

Jana Giguere  
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## **A Dreamy Reality Between Worlds**

Title: *The Years Shall Run Like Rabbits*

Author: Ben Berman Ghan

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If you're willing to let your mind wander and be enveloped by the mossy, mushroom-covered tendrils of Ben Berman Ghan's *The Years Shall Run Like Rabbits* – you will find yourself transformed. This dreamy speculative fiction launches the reader into an alternate universe where the Moon has mysteriously grown a garden.

So much of this story is told through emotion and the suggestion of thoughts. It shifts from a scientist's coherent blog excerpt to a dream-like state made up of poems and analogies. Each new sentence is a tantalizing mystery leading us to an unfathomable future.

As our society grows more dependent on AI for menial tasks, the possibilities feel exponential. What happens when cyborgs are deployed for crowd control? At what point do the images we create come alive? Ghan alludes to a life beyond these human issues by weaving a tale of tragedy, confusion, rebirth, and self-discovery.

The civilization that is Daisy finds the sentient, rogue AI who had once been nothing more than an image. She washes over him, consumes him for just a moment, then releases and lets him pass through unscathed.

He is the city, but not the city. He is new, a composite of faces and places, a receptacle of sound crashing from without until it created an echo within (144).

Though Ghan is a native Torontonionian, he now lives in Calgary, Alberta – and yet – this weird and wonderful production is set (primarily) in Toronto, Ontario. His intimate knowledge of the landscape shapes much of this stunning tale. The city's role in events is so integral, you might even consider Toronto part of the cast. The structure of the story, as abstract as it is, contains several interludes – enforcing the idea we are witnessing a great saga unfold.

Fans of Frank Herbert's *Dune* will be familiar with the use of excerpts and quotes to introduce chapters. Chapter 11 begins with the [Litany Against Fear](#), a mantra repeated often in Herbert's saga – signalling the conclusion of our journey, more than 750 years after it first began. Fear has been overcome and the path forward is clear.

It is difficult to find modern science fiction that does not show its *Dune* influences, but Ghan breaks the mould and creates a story that is entirely his own. Each piece of the puzzle is meticulously considered. His 2020 novella, [Visitation Seeds](#), appears to be a

precursor to *The Years Shall Run Like Rabbits*. This expansive and imaginative story has been percolating in his mind for many years.

*The Years Shall Run Like Rabbits* is hopeful yet heart wrenching. In one moment, you are transported to the epitome of serenity. The next, you are cowering from a nightmare. Ghan does not shy away from exposing human flaws and insecurities, but rather embraces them, pushing their limits while imposing their qualities on inhuman things.

They frightened you, with the black pooling ovals of their eyes set in mouthless faces, long and slender human frames of wet and perfect porcelain that split below the waist into many gleaming spider legs that danced them forward through the air like jellyfish through pools, and their wings that protruded grotesquely, ridged and glimmering, framing them but never moving, as if their wings were not of the bodies from which they'd sprouted (169).

Growth is a central theme in *The Years Shall Run Like Rabbits*, both natural and machine. These two opposing substances somehow fit together eloquently despite our preconceived notions. There is not a single moment of stagnation to be found throughout the entirety of this story. Growth is observed in even the smallest of characters, especially the fan favourite, Made!

Ghan masterfully winds prose between his mysteries and intimacies – revealing layers of interconnectedness that transcends time and space. If you have ever wondered what it takes to become a city, or how it feels to be born from bytes and lights, or what it means to be alive at all – this beautiful journey will have you pondering for days.

*\*AI was not used at any point while writing this review.*