

## Author's sequel fails to achieve adequate pace

Book bogs down reader with mundane descriptions

"Children of the Earth"  
Catherine Wells  
Del Rey Discovery Books



By Sam Kepfield  
Staff Reporter

The theme of mankind returning to a more simple, pastoral existence is nothing new in science fiction.

The idea that people would revert to living like the American Indians is also familiar — Paul O. Williams' seven-book "Pelbar Cycle" explored the possibility in absorbing detail.

For the '90s, with the threat of nuclear destruction fading, new ways have to be found to wipe out humanity. With "new sensitivity," writers are using real American Indians, not whites-turned-noble-savage.

"Children of the Earth," Catherine Wells' sequel to "The Earth is All That Lasts," is an example. Earth was destroyed a half-millennium ago by ecological plunder and was evacuated. Or so was thought.

Left behind were a few bands of hardy Mexicans and American Indians, eking out a precarious living in the desert. Also left behind was a small enclave of technologically advanced people who were white. All were perfectly content to be left alone.

The first book ended with the destruction of a survey ship sent to Earth that discovered the survivors' existence. The remaining Terrans feared a return of humanity would mean a return of the evils that destroyed Earth in the first place.

In the process, Coconino, a young warrior, was hurled forward 150 years and parted from the largely unrequited love of one of the technologically advanced South People, Phoenix.

"Children of the Earth" details Coconino's efforts to adjust to being a living legend and the pain of the loss he and Phoenix feel. Efforts also are underway on Earth to unravel the mystery of the lost ship and to mount a return expedition — a sure sequel warning.

The book is intriguing in concept, but execution is another matter.

It is much too long in places and drags the reader down with long, mundane descriptions of life, shot through with who is sleeping with whom in the native village.

The efforts to show the heartache felt by the two separated lovers ring shallow, maybe more for their constant repetition.

Wells' style is good, but the book could have been done in half the number of pages. One hopes the possible sequel will fare better.

## Voodoo Gearshift to hit The Edge with heavy, loud, melodic music

From Staff Reports

Des Moines, Iowa, refugees Voodoo Gearshift will return to the Midwest Thursday when they perform at The Edge, 227 N. 9th St., along with Sludge Plow.

Voodoo Gearshift's music has been described as "a large weight falling into a 100-gallon bucket of that goo you find in lava lamps, but not before it crashes through at least a couple of window panes... heavy, melodic and loud."

The band moved from Iowa to Seattle after being signed to the C/Z Records label. The band members are Jim Roth, guitar and vocals, Paul Sorrells, bass guitar and Mark Bruggeman, drums.

Thursday's show will begin at about 10 p.m. There will be a \$3 cover charge at 9 p.m.



Robin Trimarchi/DN

Artist Alvin Harper frequently uses house paint as a medium for his paintings. His work will be featured beginning Tuesday at The Coffee House.

## Inner Visions

Artist uses paint to illustrate the pictures in his mind

### PEOPLE Profile

By Jill O'Brien  
Senior Reporter

Multi-talented artist Alvin D. Harper brings inner visions to life and awakens the dead dreams of mankind.

His paintings and drawings, poems and portraits reflect his "Inner Visions."

"Inner Vision is things I see in my mind and the way I feel about the world," he said. "It's art with a deeper feeling, a deeper meaning."

Several of his paintings are displayed at the Surya Gallery and the Red and Black Cafe. Beginning Tuesday and running through Jan. 10, the Coffee House also will be exhibiting Harper's paintings.

When Harper paints, he paints with everything from varnish to one of his favorite mediums, house paint. An unstirred can of house paint can be worked at different depths to

achieve different consistencies.

His paintings sometimes require 18 layers of paint, he said. While waiting for layers to dry, he will usually begin a new painting, so it's not unusual for him to work on 18 paintings at one time in his studio.

Harper is a hard man to define — at times a collage of complexity, other times a shield of simplicity. After talking with him, you get the feeling he's layered, like his paintings, except Harper is layered with 37 years of life experiences.

Besides having attended the University of Nebraska at Omaha and colleges in Michigan, he attended government "think-tank" schools, he said.

He once worked for the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers in Vicksburg, Miss., where he was taught to build small parts to big machines. The government didn't tell him that the parts he was building sometimes went against the laws of physics, he said. Because he didn't know the limitations, he said, he was able to build what the government wanted.

"I made a lot of things that were totally impossible, but they didn't tell me, so I didn't know. Now that we did it, it's possible," he said.

Harper admits he's a method maniac. He thrives on learning the technique of a task,

whether the task is cooking, building or painting.

"Whenever I see an artist doing something I can't do, I'll go spy on them," he said jokingly. "I'll copy or imitate them over and over until I can do it."

He will copy their technique right down to their facial gestures or sitting positions, even their breathing or humming. Copying movements, he said, allows him a glimpse into the spiritual side of an artist.

Currently, the inner vision artist is nursing another vision — to represent and encourage local artists to compete on an international level.

"(Overseas) more people are interested in art in Nebraska than any other area," he said.

The international market has been saturated with artwork from New York and San Francisco. His research revealed a demand for Midwest art, he said.

"And why wouldn't there be?" he asked, adding that Nebraskans would likely buy a wood carving from a person who had just arrived from the Congo.

"It works in reverse," he said. "The work of a Nebraskan artist would be considered unique."

See ARTIST on 10



Courtesy of C/Z Records

Seattle band Voodoo Gearshift will perform Thursday at The Edge, 227 N. 9th St.

### COUNTRY WESTERN TOP 10

1. "I'm in a Hurry (And Don't Know Why)," Alabama
2. "Watch Me," Lorrie Morgan
3. "If There Hadn't Been You," Billy Dean
4. "Bubba Shot the Jukebox," Mark Chesnutt
5. "Who Needs It," Clinton Gregory
6. "Two Sparrows in a Hurricane," Tanya Tucker
7. "Even the Man in the Moon Is Cryin'," Mark Collie
8. "I Cross My Heart," George Strait
9. "Don't Let Our Love Start Slippin' Away," Vince Gill
10. "Now That's Country," Marty Stuart

Source: Cashbox magazine