



## Matthew Cushing

Author, Editor, Reviewer, Blogger

Newsletter 009, 2023Q2

Site: [www.matthewcushing.com](http://www.matthewcushing.com)  
[@mhcushing](https://twitter.com/mhcushing)

Twitter:

Hello all! I hope everyone is having a fantastic 2023 – getting out, seeing the world, catching up with friends and family. After so much home time during the pandemic, I see signs of life returning to normal.

I, too, have felt rejuvenated, digging into my novel, writing short stories, and even submitting them for publication. Whether they get accepted is another story. I've also been branching into new areas, as the first couple of articles will show – being a judge for the RMFW Gold Rush Awards, and becoming President of the newly-created Speculative Fiction Writers Association. 2023 is roaring along, and I'm roaring along with it. I hope you enjoy this edition of my newsletter.

### News & Notes



#### Gold Rush Literary Awards Judge

After consecutive years of being a finalist and then winning the Colorado Gold Rush Literary Awards, Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers (RMFW) invited me to participate this year as a judge for the science fiction, fantasy, and horror category. It was an honor that I was happy to accept.

Author submissions were due at the beginning of May, and the judging period lasts through May and June. For my part, I have received, read, and evaluated several interesting stories of several speculative fiction genres, including science fiction, fantasy, and horror. Submissions consist of the first 4000 words of a novel plus a 250-word synopsis of the entire work. Though I have not judged for this competition in the past, I was a judge for the 2021 inaugural Self-Published Science Fiction Competition (SPSFC) and am drawing heavily upon that experience – as well as years participating in the Speculative Fiction Writers Association online critique group.

All judging for the Gold Rush Literary Awards should complete by July with Finalists announced shortly thereafter. Winners will be announced during the RMFW Colorado Gold Writers Conference in Denver in September. I can't wait to see how the submissions I read fare overall.



**SPECULATIVE FICTION  
WRITERS ASSOCIATION**

#### New Organization, New President

Formerly operating as an unofficial club, Spec Fic Writers decided to more formally organize into an unincorporated association under IRS rule 501(c)7 for

social clubs. Now called the Speculative Fiction Writers Association, the new organization has developed and implemented Bylaws, elected Officers, and started charging (minimal) annual dues for members to go along with the many great benefits of the organization.

This shift has allowed the group to begin paying for its own expenses, such as a domain name and hosting for a website, Zoom video conferencing software, and other expenses instead of relying on the (very generous) donations of a few members. With these dues, the group also hopes to begin offering online workshops for members on the various aspects of writing, publishing, and marketing their works. Additionally, the group has a tremendous online presence including a group website and blog and a thriving private Discord server. It's creative madness when a group of spec fic authors come together!

In this transition, I was nominated for and elected President of the new organization and started my two-year term in March. I've enjoyed being a member of this group since the day I joined, and its talented members and critics have certainly helped me with my writing. I'm happy to be in this post..



## Spec Fic Writers Summer Newsletter Is Out

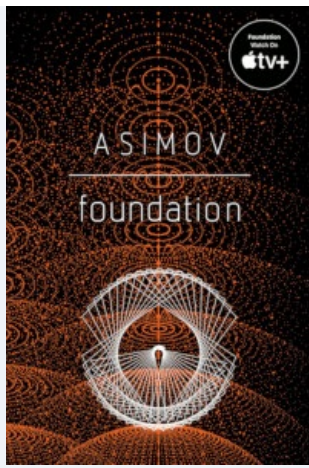
The summer edition of the Speculative Fiction Writers Association quarterly newsletter for Summer 2023 was recently published. It includes interesting articles on Language in Science Fiction, an introduction to member Bonnie McCune ([www.bfmccune.com](http://www.bfmccune.com)), tidbits of science fiction quickly becoming science fact, and a rousing book review of Garth Nix's *The Left-Handed Booksellers of London* by yours truly.

Check it out at <https://specficwriters.com/newsletters/2023-summer.pdf> and sign up for the Spec Fic Writers newsletter if you haven't already.

## Recent Blog Posts

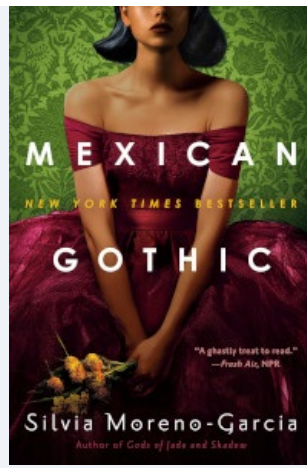
- Enjoy urban fantasy? Then you might like Garth Nix's latest foray *The Left-Handed Booksellers of London*. Check out my review of the book: <https://www.matthewcushing.com/post/book-review-the-left-handed-booksellers-of-london>
- The life of an author has been the subject of many a TV show and movie. Here are some of my favorites: <https://www.matthewcushing.com/post/shows-about-authors>
- Though authors are drilled to show the emotions of characters by explaining what they are doing doesn't work for the point-of-view (POV) character. Find out why: <https://www.matthewcushing.com/post/deep-pov-and-emotion>

## Book Recommendations



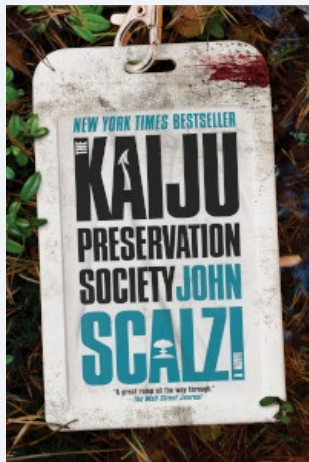
**Foundation**  
by Isaac Asimov

The seminal work from a science fiction master, now a limited series on AppleTV+



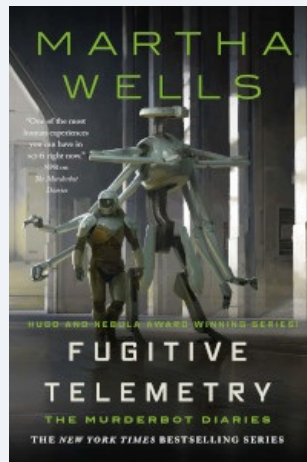
**Mexican Gothic**  
by Silvia Moreno-Garcia

A slow-burn horror mystery of family dynamics and ancient sins.



**Kaiju Preservation Society**  
by John Scalzi

An easy and mindless romp to another world filled with mysterious kaiju.



**Fugitive Telemetry**  
by Martha Wells

The latest Murderbot tale where SecUnit investigates a murder.

## Writing Excerpt - *My Brother's Keeper*

The moment he stepped foot in Jacob's room, Marko realized his mistake. The rage and blame burning in his brother's eyes conveyed the message as clearly as the bitter silence. There was no forgiveness there, no love.

The same feelings filled Marko, only directed toward himself. There was nothing to blame but his own recklessness. A day seared into his memory.

With Jacob on the back of his astrobike, Marko hadn't thought twice about riding fast and showing off. The wind blew their hair, and adrenaline pushed Marko to go faster. Jacob whooped and hollered, Marko egging him on to stand up on the pegs as the scenery whipped by—two brothers against the world.

In that moment, they were immortal.

Then Marko lost control. The thrusters blew, and the astrobike flipped, launching the brothers into the air.

Marko walked away unscathed—at least physically. Jacob didn't walk again— not until he recovered from the implant procedure. Now *that* thruster had blown.

Every day Marko fought with demons reminding him of that fateful ride. He would do anything to make it right. Anything.

And now that chance was here—if Jacob agreed.

Marko motioned his mother to join him in the hall, out of Jacob's hearing. "Have you asked him about the procedure? What does he think?"

A new member of the neurotechnology surgical team had the idea, a specialist in heuristic programming. Scans showed the cognitive architecture and organizational thought processing of Marko's brain matched his brother's identically. This made Marko the perfect candidate—the only person in the world—who could donate part of his brain and save his brother.

Or it could drive them both insane.

Without the procedure, Jacob wouldn't survive. And if his brother died, so would Marko. The guilt would make sure of it.

“Not yet,” his mother replied. “He’s only now regained consciousness.”  
The statement punched Marko in the gut. “That long? He’s been here for hours.”

“I know, honey.” His mother pulled him into a hug and whispered in his ear. “Are you sure you’re willing to do this?” Her body shook as she cried. “I can’t lose you both—I just *can’t*.”

Marko returned her embrace. “It’s alright, Ma. It’s going to be alright.”

## A Note of Humor

Maybe I missed my calling:

I always thought I'd be a great Librarian...

except for the part where I have to let others take my books.

## Thank You

A heartfelt *Thank You* to everyone who has subscribed to this newsletter. Your support of my writing is both invaluable and motivating. If you want more up-to-date information on what I'm doing--from what I'm reading to what I'm working on--please visit my website at [www.matthewcushing.com](http://www.matthewcushing.com). Or, you can follow me on Twitter [@mhcushing](https://twitter.com/mhcushing) if Elon Musk hasn't run it into the ground.

If you know anyone who loves speculative fiction (science fiction, fantasy, horror, time travel, dystopian, utopian, steampunk, solarpunk, climate fiction, space opera, urban fantasy, supernatural, etc.), please forward them a copy of this newsletter and encourage them to sign up!

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

**Matthew Cushing**

---

This email was sent to {{contact.EMAIL}}  
You've received it because you've subscribed to my newsletter.

[Unsubscribe](#)

