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vol. 5

# FRONT MATTER

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## SOME NOTES

It's the end of July, but I'm still gonna send this. This spring was mostly focused on graduating, I guess? I took a class called Black Information Futures about the role of

information science in black oppression and liberation, historically as well as today. It was really interesting and a lot of fun, but also included a lot more academic reading and writing than my previous classes and took a lot of time. Also my therapist took several months of unexpected medical leave that I didn't have any plan for. Juno's been super busy with work. I had a sleep clinic appointment + confirmed that I do not have sleep apnea, which is good, but means that I need to find a different solution to being tired all the time.

Juno's grandma Marilyn died in March, and we went to her memorial service in June, which was really nice. She spent a lot of the time we visited in March choosing the music she wanted played at the service, so it was fun to see her vision come together.

But things are good. I read some good books + don't have to go to classes any more. It's been sunny here which is nice. I made some pillows + pillow cases for the sofa, which has been a definite success.

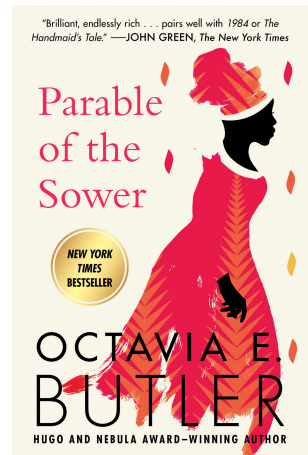
# BOOK REVIEWS

## PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Octavia Butler

This book is set in a 2025 that Octavia Butler imagined in the '80s, one where there is effectively no government and the country is suffering from a drug-induced arson epidemic. Lauren Olamiya lives near Los Angeles in a walled neighborhood, but ends up on a journey up the coast looking to share her new religion, Earthseed.

I enjoyed this one. It is SO much less disturbing than *Kindred*. I think because it is set in the future rather than the past? I have some fondness for people struggling with problems in their day-to-day lives and writing philosophy about it. I am interested in Butler's insistence on the importance of literacy even as most useful knowledge in this story is shared orally. I have also been thinking in the months since I read it about the emphasis on space exploration as something critically important for humanity to be doing. I dunno if I agree with her, but it's interesting!

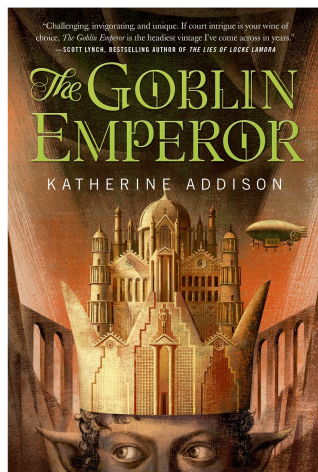


# THE GOBLIN EMPEROR

Katherine Addison

Maia, the emperor's half-goblin fourth son is summoned to the capital of the elflands after his father and brothers die in a zeppelin explosion. Having never been taught to rule, he must adjust quickly to the power struggles of court, while also determining whether the explosion that killed his family was an accident after all.

This was a strong recommendation from an online friend who has loved it for years. I don't remember what ultimately convinced me to read it, but! I think it was fun! The characters are likable and the world-building was consistently and lovingly rendered, but didn't overwhelm the mystery of the plot. Appreciated also that everything turns out okay in the end.

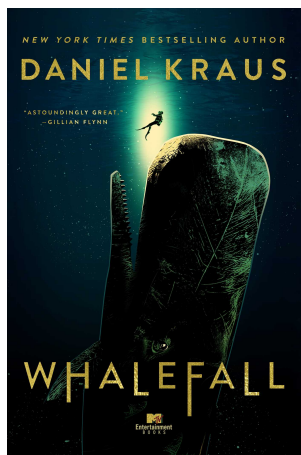


# WHALEFALL

Daniel Kraus

I am writing all of these reviews without looking up anything but my original review of the book. I do not remember any names from this book, so I am not including them.

Following the death of his estranged father, high-schooler [Name Here] takes the old diver's ashes for one last dive. He intends to scatter them in the ocean and make peace with his memories, but by wild coincidence is swallowed by a sperm whale. He must use everything his father taught him about diving if he has a hope of escaping.



Didn't care for this one! A story abt a boy who gets swallowed by a whale to me suggests a level of whimsy that this book does not deliver. It's very gory, and he ultimately has to forgive his extremely bad dad in order to escape from the whale which sucked imo. Also the more practical things he did to escape from the whale were build a bomb from some batteries (!! he was using as ballast + then cut a hole into the side of the whale's stomach + then push his hand into the hole + detonate the bomb, blowing a hole in the side of the whale and also presumably his arm. I didn't enjoy it!

## **THE NORTHERN CAVES**

nostalgebraist

The Northern Caves is a webnovel set on a fan forum for Leonard Salby, the author of a series of popular fantasy novels. A group of devoted fans meet up irl to try to make sense of his final manuscript. The story is epistolary, told in web pages and forum posts.

I read this book in one day while not reading the book I was supposed to read for class. I enjoyed it a lot. My wife looked over at my computer at one point and said "forum drama?" + I had to explain that, like, yes, but Fictional forum drama. Like a lot of people, I was a little surprised by the ending, having expected a more dramatic inflection point. But it is very atmospheric and concerned with moral philosophy in a way that takes it seriously while also acknowledging that you can't make metaphysics your whole life. I do recommend it and I will definitely read some of the author's more recent work.

# SOME COMPUTER PROJECTS

In June I jailbroke my 12-yr-old kindle, after thinking abt it for many years. The impetus is that someone made a good jailbreak that works for almost all kindles, which wasn't the deciding factor, but did make it easier. The deciding factor is that KOReader, an alternative operating system for the kindle, is now good enough that I feel it's viable for regular use. As it turns out, you can't Remove the Kindle OS, so KOReader is just running over it, but the kindle has been deregistered from my account so hopefully? That affords me some privacy? Unclear, but it does allow me to read a broader variety of file formats, and I have also set it up to sync with Calibre so that I can transfer ebooks wirelessly from my computer - useful bc most of our micro-usb cables don't transmit data + it is SO Annoying to try to find the one that does.

Anyway, I recommend it.

The other thing I did in June, shortly after graduation, was setting up a raspberry pi to act as a pi-hole blocking ads on our wifi network. It's mostly useful for removing ads from the roku tv, which are otherwise pretty persistent. I would like to use the raspberry pi in the future to host a personal website, but for the moment it is fun to just watch the DNS requests through the pi-hole software.

# MOVIES JUNO WATCHED + LIKED



## JOHN WICK : CHAPTER 4

okay look. the plot is half-baked nonsense and the interludes between action sequences are dull. but that doesn't matter because john wick is all about action, and on that front this installment really, REALLY delivers. truly an incredible amount of exhilarating, razor-sharp fight choreography in a class of its own, with careful camera work (including some jaw-dropping long overhead shots) that generously highlights every detail. john wick gets thrown through about a dozen panes of glass, rammed by about a dozen cars, and falls down about a dozen flights of stairs in a row. donnie yen tears up the screen as a zatoichi-style blind swordsman (who uses a cane and is called caine...also there is a killer named killa...). you've got sven marquardt slapping keanu across the face while repeatedly shouting "i am klaus!", a radio station for assassins called WUXIA broadcasting from the eiffel tower, a c'était un rendez-vous race to reach sacré-cœur at sunrise, a spaghetti western pistol duel, etc etc, all set to an excellent high-octane soundtrack. probably my favorite entry in the john wick series and easily one of the best action movies ever!!

# SHIN GODZILLA

now that's a godzilla movie!!! love that they used the original 1954 theme song and roar sound effect (a leather glove rubbed against detuned bass strings??? how cool is that!!). fun to see shinya tsukamoto with a significant acting role in a big mainstream film. the subtitle track i found included a lot of extra info such as characters' job titles, plane/train/helicopter models, names of buildings and landmarks, etc, which i appreciated!



# SECRET MALL APARTMENT



too much of a focus on praising michael townsend and documenting his entirely un-mall apartment related fixation with 9/11 memorial art. but you know what...i still liked it! maybe i have built up a tolerance for this sort of unpolished and self-congratulatory filmmaking from all the climbing documentaries i've seen (i was surprised nobody in secret mall apartment ever called themselves a "dirtbag" tbh). but whatever! i like that they made a secret apartment in the mall! i like the shots of

them crawling into the walls and pushing furniture up a ladder, i like the archival footage, i like that we get to see present-day michael go back and find the empty apartment. it's fun!



I mentioned in the last newsletter that Juno + I have been playing point-and-click puzzle games together. We are mostly playing single-player games where one of us drives and one takes notes.

Her favorite game is Riven, the Sequel to Myst, and Blue Prince has a lot of Riven influences, including rotating rooms and spooky tunnels. It is fun! There are a lot of distinct small puzzles that are fairly well integrated into the story. It also has some rogue-like elements that Juno's not Crazy about. We've been playing for a little more than 60 hours, and there are some combinations of rooms we just haven't been able to draw.

I'm having a good time, though. It makes my computer very hot, but I enjoy the end of the game where you're just performing familiar routines and every now and then you find something new and exciting. Our protagonist's mother writes objectively bad children's books with thinly veiled political messages, and the politics seem to be suspiciously pro-monarchy, but it's all very removed from the gameplay, which is a lot of fun.

for a full-color digital version, please see:  
[countmein.neocities.org/zine](http://countmein.neocities.org/zine)

# THANKS 4 READ- ING

please direct all feedback to

[redacted for online  
publication]