

Biketopia: Feminist Bicycle Science Fiction in Extreme Futures

Elly Blue, Editor

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Bicycles are big in the future utopian or dystopian worlds imagined by the contributors to Elly Blue's collection. Whether working in an asteroid mine and having to make do with a stationary bike while pondering the nature of AI fellow workers; learning to communicate with a new, advanced bike that will respond to its rider only when its true name is discovered; musing over the possibility that your bike repair lady, who might be a robot, has just hit on you; being pregnant in a society in which all your vital functions are monitored and broadcast to the community at large (for your own good); or discovering that a gruesome means of feeding the remaining population has been developed in the aftermath of a zombie apocalypse, bicycles still offer what they've always offered here on Earth: freedom, contact with nature, and an inexpensive, nonpolluting form of transportation. For some of the collection's strong heroines, they are also a means of escape.

Thought-provoking and disturbing, the stories demand that we face questions that, not too far down the pike, may require answers of us: whether or not robots have rights; how far a society can be allowed to go in monitoring its members; whether or not current sexual mores and gender roles are still relevant in a new world; how to relate to machines that are becoming more and more like humans; and how best to develop the skills needed to survive in an environment that appears hostile to human life.

KRISTINE MORRIS (July/August 2017)

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