

Vonda N McIntyre

by Una McCormack

Born on 28 August 1948 as Vonda Neel McIntyre in Louisville, Kentucky, she was brought up on the east coast of the USA and in the Netherlands before her family settled in Seattle in the late 1960s. Graduating with a degree in biology from the University of Washington in 1970, she began postgraduate work in genetics, but ended her studies in 1971, by which time she was beginning to have some success as a fiction writer. She attended the world-famous Clarion Workshop in 1970, which was critical in forming her life as a writer.

During this period science fiction in the USA was being challenged by feminism and a group of women writers emerged who transformed the genre. McIntyre – with Joanna Russ, Octavia E Butler, Suzy McKee Charnas, 'James Tiptree, Jr' (one of the several pen-names of Alice Sheldon) and McIntyre's close lifelong friend, Ursula K Le Guin – played a key part in battling the genre's entrenched sexism, among its conferences, conventions, publishing outlets and from other writers.

Between 1974 and 1980, McIntyre published two novels (*The Exile Waiting* and her most critically acclaimed novel, *Dreamsnake*), the short fiction in *Fireflood and Other Stories*, and co-edited an anthology of feminist science fiction, *Aurora: Beyond Equality*. During this period, she was shortlisted five times for the Hugo Award (winning once); five times for the Nebula Award (winning twice) and nine times for the Locus Award (winning once). She was still in her early thirties. She contributed extensively to the ongoing explosion in feminist sf criticism and correspondence.

From 1980 onwards, McIntyre's name became closely associated with the *Star Trek* franchise: she published novelisations of three of the films, and two other standalone novels. Other franchise work included a novelisation of the 1985 *Frankenstein*-inspired film *The Bride*, and an original novel set in the *Stars Wars* franchise, *The Crystal Star*. Between 1989 and 1994 she published a four-book space opera series under the banner title *Starfarers*. Her attempt to break into Hollywood produced a historical fantasy script set in the court of Louis XIV, *The Moon and the Sun*, which she wrote simultaneously as a novel (1997), and which beat George R R Martin's *A Game of Thrones* to win the 1997 Nebula Award.

An early adopter of word processors and, later, the Web, she was pivotal in the creation (in 2008) and ongoing operation of the Book View Café, an author-owned publishing collective which aimed to give writers options beyond Amazon. (McIntyre's out-of-print novels and some uncollected short fiction are available from the site.) In 2010, she was honoured with the Science Fiction Writers of America 'Service Award', and she was a Guest of Honour at the 2015 Worldcon. She continued to write short fiction, and completed her final novel, *The Curve of the World*, shortly before her death on 1 April 2019.

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