



Fungi

Orrin Grey (Editor) , Silvia Moreno-Garcia (Editor) , Jeff VanderMeer , Lavie Tidhar , Nick Mamatas , Laird Barron , Molly Tanzer , Jesse Bullington , more... Ann K. Schwader , W.H. Pugmire , Polenth Blake , Ian Rogers (contributor) ...less

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A collection of fungal wonders...and terrors. In this new anthology, writers reach into the rich territory first explored by William Hope Hodgson a century ago: the land of the fungi. Stories range from noir to dark fantasy, from steampunk to body horror. Join authors such as Jeff VanderMeer, Laird Barron, Nick Mamatas, W.H. Pugmire, Lavie Tidhar, Ann K. Schwader, Jesse Bullington, Molly Tanzer and Simon Strantzas through a dizzying journey of fungal tales. Feast upon Fungi.

Fungi Details

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Author : Orrin Grey (Editor) , Silvia Moreno-Garcia (Editor) , Jeff VanderMeer , Lavie Tidhar , Nick Mamatas , Laird Barron , Molly Tanzer , Jesse Bullington , more... Ann K. Schwader , W.H. Pugmire , Polenth Blake , Ian Rogers (contributor) ...less

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From Reader Review Fungi for online ebook

Muchandquick says

First: look at that cover art. Isn't it amazing?

Second: This is a strong anthology. It would be a lie to say I enjoyed every story, but for each story I disliked there were two other stories I really enjoyed. There is a wide spread of stories from humorous to haunting, fantastic to riffs on alternate realities, and damn near everything else in between.

Third: Look at that cover art. Then get this book and read it.

Karl says

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Cover by Oliver Wetter.

Eric Orchard says

The vast majority of the stories here are amazing. I found the ones that interested me most were either the ones with fantastical world building or creepy horror. The subtler stories felt like lost opportunities. Several times I was pleasantly surprised by the tone or approach of a story.

Frank Errington says

Fungi is a new anthology from Innsmouth Press edited by Orrin Grey and Silvia Moreno-Garcia. First let me compliment the brilliant cover art from Oliver Wetter. He does a very nice job of capturing the spirit of what lies between the covers of this anthology.

As I read the 27 stories in this collection I found my response to be as varied as the stories themselves. There were some I loved, some I was lukewarm about and others that I just didn't care for at all.

The anthology starts with "Hyphae" a tale from John Langan. One of the better stories in Fungi.

After that the stories get more and more out there, including a land of mushrooms, a tale where every character is named for a type of mushroom. There's a fungus western, psychedelic mushrooms. Some of the stories are truly Lovecraftian and then there are stories that just have a fungi theme. There a few familiar names in this anthology and plenty of relative newcomers.

One of my favorite stories is written by Molly Tanzer and Jesse Bullington. "Tubby McMungus, Fat from Fungus", a wonderful, fairy-tale type of story involving cats, rats and of course fungus. There's also the delightful ""Wild Mushrooms" from Jane Herenstein and the clever "Letters To a Fungus" by Polenth Blake. Nick Mamatas makes an appearance with a compelling story of revenge, titled 'The Shaft Through the Middle of It."

When I read an anthologoy, I certainly don't anticipate loving every story, but it would be nice to enjoy more than a handful. Thus 3 of 5 Stars. This means I'm glad I read it, but I'm just not crazy about it.

If it sounds interesting to you, read it by all means. The paperback (\$15) and e-book (\$8) editions of Fungi are identical. However, Fungi is also be available as a hardcover (\$28.00, available only via Innsmouth Free Press) with three extra stories not included in the paperback and ten black-and-white illustrations by Bernie Gonzalez.

Frances says

A much wider range of stories than I was expecting. You've got some classic fungus/body horror and some sad tales of personal darkness, but there's also Victorian bio-engineering, weird Westerns, dark comedy, science fiction that puts the mushrooms in a very different role from what I was expecting, high fantasy (the old stuff), cross-sections of neighbourhood life that take a dark turn, mind-altering alien invasion, poetry...

I'm sitting here looking over the table of contents, and I really don't think I can do justice to the scope of the stories, here; the variety of style and topic is honestly surprising, even as the quality is consistently high. A couple of them didn't blow me away, but all that means is that when presented with twenty-seven stories, the worst thing I can possibly say about one or two of them is "well-written, not to my personal taste".

(I've made sure the official URL to the book is included in the Goodreads information for all three editions, so you could be reading the ebook in less time than it takes you to finish this review. Just saying.)

Some particular favourites of mine, that make me want to see what else the authors have done:

Last Bloom on the Sage, by Andrew Penn Romine. A dynamic weird Western; I look at what it does for the Wild West and I'm reminded of what Elizabeth Bear and Sarah Monette did for spaceships and space stations with "Boojum" and "Mongoose".

Goatsbride, by Richard Gavin. A rich, dark tale of horror where the fungus meshes with human evil and an ancient monster. Makes me think of the best of what I used to love about the old Pan Book of Horror Stories collections.

Tubby McMungus, Fat From Fungus, by Molly Tanzer and Jesse Bullington. Anthropomorphic cats. And high-fashion merkins. And poor abused rats. And jockeying for favour at court. And fungus!

Where Dead Men Go To Dream by A.C. Wise. A weird story set in an unnamed city, where the mold and mushrooms are not the only strangeness you can find growing from people's flesh. Beautifully written, sad, and dark.

Letters to a Fungus, by Polenth Blake. A deceptively fast read, darkly funny. Very quotable, although I'm avoiding doing so because of possible spoilers.

The Flaming Exodus of the Greifswald Grimoire, by J.T. Glover. A pair of cheerfully dastardly thieving protagonists on the trail of a lost book. Prompted a very odd late-night conversation. (hardcover only)

I really have to say I've trimmed this list down hard--I stopped and went back over it when I realized I was in danger of mentioning half the stories in the anthology. Honestly, there isn't a bad one in the bunch; I think this is the best anthology (for style, quality, and variety) I've seen in ages, and really recommend picking it up.

Angela says

very entertaining. Will have to look for some more stuff by some of the authors. I particularly liked the Felix

Renn story. As well as a few others.

Kate Sherrod says

Not a dud in the bunch, but some stories did stand out. Find out which on my blog.

Aaron says

Excellent anthology from Innsmouth Free Press that centers around fungus great and small. While there are many stories of the Lovecraftian variety, the anthology also includes tales from Steampunk, Western, Fantasy, and other genres I couldn't begin to put a name to. While there were some of the stories that didn't particularly grab me, none of them struck me as a black mark. Personal favorites include "Goatsbride" by Richard Gavin, "Hyphae" by John Langan, and "Dust From A Dark Flower" by Daniel Mills.

A.C. Wise says

In the interest of full disclosure, I do have a story in this anthology. That aside, I highly recommend picking up a copy. As a physical object, *Fungi* is gorgeous. Above and beyond the cover art, which initially drew me to the anthology, the hardcover edition has lovely interior illustrations reminiscent of the work of Mike Mignola, and overall there's something very pleasing about the way the book's layout, which is not something I would normally notice. The stories are strong throughout, offering, as the title implies, variation on the theme of mushrooms. I particularly enjoyed Camille Alexa's His Sweet His Truffle of a Girl, Last Bloom on the Sage by Andrew Penn Romaine, Pilgrims of the Parthen by Kristopher Reisz, The Shaft through the Middle of it All by Nick Mamatas, Gamma by Laird Barron, New Feet Within My Garden Go by E. Catherine Tobler, and Big Guy and Little Guy's Survivalist Adventure by Claude Lalumiere

Jason says

An enjoyable collection of fungi-themed, weird tales featuring many well-renowned strange fiction writers (Jeff VanderMeer, Molly Tanzer, Laird Barron, among others). What surprised me most, however, were the pieces by authors whose names were a bit less familiar. Two pieces in particular: "Last Bloom on the Sage," by Andrew Penn Romine and "Dust From a Dark Flower," by Daniel Mills stood out to me as exemplar tales of fungal woes.

"Last Bloom" concerns a train heist set in the Weird & Wild West and its bizarre and fully-realized world echoes Miéville in its scope and vision. The story is a feat of imagination and stands out due to not having a central conceit of mushrooms invading a people or a place. Such conceits lie at the heart of most of the stories in *Fungi* and, however well-told the tale at hand (don't get me wrong - all the tales within are top-notch), it got tiresome to read such Mushroom Attack! stories one after another.

One mushroom invader story did stand out from the rest. Daniel Mills' piece, "Dust From a Dark Flower," is unforgettably creepy and rendered in a period prose so evocative I found myself at story's end having to take

a few deep breaths before turning in for the night. I'm not certain how one goes about nominating tales for Best Of awards, but "Dust From A Dark Flower" should vie as a contender wherever such awards may be.

All in all, this is a book worth your time and attention. I recommend reading the stories sparsely rather than in a marathon session. Allow time for each tale to burrow in and colonize your mind space before moving on to another. Here's hoping for a follow-up collection in a few years' time.

C McDaniel says

While there are a couple of stories in this collection that left me curious as to why (obviously thoughtful and talented) editors included them, the good tales more than compensate. If you are looking for a great access point into the Mythos or are looking for something other than the standard fare your Mythos works, this is a great anthology. I would certainly recommend it.

Chadwick Ginther says

Yes, I do have a story in this collection, but speaking for everyone else's work, this is simply a stunning anthology. Too many great stories to call out individually, and Bernie Gonzalez's art in the limited edition hardcover is so cool! I'd have read this anthology even if I didn't have a story in it, and I don't even eat mushrooms.

Justin Steele says

I've said before that original anthologies are usually a mixed bag, and for the most part that remains the case. Therefore, it's a special thing when one comes out that manages to be great throughout. Innsmouth Free Press, a Canadian "micro-publisher", has already produced some quality anthologies. Historical Lovecraft and Future Lovecraft both have a spot on my bookshelf, and were quite satisfying. Fungi, their latest anthology, stands as their best work yet.

The brilliant cover by artist Oliver Wetter blends strangeness and beauty, and gives an idea of what's to be found within the pages. Fungi itself is such an interesting species, and days could easily be spent reading about different types that are strange enough on their own without having to be fictionalized. Editors Silvia Moreno-Garcia and Orrin Grey wisely saw the potential of such a theme, and have compiled together a variety of tales. The stories themselves range from horror to fantasy. Some are dark, some are silly, some are chilling and some are just plain fun. The paperback edition contains twenty-two stories and a poem, while the deluxe hardcover edition includes three extra stories and ten black and white illustrations by Bernie Gonzalez.

Some (there are many) stories that I particularly enjoyed:

Hyphae, by John Langan, opens the anthology. It's a good, solid horror story like I've come to expect from this author.

Lavie Tidhar is an author who writes beautiful short fiction. The White Hands reads like an excerpt from a weird encyclopedia detailing a mushroom world. Although not a typical, narrative story, it's quite captivating.

Camille Alexander is an author that I'm not familiar with, but His Sweet Truffle of a Girl showcases her talent. The story is about a man on a "fungal submarine", on a mission to win over his heart's desire. It's a weird, sad tale.

The next story, Last Bloom on The Sage by Andrew Penn Romine, is a fast-paced weird western. This could be one of the weirdest westerns I've read, as it seems to add steampunk, magic, and Lovecraftian creatures into the mix. Romine writes a rip-roaring train heist filled with action and strangeness, yet hinting at a much larger world. This is one of my favorite stories, and I'd love to see more stories set in the world Romine has created.

Another favorite is The Pilgrims of Parthen by Kristopher Reisz. It's a beautiful, chilling tale of a special type of mushroom that causes shared hallucinations. Reisz manages to write a tale that could also work as a metaphor for real life drug addiction, and shows just how obsessed and dependent people can become. Parallels can be seen to Lovecraft's A Shadow Out of Time and tales by Clark Ashton Smith. All in all, one of the best stories in the anthology.

W.H. Pugmire's Midnight Mushrumps (my second favorite story title) is typical of Pugmire's work. The prose is dreamy and decadent and the story is quite haunting. Any fan of weird fiction or eerily beautiful prose should mark Pugmire as a must-read.

No weird, fungal anthology would be complete without a story by Jeff Vandermeer. The author/editor is, without a doubt, the King of Fungi. Corpse Mouth and Spore Nose revisits his fictional city of Ambergris (which is explored in his previous brilliant works: The City of Saints and Madmen, Shriek: An Afterword, and Finch). This short story involves a detective coming to the city of Ambergris on a job, but finding more than he bargained for. The story is weird at its best with some disturbing visuals and elements of body horror.

Goatsbride, by Richard Gavin, is another beautifully written story. Although I found the fungus element to play quite a small role, I loved this story. It explores primal lust in a village reminiscent of a religious, conservative settler town. Gavin is highly talented, and balances fluid prose and brilliant imagery to weave a tale that is not easily forgotten.

Molly Tanzer and Jesse Bullington show what's possible when two impishly warped minds come together. Tubby McMungus, Fat From Fungus (favorite story title – obviously) is easily the weirdest, funniest, most

memorable tale (tail?) in the anthology. Anthropomorphic animals, scheming nobles, fungus, and merkins come together in a story that will not soon be forgotten. Fungal fun for the furry in all of us.

Where Dead Men Go To Dream by A.C. Wise is a dark tale of anguish and loss. There is some beautiful imagery to be found in a tale of mushrooms and dreams.

Daniel Mills recently caught my attention with a brilliant story in *A Season in Carcosa*. With *Dust From a Dark Flower*, Mills uses fungus in a more traditional weird horror style. Mills is quickly becoming a new favorite of mine.

Nick Namatas brings us a tale of an urban housing project's garden, and the hope it brings to the neighborhood before taking a darker turn in *The Shaft Through the Middle of It All*. Namatas paints a very convincing urban picture in a stand out tale.

Go Home Again showcases Simon Strantzas many talents. The melancholy story is full of beautiful, dark imagery, coming together for a hopeful ending.

And ending the anthology (for the paperback readers) is a powerful tale by Laird Barron. *Gamma* is a disturbing, spine-chilling tale. It works as an example of how literary, powerful, and brutal Barron's stories can be, adding another example of how he is the Cormac McCarthy of the weird. A perfect closing story.

There are several other fun stories as well, Julio Toro San Martin spins a steampunk yarn, Lisa M. Bradley writes an intriguing environmental tale where not everything is as it seems, Polenth Blake pens a hilarious little ditty, Ian Rogers brings back his recurring paranormal investigator Felix Renn in a supernatural noir, and Chadwick Ginther brings fungus into the realm of *Sword and Sorcery*.

Also of note are the three additional stories available in the hardcover edition. Catherine Tobler writes a poetic, gloomy tale of a ruined earth, while J.T. Glover and Claude Lalumière bring light-hearted, funny tales to the table. The three stories together are totally worth the extra money.

Fungi is definitely an anthology any fan of the weird should get ahold of. There is just so much offered in terms of content that it is entertaining throughout. Also, the hardcover is worth dishing out the extra dollars for. Not only would I dub this anthology "highly recommended", I would even go so far as to say it's my pick for best original anthology of the year.

Originally appeared on my blog, The Arkham Digest.

Jessica says

This was very fun to read. It always seems so difficult to rate a collection of various writers, though, because it never fails that there are stories I really love and others that just seem standard, even almost uninteresting, so I think of this as a high three (since we don't have out-of-ten ratings). I liked that a spec poem was included at the end. Overall, I enjoyed reading it and would probably pass it along to someone I thought would like this kind of thing.

M Griffin says

Fungi, edited by Orrin Gray and Silvia Garcia-Moreno, collects about two dozen weird and fantastic stories focused on the theme of fungus, including mushrooms, molds and a whole related class of bizarre life forms.

I expected mostly dark tales of decay and derangement, but many of the tales here turn out to be lighthearted, whimsical, even silly. Whatever one's preference in terms of tone, *Fungi* undeniably contains a healthy measure of strong genre fiction. Whether due to my own predisposition toward more serious horror and dark fantasy, or because the more playful efforts are not as strong, I consider the most successful stories here to be those darkest or most surreal in tone. The work of John Langan, Laird Barron, and E. Catherine Tobler stood apart in my estimation.

Langan's lead-off "Hyphae" is a concentrated dose of nastiness. I dare anyone to read this without at least once letting out a disgusted, shuddering moan. I haven't seen Langan write something so viscerally gruesome until this. So awful, yet wonderful. I loved it.

Laird Barron never disappoints, and his "Gamma," a cynical yet emotionally powerful survey of childhood, adulthood, entropy and decay, balances a boy's recollection of his father killing a lame horse named Gamma against a present-day, adult contemplation of his wife leaving him for another man. The story looks outward to embrace death and human existence more generally, and finally broadens to face horror on a truly cosmic scale.

It's worth noting that E. Catherine Tobler's "New Feet Within My Garden Go," which may well be my favorite piece in the book, is a bonus story present in the hardcover but not the paperback version of *Fungi*. It's a shame many readers will miss Tobler's tale, which is complex, detail-rich, and overflowing with delicious, poetic weirdness. Beautifully and artfully told.

Another handful of stories deserve mention. Nick Mamatas describes in "The Shaft Through the Middle of It All" an apartment building where fungus growing in a ventilation shaft can bring harm to residents, though another use of fungus brings a kind of retributive power. J.T. Glover's "The Flaming Exodus of the Greifswald Grimoire" tells of two brother sorcerers, adventuring grimoire hunters who find trouble when they try to snatch a tempting tome in a house they assume is empty. Paul Tremblay's "Our Stories Will Live Forever" has the feel of straight realism, until a character dealing with terror of flying undergoes a transformation. Lastly, "The Pilgrims of Parthen," by a writer new to me, Kristopher Reisz, suggests a society taken over by the visionary trips brought on by newly discovered mushrooms, which seem to transport the user into a distinct and transcendent separate reality.

Several more, despite falling short of total success in my judgement, possess strengths of expression or

concept sufficient to at least partly recommend them. These include works by W.H. Pugmire, Ian Rogers, Daniel Mills, Jeff VanderMeer and A.C. Wise. Also, one humorous story in *Fungi* that I think works (by virtue of going way over the top) is Molly Tanzer and Jesse Bullington's "Tubby McMungus, Fat From Fungus," which describes a showdown between rival merkin-makers for fashion-conscious society felines.

Where other stories fell short, lapsing into slightness or forgettability, was often in making a story's entire point nothing more than someone being consumed by mold, or surprised by the druggy effects of mushrooms. Of course, some that miss the mark for one reader may please others looking for different approaches to the subject. Whatever tone the reader prefers, *Fungi* contains a more than sufficient number of challenging and artful takes on the theme. Readers receptive to the fungal theme, and familiar with at least some of the authors contained here, should find in *Fungi* a successful weird fiction anthology and an overall satisfying read.
