



Fantasy and Science Fiction

VOLUME 15, No. 4

OCTOBER

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Joseph W. Ferman, PUBLISHER

Robert P. Mills, EDITOR

*The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Volume 15, No. 4, Whole No. 89, OCTOBER 1968. Published monthly by Mercury Press, Inc., at \$34 a copy. Annual subscription, \$4.00 in U. S. and Possessions, Canada and the Pan-American Union; \$5.00 in all other countries. Publication office, Concord, N. H. Editorial and general offices, 327 Madison Avenue, New York 22, N. Y. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at Concord, N. H., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Printed in U. S. A. © 1968 by Mercury Press, Inc. All rights, including translation into other languages, reserved. Submissions must be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelope; the Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts.*

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## Ballade of an Artificial Satellite

*"Thence they sailed far to the southward along the land, and came to a ness; the land lay upon the right; there were long and sandy strands. They rowed to land, and found there upon the ness the keel of a ship, and called the place Keenheit, and the strands they called Wonderstrands for it took long to sail by them."*

*—Thorfinn Karlsefni's voyage to Vinland*

One inland summer I walked through rye,  
a wind at my heels that smelled of rain  
and harried white clouds through a whistling sky  
where the great sun stalked and shook his mane  
and roared so brightly across the grain  
it burned and shimmered like alien sands.—  
Ten years old, I saw down a lane  
the thunderous light on Wonderstrands.

In ages before the world ran dry,  
what might the mapless not contain?  
Atlantis gleamed like a dream to die,  
Avalon lay under faerie reign,  
Cibola guarded a golden plain,  
Tir-nan-Og was fair-locked Fand's  
sober men saw from a gull's-road wain  
the thunderous light on Wonderstrands.

Such changing countries in cloudland lie;  
but men grew weary and they grew sane  
and they grew grown—and so did I—  
and knew Tartessus was only Spain.  
No galleons call at Taprobane  
(Ceylon, with English); no queenly hands  
wear gold from Punt; nor sees the Dane  
the thunderous light on Wonderstrands.

Ahoy, Prince Andros Horizon's-bane!  
They always wait, the even lands.  
An evening planet gives again  
the thunderous light on Wonderstrands.

POUL ANDERSON