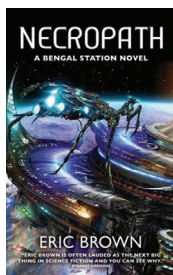


*The White Hotel*, and the concept of becoming “unstuck in time” like Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughter House-Five* will relish the *Ledfeather* journey. Jones’s mastery of reader manipulation is finely edged as he moves readers around the vast dreamscape of his prose and shows them how quickly the so-called banality of existence can become horrific. (August) *Lee Gooden*



### Necropath

**Eric Brown**

Solaris, Softcover \$7.99

(416pp)

978-1-84416-602-2

As French philosopher Emile Cioran once said, “If only we could see ourselves as others see us, we should vanish on the spot.” Centuries later, on an Earth spaceport called Bengal Station, Jeff Vaughn has that ability, due to a brain implant that allows him to read the minds of the recently deceased. Most days, he’s not that happy about it. Telepaths often have no friends. When one of the few he does have, a street kid called Tiger, overdoses on an off-world drug called rhapsody, Vaughn calls on one of his only other friends, police detective Jimmy Chandra, to investigate.

Back at his day job monitoring incoming craft for alien refugees, Vaughn discovers that his latest captain, Director Weiss, is lying to him. Could he be dealing with a rhapsody smuggler? And what is it about the drug that makes everyone who knows anything commit suicide before they can be questioned?

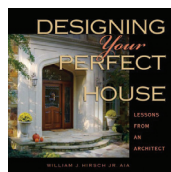
Not since the Retrieval Artist series by Kristine Kathryn Rusch has there been such an engaging anti-hero who struggles against the system to solve a series of murders and suicides. The world Brown has created is engaging and believable, a world in which the Thai and Indian cultures dominate old Earth, a world where Buddhist monks buy bodies for “Contemplation”—the practice of accepting death by staring at rotting flesh—a world in which the Church of the Adoration of the Chosen One worships golden children in a huge Holosseum...and something much, much more sinister. An alien universe in which justice is a matter of perspective.

Brown’s worldview is dark, yet pleasingly not without hope. His characters are flawed, but mostly likeable. As in real life, some have had to make unimaginably hard choices, choices for which they may be judged by others. This fast-paced blend of hard science fiction and murder mystery makes for a thoroughly entertaining read, with a couple of complete surprises at the end. The guns go off; all the nefarious plots are revealed and the ends tied up neatly—but not too neatly. And not without a few tears along the way. This page-turner is one of the best science fiction novels of the fall.

Eric Brown is the author of over thirty science fiction novels, collections, and books for teens and young children; he has won the British Science Fiction Award twice for his short stories. He also writes a monthly SF review column for the *Guardian*. His latest works include the novella *Starship Summer* and the novel *Kethani*. (October) *Holly Williams*

## Adult Nonfiction

### ARCHITECTURE



### Designing Your Perfect House: Lessons From an Architect

**William J. Hirsch Jr.**

Dalsimer Press, Hardcover

\$39.95 (240pp)

978-0-9798820-3-6

“He is happiest, be he king or peasant, who finds peace in his home,” wrote Goethe. Most people are neither kings nor peasants, but living in a house designed just for us is one way to find peace. The prospect of designing and building one’s own home may seem daunting, but Hirsch breaks the process down and brings to bear his extensive expertise in assisting first-time home builders. Hirsch holds a master’s degree in architecture, has practiced for more than thirty years, and designs custom homes for clients throughout the U.S.

Stylistically, this book caters to people at a higher socioeconomic level; the photos and example designs exclusively feature high-end homes such as a tropical-influenced, Balinese-style house with connected pavilions and a neocolonial-style home with infinity-edged pool. Anyone contemplating designing a house, however, would benefit from the valuable lessons outlined in each chapter—unifying design, delving into details, and thinking through each room—to name a few. Hirsch explains in a friendly, conversational tone many critical design components that may not be obvious to most people, for example, what it means to make a space comfortable for humans or the importance of scale. It becomes clear that, although readers may not have articulated these concepts before, they intuitively understand them.

The author leaves no paving stone unturned in his careful assessment of the particulars of superior home design, from the inclusion of nostalgic childhood memories to repetition of a specific detail throughout the house. If anything, this book impresses upon the reader just how monumental is the decision to design a custom home with care.

Green building and sustainable development are concepts that must be addressed in any contemporary architecture publication, and although this book’s focus is not “green” per

se, it does devote a portion of a chapter to energy efficiency and environmentally responsible design.

*Designing Your Perfect Home* consists of twelve chapters or “lessons” covering topics such as choosing a site, finding an architect, and figuring out a budget, but this really isn’t a “how to” formula. Hirsch delves into the fine points of building not just a great house but a house that’s perfect for its occupants. His experience working with first-timers and his sensitivity to both architectural concepts and the emotions involved in home design make this an excellent read for those in the trade and would-be homeowners. (November) *Luise Bolleber*

### ART



### Men and Angels: The Art of James C. Christensen

**by James C. Christensen, with Kate Horowitz**

Greenwich Workshop Press, 2008, \$85.00

“My spiritual life impacts my life as an artist,” writes James C. Christensen, “from the subjects I choose to paint, to the message of the work, to the responsibility I feel to the viewers. My art isn’t exploitative, confrontational or negative; there is enough darkness in the world, and I want my art to serve a more constructive purpose.”

Christensen was raised in Culver City, California, and attended UCLA. He then moved to Utah to finish his higher education at Brigham Young University (Christensen is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), and ended up teaching there for over twenty years. His artwork mixes elements of fantasy, whimsy, fairytale, and myth—always with a message, often contained in the title, like, “How Many Angels Can Dance on the Head of a Pin?” (The pin being one from a bowling alley). Christensen wants people to “get it.” Painting, for him, is also a way for him to “get it.” “Working through a process in two dimensions is a great way to examine a problem and discuss it with myself,” he writes. He recalls a painting inspired by his wife’s elderly parents, and how what began as a meditation on burdens became an inspiration of matrimonial love.

Christensen began his career illustrating book covers and magazines. In the disposable media world, the window of opportunity is minuscule and color is a way to catch a flighty reader’s attention. Using lavish amounts of gold ink to frame and highlight, the paintings in this beautifully produced, coffee table edition colorfully both capture and keep. (October) *Heather Shaw*