

ANDRE NORTON

There are always writers whose very name on the jacket of a book, or attached to a magazine story, promises the best in their chosen field of work. Certainly Robert Bloch has a firm place among these. In other times the title "craftsman" was a highly honored one, given only after long years of hard work and by producing wares which were recognized by the public to be outstanding. Certainly that is a term we can apply to Robert and his work.

But he was not only a finished craftsman, he was a generous and helpful friend for many in his field and beyond it. His gentle wit made conversation with him a joy—one need only read that enthralling autobiography of his, *Once Around the Bloch*, to realize that here was someone who had risen over many difficulties in the past and never accepted defeat even when it seemed to face him.

Having had the privilege and pleasure of working directly with him twice, I know how rich such a collaboration could be. We started with a tricky performance in one of the *Witch World* volumes, telling the very same story, but Robert taking the villainess for his protagonist while I dealt with the force of Light. This gave us such satisfaction that we embarked on a novel—*The Jekyll Legacy*—wherein Robert handled the male members of the company and I labored with the heroine, exchanging chapters as we went.

Both these projects were smoothly carried out and I trust that Robert enjoyed it all as much as I did. Not only these manuscripts but many letters passed from one edge of the country to the other in the following years, and to find one from Robert in the mail brought laughter even into a dark day, for his comments on the dealings of the publishing world were to the point and yet uttered—or written—with wit.

There is this—his work will long continue to be read with enjoyment. He has left a very rich heritage behind him for all of us.