

Fantasy and Science Fiction

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(*illustrating "A Deskful of Girls"*)

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The Watchers

Rama the watcher stares into the sky
 Above the Indian jungle. Jet-black eyes
 Little by little learn to scan the high
 Glare of the noonday sun. Whatever flies—
 Vulture, vimana—Rama sees: and yet
 Sees not. His first-learnt precept was: Forget!

Marcus stands sentinel on Hadrian's Wall,
 The far north-eastern frontier which Rome
 Flings out among the Scottish mists that fall
 Dank on his face. As Marcus dreams of home
 Lights flash across the sky. He curses, thinks
 No more of them, salutes his gods, and drinks.

Only today, when their divided world
 Pauses upon the brink of suicide,
 Do men, before the fury is unfurled,
 Think of the knowledgeable ones who ride
 Through time and space: and wonder, as they stare,
 Can the salvation that we seek be *there?*