

the new wings new strapped, he took off
the top board and hit the flat water.

Helicopters came next and one
with an ancient $1\frac{1}{2}$
h.p. motor, a 12-foot vane
and bicycle frame gave a cough
and rose $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch;
frame spinning madly it fell over,
jerking cruelly it gouged and wrenched
the lawn, his back and a grass-mower.

He tried the wings again. Lighter,
even more complicated
the straps, the spread—larger, tighter;
a cork crash-helmet on his head
like a handleless domestic pot
worn at his best friend's insistence.
Crouching on the friend's car roof, taut,
nervous, hawklike, shakily tense,
he fell off at 35 miles
an hour and spent a bandaged age
in hospital, concussed—closed eyes
from a sub-arachnoid haemorrhage.

He came out quite convinced anti-
gravity (which everyone knows is
impossible)—no more antics—
was the answer. His wife left roses
and a note on the mantleshef,
but the rest of her and the children
had gone: 'to find for them, myself,
a decent, sane father and husband.'

Vaguely, he thought this would leave more
room—room for electro-magnetic
coils; spread, assorted parts of four
home-construction, electronic
kits (we supply the parts); diodes,
soldering-irons, pliers, screw-
drivers; disassembled radios,
valves, tubes, plugs, and more than a few
rolls of wire. He has managed mildly
to electrocute himself dozens
of times but he still gets wildly
excited by theories, unproven
or fantastic. A pair of privileged
friends have seen some quite startling things
with an alloy pin: it quivered
in a stoppered, vacuumed, thin-
walled test-tube.

Now—it sounds funny—he
tries lifting a farthing (the widow's
mite) from thin sheets of ebony.
No one will laugh much if it does.

THE WANDERER

by K. W. George

I go by myself: no one with me;
All alone I wander the silent depths,
Thinking, insecure. I may be
Too far for aid when my time comes;
But who will care?
Not the fat man, drinking in his office,
Who sent me here,
'Exploration in preparation for exploitation';
But the fat man warms his belly
By the fire; laughs; drinks.
He knows nothing of the empty solitude, nor cares
For the frozen silence of the stars.

But I am here, a long way past
The broiling fires of Mercury,
The dead, sad waste of Mars, and last
The dark and icy poison of the outer giants,
Out into the emptiness, empty of passion and fury,
Life and companionship, where nothing is
Or can be, except myself,
Sealed in and alone.
I explore, probe, test,
Move on to the next,
Too far to report back.
I sometimes wonder, alone here in the stars,
If he, the fat man, really cares
What I bring back:
Rubbish, weeds and tares.

I have seen troubles, all long, long past:
Disasters long gone, the wreckage of worlds;
The ashes of races, thrown back, aghast,
Dead in the contemplation of their own works.
Nothing remains but rubble, no life.
Cold and alone I have travelled,
Dust and ashes I have seen,
All dead. No harmony, no strife,
Dead peoples, dead worlds, dead cities,
The empty wind whispering in the towns
Sadly, never of will-be, but has-been.

But I shall go on, exploring, testing, tasting.
Let those who will sit by the fire, their backs turned
To the icy sky. I shall be here
When the Time comes, hasting
From world to world, star to dead star,
Never resting, here in my coffin-ship, waiting;

And when It does come,
I shall be finally silent, finally happy,
Shooting onwards and outwards, always outwards
For the Outwards calls, even to me:
The dark, silent reaches, the black, silent lure
Of no-one-knows; to see
What's there, to taste

A joy without bitterness, be sure
Of ourselves—at last. . . .

SEARCH

by B. M. Henley

Beyond the galaxy's spreading rim—
will we find Him?
Does He reside in a flaming sun,
the Mighty One?
Or is His pitying, thorn-marked face
shadowed in space?
Is He subject to gravitic pull,
the Merciful?

Do extra-terrestrials toil and spin,
and do they sin?
Do alien life-forms fight and brawl,
and did they fall?
As visualized or nightmare-dreamed—
were they redeemed?
Scaly Sirian? Capellan BEM?
Did He save *them*?

He could be here or there or yon,
the Gentle One.
He might be up, or out, or high
in that black sky.
Perhaps He's near or in or on
great Epsilon,
or weaving light in the nebula
Andromeda.

Beyond the galaxy's distant rim,
they won't find Him.
On Procyon, or far Altair—
He won't be there.
Not to be found on singing stars,
or silent Mars—
unless the astronauts carry Him
along with them.

We give our warmest congratulations to these three prize-winners and our thanks to everyone who sent an entry to the competition. Although that is finished now, it is by no means the end of our interest in original material from readers. We have not published any stories or articles recently, simply because of lack of space, but we still welcome contributions from members. We hope that this competition will encourage some of you to send us poems as well as critical articles and short stories. Thank you again for your response to the competition itself.

NEXT MONTH'S CHOICE

Dark Universe

by Daniel Galouye

AT SOME point in the future the descendants of survivors of an atomic holocaust live out their lives in a vast system of caverns, far below the surface of the earth. These people have no remembrance of their past history; living so long in total darkness, they have even forgotten the existence of light. But in compensation for their sightlessness they have developed the sense of hearing to a tremendous degree.

In this amazingly good first novel Daniel Galouye has created in convincing detail a world of darkness. His people have had to fashion for themselves a complete way of life, rooted in and bounded by their lack of sight; they have even made for themselves a mythology: light itself has become a myth to them, a deity whom they call 'Great Light Almighty'; an electric light bulb they look upon, in their mind's eye, as a mysterious relic. The forces opposed to Light are the Twin Devils, Cobalt and Strontium.

These people in darkness lead lives of unceasing danger. There are feuds between different scattered communities and rivalry for power within one group; there is a constant need to hunt down and kill the huge bats and other creatures which also live in this eerie, tomb-like world.

Dark Universe is in fact the story of Jared, a heretic among his people for refusing to accept their myths and superstitions. He searches until he rediscovers the forgotten surface of the world and comes out into the light.

'In terms of character and individuality, Daniel Galouye's *Dark Universe* is subtly and sensitively constructed. . . . Two blind races, sunk into bronze age primitivism, compete for cattle, wells and strange plants. One sees by charting the echoes from the clickstones they carry like torches. Another, superior in their ability to travel silently, have learned to recognize outlines through infra-red sensitivity.

'The feeling of claustrophobia is brilliantly caught, and here too the theological concepts of the great god Hydrogen himself, who expresses his power through the Light Almighty, are cunningly