



Matthew Cushing

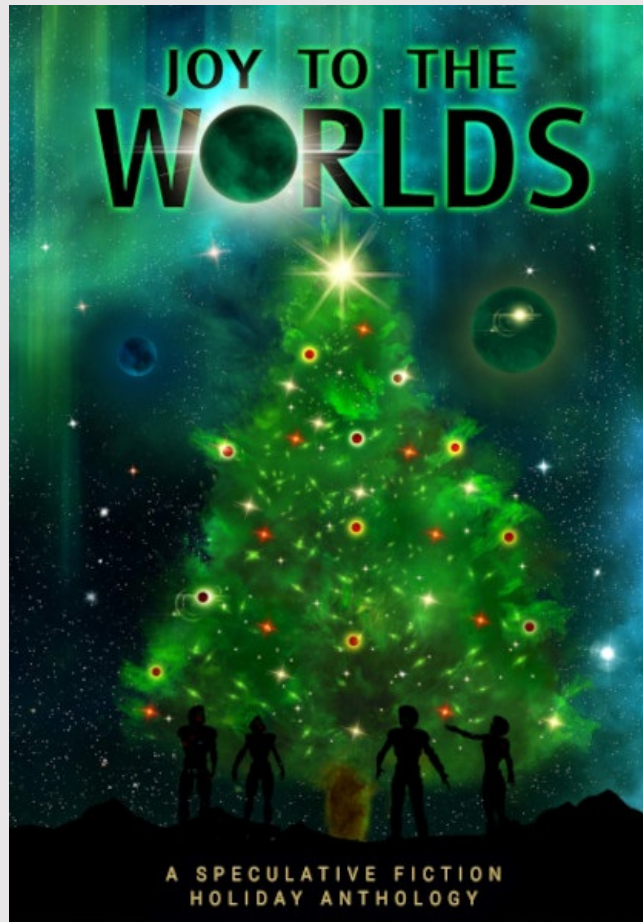
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Newsletter 003, 2021Q4

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Hello! Here is the third edition of my quarterly newsletter and the last for 2021. Included are updates on books, my latest blog posts, and an excerpt from one of my short stories. And, of course, everything is speculative fiction-related. Forward this email to friends (or even enemies) if they enjoy all things sci-fi, fantasy, or horror.

News & Notes

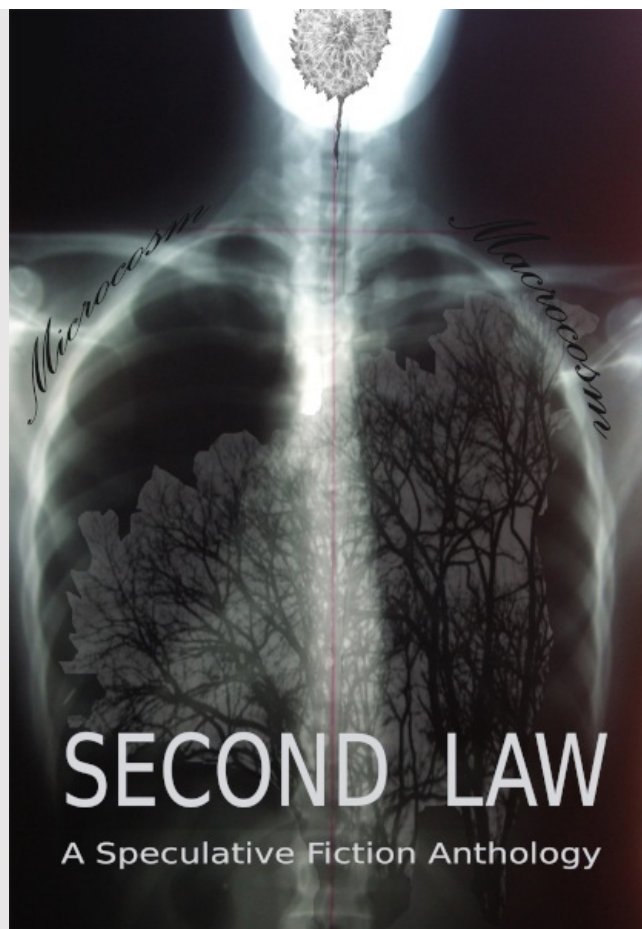


***Joy to the Worlds* Now Available!**

Looking for something to read that will put you in the holiday spirit? How about short fiction stories about maniacal Christmas robots, genetic reindeer mutations, alien holiday visitors, or omnipotent in-laws? (How terrifying!)

The latest effort from the Speculative Fiction Writers, this anthology includes thirteen festive tales by eleven accomplished (and even award-winning) authors. Two of my own stories are included: *Guiding Flight* is about a time-traveling mishap that inadvertently helps three weary travelers, and *The Champion of Arctica* depicts a holiday gladiator who savors the challenges of winning the most festive of titles.

[Purchase *Joy to the Worlds*](#)

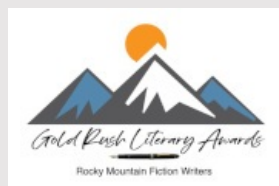


***Second Law* E-Book Available**

Laws, framed by unscrupulous leaders, diminish freedom. They can also be just, superfluous, or downright wrong. Second laws are (by design) less important than primary decrees. But depending on how regulations are ordered, the second law might be imperative for social stability, morality, or survival.

This collection offers eleven original stories with diverse themes and bodies of law. The anthology includes my story *The Beacon* about space pirates who try to exact frontier justice at their own peril. (See an excerpt below.)

[Purchase *Second Law*](#)



Gold Rush Literary Awards Finalist for Speculative Fiction

My debut novel, *The Osect Indiscretion*, a contemporary sci-fi crime noir novel with just a bit of snark, was named a Finalist for the Gold Rush Literary Awards. Presented by Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers, I attended their Colorado Gold Writers Conference in Denver in October and took the stage with four other outstanding authors.



SPSFC Quarterfinalists Announced

I have continued as a judge for the Self-Published Science Fiction Competition (SPSFC) as a member of Team Meteor, one of ten judging teams. The first round allocation to our team of 30 books has been narrowed to ten quarterfinalists. These ten books will be read in full to determine three finalists from Team Meteor by mid-January. Visit the [Team Meteor site](#) for info on Team Meteor, or follow myself or [@theSPSFC](#) on Twitter for more info on the

competition as a whole.



First Encounters - Where it Started

The first anthology of the Speculative Fiction Writers offers ten original short stories full of mysterious happenings when aliens, fantastical creatures, or strange objects interrupt ordinary life. Includes my first published story *Blue Note G* about a musical prodigy who is gifted a voodoo clarinet that grants wishes--just not always as he would expect.

[Purchase *First Encounters*](#)

Recent Blog Posts

- One of the best pieces of advice I've ever received is to [Write Your Story](#) and stay true to your own vision.
- After attending my first writers conference, check out my thoughts on pitching books to agents in [Pitching Experience](#).
- See what I think are the ten best books from the master of horror in [Top Ten Stephen King Books](#).

Writing Excerpt - *The Beacon*

Captain Diah and his three officers floated at the airlock awaiting their distinguished visitor. Had they been in the Stellar Navy, he would have required dress uniforms, but he was just glad his officers had on pants and shoes.

A loud bang against the hull rocked the ship, knocking the bulkhead into the floating crew.

"Decompression explosion in the airlock!" Sotto shouted, and everyone scrambled to look out the small porthole.

Diah shouldered Reesa out of the way, wanting to see the damage and formulate any kind of rescue attempt. Only there was no damage, no debris. Diah only glimpsed a faint blue shimmer around the fully intact docking tunnel before the eerie glow quickly dissipated. He rubbed his eyes and craned his neck to get a better view. Nothing amiss.

The officers glanced at each other, wide-eyed in surprise.

Reesa slowly shook her head. "The tunnel should be in a million pieces."

A tap sounded on the airlock. The docking status showed green. Sotto opened the door, and a woman just over two meters tall glided into the ship. Her tunic fit her form perfectly and her cloak floated behind her, billowing in the zero gravity. Even her ornate facial tattoo seemed to shift and shimmer in the weightlessness, yet her stunning blue eyes held the same granite steadfastness they had on the viewer.

Diah pushed himself toward her. "Are you okay? What happened?"

The Illuminary cocked her head. "Whatever do you mean, Captain?"

How to Write More Gooder

Similar lists have been floating around for years, but here's my take on the ten critical rules to follow to get gooder at writing words and things.

1. Avoid any and all alliteration.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. A word to the wise, avoid cliches like the plague. They're a dime a dozen.
4. Comparisons are as bad as cliches.
5. Be more or less specific about things and stuff.
- Six. Be consistent!
7. Don't be redundant and say the same thing over and over. Repeating yourself with an idea again and again is not necessary.
8. Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.
9. Never write one-word sentences. Ever.
10. Don't put things in parenthesis (under any circumstances.)

Please check out my website at www.matthewcushing.com for the latest and greatest information on my stories and novels, in-person events, my reading list, and blog posts on any and all topics concerning science fiction, fantasy, horror, or the supernatural. Follow me on Twitter at [@mhcushing](https://twitter.com/mhcushing). Comments and retweets are always welcome!

Klaatu Barada Nikto, Live Long and Prosper, and Nanoo Nanoo!

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