

AUTHOR BIO



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Before becoming a science-fiction writer, Geoffreyjen Edwards led a successful career as a full-time scientist. Indeed, he populates his world-building by drawing on experience in fields as diverse as astrophysics, artificial intelligence, geomatics, design, disability studies and the performing arts. *Plenum: The First Book of Deo*, is his first published novel. Dr. Edwards lives and works in Quebec City, Canada, and has published smaller pieces in both English and French. He also is a fashion designer.

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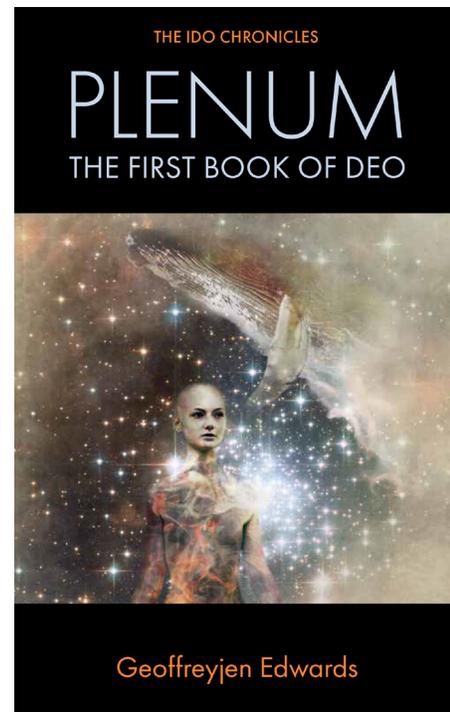
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BOOK BIO

Vanu Francoeur is a gender-neutral novice in the Kinship of the Suffering God, whose mandate is to seed new stars within a stellar nursery, where jonahs (living ships descended from the whales of Old Earth) roam wild. An intimate encounter with an exotic outsider stirs up a storm of conflicts within the usually quiet religious order, and triggers a spiritual awakening in Vanu that forever changes his relationship with his community and his sibs. In rebellion against the Kinship's heavy-handed sanctions, he hurtles towards a resolution—touched by a haunting mystery—deep within the fires of a star.



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Plenum: The First Book of Deo by Geoffreyjen Edwards

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PRESS RELEASE

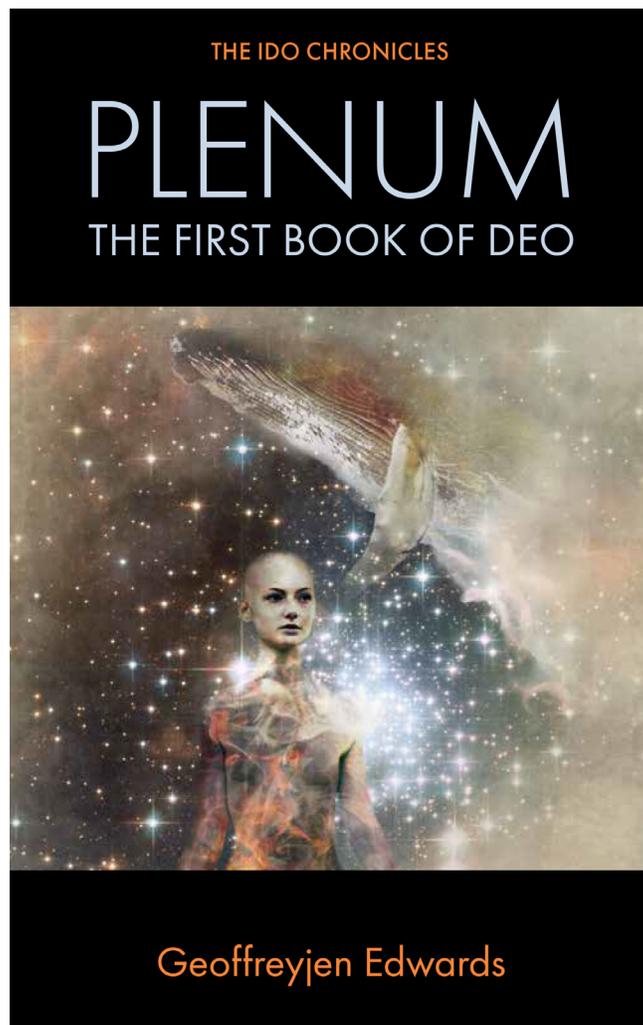
Plenum: the First Book of Deo

Volume One of the Ido Chronicles

Published by Untimely Books on
April 19, 2022, priced \$16.99

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Geoffreyjen Edwards, before becoming a science-fiction writer, led a successful career as a full-time scientist. He has worked in a broad range of disciplines, including astrophysics, forestry, agriculture, cognitive science, linguistics, artificial intelligence, museum studies, performance and installation art, rehabilitation and disability studies. He is also a fashion designer.



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INTERVIEW TIP SHEET

1. What was your inspiration for the Ido Chronicles? And for Plenum?
2. Tell us about how you treat gender in Plenum, and other books in the series.
3. And what about the jonahs? In your excerpt one features prominently. What are they and what is their importance to your story?
4. You have an unusual way of dealing with time in your books. Tell us about tempo. Why is it there and what does it do?
5. Your book explores both religious and spiritual themes. Do you see these as different, and how does your book address them?
6. Although you describe an authoritarian culture in the Kinship, one senses there is a lot of respect there too. Tell us about this context.
7. Plenum is the first of a planned series of fifteen books. How much do you plan ahead? Do you need to know the character's whole story before you start writing?
8. Discussion of the spiritual dimension is often missing from mainstream literature. Why did you feel it was important to explore this aspect of human experience?
9. You propose several forms of technology that completely transform human life. Are there certain aspects of life that we take for granted that you see as open to change?
10. An element that grows in importance as the novel goes on is the struggle of helping a friend suffering from depression. Do you think we can learn from sharing stories about this kind of difficult experience?
11. A lot of modern science fiction deals with the near future. What is that draws you to situate your books in the far future?
12. How does your training as an astrophysicist affect your writing in Plenum? In the Ido Chronicles as a whole?
13. How do you deal with language in Plenum? You introduce a number of neologisms. Did you have a process for developing these?
14. Plenum situates the unfolding action in historical terms. Tell us more about why you adopted this strategy for telling the story.
15. You live and write in Quebec City, Canada, but you have published through an American publishing house. Are there issues that have arisen about this?



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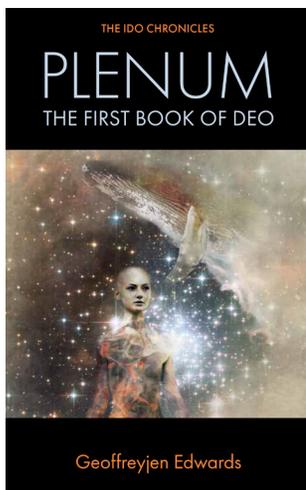
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SELL SHEET



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Title: Plenum: The First Book of Deo

Author: Geoffreyjen Edwards

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Reviews: <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/geoffreyjen-edwards/plenum-the-first-book-of-deo/>



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BOOK EXCERPT

The machine crawling across the Machine Platform towards the waiting figure of Joh, tiny by comparison, was some kind of construction beamer. These behemoths were used to create massive beams and wall segments from the raw particles provided by harvesters that trawled the interstellar medium. The machine could not have much in the way of materials right now, as there were no harvesters in operation. It might contain a limited supply in an internal store, left over from the days when the Annex was constructed. From the distance at which Vanu was viewing it, the beamer appeared to lumber along slowly, but zhe guessed it was moving fast enough to outmaneuver a solitary human. It sidled laterally across the Machine Platform, its movement resembling that of a large crab—indeed, it had pincer-like appendages like those of the ancient crustacean.

The beamer was a large cube, more than two hundred meters in each dimension, upon which were attached half a dozen large, articulated arms. Two of these, near the base of the machine, were hauling it along by grabbing hold of bars that jutted out from the Platform. The machine must be floating several meters from the Platform surface. The role of the articulated arms was to keep that massive mass on its course. Who was operating the machine? Vanu wondered. It was an act of near insanity

<Joh! What's going on? Are you all right? We're almost there!>

The jonah swooped towards the tiny figure as the monstrous beamer drew near.

With a start, Vanu realized what they had to do. <Joh, tempo up! Tempo up! Set your tempo to five!>

Vanu coordinated with Tee'hal and Jetsu to reset their tempo. At a tempo of five, instead of the usual 800, they might have a chance at forestalling whatever that operator had planned. They also stood a better chance of dealing with the physics of the various moving bodies out there. Five was uncomfortably close to realtime for hir vacuum-adapted bren, however. Vanu could feel the sudden, deep chill as hir bren tried to supply heat at a rate faster than it leaked away.

Vanu wasn't sure Joh had heard hir instruction, but it might not matter. <Tee'hal, I need you to swing in as close to Joh as you can get. Jetsu, do you think you could catch Joh *and* the supplies as we move by them? Before that beamer... before that machine gets there?>

Both creatures assented. Vanu didn't have time to test their resolve further. At the change in tempo, the forward motion of the beamer had slowed dramatically, but so, of course, had their own. Nonetheless, Tee'hal put on a burst of speed, twisting his body so that the Machine Platform became their ceiling. As they swept past, the oggie grabbed Joh. A few moments later, Joh clambered through the access portal, holding hir slight body away from the soft walls to counter the sharp movements of the jonah's maneuvering efforts, still wrapped in the yellow splattered flag of DeoFax, now both dirty and rumpled. Zhe held a crumpled bag between hir hands.

<Need t' go 'gain f'r s'plies,> Jetsu confessed. Obediently, Tee'hal jetted around for another pass.

<I've got a few!> Joh asserted, holding out the bag, but Vanu could see these weren't enough.

They would have made it, but at that moment the operator of the beamer showed hir hand.

<Watch out!> Vanu called to Tee'hal as a huge, horizontal shape shot forward from the beamer towards them. Tee'hal twisted and lurched, causing both Vanu and Joh to crash into the sides of the chamber. Suddenly their binups were filled with a keen wailing, a cry of pain, that almost caused Vanu to lose consciousness. <Tee'hal? Are you all right?> zhe finally managed to call out.

In answer, the jonah sent Vanu an image of mangled flesh still clinging to the sailfin. Jetsu was gone, leaving only a few flickering pieces of tentacle behind. And the Annex was dropping away behind them as the keening wail of the jonah accompanied them into the void.



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ENDORSEMENTS

“Vanu is one of those rare characters who stays with us, pushing up against our waking dreams. Hir exquisite curiosity mobilizes worlds we can’t quite fathom even as we live them. This is the power of *Plenum: The First Book of Deo*. The first of *The Ido Chronicles*’ braided quintet of trilogies, it launches us into a compelling tale that weaves between story and history, troubling the cleave. We enter with abandon, launched into a realm of complex spirituality and sexuality, our worlds alive with the sound of resonant creatures singing life, and we emerge knowing, in the deepest recesses of our collective being, that any life worth living is born of the most unanswerable of questions. Vanu is a conduit for this learning. We can’t help but follow her lead toward modes of existence yet to be invented. I was deeply moved. What an extraordinary book.”

Erin Manning is a philosopher and artist. She teaches at Concordia University, Montreal, Canada. Recent books include *The Minor Gesture* and *For a Pragmatics of the Useless*. 3E is the direction her current research takes—an exploration of the transversality of the three ecologies: the social, the environmental, and the conceptual (3ecologies.org)

“Like the far off song of the jonahs, Geoffreyjen’s creation is luminous, keening, and strange. The author is at once warm and wise on the page—fearlessly plunging the reader into re-imagined theologies, ambitious political systems, and new sexual landscapes that verge on the poetic. In the world of this book, gender identity can be understood more like a musical scale. Geoffreyjen guides us with intelligence, scientific rigor, and mystical grace into the first chronicle, where we enter a stream of stories so deep and vast that they span universes and eons. We find ourselves far removed from our own planet and time, yet the struggles Vanu and the other characters endure echo our own.”

Heather Fester is a poet, essayist, and author of the forthcoming chapbook *Ghosts of Things Unsaid*. She was an Allen Ginsberg Fellow at Naropa University and directed the Center for Writing & Scholarship at the California Institute of Integral Studies; she now teaches creative writing, rhetoric, and composition courses at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.

“A young star gardener embarks on a religious pilgrimage in this debut space opera.

In a distant, seven-gendered future, where time can move fast or slow depending on one’s position, Vanu Francoeur lives where stars are born. Vanu, who uses zhe/hir pronouns, is a Novice member of the Kinship of the Suffering God, a religious community. The Kinship inhabits the Annex, a space station floating in the Plenum Star Nursery. Vanu is right on the cusp of adulthood and, as such, will soon be a full member of the Kinship, though zhe still doesn’t quite understand the nature of God or the complexities of tending to the Star Nursery. Two strange occurrences arise to shake up Vanu’s world. The first is a sexual encounter with a female visitor to the Annex that proves controversial among the other members of Vanu’s community. The second is a dream vision of darkness that excites and awakens hir spiritual self. The two may in fact be related: According to one of Vanu’s superiors, people are more receptive to visions after a sexual encounter. The Kinship’s reaction to Vanu’s relationship causes hir to question if zhe will find what zhe needs in its teachings—like the mystery of the song sung by a space-inhabiting descendant of Old Earth’s whales. In this novel, Edwards not only creates a rich world, but renders it in vivid, lyrical prose as well. Vanu looks at a nebula “as a creature of the deep might stare towards the distant lights of the surface. The pastel ceiling was intercut with dark bands and splashes of varicoloured luminosity, violets, pinks and yellows, shapes that echoed hir inner turmoil, the fires of space frozen in time.” The vocabulary takes some getting used to, though there is a certain logic to much of it (the descendants of whales are known as jonahs), and the author helpfully includes a glossary in the back. This is only the first installment of a 15-volume SF series following five far-future subcultures. While that may seem like an intimidating prospect, Edwards demonstrates an imagination befitting an epic on that scale.

A poetic and wondrous SF tale that grapples with gender and faith.”

Kirkus Reviews



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