

joined the editorial board of *Science Fiction Studies* with its first issue in 1973, and remained an editorial consultant up to his death more than 100 issues later. He was of the generation that brought science fiction into the academy and supported it as a sophisticated, ambitious, and valuable experimental genre, as admirable for its literary qualities as for its thematic and theoretical engagements. Theall wrote the introduction to Judith Merrill's *Survival Ship and Other Stories* in 1973, and published two notable pieces in *SFS* over the next few years, elucidating his characteristic topics: "The Art of Social Science Fiction: The Ambiguous Utopian Dialectics of Ursula Le Guin" (*SFS* 2 [Nov. 1975]) and "On SF as Symbolic Communication" (*SFS* 22 [Nov. 1980]). As late as March 2001 (*SFS* 28.1), Theall, then in his 70s, was contributing reviews to *SFS* that testified to the persistence of his attention to newly evolving communicative symbols: reviews of Kurt Lancaster's *Warlocks and Warpdrive: Contemporary Fantasy Entertainments with Interactive and Virtual Environments* (1999) and Vivian Sobchack's edited volume *Meta-Morphing: Visual Transformation and the Culture of Quick-Change* (2000). The journal and its megatext of interests could always count on his continuing encouragement. His friends, colleagues, collaborators, and students, and the world of science fiction to which he belonged but whose future moves he will now not see, will miss his lively intellect, his capacious mind, his tradition-based contemporaneity, his steady judgment, and his generosity of spirit.—**John Fekete, Trent University**

***Blood's a Rover: Harlan Ellison's Waiting.*** Along with the mythical third volume of *Dangerous Visions*, one of the longest awaited sf novels in the genre's history is *Blood's a Rover*, Harlan Ellison's novelization of his 1969 Nebula Award-winning novella, "A Boy and His Dog," which first appeared in the UK: a 15,600-word version in the April 1969 edition of *New Worlds* and a full 18,000 words in the US in Ellison's *The Beast That Shouted Love at the Heart of the World* (1969). This is a post-apocalyptic story about a teenage boy surviving in a nuked America, traveling around with his best friend and only family—a telepathic dog (an apparent product of military experimentation) named Blood. Their adventures include sex, violence, and tongue-in-cheek banter. The low-budget film of 1970 starred a young Don Johnson, who makes Vic seem closer to twenty than fifteen, as Ellison portrays the character. Both the fictional and cinematic heroes have overactive libidos, though: both live to eat and to fornicate. The film, a cult favorite among sf fans, is often shown late at night at conventions. It mostly met with Ellison's approval, except for the ending.<sup>1</sup>

In his introduction to *Vic and Blood* (Edgeworks Abbey/iBooks, 2000), Ellison writes that "A Boy and His Dog" is actually the mid-section "of an intended 150,000-word novel" (5). Ellison's forte has always been the short form, the screenplay and teleplay. Although he wrote a handful of non-sf novels at the beginning of his career (*Web of the City* [1958]; *Spider Kiss* [1961]; *The Juvies* [1961]), from the 1970s to the present his longest works have been novellas—"All the Lies that Are My Life" (1980); "Mephisto in Onyx" (1994)—and he has not produced any novel.

In the early 1980s, Ace Books announced it would publish *Blood's a Rover*. I remember being excited by this news; I was fourteen and an Ellison fan. I asked my mother to pre-order the book as a birthday present. She did, but months later received a letter from Ace stating that the book would not be coming out. As I would later learn, Ellison never turned in a manuscript, although he spent the advance. In exchange for not paying back the advance, Ellison allowed Ace to re-issue a number of his out-of-print collections and early novels: thirteen books in all in exchange for the non-existent novel's advance.

Two stories written during the later 1980s about the boy Vic and the K-9 Blood have appeared: "Eggsucker" and "Run, Spot, Run." "Eggsucker" is a prequel to "A Boy" that shows how Vic and Blood first met. "Run, Spot, Run" is set after the events in "A Boy": Vic and Blood wander into an area inhabited by half-dead, zombie-like victims of the nuclear war, who lie in wait for live, normal humans to take as victims. All three stories are collected in a graphic quasi-novel, *Vic and Blood* (1989), that offers the full-text versions alongside visual adaptations by Richard Corben, rendered in Corben's trademark dark surrealism, with sultry female bodies and a Heavy Metal-style of blood, guts, breasts, and sf gone awry in dark, desperate worlds.

Printing two versions—Ellison's and Corben's—allows the reader to see the artist's interpretation of what needs to be left out for the sake of space in a comic book, as well as what the artist envisions that the writer may have not seen, such as the facial expressions of the characters, background imagery, and details of clothing, hairstyles, and body types. Ellison has been known to work closely with the artists adapting his works in order to maintain the integrity of his vision, as demonstrated in *The Illustrated Harlan Ellison* (1978) and the DREAM CORRIDOR series from Dark Horse Comics (1995-96).

The question lingers: when will the world read the complete adventures of Vic and Blood, a novel now five decades in the making?<sup>2</sup> Will my deeply disappointed 14-year-old self ever read the book that never arrived? Ellison claims that he has finished *Blood's a Rover* but that "the final, longest section is in screenplay form—and they're bidding here in Hollywood, once again, for the feature film and tv rights—and one of these days before I go through that final door, I'll translate it into elegant prose, and the full novel will appear" (*Vic and Blood* 5). This was written on March 23, 2003. The waiting continues.—**Michael Hemmingson, San Diego**

#### NOTES

1. In the movie it is insinuated that Vic joins in eating Quilla June's flesh, but Ellison has made it clear, in the novella and by his own later account, that Vic never feeds on Quilla June: the meal is for Blood, to regain his strength and heal. Ellison notes, in his introduction to *Vic and Blood*, that he has suffered the label of misogynist for that part in the movie, when it was the director's invention.

2. The longest gestating sf novel is possibly Samuel R. Delany's *They Fly at Çiron* (1995), which he began in the late 1950s.

**SF Studies at UC Riverside.** I thought I should give the field at large some news regarding the ongoing sf initiative at the University of California at Riverside. Following the first national search for a senior position in science fiction, I