

# Robert J. Sawyer Books

The Science Fiction Imprint of RED DEER PRESS

## Submission Guidelines

**Robert J. Sawyer Books** is the science-fiction imprint of Red Deer Press. Established in 1975 and now a division of Fitzhenry & Whiteside Publishing of Toronto, Red Deer Press is one of Canada's leading publishing houses.

The books in this line of literate, cutting-edge, philosophically rich science-fiction titles are personally selected by the man the *Ottawa Citizen* calls "the dean of Canadian Science Fiction" and the *Rocky Mountain News* calls "just about the best science-fiction writer out there," Hugo and Nebula Award-winning bestselling author Rob Sawyer. Writers whose submissions are selected work directly with Rob on their manuscripts, and Rob writes an introduction for each book.

Robert J. Sawyer Books is strictly a **science-fiction** imprint: it does not publish fantasy, horror, magic realism, or anything else. It is a line of **adult books**: we are not interested in children's or young-adult fiction. Because some of our funding comes from Canadian federal and provincial government agencies, we must publish mostly, although not exclusively, Canadian authors.

We do just two or three books a year (mostly novels, but we are open to single-author short-story collections by established novelists). Most of our books are published as trade (large-format) paperbacks, although we also do some hardcovers. We are looking for **commercially viable** titles, and we distribute our books across North America via Fitzhenry & Whiteside. **Our maximum length is 100,000 words**—no exceptions.

Science-fiction publishing in the U.S. has been in a slump for over a decade, and lots of good books that might have found homes with the major New York SF imprints (Ace, Aspect, DAW, Del Rey, Eos, Roc, Spectra, and Tor) in more prosperous days have been going unpublished. If your book might have made it in New York in greener times, give us a try.

Note that we only publish original self-contained, stand-alone books: don't send us the first volume of your prospective trilogy, because we'll never have enough slots to publish the subsequent books, and no other publisher is going to pick up a series started by somebody else. Also note that we're not currently interested in reprints.

Some authors we like: James Alan Gardner, Nancy Kress, Jack McDevitt, Mike Resnick, Connie Willis, Robert Charles Wilson, and, of course, Robert J. Sawyer. If your work is like theirs, with the same deft mixture of science *and* fiction, we're interested in seeing a query from you. (If you don't know the work of these authors, or if the list of SF imprints given above didn't mean anything to you, then we're probably not going to be a good match for each other; try your luck somewhere else.)

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If your book is built on a foundation of accurate, cleverly extrapolated science *and* believable, subtle, sophisticated characterization, it might be for us. We want real people in our stories, not cardboard heroes and villains. We firmly believe that SF is the literature of ideas—and we love the sense of wonder that good science fiction invokes.

Most of all, your book must be *about* something. If your first impulse in describing your novel is to make a thematic statement, we're interested; if, on the other hand, your first impulse is to give a plot synopsis, we're probably not the right place for you.

We are open to stylistic experimentation and adult content, so long as they help, rather than hinder, the story. Plain, straightforward prose is fine with us; so is beautiful, lyrical writing. Humor and satire are welcome.

Our advances are decent by the standards of small presses, but we can't compete up front with the big New York houses (although our royalty rates match theirs, of course). We cannot commission novels; you must have a completed manuscript, ready to go into editing. We welcome agented submissions, and are happy to deal with agents during contract negotiations.

To give you a taste of what we're looking for, these were our first two books:

Marcos Donnelly's *Letters from the Flesh* intertwines the startling observations of an extraterrestrial witnessing the rise of Christianity in First-Century Judea with the modern plight of a teacher attacked for championing evolution in his classroom.

*Getting Near the End* by Andrew Weiner is an apocalyptic tale of a rock singer whose melancholy songs seem to accurately foretell the impending downfall of humanity. The novel draws heavily on Weiner's experience as a rock journalist, and is told in the same sardonic voice found in his many stories for *Asimov's Science Fiction* and *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*.

No unsolicited manuscripts: you must query us first by paper mail (not e-mail or fax). Send query letters and brief synopses (no more than a couple of pages are necessary, although if you've already written a longer synopsis, that's fine) to:

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Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope (with Canadian postage) for our reply; those submitting queries from outside Canada, use an International Reply Coupon, available at large post offices. If we like what you've got to say in your query, we'll solicit your full manuscript.

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