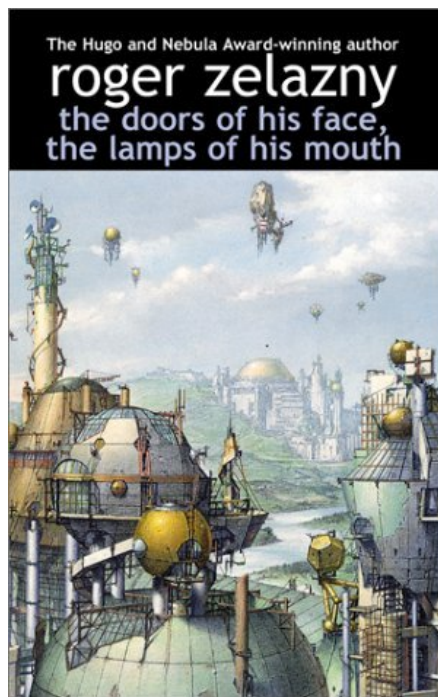




The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth

Roger Zelazny

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The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth Roger Zelazny

Here are strange, beautiful stories covering the full spectrum of the late Roger Zelazny's remarkable talents. In Doors of His Face, The Lamps of His Mouth, Zelazny's rare ability to mix the dream-like, disturbing imagery of fantasy with the real-life hardware of science fiction is on full display. His vivid imagination and fine prose made him one of the most highly acclaimed writers in his field.

Contents:

- The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth · nv F&SF Mar '65
- The Keys to December · nv New Worlds Aug '66
- Devil Car [Sam Nurdock] · ss Galaxy Jun '65
- A Rose for Ecclesiastes · nv F&SF Nov '63
- The Monster and the Maiden · vi Galaxy Dec '64
- Collector's Fever · vi Galaxy Jun '64
- This Mortal Mountain · nv If Mar '67
- This Moment of the Storm · nv F&SF Jun '66
- The Great Slow Kings · ss Worlds of Tomorrow Dec '63
- A Museum Piece · ss Fantastic Jun '63
- Divine Madness · ss Magazine of Horror Sum '66
- Corrida · ss Anubis v1 #3 '68
- Love Is an Imaginary Number · ss New Worlds Jan '66
- The Man Who Loved the Faioli · ss Galaxy Jun '67
- Lucifer · ss Worlds of Tomorrow Jun '64

The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth Details

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From Reader Review The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth for online ebook

Carol. says

Zelazny was a master at the short, novelette and novella (rather a pity, since his world-building often leaves me wanting much more) and this collection almost consistently kicked my mental butt for his exploration of humanity and his creativity. His use of language is impressive; he can write concisely, clear-cutting to a quiet moment in the middle of a hurricane, or he can weave together words to perfectly describe an alien sunrise. There is tone of melancholy running through these stories, themes of time and loneliness, but how he translates it into exotic settings is amazing. Who knew he was such a romantic? A few weaker works are included, as well as one or two that seemed like they were fun writing exercises, but even his least efforts are worth reading. A craftsman.

The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth: (Nebula winner) Deep-sea fishing on Venus. A baitman takes one last job hunting the biggest sea monster yet, only the commission is from a makeup millionaire. She's filming it, to boot--is Zelazny prescient or what? **"Venus at night is a field of sable waters... Dawn is like dumping milk into an inkwell. First, there are erratic curdles of whites, then streamers. Shake the bottle for a gray colloid, then watch it whiten a little more. All of a sudden you've got day."**

The Keys to December: Haunting. Beautiful. A group of people bioengineered by General Mining to work in the cold world of Alyonal (now defunct) buy themselves a world and plan to bioengineer it to fit their physical forms. They cryo-sleep during the accelerated planetary evolution, but leave a few people to stand guard each decade, which gives them an unique opportunity to observe local evolution--and extinction. What is it to be human? To be a race? What does one marginalized species owe another? **"I'm afraid," she said..."(of) Living the way we've been living, I guess. Leaving little pieces of ourselves in different centuries."**

Devil Car: Zelazny's post-apocalyptic answer to Christine. Groups of wild escaped cars are living in the wastes, led by the Devil Car. Murdock and his artificed car Jenny are tracking him down. What does it mean to be alive and wild?

A Rose for Ecclesiastes: One of his classics. An internationally acclaimed poet with a knack for languages is invited to Mars. He becomes the first human to learn the Martian language, and the first invited into the inner sanctum to see the Martian dance, a mix of spirituality and poetry. **"For the next three weeks alphabet-bugs chased each other behind my eyelids whenever I tried to sleep. The sky was an unclouded pool of turquoise that rippled calligraphies whenever I swept my eyes across it."** Braxa, the performer, becomes his tutor, and he gains more insight than he expected into the Martian race and a prophecy. A poet as narrator gives Zelazny full reign of wordsmithing. This one is a heart-render.

The Monster and the Maiden: a quick two-pager with a twist.

Collector's Fever: a nephew with ulterior motives collects a Stone that doesn't want to leave. A bit silly, a bit of social commentary. Kind of cute.

This Mortal Mountain: a mountain climber and his team attempt the impossible, the highest mountain in the universe, a mountain higher than the atmosphere. Similar to "A Rose--" it involves a man at the peak of his profession seeking the ultimate challenge. As they climb, his team is not only challenged by winds, but by visions. Poetic beauty; makes me almost identify with mountain climbers, but the quote I found to share

contains the ultimate insult: **"'You tipped off the press,' I said. 'Now, now,' he said, growing smaller and stiffening as my gaze groped its way through the murk of his central nervous system and finally touched upon the edges of that tiny tumor, his forebrain."**

This Moment of the Storm: One of my favorite Zelazny novelettes. A storm predictor and a world hopper predicts the big storm. He works with the Mayor to watch, predict, and steer the city through the Big One, even as society is disrupted. Heartbreaking. A classic, this one is in other collections as well, and is one of my favorites. Begins and ends the philosophical question of What is Man? **"As she looked down into her coffee, I saw a little girl staring into a pool, waiting for it to clear, to see her reflection or to see the bottom of the pool, or perhaps both."**

The Great Slow Kings: seems to be a thought exercise: what would be the perspective on life of beings whose lives spanned millennia? **"Drax had been musing for the past four centuries (theirs was a sluggish sort) over the possibility of life on other planets in the galaxy."**

A Museum Piece: a gorgeous but critically unknown artist decides that **"if one could not live by creating art, then one might do worse than turn the thing the other way about, so to speak."** In true Zelazny fashion, he not only meets a woman, but an alien. A whimsical tone pervades. **"He should have hated being reported stolen during the first week of his career, with nothing to face then but the prospect of second-rate galleries or an uneasy role in the cheerless private collections of cheerless and private collectors."**

Divine Madness: a man is caught in a time loop relives the death of his wife. Remarkable writing technique in capturing the backward loop. **"How does a man undo that which has been done? He doesn't. There is no way under the sun. He may suffer, remember, repeat, curse or forget. Nothing else. The past, in this sense, is inevitable."**

Corrida: a strange little tale where a man awakens in a bullring. Another short-short, this was one of my least favorite in the collection.

Love is an Imaginary Number: pre-Amber? A demigod tries to escape. Reads much like an Amber short, shifting and escape-focused. **"They had made me to forget. They had nailed me with love."**

The Man Who Loved the Faioli: **"The Faioli were known to come to a man the month before his death--those rare men who still died--"** Another haunting, love-lost tale that has the essence of wish-fulfillment about it.

Lucifer: a man who misses the lights and life of the city struggles to get the generators running. An ode to great cities.

The Furies: a little sci-fi opera with a space pirate, an empath, an assassin and a space geographer. A great chase tale with build and tension. What an ending!

The Graveyard Heart: a man meets a beautiful woman who is a member of the Set, an elite, eternal group. In order to be worthy of joining, he needs a lifestyle change and to pass an interview with the head maven. Another one where Zelazny plays with the pinnacle of career, manipulation of time and love.

"He realized, then, that his goals has shifted; the act had become the actor. What he really wanted, first and foremost, impure and unsimple, was an in to the Set--that century-spanning stratocruiser, luxury class, jetting across tomorrow and tomorrow and all the days that followed after--to ride high,

like those gods of old who appeared at the rites of the equinoxes, slept between processions, and were remanifest with each new season, the bulk of humanity living through all those dreary days that lay between. To be a part of Leota was to be a part of the Set, and that was what he wanted now. So of course it was vanity. It was love."

Genius.

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Alazzar says

I'm generally not a sci-fi guy, but I'm definitely a Zelazny guy. And, of course, Zelazny managed to make me like sci-fi with this book, because he's just that good.

I could give a general review for the book, but I think I'll just go story-by-story instead (mostly so I can remember what they're all about when the memories of reading this collection leave my mind in about 3 months).

1. **The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth:** One of my favorite stories in the book, if not my very favorite. A tale of a fisherman on Venus who's trying to catch more than just a big freakin' fish.
2. **The Keys to December:** Took me a while to get into this tale of cat-people colonizing a new planet, but it ended up being quite good, and I really liked the way things worked out towards the end.
3. **Devil Car:** A decent story about sentient vehicles and how they interact with the world and their drivers. Not the best story in the book, but not bad.
4. **A Rose for Ecclesiastes:** I can't help but wonder if the reason I liked this story so much is because it's so famous for being one of Zelazny's greatest shorts. In any case, I *did* end up enjoying this story of Martian/Human relations, romance, and faith, regardless of whether or not that enjoyment was injected into me by reputation before I even started reading. The last line of this story is one of the best (if not the very best) in the book.
5. **The Monster and the Maiden:** A very short story (2 pages) that... well, I can't even give a summary for it without spoiling it, because at 2 pages, the whole thing practically *is* a summary. It was interesting, I'll say that.
6. **Collector's Fever:** Another fairly short one, this tale with the distinction of being almost entirely dialogue. Zelazny always wrote great dialogue, and there's a little bit of humor injected into this story simply by the use of a funny-sounding made-up word. Definitely enjoyed this one quite a bit.
7. **This Mortal Mountain:** A man sets out to climb the largest mountain in the known universe, and runs

into some unusual complications along the way. One of my favorites of the book.

8. **This Moment of the Storm:** I didn't like this one as much as I feel I should have, and I'm not sure why. I could interpret the message in this story in either of two ways, and I find both interesting, but the story itself just wasn't really my thing (which is weird, because I love rain, and it pours for the majority of the tale).

9. **The Great Slow Kings:** Another really short one, which I found delightfully enjoyable. It's about a pair of kings that are really, really slow when it comes to making decisions for their kingdom.

10. **A Museum Piece:** I seem to remember being pretty tired when I read this one, which could contribute to my inability to enjoy it fully. I should probably read it again some day, as the memory is a little foggy. But, as with virtually every story in this book, I know this at least: it wasn't bad, because Zelazny doesn't know how to do bad.

11. **Divine Madness:** This definitely ranks up there with my favorites of the book. Fairly short, and written almost entirely in reverse. Another successful experiment with form by Zelazny.

12. **Corrida:** Didn't read this because I've read it in another collection (Manna From Heaven), but I remember thinking it was pretty interesting for such a short story.

13. **Love is an Imaginary Number:** I definitely see shadows of the Amber series here (hmm... maybe I could have selected better words to describe that). Anyway, this could very well be the story that gave Zelazny the idea for shadow-shifting. It also boasts traces of mythology, in classic Zelazny fashion.

14. **The Man Who Loved the Faioli:** Another one where I shouldn't have been reading while I was so sleepy, but damn it, Zelazny just makes me stay up past my bed time. As with A Museum Piece, I should give this another read, but it seemed good based on what I recall.

15. **Lucifer:** Interesting little tale about a man trying to regain that which was lost. The title seems to give it another layer of meaning that I otherwise wouldn't have seen.

16. **The Furies:** Another story I read back in Manna From Heaven, and didn't repeat this time. I seem to recall thinking it was OK, but I didn't like it as much as everyone else seems to. Of course, I was still extremely wary of sci-fi back then, and now that I've read more of Zelazny's stuff, I might go into it with a fresh set of eyes.

17. **The Graveyard Heart:** The longest story in the book, and also my least favorite. Part of this could be attributed to the fact that I was trying to finish the book last night, and ended up reading beyond my attention span's willingness to continue. It's about a group of people who have formed a sort of upper-class society that remains virtually immortal by freezing themselves between big parties, and only being awake for small amounts of time. It just didn't do enough for me, and I think maybe I'm being extra harsh on it because 1) it was the longest story in the book (if the story's that long, it should at least be good!), and 2) it was the *last* story in the book, and kind of a bad taste to go out on.

All in all, a great collection. It seems to me that Zelazny may have been going through some relationship issues during this time period, because a lot of the stories have some sort of romance angle as the primary focus (whereas in his Amber series, for example, romance is just a little something extra on the side).

I realize that this review likely isn't very useful to anyone else (lots of "I liked this story" that doesn't really tell you anything), but once again: it's mostly for my own benefit. Because I'm SELFISH. It won't be long

before I start to forget exactly which stories were what, so I'll be using this as a reference for myself.

But here's one thing I certainly won't be forgetting: Zelazny was a god.

Alex says

This is a fairly comprehensive collection of Zelazny's early short fiction.

THE DOORS OF HIS FACE, THE LAMPS OF HIS MOUTH is another example of Zelazny presenting great action. There's also some interesting relationship commentary that can be unpacked from under the action. I suspect that in the pulp era that this story is responding to, the relationship would be reconciled by the culmination of the action, rather than the give-and-take of power. THIS MORTAL MOUNTAIN seems to be a return to this same theme of a man exiting retirement to take down the white whale, yet is still surprising and powerful in its resolution.

A ROSE FOR ECCLESIASTES subverts the pulp era style even more than DOORS. The Great White Hope comes to Mars to save the natives with poetry and the Old Testament, while dishing out some Two Fisted Justice. He fundamentally changes their culture, but not in the way he intended and not without being fundamentally changed himself.

THE KEYS TO DECEMBER is a powerful story that explores what it is to be human, and explores the morality of interfering with the development of sentient life.

LOVE IS AN IMAGINARY NUMBER points at both themes in LORD OF LIGHT as well as stylistic tweaks that will arise integral to Amber. And who doesn't love a good Loki story?

Of the light fare in the collection A MUSEUM PIECE is the most absurdly endearing. An artist who deems himself a failure sneaks into a museum to exhibit himself as a statue. Then we receive more and more layers. Fun and tightly packed.

Aaron says

Very good collection of '60s SF stories. Having read the first few Amber novels and generally liked them, I was surprised at how much stronger some of these stories are than the series he seems to be remembered by. The twists and turns of the Amber series are certainly fun, but the writing seems much lighter in tone, possibly simplified for the masses, or per a publisher's request.

The stories served up here range from dark to humorous, but Zelazny's intellect is clearly on display. Beyond the requisite far future imaginings of this era of SF, I was surprised by the number of references to high literature and religion. I don't have the patience to write a story by story review -- a handful of the shortest stories don't stick, but most are excellent, particularly: A Rose for Ecclesiastes, This Mortal Mountain, and The Keys to December -- but overall the book stands tall as one of the better SF collections I've had the pleasure to read.

Yolanda Casica says

It took me a while to finish this only because the copy I have is 40 something years old and that apparently did not agree with my allergies. My opinion of this book did not lessen in the slightest because every time I got near it made me physically ill, in fact my opinion of it grew stronger. If it had not hooked me in, then I probably would not have picked it up and would have put it into my occasional donate pile.

I went in knowing nothing of the author's writing ability or anything about the short stories collected, except for the cover telling me that the leading story won the Nebula Award. By the end of this book I cannot describe how happy I was to learn that I also had another of his books. I will be forever grateful to my boyfriend for picking them up at a locale library book sale.

As the stories developed around me I was astounded at the intelligence and creativity behind each world building and character.

There was love and determination. Monsters and death. Usually, I am not one for a love story, but my goodness! This was beautiful writing without an excess of sugary descriptions (not that I dislike those). I could tell each word was carefully selected for the overall goal of Never Letting You Forget Them.

N says

"[...] brainsmash and binding to this Otherwhen."

Gorgeous, expressionist stories written with a lot of love. I'm not all that used to expressionist sci-fi yet, and this was a fantastic journey into some very experimental tales.

Michael Burnam-Fink says

Few authors are as like themselves as Roger Zelazny, and as hard to explain why they are like themselves. This collection encompasses the short fiction of the middle 1960s, when Zelazny was at the height of his power (his two novel Hugos were awarded in this time.) The stories are lyrical meditations on great themes of life, death, change, and small moments of humanity in the face of the absolute powers of the universe.

The stories are all solid, but the clear standout is "A Rose for Ecclesiastes", which follows a genius poet on a mission to understand Martian religion and culture, and translate the who sense of that dying race.

Alan Rader says

This elegant tale, winner of the Nebula for best Novelette in 1965, has somehow not made its way into any of those "best of short stories" collections that come out year after year, always containing the same old classic titles with maybe one or two new mainstream authors included for freshness. That is a literary crime, because this story should be but is not considered a literary classic.

It is a fishing story, but the setting makes it interesting. Told by a black narrator, with elements of the racial

insensitivity of the 1960s and 70s, we see a troupe of master fishermen and women coming together for the catch of the millennia -- a staggeringly massive fish, larger than any earthborn creature. Many have tried to catch one, but all have failed, and some have died in the process.

The narrator came close, once, and now he joins the crew of a superrich woman who can actually afford the cost of an expedition. Will they land the fish? Read the story to find out, and go fishing with Zelazny on Venus.

The rest of the stories are good, but the title story is the real gem.

Evgeny says

An excellent collection of short stories from one of the greatest science fiction writers. There are 17 of them and it would take a lot of space to give brief outlines for all. I would like to give my thoughts on *some*.

The Keys to December. Really good with very interesting and gripping plot.

Devil Car. At the time the story was written the idea of sentient cars seemed pretty ridiculous. Now with every car equipped with a computer and emergence of self-driving cars that idea no longer look ridiculous or even impossible. One more example of science fiction predicting the future.

A Rose for Ecclesiastes. It is arguable if this is the best piece of fiction Zelazny ever written, but it is undoubtedly his best short story, period.

Collector's Fever. An experimental story told entirely in dialogs. Good enough for the "experimental" part not interfering with reading.

This Mortal Mountain. Another really good one.

The Great Slow Kings. Humorous/satirical piece with very original plot. Really funny.

A Museum Piece. The movie "A Night in the Museum" shamelessly stole the plot from this story. Needless to say, this one is miles ahead in terms of writing.

Divine Madness. Again one of the first times this idea (later used and reused everywhere) appeared. Very powerful ending.

Love is an Imaginary Number. A short story that gave birth to Nine Princes in Amber. If you have no idea about the latter, shame on you!

The Man Who Loved the Faioli. If somebody other than Zelazny can write equally good tale about love between a vampire and a cyborg I have not heard about such person.

The Graveyard Heart. The main and only reason I rated this book with 4 instead of 5 stars. It is quite long and it was the only time I got bored reading.

Sometimes you read a book and cannot help thinking, "Darn, I can write this good!" In some extreme cases you think, "I can actually write better!" and begin looking for a pen only to realize there are already more

than enough mediocre books around, without your contribution. I read this book and my only evaluation about its writing quality was: there is no way in Hell I can write half as good as this. This is all I want to say about the collection in general.

Mind you, not all the stories are equally good and some might not work for everybody, but if you call yourself a fan of science fiction this book is a must read. For now let us just weep for untimely passing of a Master (with a capital M) of science fiction.

Howl says

I got a little over halfway through this awesome collection of stories (to *Divine Madness*) before the overdue notices started assaulting me; I took a while to get through the first story because I wasn't really familiar with Zelazny's style, but by *A Rose For Ecclesiastes* I was completely absorbed.

Zelazny's writing is spectacular. I could list all the synonyms for 'spectacular', but instead of that I will just recommend that you read his descriptions of the storm, both brewing and happening, in *This Moment Of The Storm*. And occasionally, it's quite hilarious: *Collector's Fever* and *The Great Slow Kings* in particular.

These are interesting, thought-provoking stories of the future, humankind's destiny, personal struggle, and deebing rocks. I'd like to do a story-by-story review, but I will need to hold off until I acquire a copy. Anyway, **intensely** recommended.

Amanda says

I really liked this collection, but the treatment of women as plot devices rather than characters demoted this read to three stars. Zelazny has some really interesting ideas and integrates them well with actual plots in his stories (which is not always the case with classic sci-fi). His writing style also borders on poetry at times. However, there was not one story where a female character existed in her own right; she was always present to affect the main male character (and many of these female characters died to further the male's plot - expendable women isn't a theme I support). My favorite story was "This Moment of the Storm," and there were many other stories with thought-provoking ideas, but they didn't affect me emotionally (and, again, the treatment of female characters was deplorable).

Eveningstar2 says

Lovely stuff, as always. This is earlier Zelazny, prototypical and experimental, still in his development phases. Most of these stories were published in the years prior to *Lord of Light*, and you can see the ingredients of that novel budding in shorts like "Love Is An Imaginary Number," published in 1966, one year prior to *Lord of Light*. I swear, "Love" and "Lord" are essentially the same basic story, spun in different directions.

Likewise, some parallels between *Devil Car* and *Damnation Alley*, and the repeated appearance of the archetypal Zelazny Protagonist--a compassionate man with a rebellious streak, a great deal of confidence, a smug sense of humor and a penchant for cigarettes.

This Mortal Mountain, The Keys to December and This Moment of the Storm are probably my favorites. The Great Slow Kings, Museum Piece and Collector's Fever were funny, clever and bizarre; Zelazny doesn't receive nearly enough credit for his chummy wit.

I wasn't a huge fan of the titular short, and the later stories felt a little flat. This may be because I'm spoiled, and my love affair with Zelazny began with some of his finest work (Lord of Light, Creatures of Light and Darkness, A Night In The Lonesome October).

Recommended for Zelazny fans and anyone interested in early 60's Sci Fi from a young master.

For anyone new to Zelazny, do yourself a favor and read LAST DEFENDER OF CAMELOT instead, which is a far superior collection of Zelazny's stories.

Kathryn says

I used to think I loved Roger Zelazny's writing. After trying out a few more of his books, I realized that it was THIS collection in particular that I loved. Nothing else of his that I've read has measured up, although I keep hoping I'll stumble on something I like just as much.

The stories cover a lot of ground, with sentient cars, a hunt for a leviathan, aliens, and some misunderstandings. "The Keys to December" ranks up there as one of my favorite short-stories. (It's about a genetically-engineered race of cat-people who alternate between waking and cold-sleep for thousands of years in order to terraform a planet they can live on. And at 44 years old it most likely predates any Furry fiction out there. But don't quote me on that.) "A Rose for Ecclesiastes" is another favorite, but I had to re-read it about fifteen years after the first read before I could really appreciate it. "This Moment of Storm" was SHOCKINGLY tragic, after being not all that interesting to start out with. "Divine Madness" disturbed me, if only because it strikes me as a word-for-word description of what someone would daydream about when their life has been turned upside down by tragedy. And "A Museum Piece" was just cute, in a fun sort of way.

Shel says

Dated, but entertaining stories. Some very short, some more like novellas, all very good!

Abhishek says

I decided to give this collection a try after reading, and liking, Lord of Light. In the short stories here, Zelazny maintains a brash, belligerent style, and a preference for smug, egocentric, cigarette-smoke blowing narrators. His language, though colorful and poetic, is hard to follow most of the time, and I ended up reading and rereading parts to get a grip on the going ons. Well, not all stories are at the same level of *density*, but most of them rank pretty high up there. It was infuriating at times, but pretty intense at the others. Zelazny cares more about imagery than he does about science, and each of his stories make you stop and think. His imagination is quite brilliant, as he envisions and contemplates the possible futures in store for the mankind. This is required reading for a sci-fi fan.

Jan says

This is the first work of Zelazny's I've read. I'm not all that impressed by the inventiveness of the plots; what stuck with me was the astonishing, highly poetic, sometimes almost biblical or prophetic language and imagery. This is a *writer*.

Joey Brockert says

"The Doors of His Face The Lamps of His Mouth" by Roger Zelazny, © 1971

A very nice collection of short stories by Mr. Zelazny.

'The Doors of His Face The Lamps of His Mouth' –

A fishing tale told of Venus. It is a bit confusing because the people seem to be talked of in the third person, then they appear to be the people talking, and there is a bit of a love story in here, too.

'The Keys to December' –

Humans have developed the ability to create life forms that can live in environments other than Earth. Some of these were created for working on a planet for a mining company. The planet is destroyed before any of the new humans can inhabit it, so they are left in bubbles on planets humans can live on. Another planet is found and terra-formed into one these created beings can live on, to the demise of the present inhabitants.

'Devil Cat' –

In this future time, cars have self-awareness. If there are humans on board, they may be along for the ride or to get something done. Sam Murdock is driving his souped up car, Jenny, out to capture a renegade car and his gang.

'A Rose for Ecclesiastes' –

Gallinger is a jerk. He knows it and does not care: he can do what no one else can. He is part of a mission to Mars. There has been one already which found a civilization that seems to be tottering towards oblivion, so he is sent to preserve and learn what all he can before it is gone. The story is the best of this collection, though the ending is a bit weird. The details are suspect. Mars is not an environment that people can live in without aid, spacesuits, etc. Beings from different planets should not be able to procreate, much less communicate so easily. This of course is a fallacy that Superman and Star Trek and Star Wars perpetuate. It does make for good stories, though.

'Collector's Fever' -

'This Mortal Mountain' – A man conquers a mountain, with help. The mountain is so tall it sticks up into outer space and it, seemingly, fights them as they crawl to the top.

'This Moment of the Storm' –

In the future, man will travel to the stars and need to have rest stops to relieve the boredom of the ones who tend the ship while the others sleep. One such traveler has stayed on this planet once before and is back for a spell. It is a nice enough planet with good enough people. The weather, though, is a challenge.

'The Great Slow Kings' -

There are two kings who share ruling on this planet and one robot to serve them. The kings are old as the hills, literally. They naturally function slowly. The best quote in this book: "Concerning organic life the only statement which can be made with certainty is that life is uncertain."

'A Museum Piece' -

This is a weird story of a fellow who is down on his luck, so he decides to become piece of art in a museum and finds love.

'Divine Madness' -

This is an impossible story of love. Somehow this fellow can go back in time and make a simple adjustment.

'Love is an Imaginary Number' -

This is the story of one ancient myth explained.

'The Man Who Loved Faioli' -

This is a strange story of a dead man who takes care of dead bodies.

Yve says

There are some stories I like less than others but the ones I loved more than compensated for those. It's a testament to how well-conceived and well-written the stories are that they don't feel dated despite being obvious false representations of what is now present day.

One note - there are a LOT of typos in this edition. Not any that prevent understanding, but a very noticeable amount nonetheless. Otherwise the book is nicely laid out.

Highlights include

The Keys To December - Wherein a race of Catform people, genetically modified to work for mining corporation on a planet that was unexpectedly destroyed, seek to in turn modify a new planet so that they can live freely. It turns out that the changes they make in the planet cause one of the native races to become intelligent and look upon the cat-people as their gods.

Devil Car - A tale of sentient cars, like a hardcore version of that Pixar movie. My favorite touch is that the wild Devil Car keeps a rotation of human corpses in the driver seat to pass himself off as a normal decent car.

A Rose For Ecclesiastes - Which is perhaps his best known story and fully worth the hype.

This Mortal Mountain - A spectacular adventure story about mountain climbing (of course), with the special distinction of a 40 mile high extraterrestrial mountain and a ghost story in the mix too.

This Moment of the Storm - About a torrential tropical storm on a smaller colonized planet (pseudo Caribbean), and a space-traveling cop who witnesses all the resulting destruction and madness.

A Museum Piece - Which is actually kind of funny, like the cool version of Night At The Museum (i.e. with 100% less Ben Stiller and 100% more aliens).

Manny says

I last looked at this collection 35 years ago and I can still remember at least half of them, so I conclude that it must be pretty good.

I think I liked the love stories most: "A Rose for Ecclesiastes", where the Earth poet visits the doomed Martian society and falls in love with their priestess, and "The Man Who Loved The Faioli", in which Zelazny pulls off the near-impossible feat of creating a moving romance between a vampire and a cyborg. Really, I'm not being ironic! He was one of the brightest SF talents around during the early to mid-60s.

Andreas says

Fisher, climber, cowboy romanticism, terraforming, a proto-amber and other stories.

My favourite ★★★★★ story was

A Rose for Ecclesiaste

No ★ or ★★ for me were

The Great Slow Kings Corrida

Contents:

- ★★★★ for **The Doors of His Face, the Lamps of His Mouth** • (1965) • fisher story on Old Venus - review
- ★★★1/2 for **The Keys to December** • (1966) • terraforming for Cold Cats - review
- ★★★★ for **Devil Car** • (1965) • Wild West romanticism with A.I. cars - review
- ★★★★★ • **A Rose for Ecclesiastes** • (1963) • fatalisms of Old Marsians - review
- ★★ for **The Monster and the Maiden** • (1964) • two-pager faery story, a twist about the eponymous topic
- ★★★1/2 for **Collector's Fever** • (1964) • three-pager funny, bizarre SF about trying to collect an intelligent stone. Nearly 100% dialogue but with an interesting world-setting.
- ★★★★ for **This Mortal Mountain** • (1967) • mysticistic climbing turning real - review
- ★★★★ for **This Moment of the Storm** • (1966) • storm watcher leads a city through the perils of a storm - review
- ★★ for **The Great Slow Kings** • (1963) • satirical and witty story about reptile Gods taking years for simple conversations, witnessing civilizations fade away while they try to come up with answers. *"Masters," suggested Zindrome, "the half-life of radioactive materials being as ephemeral as it is, I regret to report that only one spaceship is now in operational condition."*
- ★★★★ for **A Museum Piece** • (1963) • an artist decides to flee the world, exhibiting himself as a statue in a museum. Others do similar. Satirical, witty, absurd story.
- ★★★★★ for **Divine Madness** • (1966) • reverse time love story - review
- ★ for **Corrida** • (1968) • a man awakes as the bull in a tauromachia; thankfully only two pages long

★★★★ for **Love is an Imaginary Number** • (1966) • proto-Amber - review

★★★ for **The Man Who Loved the Faioli** • (1967) • *A month. A month, he knew, and it would come to an end. The Faioli, whatever they were, paid for the life that they took with the pleasures of the flesh.*

★★1/2 for **Lucifer** • (1964) • the eponymous lightbringer (from "lux"+"ferre") brings back life to a city in the form of electricity, if only for a few moments
