

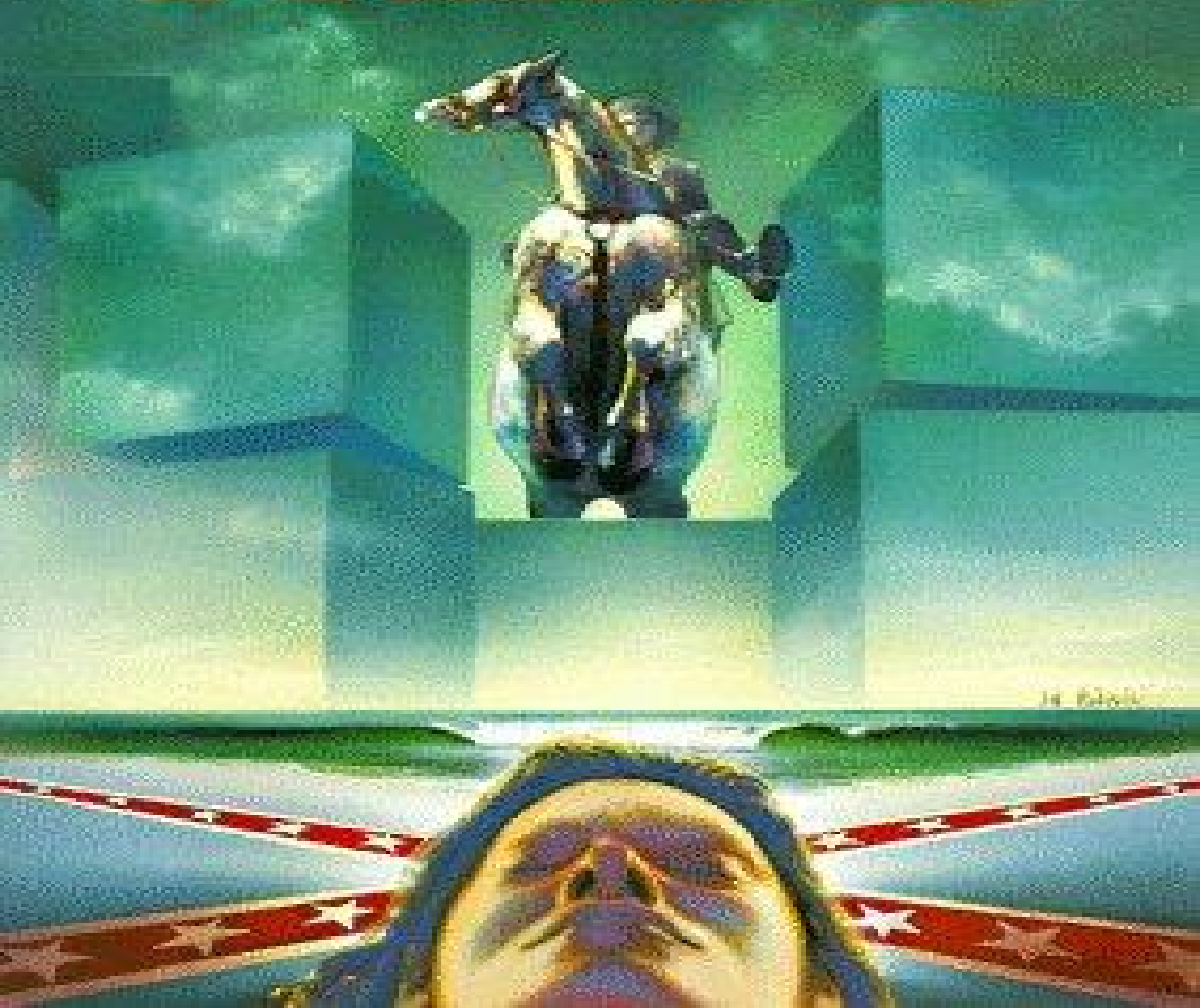
SAVANT BOOKS

THE HUGO AND NEBULA AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF DOOMSDAY BOOK

CONNIE WILLIS

WINNER OF THE JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD

LINCOLN'S
DREAMS



RAVES FOR LINCOLN'S DREAMS:

"A TIGHT, SOLID FANTASY WITH A STILETTO-IN-THE-HEART EPIPHANY AT THE END ... FASCINATING ... DEEPLY AFFECTING."

—*Twilight Zone Magazine*

"[*LINCOLN'S DREAMS*] CLEARLY MARKS CONNIE WILLIS AS ONE OF OUR FOREMOST YOUNG NOVELISTS. THE BOOK DESERVES TO BE VERY WIDELY READ."

—*Fantasy Review*

"CHARMING, UNPREDICTABLE ... AN IMPRESSIVE FIRST NOVEL FROM A TALENTED WRITER."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"*LINCOLN'S DREAMS* IS MORE THAN JUST AN ENTHRALLING NOVEL. EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE A TALENT LEAPS UP TO ANNOUNCE ITSELF AS *IMPORTANT*. CONNIE WILLIS IS SUCH A TALENT: A MAGISTERIAL INTELLIGENCE AT WORK. TO ENJOY MS. WILLIS'S WORK IS ONLY COMMON SENSE; TO MISS *LINCOLN'S DREAMS* IS TO RISK THE LOSS OF YOUR IMMORTAL SOUL. BECAUSE OF ITS EXCELLENCE, AND THE PLEASURE IT WILL BRING, I HOPE THIS WISE AND INVENTIVE BOOK FINDS A WIDE READERSHIP"

—Harlan Ellison

"MOVING AND BEAUTIFUL ... A MOST ORIGINAL AND FASCINATING NOVEL."

—Richard Adams,

author of *Watership Down*

"SUSPENSEFUL, THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND POIGNANT, *LINCOLN'S DREAMS* TOTALLY ENGAGES THE MIND AND HEART."

—Michael Bishop,

author of *No Enemy but Time*

Bantam Books by Connie Willis

DOOMSDAY BOOK

FIRE WATCH

LINCOLN'S DREAMS

IMPOSSIBLE THINGS

BELLWETHER

REMAKE

UNCHARTED TERRITORY

TO SAY NOTHING OF THE DOG

MIRACLE AND OTHER

CHRISTMAS STORIES

PASSAGE

LINCOLN'S DREAMS

CONNIE WILLIS



BANTAM BOOKS

NEW YORK • TORONTO • LONDON • SYDNEY • AUCKLAND

Table of Contents

[Cover](#)

[Other Books by this Author](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Foreword](#)

[Chapter One](#)

[Chapter Two](#)

[Chapter Three](#)

[Chapter Four](#)

[Chapter Five](#)

[Chapter Six](#)

[Chapter Seven](#)

[Chapter Eight](#)

[Chapter Nine](#)

[Chapter Ten](#)

[Chapter Eleven](#)

[Chapter Twelve](#)

[Chapter Thirteen](#)

[Chapter Fourteen](#)

[Chapter Fifteen](#)

[Chapter Sixteen](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Copyright](#)

To

Courtney and Cordelia

**Special thanks to my research assistants,
the Smiths—Brooke and Karolyn, Brien
and Julie—for wandering among
the tombstones of Fredericksburg and
Arlington, asking questions and taking
notes, searching for clues.**

FOREWORD

While I was working on *Lincoln's Dreams*, any number of people asked me why I was writing a book about the Civil War, but no one at all asked me why I was writing a book about dreams. Instead, when I told them what the book was about, they began telling me about dreams they had had, as if I could tell them what they meant.

I had no idea. I have no idea what any dreams mean. All the latest research seems to indicate that they don't mean anything—that they are nothing more than the nervous system's charwoman, tidying up after the day's events, taking out the trash. And that makes very good sense. (Why else would we dream about empty creamer packets that steal a parakeet?) But something in us rebels at the idea that they're the day's detritus, because dreams so obviously *mean* something.

Freud thought so, too. He wrote his dreams down in painstaking detail (they are as ridiculous as ours—full of flower monographs and false teeth) and pored over them, trying to decipher their meaning. He decided they were dispatches from our unconscious: longing sighs and murmured memories and cries for help, all sent in a complicated code.

And that seems logical, too, until it comes to the deciphering. (“The creamer packets clearly represent your yearning for your mother's breast ...”) Because it's not a code, it's another language. And their images can't be reduced to symbols. Dreams are something more, something else.

Abraham Lincoln dreamed his own death. He heard the sound of crying and asked the guard, “Who is dead in the White House?” and the guard said, “The President.” And it's perfectly clear what that dream meant. You don't need a codebook to tell it's a warning. Yet I find myself puzzling over it, and over that other dream of his, the one he dreamed “before every significant event of the war,” the one he dreamed the night before he died. In that dream, he was in a boat, drifting toward an unknown shore, and you don't need Freud for that one either.

Or if you insist on the charwoman theory, it is scarcely unusual that death was on his mind—there was at least one assassination attempt a week, and he had already heard the sound of crying in the White House when Willie died. And yet, in spite of all this logic, I find them staying with me like a dream, the code impossible to decipher, troubling me, haunting me.

As the Civil War haunts me. In the first part of *Lincoln's Dreams*, Jeff is offered a job researching the long-term effects of the Vietnam War. He turns it down. "I'm busy studying the long-term effects of the Civil War." And I guess that's what I was doing, too, writing this book. Because the Civil War isn't over. Its images, dreamlike, stay with us—young boys lying face-down in cornfields and orchards, and Robert E. Lee on Traveller. And Lincoln, dead in the White House, and the sound of crying.

The Civil War disturbs us, all these long years after, troubling our sleep. Like a cry for help, like a warning, like a dream. And we pore over it, trying to break the code, its meaning just out of reach.

Connie Willis

It may be that life is not man's most precious possession, after all. Certainly men can be induced to give it away very freely at times, and the terms hardly seem to make sense unless there is something about the whole business that we don't understand. Lives are spent for very insignificant things which benefit the dead not at all—a few rods of ground in a cornfield, for instance, or temporary ownership of a little hill or a piece of windy pasture; and now and then they are simply wasted outright, with nobody gaining anything at all.

Bruce Catton

Mr. Lincoln's Army

CHAPTER ONE

They bred such horses in Virginia then,
Horses that were remembered after death
And buried not so far from Christian ground
That if their sleeping riders should arise
They could not witch them from the earth again
And ride a printless course along the grass
With the old manage and light ease of hand.

Stephen Vincent Benet

Traveller died of lockjaw two years after Robert E. Lee died. I looked that up one day in February, the day I went out to see where Abraham Lincoln's son Willie had been buried. I had been looking for the grave for over a year, and when I finally found it in a biography of Mary Todd Lincoln, I ran out of the library still carrying the book. It set off an alarm, and one of the librarians came out on the steps and shouted after me, "Jeff, are you all right? Jeff!"

It was snowing hard that day, a wet spring snow. It took me nearly an hour to drive out to the old cemetery in Georgetown. I don't know what I thought I'd find, some clue maybe to where Annie was and what had happened to her, some message that would tell me what had happened to all of them, Tom Tita and Ben and the rest of the soldiers who had died in the Civil War and were buried together under granite squares no larger than a scrap of paper.

But there wasn't anything there, not even Willie Lincoln's body, and I went back to Broun's house and got out Freeman's four-volume biography of Lee and tried to find out what had happened to Traveller.

As with everything else that had happened, there were both too many clues and not enough. But eventually I found out what I needed to know, the way I had found out where Willie had been, the way I had found out