucepan, combine milk, cream, and sugar. Bring to near boil, and remove 1/2 cup of hot mixture. In a separate bowl containing the egg yolks, whisk them until frothy, then pour the hot cream in slowly while continuing to whisk briskly. Once the eggs are tempered, pour them back into the pan, whisking, and bring the whole thing to a boil.

Remove from heat and allow to cool. Whisk in the vanilla. Chill until ice-cold, preferably overnight.

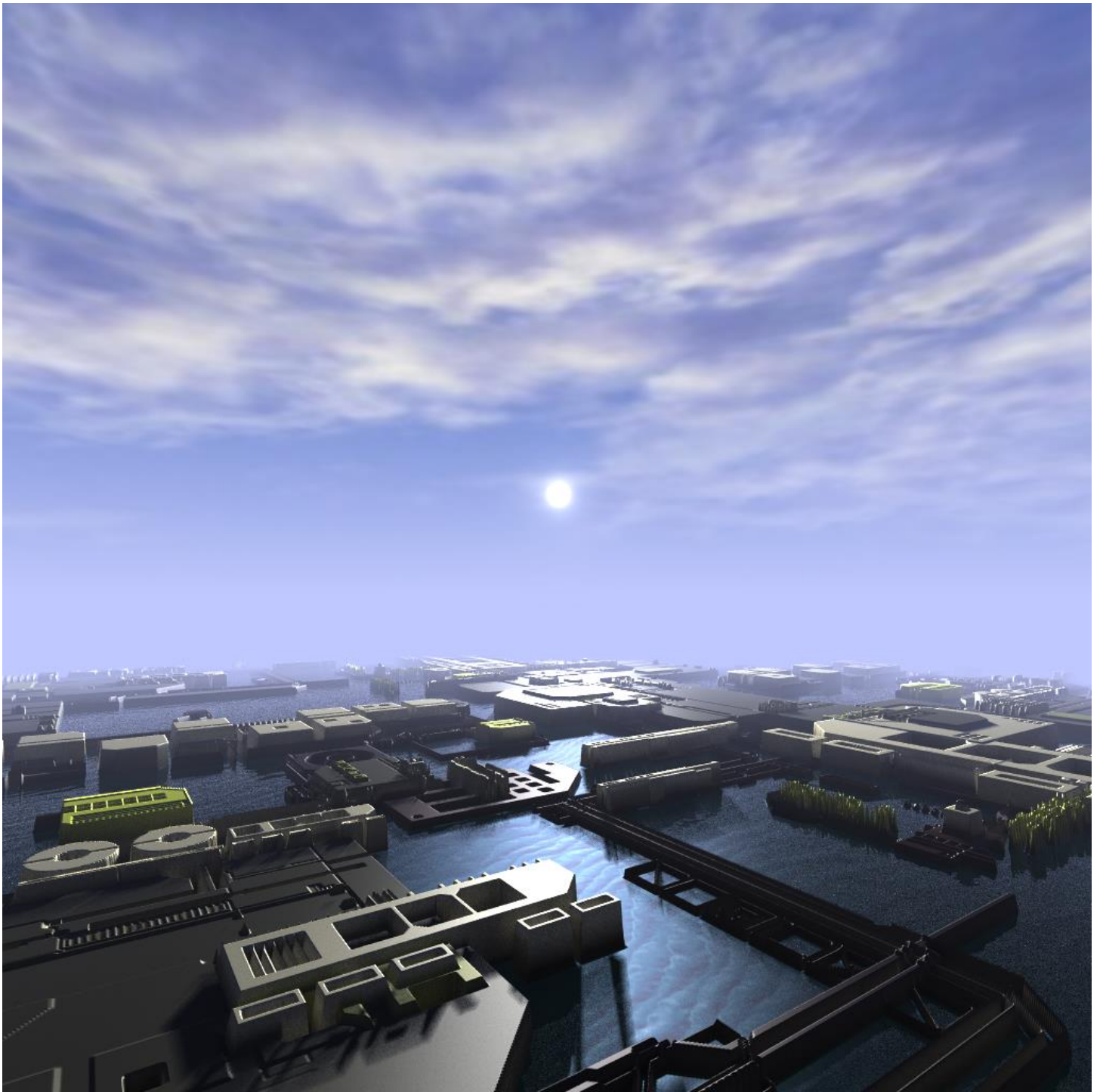
Stir well before pouring into ice cream maker (see procedure above).

Freeze for at least 30 minutes after removing from the maker. This will not need warming before scooping, it remains nicely medium-serve texture.

Rich, sweet, cold, this is everything ice cream ought to be and so rare is from a carton.



Alien City by Tiffanie Gray



# Waterworks by Tiffanię Gray