

# Arts & Entertainment

## Lincoln sci-fi writer to release new novel

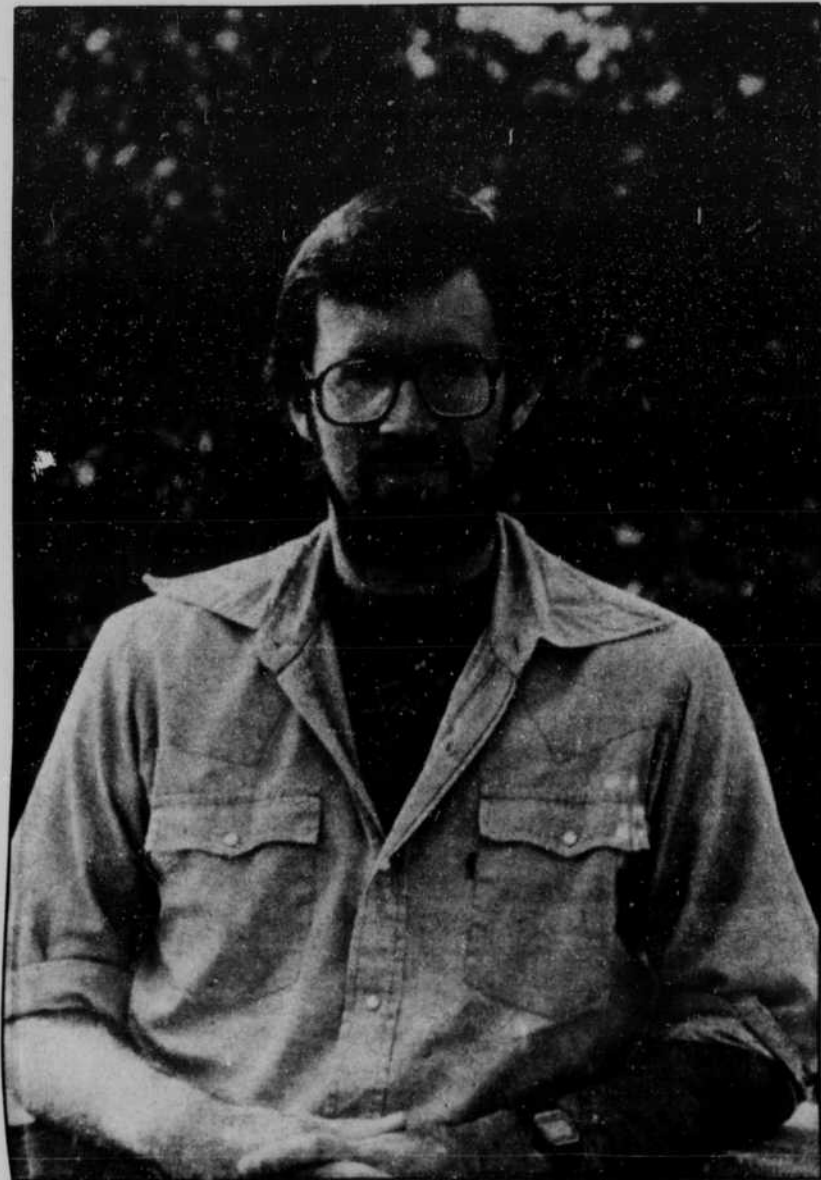


Photo courtesy of Donald I. Fine Inc.

Reed

By Chris McCubbin  
Staff Reporter

According to Robert Reed, trying to make a living by writing science fiction is "a stupid thing to do — people shouldn't do it."

But that hasn't stopped Reed.

Reed is a Lincoln resident and a graduate of Nebraska Wesleyan University. His first novel, "The Leeshore," published by Donald I. Fine, has been out since April. His second novel, "The Hormone Jungle," will be out in a few months.

Reed got his start as a professional writer when he won the L. Ron Hubbard Writers of the Future Gold Award with his short story, "Mudpuppies."

**'I'm very stubborn and obsessive. I don't know if I make a very good human being, but I think that's part of the reason I stuck with it.'**

-Reed

The Writers of the Future contest was established by Hubbard, the late pulp science-fiction writer and founder of the pop philosophy Dianetics, to encourage young writers.

A panel of top professional science-fiction writers picks a contest winner every three months. At the end of the year the story judged the best among the quarterly winners receives the Gold Award.

Reed is the first writer to win a Gold Award. He received a \$1,000

prize for winning the quarterly contest, and an additional \$4,000 came along with the Gold Award. He was also paid by the word for his story.

Reed has been writing science fiction since he was in college, he said. He never sold anything, but he got to the point where he was getting a personal response from some editors. Then those editors moved on, and Reed says he felt as if he was back to the beginning.

After graduation he took a full-time job. Then, after a few years, he quit and moved to Texas, where he wrote for a year while living on savings.

"I'm very stubborn and obsessive," Reed said. "I don't know if I make a very good human being, but I think that's part of the reason I stuck with it."

Another important step in his success, Reed said, was acquiring an agent. "If you ever want to be a writer, you should probably get yourself an agent," he said.

After winning the Hubbard award, Reed was contacted by popular science-fiction writer Robert Silverberg, who was then working as acquisitions editor for the Donald I. Fine publishing house.

After that conversation Reed submitted an idea for a novel, then 45 sample pages to Silverberg. Then he was given a contract for his first novel, "The Leeshore," a moody book about a conflict between government and religion on a wet and gloomy planet that is completely surrounded by a free-floating sphere of organic matter, from which dead and rotting organic material constantly falls on those on the surface.

"The Leeshore" has received favorable reviews in The New York Times, Fantasy and Science Fiction,

Locus and a number of local newspapers across the country, including the Omaha World-Herald, Reed said.

He's also sold short stories to Fantasy and Science Fiction, Universe 16, Far Frontiers and Aboriginal Science Fiction.

Reed said he's beginning to get some recognition as an author at home as well. He's spoken to a non-credit writing class at Wesleyan, and he's been invited to be a guest at an upcoming science-fiction convention in Omaha.

"The bulk of what I read is not science fiction," but in spite of this, Reed says, "all my stories are science fiction."

Reed said scientific plausibility is important in his books. He said he takes particular care in the biological sciences, where his educational background lies. "I try to keep my critters reasonable," he said.

In order to keep his stories theoretically plausible, he said, he tries to avoid that pseudo-scientific science-fiction staple — faster-than-light space travel.

In the next few months, Reed said, "The Leeshore" will be released in paperback and his next novel, "The Hormone Jungle" will be published.

Reed said the new novel will be longer than "The Leeshore." His editor believes "The Hormone Jungle" is more commercial, and Reed himself is happier with the new book, he said.

"I had reservations about this book ('The Leeshore') and I'd like to make up for it by doing a second book," he said.

He said that while he was asked to do extensive revisions on "The Leeshore" before it was published, the only change his editor requested on "The Hormone Jungle" was a stronger final sentence.

### French cinema brings atmosphere and romance

## You don't need to understand French to enjoy these films

By Geoff McMurtry  
Staff Reporter

*Parlez-vous le fromage, c'est deux faux-gras?*

You don't need to understand French to appreciate the movies presented by the French-American Film Workshop.

This weekend, the workshop presents the 1987 U.S. Tour of Contemporary French Cinema at the Sheldon Film Theatre.

### Film Review

The eight films being shown, four features and four short subjects, are the French equivalent of American independent films. They have a fresh, unique bent not found in American commercial movies. Also, thanks to the miracle of subtitles, people who do not know French can still understand and appreciate the movies.

This French film tour of the United States is a counterpart to the Contemporary American Film Festival at Avignon, France, every summer, which features independent and underground American films. Some of the American films shown there in the past include "Blood Simple," which ran at Sheldon last spring, and John Sayles' "Brother From Another Planet."

One of this weekend's films, "L'Arbre sous la mer" ("The Tree Under the Sea"), is an atmospheric, romantic film set on the remote Greek isle of Sedussa.

Mathieu (Christophe Malavoy) is a young geologist who goes to the island to study its rock formations. He is especially attracted to the island's unusual petrified tree and the legend surrounding it.

Along the way he becomes especially attracted to Eleni Dragoumi,

the wild, enchanting daughter of the island's owner. The three of them are the island's only inhabitants. Their isolation is broken only by the occasional visits of the supply boat, whose driver continually warns Mathieu to beware of the island, of Eleni and of various things he can never hope to understand — and better off not knowing about.

The strength of the film rests in its glimpses into Mathieu's confusion and isolation. Also, the film presents truly beautiful camera work in and around the picturesque island.

Although it has a bit of a short plot compared to mainstream films, the strong atmosphere, the intriguing mystery of Eleni's character and the continually unravelling metaphorical subtexts leave an impact on the viewer that is much stronger than the typical entertainment-oriented movie shown downtown. While it may not actually lead the viewer to any particular conclusion about anything, it's a fascinating journey nonetheless.

Playing along with "L'Arbre sous la mer" is a short film titled "Le Mauvais oeil" (The Evil Eye).

Set in the late 19th century, "Le Mauvais oeil" starts innocuously enough with a photographer taking pictures of a blacksmith at work. Later, the photographer hears a woman screaming. He sees several men at the top of a cliff, lowering a tied-up girl over the side.

He acts immediately to do the right thing — rush to his camera. After getting his pictures he goes to investigate. He comes to the scene, where several men hold him back. He can only watch as the girl's limp body is being hoisted back up the side of the cliff. But alas, she is not dead and spits in the face of the nearest assailant, prompting another to shout, "She's alive, I knew she was a witch."

The photographer later helps her and offers her a place to hide, but his

own interests eventually get in the way of his helpful efforts.

The title refers to the camera and the photographer, who see and record the event without regard to the consequences of their seemingly innocent actions.

Because two of the films originally scheduled to show this weekend were lost during shipping, there has been a change in the previously published schedule. The lost films are the feature-length "Le Bonheur a encore frappe" and the 10-minute short, "Synthetique operette."

The revised schedule is as follows:

#### Thursday:

3 p.m. — "Havre" (directed by Juliet Berto, 95 min.) and "Le Torero hallucinogene" (Stephen Clavier, 4 min.)

7 p.m. — "Trop tard Balthazar" (Phillipe Lopez-Curval, 8 min.) and "L'Etoile de sang" (Bertrande Fevre, 21 min.)

9 p.m. — "Rue de depart" (Tony Gatlif, 100 min.) and "Fin de Serie" (Phillipe Harel, 10 min.)

#### Friday:

1 p.m. — "Trop tard Balthazar" and "L'Etoile de sang"

3 p.m. — "L'Arbre sous la mer" (Phillipe Muyl, 95 min.) and "Le Mauvais oeil" (Jean-Louis Cros, 15 min.)

7 p.m. — "Havre" and "Le Torero hallucinogene"

9 p.m. — "Trop tard Balthazar" and "L'Etoile de sang"

#### Saturday:

1 p.m. — "Rue de depart" and "Fin de Serie"

3 p.m. — "Trop tard Balthazar" and "L'Etoile de sang"

7 p.m. — "L'Arbre sous la mer" and "Le Mauvais oeil"

9 p.m. — "Havre" and "Le Torero"

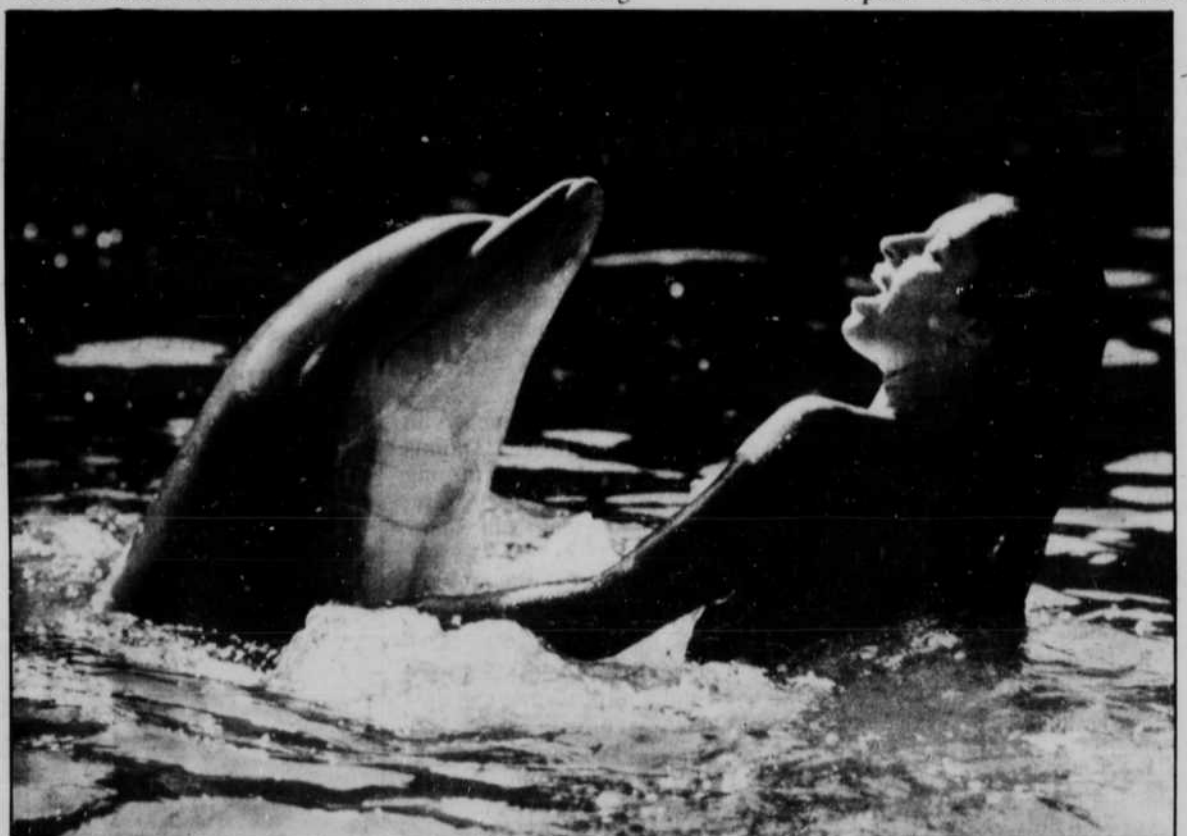


Photo courtesy of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication

A scene from "L'Arbre Sous La Mer."