



The Drink Tank 377

In Memoriam: Jay Lake

Jay Lake - 1964 to 2014

Page 3

Science Fiction Author, Bonvivant, and Wonderful Person by Robert Hole

Page 5

Eugie Foster

Page 6

Dave McCarty

Page 8

Jonathan Erman

Page 9

How Jay Lake Saved My Life by Danny Adams

Page 16

Diana Sherman

Page 17

Michael Shea

Page 20

Gail Carriger

Page 21

John Scalzi

~ Your Editors ~

Vanessa Applegate, James Bacon, and Chris Garcia

**Letters of Comment to
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or
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*Dreamt that I was still in the truck on the way to Florida...
but it wasn't Dad driving. It was @jay_lake #goodtidings
Alethea Kontis @AletheaKontis*

Jay Lake, Science Fiction Author, bonvivant, and wonderful person. by Robert Hole

Though I didn't know him well, like all people he has touched (both appropriately and inappropriately), I will miss him dearly.

I got to attend JayCon, his annual birthday bash, one year and watching Jay and Frank Wu do "hair wars" while singing "Istanbul was Constantinople" is one of my highlight memories (okay, I live a sheltered life sometimes). I remember it especially since I tripped and injured my knee rather badly on the way IN to the bar. The singing made me feel better and is memorable for that.

I also had the pleasure of spending an hour with him at the Denver Worldcon in 2008, where we sat next to each other at a signing. I was concentrated on the idea that I had exactly one person come by for my signature - and they didn't know who I was, but recognized my last name as being a cousin. Jay of course had a fairly steady stream of people. During a lull I mentioned that I was a bit jealous of him. He looked to his other side and said something to the effect that it was a matter of perspective. On that side sat George R. R. Martin, who of course had a line stretching out the door. At the end I gave Jay a little picture that I drew during the signing. I am not an autograph seeker, so I never did get his signature.

Back in the Livejournal days, Jay ran contests to caption pictures. I won one of the contests captioning a picture of Jay hooked up to a bunch of machinery. I don't remember exactly any more, but it was something referencing Borg of course. Jay never sent me the book, Green, that was the prize. Before I bugged him about it jokingly, I had started reading a local library copy.

Jay asked me about it when I did mention it, and I had to

*If you think *you* miss @jay_lake ... <http://nolossofmomentum.blogspot.com/> (I thought I missed him--until I started reading this.)*

Fred Kiesche @FredKiesche



send him a long note explaining why I didn't want the book. It has trigger and other problems that made me unable to finish it (the problems are mine, not Jay's). So, I never got that either.

I of course also enjoyed his writing. Following his blog of late has been heartbreaking as cancer took control of his life. But his fiction is sweet and complicated and a real pleasure to read. *The Clockwork Earth* and *Trial of Flowers* are well worth reading, and rereading. If you're not familiar with his work, I recommend them highly.

Sight unseen I'll also recommend "Last Plane to Heaven", his collection that will be available in September, 2014.

At one point Jay organized an auction for a neighbor of his who had some financial issues, a typical thing for him. I happily bid on and won three pairs of Jay Lake Socks (TM) - tie-dyed of course. The socks were produced by our mutual friend Kelly Green, and I wore them until the holes had holes. And I think I still have them anyway, somewhere in storage.

Well, Jay will be missed, and is already by many and more eloquent than me. But for almost all of us, he will be missed with Good Memories.



Tweet from Jay Lake's account. For just a second there ... Damn.

Greg van Eekhout @gregvaneekhout

Eugie Foster

When I saw that Jay Lake had passed away yesterday, it didn't feel real. How could Jay be dead? He'd been fighting his cancer for so long and so valiantly, with such courage, dignity, and determination, that even though I knew his case was terminal, a part of me couldn't accept he was gone, a part of me still thought that in the end, he'd surely beat it.

Then I started reading the groundswell of eulogies and remembrances of him. Jay was so talented, so vivacious, and so generous of spirit and deed. The Internet is filled with personal stories of how he touched lives, enriching them with his humor and his heart. That's when the tears came and the realization that really and truly, Jay is gone.

I only knew him online--we met on LiveJournal lo, these many years ago--but he was always an inspiration to me, both as a writer and as a cancer warrior. Jay reached out to me when I was diagnosed with cancer, a man dealing with his own battle with the disease taking the time to give support and share experience hard earned with someone he'd only known through pixels on a screen. He made it clear that if I ever needed someone to talk to who'd been there and understood what I was going through, his door was open to me. That was the kind of person Jay was.

He will be greatly missed by myself and by everyone he has ever touched with his eloquent words, his unstinting compassion, and his indefatigable love of life and living.

Holy crap @KevinHearne Jay Lake passed!!!!?!? Where the hell was I.

Nathan Samuel Grey @GreyElfNate



Dave McCarty

I am about to pull my own version of Bill Cosby's "I told you that story so I could tell you this one..."

I have my conversation topic ready for the pharts party in London this year. It's this slightly odd effect that chairing the Worldcon had on me (and I'd be interested to see if or how it manifested with other chairs).

When I was the chairman of the seated Worldcon, in a strange way it felt like the whole community were "my kids" (for lack of a better term). There were fights over that year that I was not party to that caused very personal reactions in me. All kinds of events that year made very personal connections in me because it happened to the tribe while I had a specific interest in the collective.

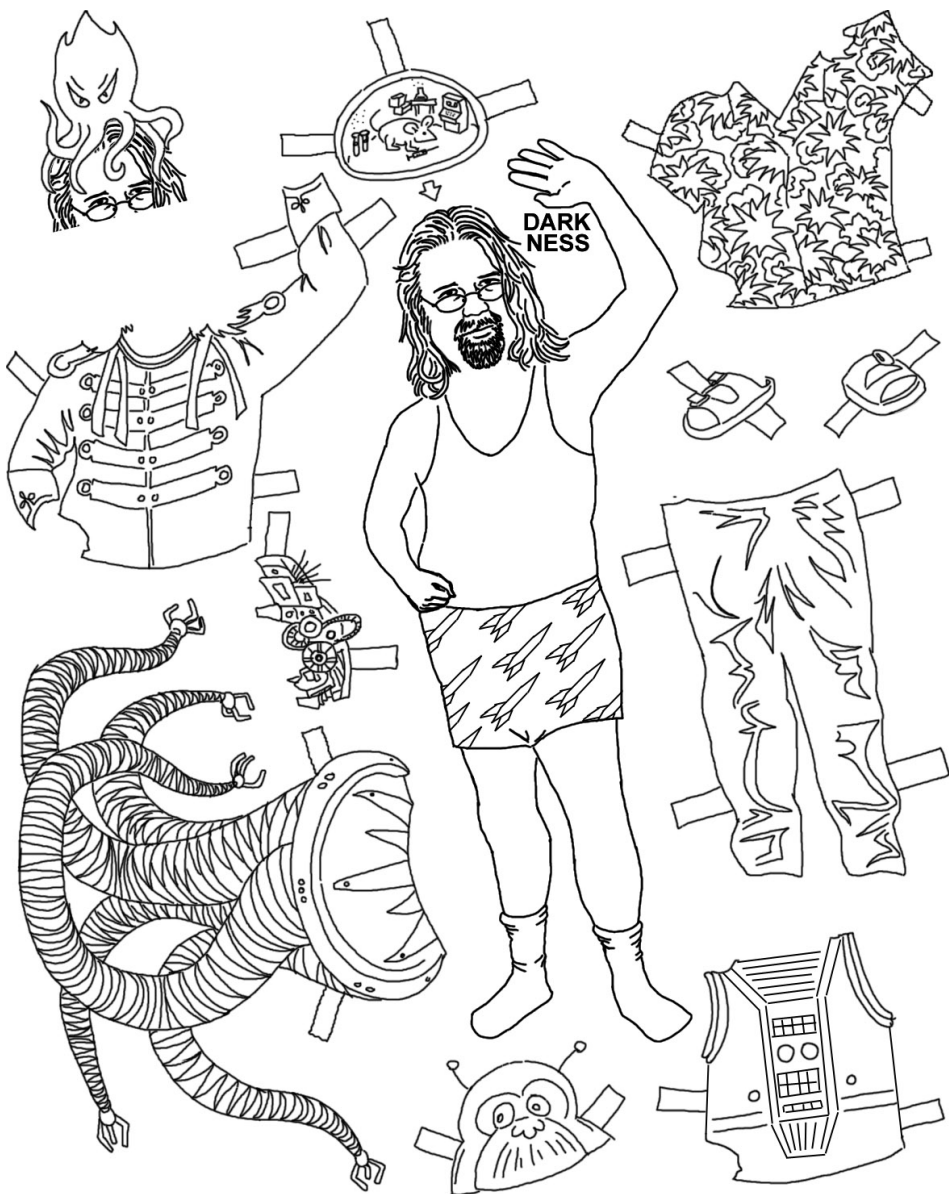
Which brings me to "the other story".

One of the strongest connections for me was the fight that author Jay Lake had with cancer. I can't say we were really friends, we'd only spoken a handful of times at various Worldcons...but for some reason, his fight really connected with me because a fair portion of it was on "my watch". The connection is so strong that he's honestly the only person who wasn't on the Chicago bid committee who I can specifically recall talking to at A4 after our win.

So, yesterday was a heavy day as Jay lost his battle. Something he did publicly with strength and character that even my raging ego-maniac brain can't imagine I'd ever have. While Jay's fiction was outstanding and award winning...what he created on his blog over the past few years (<http://www.jlake.com/blog/>) is a master class in dealing with the truly terrifying.



Via LinkedIn I think I found out Jay Lake died earlier this year from cancer. I redvd Tweets from him during the last 2 years of his life.



There's a level where that kind of bothers me because I don't want to be the cancer guy—I want to be the science fiction guy.

Jay Lake @jay_lake



Jonathan Erman

Hey Chris,

My brother called me a few hours ago and gave me the news..”Have you heard?” No I had not. Totally sucks. No matter how sick someone gets, part of me always holds out that things will get better...after all, it could happen...

It always hurts.

I found your *Drink Tank*, and my brother pointed me to Tad and John Scalzi. Jay is everywhere. (See Chaz.) This is the stuff I’ve found so far; just the tip of the iceberg sticking out of a very large Lake.

SFWA:

<http://www.sfw.org/2014/06/memori-am-jay-lake-1964-2014/>

Tor.com:

<http://www.tor.com/blogs/2014/06/jay-lake-in-memori-am#comments>

Chaz Brenchley: <http://desperance.livejournal.com/>

Tad Williams: <http://www.tadwilliams.com/>

(also at:<https://www.facebook.com/AuthorTadWilliams>)

John Scalzi: (contains brain-tasting photo)<http://whatever.scalzi.com/>

Borderlands Books: https://twitter.com/borderlands_sf

Yours,
Jonathan



Long overdue reconsideration of @jay_lake's Mainspring, as tribute.

I promised Jay I'd send it, but never did. <http://steampunkscholar.blogspot.ca/2014/06/mainspring-reconsidered-in-memory-of.html>

blogspot.ca/2014/06/mainspring-reconsidered-in-memory-of.html

Mike Perschon @DocPerschon

How Jay Lake Saved My Life

Danny Adams

June 2, 2014 at 9:42am

This is not the entry I would like to have returned to blogging with after a month-long hiatus. But then again, this is an entry I hoped I wouldn't have to write for a long time, because (for reasons I'll make plain shortly) I wasn't going to write it while Jay was still with us. And I'd hoped that despite everything, he would still have years yet. But his passing yesterday after the six-year bout with cancer(s) that he documented so thoroughly over the years has gotten me reflecting about many things, of which this one item I'll share publicly because it's one example of his generosity.

To sum up: Jay Lake in all likelihood saved my life. I mean that literally.

I never met Jay in person, but we became Live Journal friends about nine years ago or so. I'd started hearing his name from other writer friends who blogged on LJ, and was instantly fascinated by his posts about the writing process as well as his fearless political posts. (Some people said he had a reputation for being arrogant or condescending; I never saw that. He was frank and unashamed of his beliefs and his writing, and didn't suffer fools, and I think this rubbed a few people the wrong way. But those tend to be the sort of people who need to be rubbed the wrong way. Anyway.)

In the summer of 2009, I was bitten by a spider on my left arm. The bite got swollen; I was advised to ice it. The swelling went down and I thought nothing more of it for a few weeks as I went about my normal routines, which included a 45-60 minute workout three to four days a week. Then both arms started swelling up again. I resumed icing them. This time I knew I'd need to see a doctor about it, but while I had insurance, I wouldn't be able to get to

Hey, Jay, you got any weed? I hear cancer guys always have weed.

Christopher J Garcia @johnnyeponymous



a doctor for a few days. At the time money was super-tight and I was, as the saying goes, living from paycheck to four days before paycheck. I was a few days away from a paycheck, thus I was a few days away from seeing a doctor.

Now one of Jay's political leanings was being an unabashed supporter of Obamacare, and he had numerous lively discussions about it on his blog. I commented on one of these at the time, citing my frustration about not having money for a doctor visit. It was a passing remark, bolstering some comment about medical expenses that he'd made, and I thought no more about it.

At least I didn't think about it again till the next day, when money showed up in my Paypal account with the note that it was from Jay Lake, telling me to go to the doctor. I won't say how much but it covered the next two visits...out of what became five appointments over the course of two weeks.

Because that's the kind of person he was. And he refused to let me pay it back, instead insisting that I pay it forward.

So to the doctor I went. She checked out my arms and was horrified. The swelling I thought had gone "down" was in fact the fluid in my arm hardening - hastened by the ice I'd been using. Between that and my workouts, the doctor told me that it was an almost complete certainty that within the next few days a piece of that hardened fluid would have broken off, caused a block somewhere, and likely become fatal. In other words, that few days' wait for my paycheck that Jay eliminated very well could have been lethal.

I got a round of antibiotics - also paid for with the money Jay gave me - with instructions not to exercise beyond a gentle walk for a month.

I told Jay all of this. He still wouldn't accept any repayment. His first cancer had been going for a year by this point and I told him I knew about his own health issues; he told me he'd been helped this way in the past and was now passing that help along. Eventually he did consent to me sending him a signed copy of *The City Beyond*



Just saw this, Jay Lake lost his fight with cancer, I saw him at LonStarCon3, last year...so sad that he's gone

W. C. Bauers @WCBauers

Play, but that was all.

I did also vow to him that I wouldn't tell anyone about this publicly. That was my idea - he never asked it of me. I was just afraid people might start begging him for money if I did.

Two months ago, at last, I was in a position to pay it forward, and with Jay in mind I did so. A friend who was unemployed and uninsured had to be rushed into an emergency surgery, and wasn't sure how she could pay for it. I sent her the amount Jay had sent me. I knew it wouldn't have as profound an effect as his donation did for me, but I could do it, so I did.

And I let Jay know that I had. Despite being what I know now was so close to death, he sent me back an e-mail thanking me for letting him know and - because he was still generous even then - wishing both my friend and me good health.

So while many people are remembering Jay's personality, his Hawaiian shirts, his stories and his writing work ethic, I'm remembering him for my existence.

Thank you, Jay. I won't forget, and I'll keep paying it forward whenever I can.

Can't read the stuff about Jay Lake. Too sad and close to home.

Liz de Jager @LizUK





KYLECASSIDY.COM



Kyle Cassidy

I met Jay Lake on livejournal. He started blogging in 2004 and you can go back and start reading it there. LJ is a much more personal blogging platform than Facebook or Twitter and I felt that I really got to know Jay through his frequent entries. He was a very popular blogger and in 2008 when he was first diagnosed with cancer he made the decision to bring all of us along with him in a series of extraordinarily honest journal entries that continued right up to his death last week. I hope someone collects these into a book, and knowing Jay, I can't imagine that he hasn't already thought of it.

His openness about his fight was one of the most remarkable things about Jay, the fact that he let us know that he was not ok with dying, that he was afraid was all a part of his invitation, his request even, that we come along with him. He took us all on an extremely difficult journey in a way that I don't know anybody has ever done before. He never vanished from the story he was telling, he told it as long as he was physically able and we are all the richer for having been able to witness it.

I photographed the cover of his amazing book *The Specific Gravity of Grief* in which he writes eloquently about a fictional author dying of cancer and brings into it his own experience. He wanted people to know how much it hurt, and he also showed me a jar which contained a Dorito shaped wedge of his lung that doctors had just cut out.

He wanted me to photograph him getting up out of the bed, because it hurt an awful lot to do that and he wanted people to know that it hurt and to be able to see it on his face. He didn't internalize his suffering to shield us, because he wanted us to know what was happening.



Like many others said in their rememberances of Jay, it was clear that this day would eventually come, but we all hoped it wouldn't be quite so soon. So rest in peace, Jay, and a hearty "Fuck cancer"!

Cora Buhlert <http://corabuhlert.com/>

There were a number of remarkable things about Jay Lake, one was this gift, if you can call it that, of wanting to share this journey, and the other was his gregariousness. He was surrounded by people who loved and cared for him, and people upon whom he depended and who depended on him.

What I learned from Jay is that there are ways to deal with the inevitable. He held his funeral in advance so that he could attend it, he took time out to visit with people and, as much as possible, make the spectacle of his death into a party, but all that time he never pretended it was a party he was okay with throwing, he threw it because the other option was to sit quietly at home and wait for night instead of dancing with friends as the sun set.

My photograph of Jay for *Where I Write: Fantasy & Science Fiction Authors in Their Creative Spaces*.



Linda sent me a Facebook message asking how I was taking the news of Jay's death. I hadn't heard. I sobbed uncontrollably. I knew it was coming, but I wish I hadn't

Christopher J Garcia @johnnyeponymous

Diana Sherman

Jay died this morning. Jay... Jay was my refuge when I fell apart. He was a safe place to go to feel loved. He didn't judge, he just cuddled you and then made wacky, crazy jokes that had you laughing even when you thought you could never laugh again. He could hold your hand without it ever feeling intrusive. He could tell you you were doing something dumb without it ever feeling like judgment.

Jay met my folks back in 2004 and they immediately loved him. Like most people do. He was my mom's cancer buddy in 2011-2012, passing along advice from his own experiences.

I met Jay right after I got out of Clarion in '02. For me, he was an intrinsic part of the science fiction community. And I know it isn't, but right now it feels like such a wasteland without him. I'll write more about this. I'll be grieving for a long time. But if you look, you'll see it's a hell of a lot more than just me. The grief pouring out today, the stories and pictures that have been pouring out for the last week...

Jay was a phenomenon. Bigger than life, and more garish. And, my god, did he love his daughter.

I am so, so very sorry. For Lisa, who has lost her partner, for the Child, who has lost her father, for Jay's parents, for Mother of the Child. For Ken and Jen and Jay's sister. And for everyone else grieving his loss today. And for everyone who never got to meet him. You missed something spectacular.

*I know it's a cliche to quote this poem, but Dylan Thomas was right, goddammit. Rage, rage, against the dying of the light-
Live forever, Jay.*

Sarah Monet

Michael Shea

I've been thinking all day about what to say in regards to the passing of Jay Lake.

I had the pleasure of becoming friends with him over the last several years after meeting him as I MC'd World Steam Expo. We were casual friends, but still friends. I was reading his work before I ever met him and as much as I was impressed with him and had respect for him through his written words, it elevated to an entirely new level upon meeting him. He was true, gregarious, kind, generous with his time, his thoughts and his ear.

Some say that he was an ambassador of Steampunk. I say he was a fan and his fandom came across on every page. Every piece he wrote showed that he was truly a fan of any genre into which he tread. It drew others into that same fandom as well. But, even more, it showed how truly talented he was, by not just following in the footsteps of others, but by paying homage, even as he created something new, fresh and vital. It's also how he lived his life- making everything he did new, fresh and vital, even as he shared it with everyone around him, be they family, friends, or even the throngs of total strangers at conventions expressing their fandom of his work. He made them all feel appreciated and welcomed into the experience of his life.

I can think of no better words to express Jay Lake, other than this...

His works inspired others to write.
His ideas inspired others to dream.
His battle with cancer inspired others to fight.
His personality inspired others to live.

If I ever write an autobiography, I'll use the title IT'S ONLY ANKLE-DEEP... IF YOU'RE STANDING ON YOUR HEAD.

Jay Lake @jay_lake





BEING J

Concept and original



Momos were delicious, as were the bbq ribs. Reading of @jay_lake's "The Angle of My Dreams" & "Loving Julius" successful. A fine #jaycon

Daniel Spector @danjite



JAY LAKE

image (c) 2000 Gary Emenitove, with visual blandishments by F. Wu

Tomorrow would be Jay Lake's 50th birthday. I think I'll wear a Hawaiian shirt & eat some good cheese in his memory.

Shelly Rae Clift @ShellyRaeClift



Gail Carriger

Jay Lake died recently. I know, Gentle Reader, but that is the stark reality of it. One of SF/F's beacons as gone dark. I didn't know him well, but I, like many others, have a Jay Lake story to tell. Since he was a master storyteller, I figured the best way to honor his memory is in prose.

Jay was one of those rarest of creatures among authors and in geekdom... an extrovert. I never saw anything like him: always cheerful, always bubbly, always the life of the party ~ he actually managed to gain energy through social iterations. It was, at times, quite exhausting to watch. I met him at a convention. I was merely lurking on the outskirts but I watched him be a hero, in his gregarious way, and I loved him for how he treated others.

You see, my dearest friend in the whole world had an awful day. It had gone on to be an awful evening. Her boss was outright cruel to her and the flack followed her into convention safe/fun space in such a way as to ruin her entire weekend.

This was a simple thing and no great matter in the workings of the universe. I tried to cheer her up, but I am not always good at such things and mine, I think, was not the right approach.

Then Jay swooped in. He simply gathered her into his fold. He spoiled her with words and high bright brilliant cheer and unending humor. But also paid grave attention to her troubles and bestowed genuine care on her emotional well-being. It is not often I leave a girlfriend with a male unbidden, but with Jay, it felt perfectly right.

I ran into them later that night, Jay striding about in his crazy loud Hawaiian shirt, his long hair flowing behind him, and each arm graced by a beautiful woman. My friend had a radiant smile on her face. And that, I would come to find, was typical Jay. To absorb and delight and touch and befriend and uplift a near stranger was utterly natural to him. To turn the force of his intellect and personality toward making other people happy. What an unbelievable gift.

I never got to say it but: Thank You, Jay. And, safe travels.



Through his writing, Lake leaves an enduring legacy, and his impact on science fiction and fantasy will be felt forever.

Charlie Jane Anders on io9.com

John Scalzi

I can't actually remember when it was that I first met Jay Lake, which is an unusual thing for me. I can often tell you the exact time and place I met most people I care about, from my oldest friend Kyle (on the bus on the first day of second grade) onward. I suspect my memory of meeting Jay is more diffuse because I first knew so many people who knew Jay, so that by the time we had our first meeting it felt, by commutative property, that I already knew him. I'm racking my brain here and coming up with nothing. From the point of view of my memory, Jay just was.

The picture above, (**On page 23**) taken at 2013's Nebula Awards Weekend, was one of the last times I saw him in person. In case you're not clear what's going on here, he's attempting to taste my brain, and I am both alarmed and intrigued by the attempt. Because, you know: Jay. That's him. A big goof in a Hawaiian shirt.

In between the nebulous start of our friendship and that brain tasting. I am happy to say I got a good amount of quality time with Jay. We shared many conversations about writing and the sf/f community and other things. We collaborated together on a project. I blurbed one of his books. He and Elizabeth Bear instigated the Campbell Tiara, which I was honored to be the first (but not the last) to wear. Indeed, "instigating" is a thing he did a lot of, both for good and for fun. I was happy to be an occasional participant of the instigations.

He was my friend, in short. In moments like these I always feel like I need to be careful about overstating the friendship; I don't want to claim a special status. So many more people are ahead of me in the line for Jay's affections, starting with his partner, and his daughter, his family, and then moving down the line. Nevertheless we were friends, and there was mutual affection. I am happy to have shared in his life in the amount I have been able.

For those playing along with the home game version of "Lab Rat Jay", I am as of today officially neutropenic.

Jay Lake @jay_lake



Of the many things I admired about Jay, his ability to write, in astoundingly huge gouts, was chief among them. He had nine novels and three hundred short stories published during his career, during which he also maintained a full-time job and, alas, had to fight against the cancer that would eventually take him from us. It's not necessarily a smart thing to compare one writer's process with another's, so I never compared my output to Jay's. But one thing I did do, whenever I was having a little pity party for myself about how hard my writing life was at the moment, was to remind myself of Jay's work ethic, even in the face of everything he had to deal with. Writers write.

Jay was an excellent writer — the winner of the Campbell award and a nominee for the Hugo and the Nebula (among others) — and he was a person who was open about so much of his life. When it came to his cancer, it was no surprise that he would write about it and write about it nakedly, chronicling what seemed almost every aspect of his fight with the disease with a lack of personal vanity. Jay never painted himself a noble sufferer as far as I could see. He was pissed that he had cancer, angry about what it was taking from him, and apprehensive about the end of the only life he would have.

He was, in a word, human about it. I like so many others in science fiction and fantasy read these posts — not only because Jay offered them like signposts, letting us know where he was in his journey, but because, I think, Jay was asking us to stand witness to his life. I tried to be the witness I thought he was asking me to be. I think many of us did.

Now the witnessing is over and Jay is gone and there is a life complete. It is a good one, as far as I can see. Jay was and is a man of complexity; my picture of him is incomplete and narrow but hopefully not less true because of it. I'm happy I am his friend and glad for the times I had with him. I'm glad he shared part of his life with me, through his writing and through his company. I'm glad he shared part of his life with all of us.

Goodbye, Jay. You are remembered, and loved.



Just got in the galleys for Jay Lake's final collection and now I'm all teary-eyed.

Dandy McFopperson @rosefox

~ Credits ~

Cover Artwork by Frank Wu

Page Number Art piece by Vanessa

Page 4, 18-19 photos from Frank Wu

Page 7 Art by Frank Wu from the Baycon 2005 GoH Paper Doll set

Page 12-13, 15 - Photos by Kyle Cassidy

Page 23 - Photo from John Scalzi

Back Cover - Photo Copyright Richard Man

richardmanphoto.com



Meltdowns are part of the scenery here in Cancerland. Doesn't mean I enjoy the view. Sigh.

Jay Lake @jay_lake





**Chris Hugs Jay after the Drink Tank's
Hugo Victory, 2011**