ForeWord Reviews

YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Futuredaze: An Anthology of YA Science Fiction
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Erin Underwood, editor
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Fiction for young adults (YA if you are pub-geeky) is taking the world by solar storm. We have seen the novels and the movies, now Underwords Press brings us an anthology of YA shorts. True to trend, *Futuredaze* features both space opera and postapocalyptic drama while also dishing out several fantasy offerings. It even has poetry.

Editors Hanna Strom-Martin and Erin Underwood have produced a volume with more than a few good examples of the genre. While some selections are exciting and surprisingly unnerving, other are melancholy. A tale of an old man's mind implanted into his young grandson ("Your Own Way Back," by Richard Larson) concludes the way a good story should: it's touching, yes, but the important thing is that a boy grows up. In other stories, a girl loses a friend to a revolutionary group, a bored kid conjures eschatological fantasies, and a young would-be terrorist decides not to plant a bomb.

In YA there doesn't have to be a moral, just a moment where a youth takes a step toward maturity and in doing so reconciles him or herself with life or death. In Mark Smith-Briggs's "The Cleansing," a boy must grow up when his grandfather is selected for government-ordained culling on an overcrowded Earth. In "Over It," a student comes to terms with her violation—one might easily understand it as a rape—by strangers in a purely online world.

There are also playful, even romantic, selections in *Futuredaze*. Chuck Rothman's comic "Spirk Station" features a youth who narrowly avoids becoming an alien hatching ground. In Leah Thomas's "Powerless," a boy seeks love despite an allergy to electricity.

The poetry of *Futuredaze* is its weakest point. Against a backdrop of fast-paced stories, the poems seem out of place—gratuitous afterthoughts. The verse addresses concepts so distant from basic experience—postapocalyptic ghost-peoples, for example—that the reader may fail to connect. The exposition necessary upsets the delicate give-and-take between poet and reader. As an attempt to broaden YA offerings, however, it was a valiant and, for that reason, appreciated inclusion.

Overall, *Futuredaze* is a fantastic choice for YA (and older) readers who enjoy science fiction and fantasy. Of interest and possible inspiration to young writers is the fact that many of the authors featured in this anthology are themselves quite young.

Leia Menlove