

Pulp Kings # 3

Litzin, edited by IB, 61 pgs

Zine Review by Cole Bisson

It takes a lot of effort and grace to express subtle themes amidst the bustling worlds and elaborate backdrops typical of science fiction. Highly skilled prose that also demonstrates its intended themes is rare two out of two. The four contributors in the third issue of previous Zine Awards finalist *Pulp Kings* achieves just that feat. Each contribution to this compilation zine offers a unique world where the authors tackle a unifying theme: love.

The opening story is tender, exploring the challenge of accepting difficult pasts, all against a sci-fi backdrop. Subsequent stories are each their own masterclass in satire. One depicts a scene of alien warp dating, transplanting the comedy of modern romance into another dimension with gonzo dialogue and non-stop hilarity. The other would be lightly absurdist if we weren't so familiar with the subject. In it, an unthinkable presidential candidate rises to power—a literal sentient tanning bed. Alternate futures and alien concepts, of course, fit perfectly in our present reality too. The final entry is a time travel tale that tackles lover's regret. The character's second-guessing nature defies her attempts to make peace with her past. *Pulp Kings #3* is easily a standout collection that not only uses the sci-fi premise to encourage introspection in the here and now—it also encourages a return for the next issue.