

in “Midnight Robber” to the imagined future of truly liberated Maori in Robert Sullivan’s prose-poem excerpt from “Space Waka,” *Walking the Clouds* is a revelation. Science fiction fans would do well to pay close attention to these writers because they may be the vanguard of the next wave of change in the genre. This anthology would make an excellent source for any academic study of indigenous peoples and for the general reader as well.

Dillon has the credentials for editing this anthology: she earned her PhD in literary studies and is associate professor in the Indigenous Nations Studies program at Portland State University in Oregon. She edited *Hive of Dreams: Contemporary Science Fiction from the Pacific Northwest*. Her use of the Anishinaabemowin language in her preface and introductions to each story or excerpt underscores her Anishinaabe heritage.

(March) J. G. STINSON

• SHORT STORIES

**The Agriculture Hall of Fame**

**Andrew Malan Milward**  
University of Massachusetts Press  
Softcover \$19.95 (144pp)  
978-1-55849-948-5

The ten stories in Andrew Malan Milward’s *The Agriculture Hall of Fame* are set in “the center of the center of America”: Kansas. And they are all, in their own unique ways, wild, hopeful, and devastating.

From “Quail Haven, 1989”: “Our father is a stark mosaic of his past: his maimed seven-year-old feet, dappled by a friend’s errant buck-shot; the 8-to-5 creases framing his adulterous eyes; the broken-down All-State throwing arm, forever aching; his red swollen knuckles and Vietnam brain.” So much is communicated in so little—appropriate for a story that barely makes three pages but packs in a gut punch or two along the way.

The title story unfurls from end to beginning. It’s a tender piece that allows readers, by the end, to fit all the pieces together themselves, a gritty puzzle of loss and love and the natural order of things. “From above, it all seemed so small and ordered: the way the land neatly divided into parallel tracts, the doll-sized simplicity of houses and buildings that looked like they’d never been disturbed, the sinuous roads, twisting but never desultory—always leading somewhere.”

In “The Antichrist Chronicles,” a lake disappears in a “town where everyone knew each other, but no one wanted to admit it.” It’s a place where “everybody’s crazy with looking for something.” Tom, the story’s narrator, is bowed under the weight of his poet-turned-

Star-Trek-obsessed father and meth-and-anarchy-obsessed best friend, Juby. He is a boy stunned too young by the loss of important women in his life.

Milward makes elements in his fiction work—from the natural to the structural. In “The Cure for Cancer,” a relationship between a brother and sister deepens even as the sister is dying and snow blankets the world. At no point does this story become sentimental, trite, or predictable. And from “Two Back, 1973”: “Before he let it kill him, the barn saved his life.”

A graduate of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, Milward is a visiting writer at the University of Southern Mississippi. *The Agriculture Hall of Fame* won the Juniper Prize for Fiction from the University of Massachusetts Press. (April) S. HOPE MILLS

**In the Shade of the Shady Tree: Stories of Wheatbelt Australia**

**John Kinsella**  
Swallow Press  
Hardcover \$24.95 (212pp)  
978-0-8040-1137-2

“Rain” opens John Kinsella’s new collection about rural and small town life in Western Australia’s arid wheatbelt. As the book’s opening story, it’s perhaps a common prayer or even a tease in contrast to the perennial drought conditions and hard lives that Kinsella characterizes.

In the tradition of the long line of small-town serials, dating back through Sherwood Anderson and William Faulkner, most of the stories in *In the Shade of the Shady Tree* explore the dysfunctional undercurrents that characterize rural life in literature.

One might think that the large, open spaces of Western Australia would allow the cast of characters (drunks, bigots, men of God, Aborigines, hippies, city transplants, WWII

vets) a wide berth when navigating their lives around one another, but more often, neighbors get embroiled in conflict and families plod through life’s troubles, usually without an inkling that hope might be possible.

In “Purchase,” a drunk, hateful man uses his son to try to drive away a couple that purchases the land next to his: “The boy was nervous, even frantic around his father. ‘So I told them like you said, Dad. I told them it was an old lead mine and that the tailings are all over the block. That the place is poison. That there’s lead in the well water. Just like I told the other people.’”

The prejudices run deep. The ongoing struggle to make a go of it living off a forbidding land with little or no water gets redirected into hatred and blame: blame against the miscreants, blame against one’s neighbors, blame against the Aborigines.

In “The Appointment,” two older patients wait in a doctor’s office and get to talking while waiting for their eyes to return to normal after dilating. At first, they seem to know many of the same people and are curious why they don’t socialize in the same circles. As the story progresses (and their vision comes back), it becomes clear they have near opposite views about blacks (Aborigines) and how the police treat them. The woman says, “You know, the sort that never work and the sort that are always having fights and have relatives coming in from all over the place to make trouble . . . Well, he [the police officer] doesn’t handle them properly.” Handle them, thinks the narrator, somewhat stunned by the woman’s lack of humanity.

Kinsella, author of seventeen books of poetry, along with several plays and works of fiction, tells the title story twice, with slightly varying facts (“In the Shade of the Shady Tree” and “Eyewitness”), about a developer cutting down a legendary tree in the middle of a small town to build a fast-food joint. The



effect is a disconnect between small-town life and the outside world, where the reality is that so-called progress can erase history as quick as felling a tree with a chainsaw. Life goes on, even as hope is torn from the land.

(April) BRUCE CUTHBERTSON

## • THRILLER

### Subduction

Todd Shimoda

Linda J. C. Shimoda, illustrator

Chin Music Press

Hardcover \$25.00 (314pp)

978-0-9844576-7-0

Endo is a young physician beginning his residency when an otherwise healthy woman recovering from a simple knee operation dies on his watch. A blood test he wanted to perform could have saved her life by identifying a burst appendix, but the head resident forced a diagnosis and prescribed morphine instead. One does not argue with one's superiors, but occasionally one is forced to take the fall for them, and Endo soon finds himself exiled to a tiny medical clinic on Marui-jima, a flyspeck of an island off the tip of Japan.

Upon arrival, Endo meets a few people his own age, a seismologist and documentary filmmaker among them. He discovers that the island is not only small but earthquake prone as well. Sitting squarely over the subduction zone where the North American plate slides under the Asian plate is hazardous enough, but the nearby Philippine and Eurasian plates add pressure to the region. When scientists notice increasing seismic activity, they convince government officials to order an evacuation, yet elderly residents

hoping to resurrect their failed fishing industry refuse to go. Worse, they're suspicious of Endo and his fellow newcomers.

Jealousies, secrets, and the mysterious death of the seismologist turn what could have been a boring assignment at a remote clinic into quite an adventure. As Endo uncovers a history of violence and tribulations amongst the island's people, he faces dangers he could never have foreseen. And that's just from the residents. Husband-and-wife team Todd and Linda Shimoda's skills blend seamlessly together to make *Subduction* a hauntingly beautiful and highly unique novel. The author's prose and illustrator's talent give the book a tone and quality that is both rare and memorable.

Todd won the 2010 Elliot Cades Award for Literature, the highest literary honor in the state of Hawaii. Of his previous novels, *Oh!* was named an NPR summer best read and a notable book by the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. *The Fourth Treasure* was translated into six languages and named a notable book by the Kiriyama Prize. He was born and raised in Colorado and lives in Hawaii and California. His PhD in science and mathematics education is from the University of California, Berkeley.

Linda is an accomplished artist, illustrator, and book designer. In addition to many other venues and publications, her work has appeared in her husband's novels *365 Views of Mt. Fuji*, *The Fourth Treasure*, and *Oh!* Linda's traditional Japanese-style brushwork adds a dynamic visual layer to the stories, in this instance a sixteen-page illustrated retelling of the myth of Kashima, the Japanese god who controls a giant, thrashing catfish that causes earthquakes (and offers clues to the mysterious motives of the island's residents).

(May) LAWRENCE KANE

## adult nonfiction

## • ART

### The Art of Video Games: From Pac-Man to Mass Effect

Chris Melissinos and Patrick O'Rourke

Welcome Books

Hardcover \$40.00 (216pp)

978-1-59962-110-4

Video games are art. So says *The Art of Video Games* simply by existing. A codified complement to an exhibit of the same name that opened in March at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the book enters a cultural discussion that has spawned as many angry message board posts as it has aloof declarations from critics. (Roger Ebert rather famously declared that games are not—will never be—art. The response from gamer culture was less than polite.)

To their credit, authors Chris Melissinos, Sun Microsystems' Chief Gaming Officer, and Patrick O'Rourke, a freelance graphic designer, photographer, and video editor, do not get bogged down by the potential to pontificate. This handsome coffee-table book is an embodiment of "show" over "tell." A few pages of introduction lay the groundwork for the catalog that follows, which takes eighty video games from the industry's forty-year history and sorts them into five chronological eras and four broad genres. Interestingly, the games included were chosen in part by popular opinion via online polls, lending the entire affair a populist feel with the inclusive approach to art assumed by the authors.

The selection is impressive in its depth and breadth, running from an obscure 1983 Commodore 64 game, *Attack of the Mutant Camels*, to gems from all eras, such as *The Legend of Zelda* (1987) and *BioShock* (2007). Each game is presented as a two-page spread of imagery accompanied by a very brief essay placing it in context in the development of games as an art form. Though brief, the essays are thoughtful and interesting and offer insights even for indoctrinated gamers. Interspersed throughout the game coverage are similar spreads featuring interviews with big names in the world of games, like cult-favorite designer Tim Schafer (*The Secret of Monkey Island*, *Psychonauts*).

One or two oversights detract from the book's reading and viewing experience. First, a few game series seem overrepresented (Zelda games, for instance), though the book does generally find new things to say about each iteration. Second, there's no index or table of contents that lists all of the games included,

