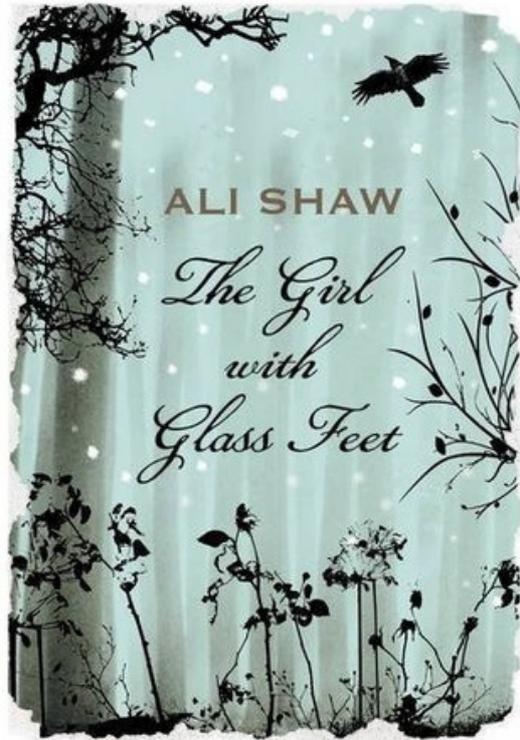


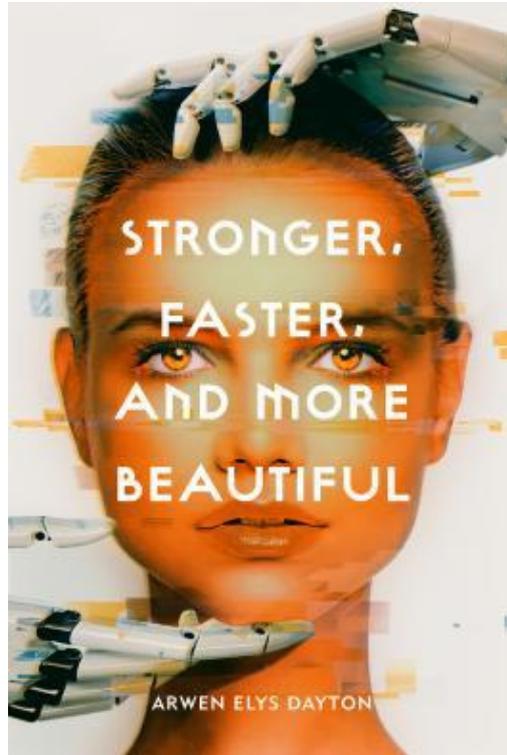
Ali Shaw – The Girl with Glass Feet



Strange things are happening on the remote and snowbound archipelago of St Hauda's Land. Unusual winged creatures flit around icy bogland; albino animals hide themselves in the snow-glazed woods; jellyfish glow in the ocean's depths - and Ida MacLaird is slowly turning into glass.

Shaw has worked the great tradition of European fairy tales and come up with an ingenious story so deft it defies the obvious label "quirky". Set on a fictional northern archipelago, the world conjured up is one of frozen beauty with small Arctic creatures melting into the snowbound woods. Into this landscape steps Ida MacLaird, whose body, beginning with her carefully concealed feet, is inexplicably turning to glass. Photographer Midas, estranged from his reclusive mother, is fixated on his hated father's suicide. Falling tentatively in love with Ida, he embarks on a desperate quest to save her. The key to Ida's predicament lies with the mysterious Henry, and the lovers are further thwarted by Ida's sinister, self-appointed guardian. A magical fable of fate and resignation.

Arwen Elys Dayton - Stronger, faster and more beautiful

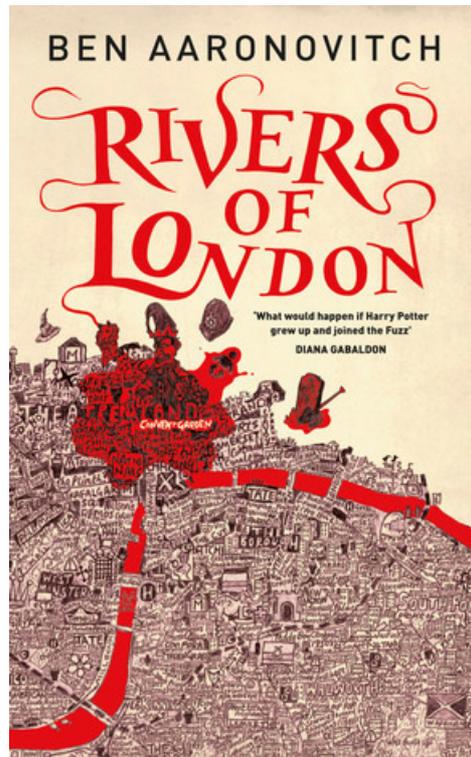


For fans of television shows Black Mirror and Westworld, this compelling, mind-bending novel is a twisted look into the future, exploring how far we will go to remake ourselves into the perfect human specimen and what it means to be human at all.

Set in our world, spanning the near to distant futures, Stronger, Faster, and More Beautiful is a novel made up of six interconnected stories that ask how far we will go to remake ourselves into the perfect human specimens, and how hard that will push the definition of "human."

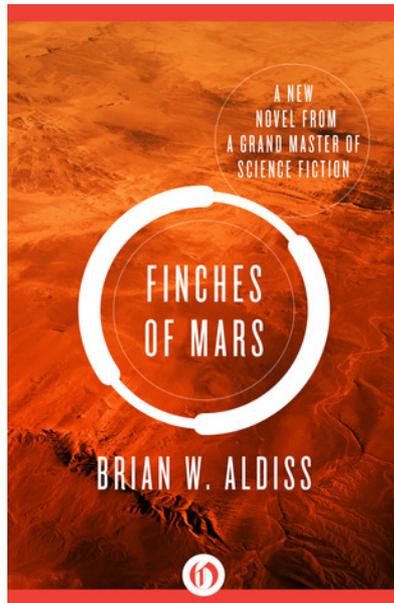
This extraordinary work explores the amazing possibilities of genetic manipulation and life extension, as well as the ethical quandaries that will arise with these advances. The results range from the heavenly to the monstrous. Deeply thoughtful, poignant, horrifying, and action-packed, Arwen Elys Dayton's Stronger, Faster, and More Beautiful is groundbreaking in both form and substance.

Ben Aaronovitch - Rivers of London



Probationary Constable Peter Grant dreams of being a detective in London's Metropolitan Police. Too bad his superior plans to assign him to the Case Progression Unit, where the biggest threat he'll face is a paper cut. But Peter's prospects change in the aftermath of a puzzling murder, when he gains exclusive information from an eyewitness who happens to be a ghost. Peter's ability to speak with the lingering dead brings him to the attention of Detective Chief Inspector Thomas Nightingale, who investigates crimes involving magic and other manifestations of the uncanny. Now, as a wave of brutal and bizarre murders engulfs the city, Peter is plunged into a world where gods and goddesses mingle with mortals and a long-dead evil is making a comeback on a rising tide of magic.

Brian Aldiss – Finches of Mars



Set on the Red Planet, it follows a group of colonists and the problems they have in setting up a new society. Life can be sustained but new life will not prosper - the women on the planet only ever give birth to stillborn children. Exploring many of the author's classic themes, this is a landmark novel in any genre.

However note that the Guardian said:

Mars has, in a rather random pairing, banned the importation from Earth of religion and pets. Despite this latter interdiction a population of finches has been smuggled in, hence the novel's title. It's a nod, of course, towards Darwin, and *The Origin of Species* is quoted as an epigraph; clearly the book is about

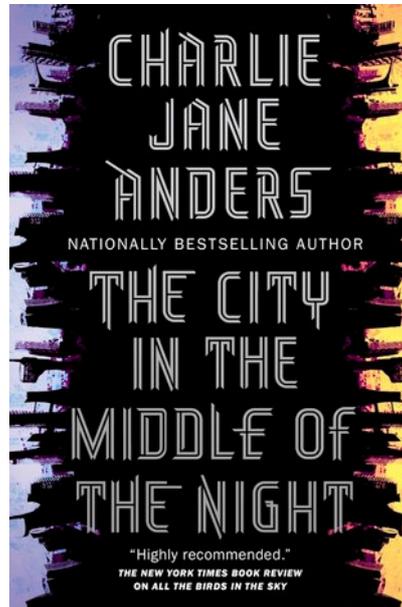
evolution. The inability of settlers to have children represents a generational blockage in the life-force. Indeed, what is strongest about the novel is its meditation on humanity's potential for breaking out of its chrysalis to become something cosmically new.

Some of this speculation is thought-provoking, but sometimes Aldiss's wisdom crosses the line into mere deepitude. "Supposing the universe has a meaning," the narrator ponders early in the novel. "Does that give human life meaning? What if 'meaning' itself holds no 'meaning'?" Um.

In other words, *Finches of Mars* is an uneven novel. Some of it is stimulating. Some of it is actively bad. Aldiss's portrait of Martian life suffers from what we might call "Post-Kim Stanley Robinson Syndrome". Robinson's Mars trilogy (1993-96) mapped out a future colonisation of Mars so detailed and convincing that later fictionalisations covering the same territory almost inevitably feel thin. Not that Aldiss is going for documentary verisimilitude here. The sensibility at work is more discursive, literary, even symbolist. At its best the writing is lit by flashes of genuinely haunting oddness – a Martian astronaut haunted by his absent (still living) wife; an Earthbound French bishop's midnight chat with a talking horse; centuries-old Martian settlers encountering a bizarre UFO.

The bad bits, though, are hard to salvage. Tap the future Aldiss describes and it simply doesn't ring true: Earth politics is a melange of improbable political flashpoints ("Russos from Greenland have occupied Newfoundland!" "Hungary, Slovakia and Bulgaria are at war!"). The Martian colonisation programme has been organised and funded not by nation-states, but by a consortium of universities. Speaking as someone who works in a university I find this unlikely.

Charlie Jane Anders – The City in the Middle of the Night

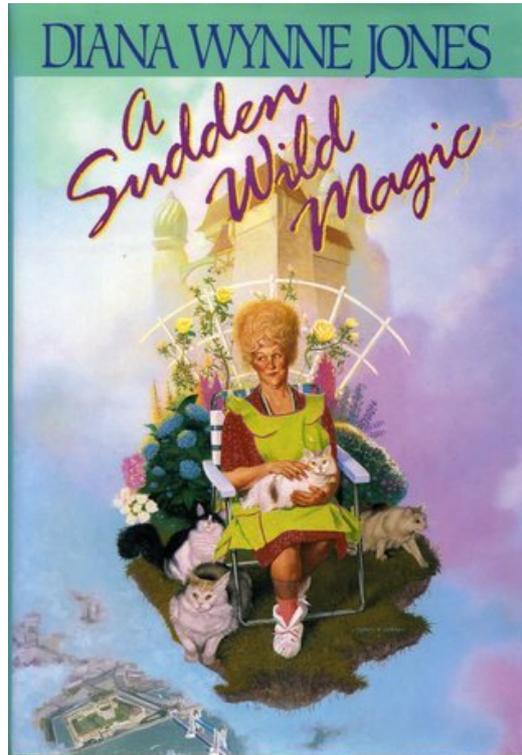


In the distant future, the descendants of a colony spaceship have settled precariously on the hostile planet of January, swarming with vicious predators and dangerous weather patterns. One side of the planet continually faces the sun, while the other faces the frozen dark of space. Humans have built two main cities on the light side: the rigidly rules- and caste-bound Xiosphant, where guards wait to seize you for the slightest infraction, and the more licentious Argelo, run by various warring gangs.

In Xiosphant, shy, working-class student Sophie idolizes her upper-crust roommate, Bianca, who loves parties and seeking power. But Bianca's flirtation with revolution drives Sophie first into the brutal hands of the police, and then into the saving pincers and tentacles of January's nightside-living, sentient native species, dismissed by the colonists as brute beasts. But these creatures, whom Sophie dubs the "Gelet," develop a psychic bond with her, and their willingness to share understanding and friendship changes her forever.

One person the new Sophie slowly manages to influence is Mouth, a smuggler and survivor of an otherwise extinct nomadic band, who's desperately seeking both a connection to her lost past and a reason to forge a future. But ultimately, Sophie can't exert a similar influence over Bianca; despite Bianca's claims of caring for her, she chooses to exploit Sophie's vulnerabilities instead of granting her the understanding and acceptance Sophie craves. In our world, Bianca would represent the worst kind of faux "woke" liberal. She's an angry woman who thinks she's making a difference, but she doesn't really want to help people or even listen to them; she just wants to be the one in charge and profit from it. Watching Sophie come into her own and gradually (and almost too late) realize that the Bianca she loves doesn't exist is inevitable, sad, and, eventually, empowering.

Diana Wynne Jones - A Sudden Wild Magic

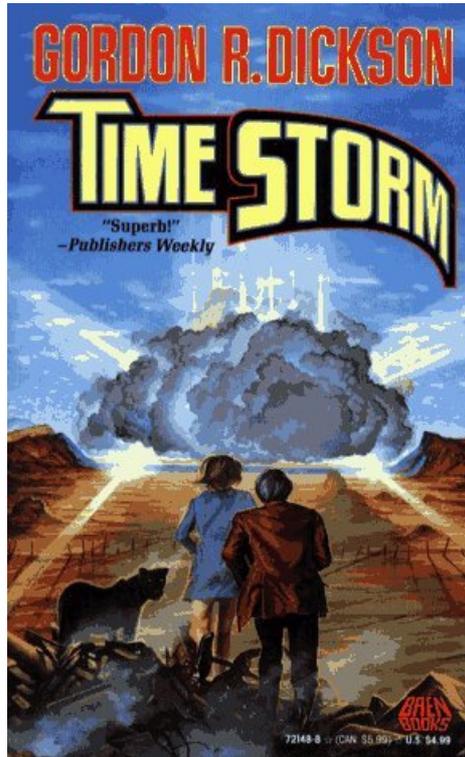


Our world has long been protected by "The Ring" - a benevolent secret society of witches and conjurers dedicated to the continuance and well-being of humankind. Now, in the face of impending climatic disaster, the Ring has uncovered a conspiracy potentially more destructive than any it has ever had to contend with. For eons, the mages of a neighbouring universe have been looting the Earth of ideas, innovations and technologies - all the while manipulating events and creating devastating catastrophes for their own edification. And unless the brazen piracy is halted, our planet is certainly doomed.

Aboard a modified city omnibus, a raiding party of adepts is dispatched to Arth, the stronghold of the interfering Pentarchy - a world ruled by magic, ritual and unbending tradition. And while the Inner Ring on Earth battles spies, traitors and the terrifying sendings of an evil, would-be queen, a motley group of commandoes launches a cynical attack on the virtue of the great citadel of Arth - determined to conquer the mighty fortress through internal dissension, psychological sabotage and kamikaze sex.

But ultimately the destiny of two separate universes is in the hands of a trio of unlikely champions: a dotty old Earth woman, caretaker to many cats and a bizarre, simianlike familiar...a rebellious heir to the Pentarchy, whose birthright enables him to perform astonishing feats...and Zillah, a beautiful but troubled young mother who unknowingly possesses the wildest, strangest, and most powerful magic of all.

Gordon R. Dickson – Time Storm

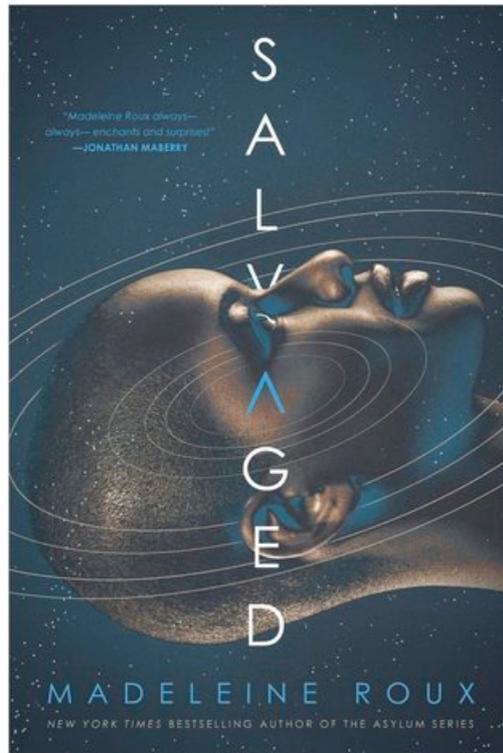


The time storm had devastated the Earth, and all but a small fraction of humankind has vanished. In the rubble of the world, three survivors had formed an unlikely trio: Marc Despard, determined to find a way to stop the time storm; a leopard, dazed by the storm and following after Despard like a kitten; and a young woman with an unbreakable bond to the leopard.

Now, Marc searches relentlessly for a clue to the nature of the storm, not guessing that the time storm threatens not just the Earth but the entire universe—and that his two companions were the only hope of reversing the distortions in the fabric of the cosmos that were about to bring an end to all of space and time

This was a Hugo nominee in 1978 (though it didn't win).

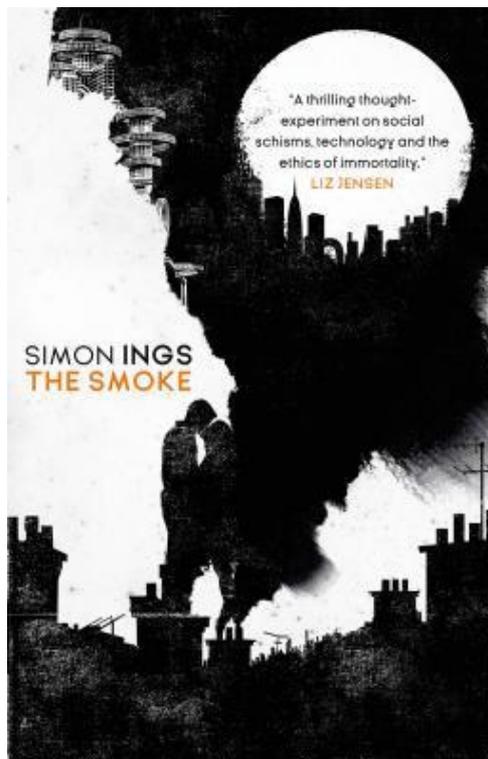
Madeleine Roux – Salvaged



Rosalyn Devar is on the run from her famous family, the bioengineering job she's come to hate, and her messed-up life. She's run all the way to outer space, where she's taken a position as a "space janitor," cleaning up ill-fated research expeditions. But no matter how far she goes, Rosalyn can't escape herself. After too many mistakes on the job, she's given one last chance: take care of salvaging the Brigantine, a research vessel that has gone dark, with all crew aboard thought dead.

But the Brigantine's crew are very much alive--if not entirely human. Now Rosalyn is trapped on board, alone with a crew infected by a mysterious parasitic alien. The captain, Edison Aries, seems to still maintain some control over himself and the crew, but he won't be able to keep fighting much longer. Rosalyn and Edison must find a way to stop the parasite's onslaught...or it may take over the entire human race.

Simon Ings – The Smoke



Simon Ings' *The Smoke* is about love, loss and loneliness in an incomprehensible world.

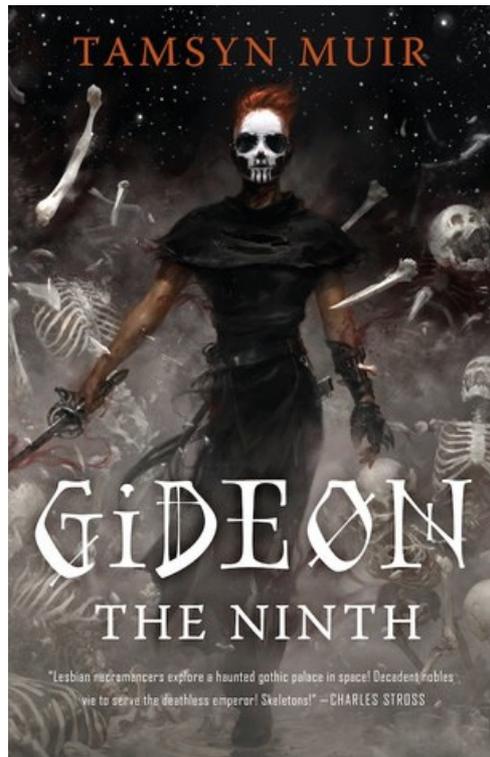
Humanity has been split into three different species. Mutual incomprehension has fractured the globe. As humans race to be the first of their kind to reach the stars, another Great War looms.

For you that means returning to Yorkshire and the town of your birth, where factories churn out the parts for gigantic spaceships. You're done with the pretensions of the capital and its unfathomable architecture. You're done with the people of the Bund, their easy superiority and unstoppable spread throughout the city of London and beyond. You're done with Georgy Chernoy and his questionable defeat of death. You're done with his daughter, Fel, and losing all the time. You're done with love.

But soon enough you will find yourself in the Smoke again, drawn back to the life you thought you'd left behind.

You're done with love. But love's not done with you.

Tamsyn Muir - Gideon the Ninth



The Emperor needs necromancers.
The Ninth Necromancer needs a swordswoman.
Gideon has a sword, some dirty magazines, and no more time for undead bullshit.

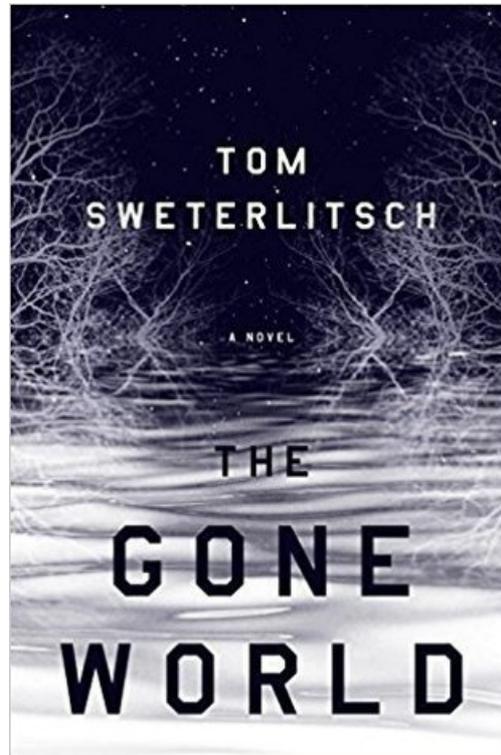
Tamsyn Muir's *Gideon the Ninth* unveils a solar system of swordplay, cut-throat politics, and lesbian necromancers. Her characters leap off the page, as skillfully animated as necromantic skeletons. The result is a heart-pounding epic science fantasy.

Brought up by unfriendly, ossifying nuns, ancient retainers, and countless skeletons, Gideon is ready to abandon a life of servitude and an afterlife as a reanimated corpse. She packs up her sword, her shoes, and her dirty magazines, and prepares to launch her daring escape. But her childhood nemesis won't set her free without a service.

Harrowhark Nonagesimus, Reverend Daughter of the Ninth House and bone witch extraordinaire, has been summoned into action. The Emperor has invited the heirs to each of his loyal Houses to a deadly trial of wits and skill. If Harrowhark succeeds she will become an immortal, all-powerful servant of the Resurrection, but no necromancer can ascend without their cavalier. Without Gideon's sword, Harrow will fail, and the Ninth House will die.

Of course, some things are better left dead.

Tom Sweterlitsch - The Gone World

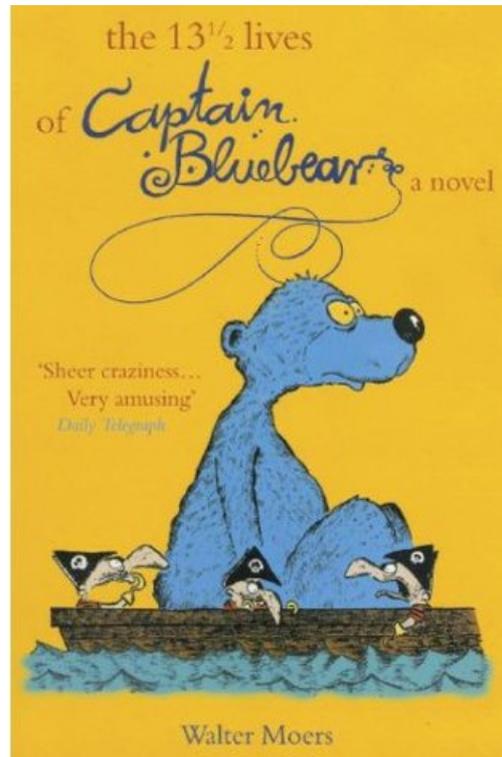


Shannon Moss is part of a clandestine division within the Naval Criminal Investigative Service. In Western Pennsylvania, 1997, she is assigned to solve the murder of a Navy SEAL's family--and to locate his teenage daughter, who has disappeared. Though she can't share the information with conventional law enforcement, Moss discovers that the missing SEAL was an astronaut aboard the spaceship U.S.S. Libra--a ship assumed lost to the darkest currents of Deep Time. Moss knows first-hand the mental trauma of time-travel and believes the SEAL's experience with the future has triggered this violence.

Determined to find the missing girl and driven by a troubling connection from her own past, Moss travels ahead in time to explore possible versions of the future, seeking evidence or insight that will crack the present-day case. To her horror, the future reveals that it's not only the fate of a family that hinges on her work, for what she witnesses rising over time's horizon and hurtling toward the present is the Terminus: the terrifying and cataclysmic end of humanity itself.

Luminous and unsettling, *The Gone World* bristles with world-shattering ideas yet remains at its heart an intensely human story.

Walter Moers - The 13½ Lives of Captain Bluebear



Captain Bluebear tells the story of his first 13-1/2 lives spent on the mysterious continent of Zamonia, where intelligence is an infectious disease, water flows uphill, and dangers lie in wait for him around every corner.

"A bluebear has twenty-seven lives. I shall recount thirteen and a half of them in this book but keep quiet about the rest," says the narrator of Walter Moers's epic adventure. "What about the Minipirates? What about the Hobgoblins, the Spiderwitch, the Babbling Billows, the Troglotroll, the Mountain Maggot... Mine is a tale of mortal danger and eternal love, of hair's breadth, last-minute escapes." Welcome to the fantastic world of Zamonia, populated by all manner of extraordinary characters. It's a land of imaginative lunacy and supreme adventure, wicked satire and epic fantasy, all mixed together, turned on its head, and lavishly illustrated by the author.