

REVIEW OF *SINOPTICON*

I had three favorites from this collection.

Gu Shi's "The Last Save" presents a strange version of time travel, where you can reload past "saves" of your life—but also have to worry about your loved ones disappearing from your life forever when they choose to reload.

A Que's "Flower of the Other Shore" is a creative, romantic zombie tale told from the zombie's perspective. I found this bit amusing:

In fact, Stiffs are not only able to communicate with their own sign language, but also think, and think more deeply than humans. Theoretically speaking, if someone has an unquenchable passion but is confined to spend his days in aimless roaming, then he's bound to become a philosopher: only our memories are too short, and our Hunger too fierce. Whenever we smell humans, this drives us to chase after blood and flesh, leaving us no time to commit our thoughts to paper.

They're not philosophical zombies, they're just zombies who get philosophical, y'know?

Jiang Bo's "Starship: Library" follows an immortal who maintains a library long after civilization has moved on. The theme of patient commitment to a long-term endeavor, undistracted by the frenzy of mainstream society, reminds me a bit of *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (review). The story also asks what is lost when knowledge can be gained instantaneously rather than requiring one to go through "the struggles and pains of learning".