

CLARENDON HOUSE PUBLICATIONS

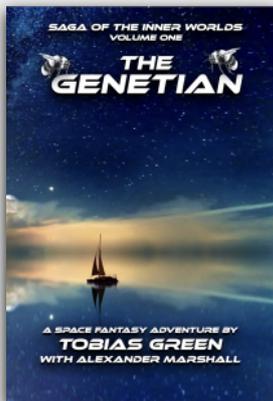
'The world is better with all this beautiful work seen at last.' - A. Delf, author

This week from Clarendon House



*Galaxy # 25: An Inner Circle Writers'
Group Science Fiction and Fantasy
Anthology*

Phantom duplicates in space, haunted prison ships, immortal beings in mystical cities, escape from underground suppression, compassionate robots, humanity viewed from the outside, dystopian near-futures, the consequences of the absence of pain, animals taking revenge, asteroid collisions and strange civilisations - it's all here in *Galaxy # 25!*



Volume One of the *Saga of the Inner Worlds* by Tobias Green and Alexander Marshall, *The Genetian*



Welcome!

Welcome to the Clarendon House Newsletter for week ending 5th December 2025!

Another big week! We saw the release of *Galaxy # 25*, featuring the work of Raphael Merriman, the Birch Twins, Jayant Neogy, Jim Bates, RLM Cooper, Tim Law, Linda Sparks, DJ Elton, Tony Fyler, David Painter, Puneet Kumar, Allan Edward Tierney, A. L. Paradiso, Gabriella Balcom, Michal Reiben, Gareth Maccready and Debby Hackbarth.

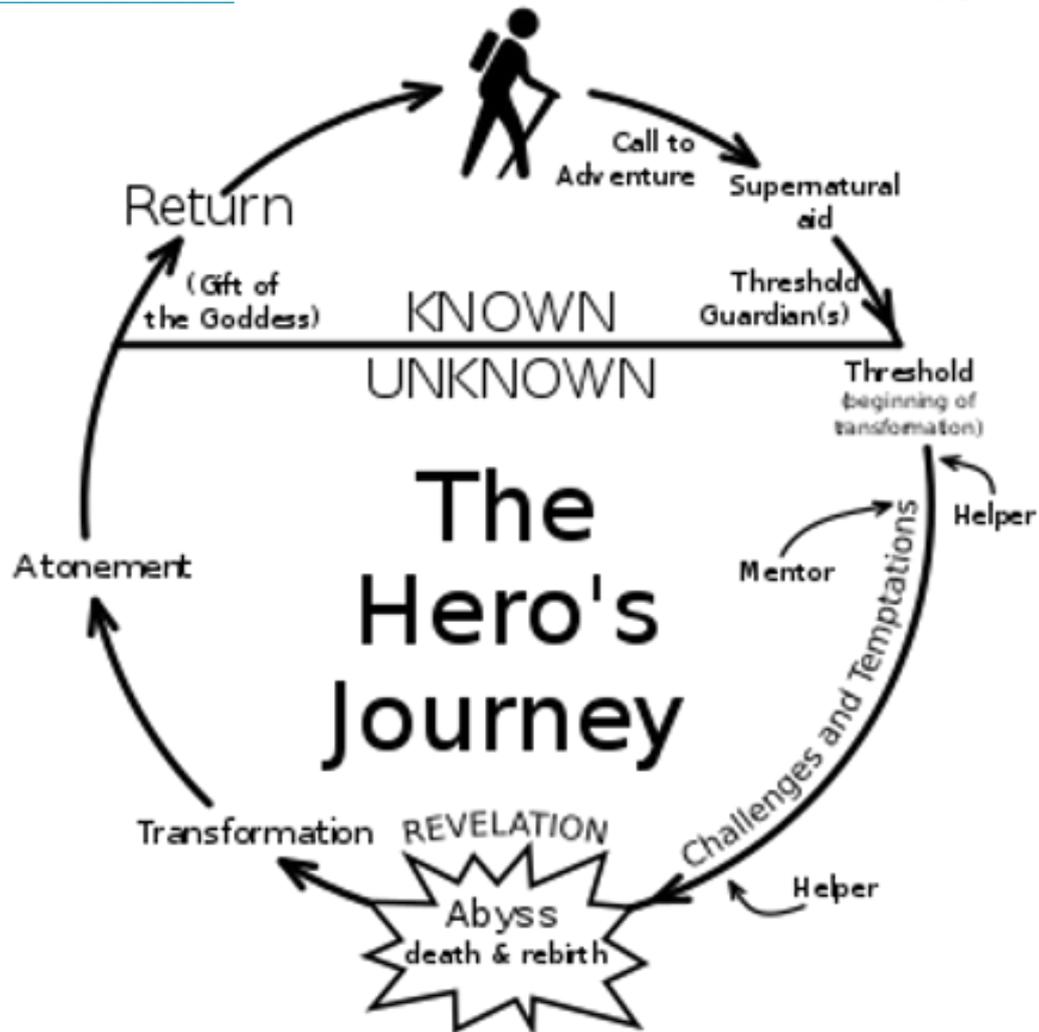
PLUS Volume One of the *Saga of the Inner Worlds* by Tobias Green and Alexander Marshall, *The Genetian*:

'Genet, the worldsphere known as Emerald, is categorised as a winterworld...' For lovers of fiction like that of Ursula K. Le Guin, or the Icelandic Sagas, or J. R. R. Tolkien, or mediaeval epics.

Feedback is welcome. Drop me a line at

grant@clarendonhousebooks.com

Below is a popular blog item.



What's Wrong With The 'Hero's Journey'?

If you're a writer who has investigated writing techniques, especially to do with writing longer stories, then you have probably heard of the concept of the 'Hero's Journey'. It's a widely recognised and used template for stories which involve a hero going on an 'adventure'. In this model, there is a climax and the hero wins a victory, and then comes home changed in some way.

Most people think that the idea started with Joseph Campbell's 1949 work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, heavily influenced by the psychological philosophy of Carl Jung, but actually the study of this kind of mythical narrative goes back to 1871 and anthropologist Edward Taylor's observations of common patterns in story plots. Later, Otto Rank took a Freudian psychoanalytic approach to myths and delineated much the same kind of thing.

The basic idea is that a hero goes out from a world of common day experiences into a region of wonder; fantastic powers are met there and a decisive victory is won; the hero comes back from this adventure with powers of gift-giving and a new wisdom. Campbell and others even looked at religious tales in this way, including the story of Buddha, Moses, and Christ, attempting to assert that this pattern represented a 'monomyth' - a term Campbell borrowed from James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* (1939) - some kind of ultimate narrative archetype. Campbell describes 17 stages of this monomyth, though not all stories, he says, contain all stages. These stages divide into three sections: the Departure, the Initiation and the Return.

In the departure part of the narrative, the protagonist lives in the ordinary world but receives some kind of call to go on an adventure. He is reluctant to follow the call at first, but is helped by a mentor figure. In the initiation section, he enters an unknown world, where he faces tasks or trials, either alone or with the assistance of a variety of helpers. Eventually, he reaches 'the innermost cave', where he must undergo 'the ordeal' and overcomes his enemy, gaining some kind of reward. Sometimes he then simply returns to the world from whence he came, sometimes he needs rescuing. On returning, it is noted that he has gained spiritual power as a result of his adventure.

So what's wrong with this model?

The primary thing is that it lacks a foundation that is easily comprehensible. Why should there be this pattern? On what basis does it rest? Is it simply that it has perpetuated itself based on the idea that 'stories are always written this way'? Or is there some kind of psychology behind the movement of a hero from a known world into an unknown world and then his return? Followers of Jung would

argue for the latter, probably. But the first thing I find unworkable about it is that it lacks an understandable basis. To accept that there is a 'hero's journey' template behind all tales is to accept a certain level of mystical mumbo-jumbo as the basis of human psychology. I have nothing against mysticism, but I don't think things need to be that complicated to understand story-telling.

The other thing notable about it is that it seems disconnected from anything to do with the author or the author's intentions. Certainly, authors often write tales only partly consciously - some stories indeed may arise almost completely from the unconscious part of an author's mind. But whether conscious or not, there is usually an intention there in order that there is enough 'horse power' to complete the writing of the thing. That intention may be unvoiced, it may be largely emotional, it may be disparate, but there is on some level an impulse within every author to get out into the world some kind of thought, idea or feeling in such a form that at least one reader will understand it. That's why we have stories at all.





Is it the case that a writer reaches for a complex model like the 'hero's journey' in order to get his or her point across? Possibly. But in fact, the whole thing has a much simpler explanation.

In endeavouring to communicate a thought or set of thoughts, a writer reaches for two basic things, knowingly or unknowingly:

1. Words and grammar

Obviously, the nature of the task means that a writer will use words. Even Joyce, who invented his own words in the writing of *Finnegan's Wake*, uses them. And they must be strung together in mechanical way so as to be comprehensible to a reader. William Burrough's *The Naked Lunch* took a text, cut it up into sections and then randomly glued those sections back together - but it still used words and communicated an intention.

2. A Communication Channel

If you stand in the corner of a room and shout across the space to a listener in the

opposite corner, mechanically the words leave your mouth, travel ever greater distances across the room and eventually come within range of the hearer. Finally, they enter the hearer's ears and (hopefully) some understanding is achieved. Stories operate in the same way, but on another level. Of course, you can 'shout' a story across a room and the words behave mechanically as described above, but in terms of meaning something else, something parallel to this, is occurring: an idea is encapsulated in a recognisable form, guided with authority towards its destination, assisted or hindered as it goes along by various forces and counter-forces, and then comes to fruition at its receipt-point.

We don't need the terminology of the 'hero's journey' to get a grip on this: we need to strip that model back to see the steps in isolation and together.

Firstly, an author needs a 'hero', a protagonist, or some kind of 'idea vehicle' in which the reader 'across the (metaphysical) room' will see himself or herself to some degree.

Setting off on its journey, this embodied idea needs to be guided with power and authority towards its destination or it will wander astray and totally miss its target. Instead of picturing this control in the form of a mystical 'mentor' as in the 'hero's journey' template, we can view this as a necessary mechanical step to launch an idea in the right direction. These mentor figures exist, usually in the form of an old man with stick, and they do quite a bit of 'mentoring' - but on a purely practical level, it is they who set the sights and do the initial 'pushing' of the hero towards his or her goal. You will probably have already thought of a dozen of these in fiction, from Merlin to Gandalf to Dumbledore to Moana's grandmother Tala, and so forth.

Launched into the story 'air' by the wise old figure, the protagonist/idea is assisted or hindered on his or her 'journey' by a set of very identifiable companions, in whom many would no doubt see some Jungian archetypes. But these companions are also simply embodiments of

almost physical forces, designed to further the protagonist/idea's journey in the long-run. The most important of these is the antagonist, that figure which represents a total reversal of the hero, and whose intention is opposite to that of the author. Effective antagonists are almost always linked somehow with the protagonist, signifying an intimate role in the journey. But they are not alone: often there is a shadow protagonist, a lesser antagonist who, very similar to the protagonist, shows what occurs if the trajectory is changed, even slightly; then there is a female companion who represents another way of losing one's way. Assisting the protagonist 'particle' in its travels to the other side of the room are an emerging warrior figure - a kind of 'advance man', someone who has already deviated, or appeared to have deviated, from the line of travel but who returns to the true path - and a comic companion, who is an embodiment of the author's message in a different way.



Together, these figures keep the hero on the 'straight and narrow path' to his destination, the reader's heart and mind. The 'victory' described in some detail in the 'hero's journey' model, is simply an arrival: it is the moment when the reader receives the full impact of the author's message or intention. The 'innermost cave' is merely the void at which the message is aimed from the beginning - the space in the reader, as it were, which is in need of the approaching 'message'.

What, then, is the 'Return' of the hero? This is the after-effect of the story's completion. The reader, having received the message that was hurled from across the room by the writer, now basks in fulfilment. The sensation is that of a gained treasure, a new wisdom - but these are in effect the 'afterwash' of a filled void.

In essence, then, what is wrong with the 'hero's journey' model is that it is too

complicated. We do not need to dress up the transmission of a thought or message from one mind or heart to another with mystical terminology. If we can step back and see a particle travelling across a space, then everything that happens to that particle as it moves along addresses itself: the particle itself takes on the form of a recognisable protagonist, its launching is supervised by a standard mentor figure, and its trajectory is monitored and adjusted by a set of archetypal 'companions' until it arrives in the 'cave' of the reader, where it accomplishes a victory by fulfilling a need.

The details of this much more straightforward journey, with plenty of examples, are to be found in the book [How Stories Really Work](#).

How Stories Really Work

Exploring the Physics of Fiction

by Grant P. Hudson B.A.(Hons.)



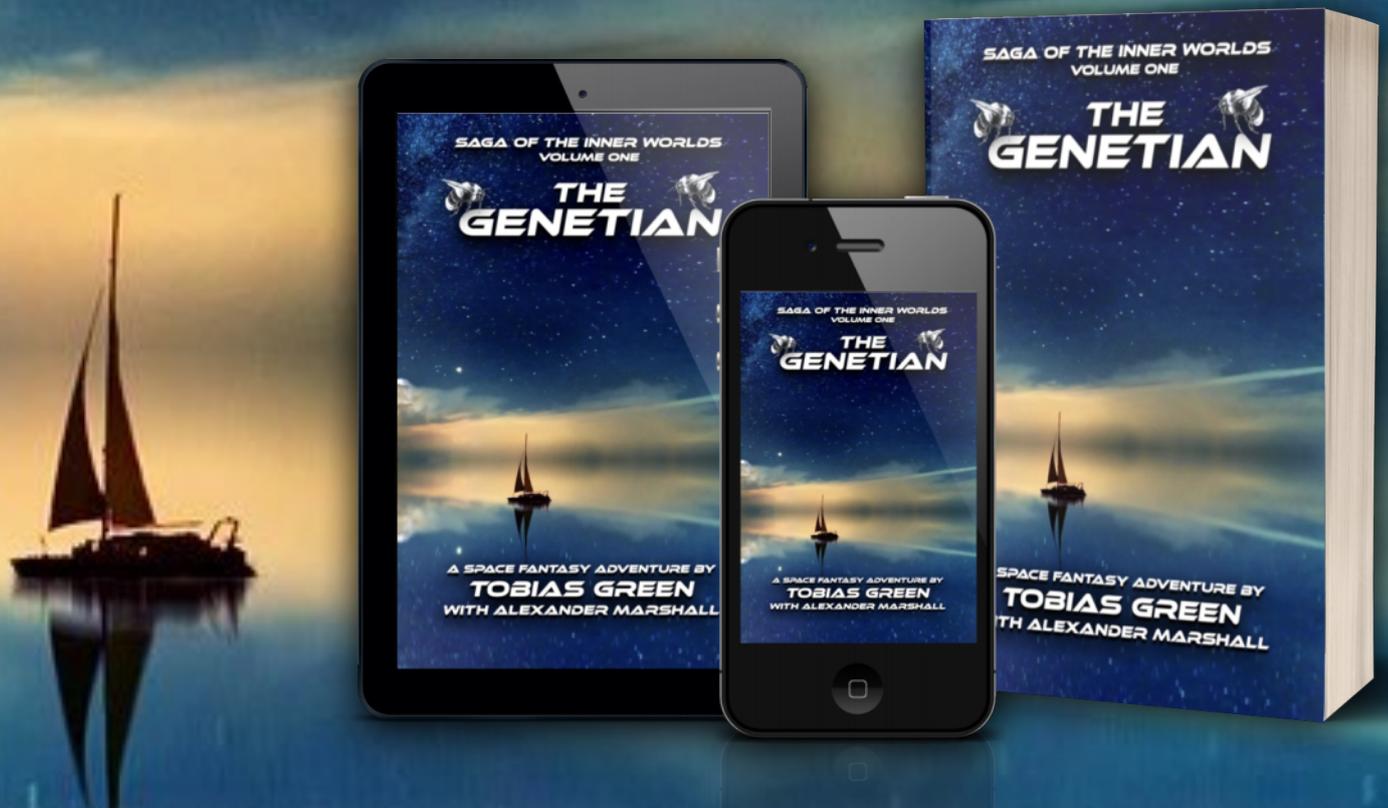
*'I'm reading through **How Stories Really Work**. I've studied writing books for years but I've never seen anything like this! This book is REVOLUTIONARY. Everything is made so simple and precise that other methods of writing seem clumsy by comparison. It's not just a way of writing, but a way of seeing.'*

-A. P. (Author)

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TOBIAS GREEN
AND ALEXANDER MARSHALL

**SAGA OF THE INNER WORLDS
VOLUME ONE**

**THE
GENETIAN**



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Humble beekeeper Veren Vantra, living a quiet life alone on the island of Garth on the seas of a half-frozen world, discovers in his cellars a creature unlike anything he has seen before...

Thadassy of the Lonely Isle, daughter of the slain Thagar, is sent to find the Key to Emerald by none other than Saraptar the Celestial... Forced into a dangerous journey across storm-tossed oceans, pursued by firedemons and unearthly monsters, Veren and his companions discover wondrous artefacts left by the

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ANDREW and HELEN BIRCH



Space Truckers 6

Marvis City Blues



Jack Booth turned into the shadows, and away from the blinking neon that permeated the mask covering his face. Avoiding the puddles of the alley, he stepped into a doorway, and opened the door. Looking around, he sighed. The sign that read 'Booth, Private Investigations', was faded and peeling...

Outside, Marvis City was alive. Vendors with street stalls hawked their wares among the neon signs, to the throng of night owls, with tastes and smells from across the galaxy. Con-artists and tricksters walked up and down the strip looking for the unsuspecting tourists, and the easy mark. Cabs lifted off and set down, taking drunken revellers from across the galaxy, to night spots and flesh pots, where a week's wages could be spent in a moment. Whatever you could imagine, it could be bought in Marvis City. Whatever kink or fantasy your heart desired, as long as you had the green, it was here for the taking...

Come to Marvis City in the universe of the Spacetruckers and enter the dark world of the detective, especially that of Jack Booth, scarred ex-soldier from the Celeron Wars, who now battles against injustice and corruption as a detective in one of the wildest cities in the galaxy...

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Join Victoria King, her loyal partner Abe Stone, the peculiar wild man Old Laramie, Captain Stirling and others on a ride you will never forget into 1880s Wyoming, where the only real law is written by the bullet...



The Shattered Stone

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BERNARD CRISPIN

WITH ALEXANDER MARSHALL

THE JOURNALS OF
SUSAN COVENTRY
VOLUME ONE

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Or discovering the strange mystery of the Beckenwith Necklace...

Or encountering the Ghost of Greenbridge Gate...

Or trying to figure out how on earth to get rid of the horrible Skelthorpes...

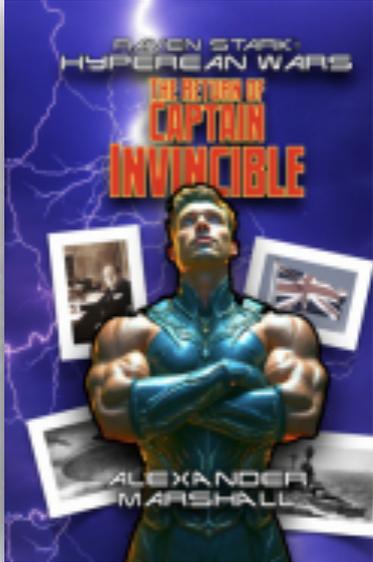
And what is the real significance of the portal known as Winter's Door?

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HYPEREAN WARS**



THE RETURN OF CAPTAIN INVINCIBLE

1940: Britain and Nazi Germany are at war.

HMS Eagle, under the command of Captain John Strange, is sent to investigate a huge craft of extra-terrestrial origin which has plunged into the ocean west of Spitsbergen. He finds that the Germans have been there first - and that the secrets of the ship threaten to alter not only his life, but the entire destiny of humanity...

In this novella launching the Raven Stark series, sorcery and spectral evil meet super-science and space wars - and the world will never be the same again...

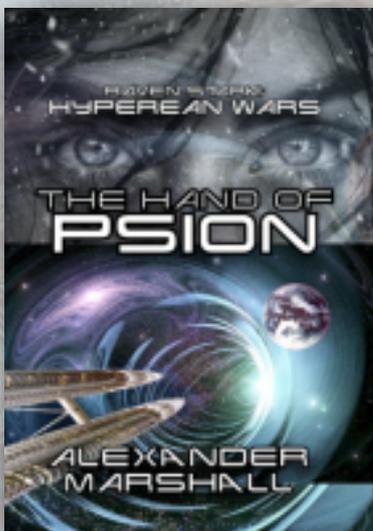
SPECTREBROOD

1940: Britain stands alone on the threshold of an invasion...

But from an alien craft in the Arctic Sea comes an evil even greater than the Nazi threat...

Raven Stark, a gifted but physically challenged orphan with a talent for tackling bullies, stumbles upon a secret initiative to save humanity hidden under an ordinary London shop...

When her best friend disappears while seeking her sinister father, Raven is driven to make decisions that will change life on Earth in ways no one could have imagined - and to find out who, or what, she really is...



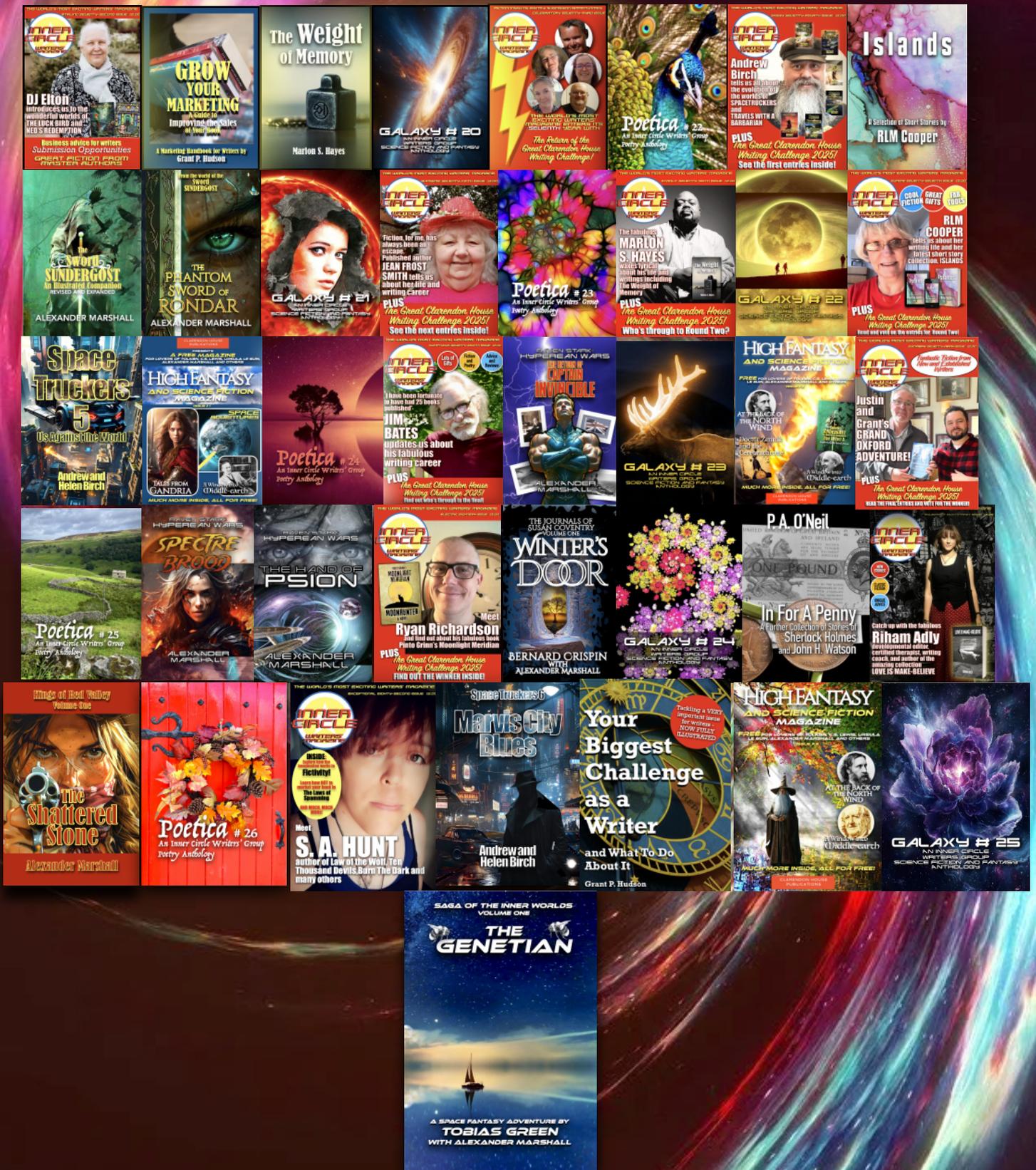
THE HAND OF PSION

1940: the Nazi regime stands poised to invade Britain...

But the nascent British Space Fleet has its hands full with a menace far more powerful, one that threatens all life on Earth...

With her best friend taken by the enemy for purposes too dark to contemplate, and Captain Invincible shorn of his powers, the newly emancipated Raven Stark finds herself confronting the ultimate challenge alone, on the frozen edge of the world...

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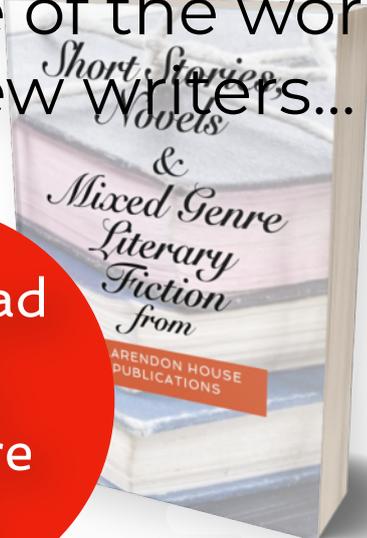
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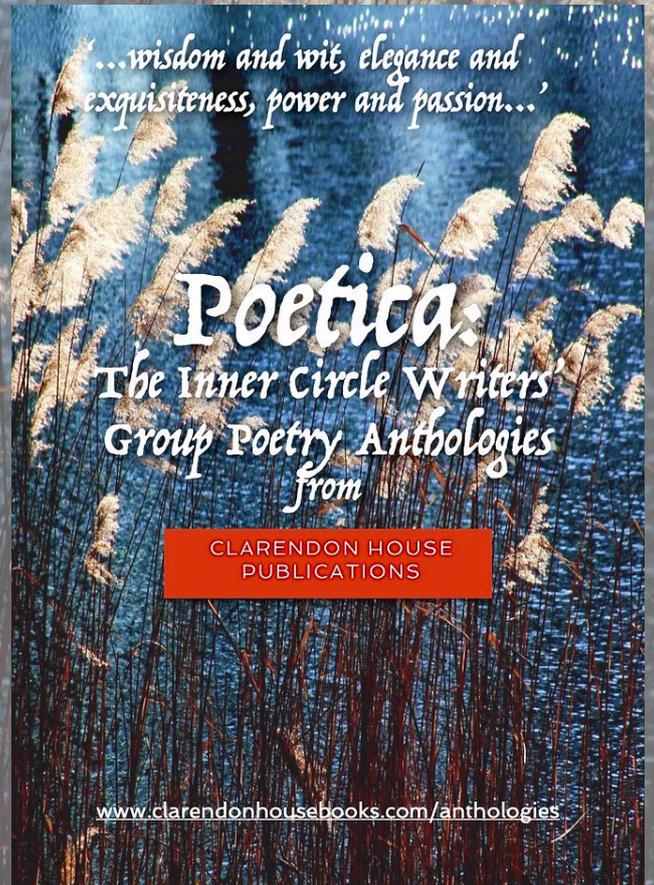
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The
Poetica
anthologies

*Poetry should surprise
by a fine excess and not
by singularity—it should
strike the reader as a
wording of his own
highest thoughts, and
appear almost a
remembrance.
— John Keats*



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THE PHANTOM SWORD OF RONDAR

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Fearful Fretravorn is home to the Bloodseekers, vicious raiders who seek the downfall of the kingdom of Rondar across the sea; they will stop at nothing to utterly destroy that realm...

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-David Bowmore, author of *The Magic of Deben Market*

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