

★ **Seasons Between Us: Tales of Identities and Memories**

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The dazzling speculative fiction anthology *Seasons Between Us* features a range of distinct and powerful voices.

These stories imagine parallel worlds in which different rules apply, animated by androids, aliens, selkies, and dryads. Throughout, characters grapple with the universal challenges of understanding and self-acceptance. In one story, an elderly man in Japan struggles to acknowledge his son-in-law, an android. In another, a sensitive Hungarian girl wonders if she is an alien-human hybrid.

Elsewhere, a mathematician on vacation in Spain consults his future self for relationship advice. A social worker's new contact lenses enable her to see the spirits of the dead during the Chinese Hungry Ghost Festival; a grieving man at an assisted living facility is comforted by an android "carebot," who teaches him that the teenagers who he thought were vandals are planting moss for an ecology project. In Bev Geddes's poignant "The Selkie's Skin," a magical sea creature loses her pelt and spends the rest of her days in compromised existence on land. Even as her eyes dim and her memories fold into themselves, she reflects, "It is enough. A life lived is enough. I have made something of my days, however small."

The stories conclude with their writers' "notes to my younger self." At the close of "The Light of Stars," where a girl sees spirits burst and flutter "like cherry petals" at a shrine in Okinawa, Amanda Sun writes: "They are wrong... You will grow and unfold and flourish in the moonlight. And bathed in such bright light, you will not see them anymore."

By stretching the boundaries of what is and what might be, the stories in *Seasons Between Us* are compelling in addressing choice, identity, and meaning.

KRISTEN RABE (July / August 2021)

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