

David Mitchell has a new book, but you'll have to wait 98 years to read it

By **Michael Schaub**

MAY 31, 2016, 9:19 AM

There's good news and bad news for fans of "Cloud Atlas" author David Mitchell. The good news: He's just finished writing a brand-new manuscript, called "From Me Flows What You Call Time."

The bad news: You won't be able to read it for 98 years.

Mitchell, whose critically acclaimed novels include "The Bone Clocks," "number9dream" and "Black Swan Green," delivered his latest work to the [Future Library project](#) in Norway, where it will remain unread for nearly a century.

The project is the brainchild of Katie Paterson, a Scottish conceptual artist. She kicked it off [last year](#) with a piece by Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood, whose not-to-be-read-for-100-years story is titled "Scribbler Moon."

The Future Library isn't just a vault where pieces of literature will remain for a century. It involves 1,000 trees that have been planted in the forest of Nordmarka, north of the Norwegian city of Oslo.



Future Library

@FuturelibraryNO



Follow

"From Me Flows What You Call Time" @david_mitchell
@ktmpaterson @MargaretAtwood
theguardian.com/books/2016/may...

7:52 PM - 30 May 2016



18



29

In 2114, the trees will be cut down and processed into paper, upon which the contributors' texts will be printed. Each year until then, an author will contribute a work of literature — a poem, short story, novel, essay or anything else, written in whatever language they'd like.

The Guardian [reports](#) that Mitchell praised the concept behind the Future Library. "It's a little glimmer of hope in a season of highly depressing news cycles, that affirms we are in with a chance of civilization in 100 years," he said. "It brings hope that we are more resilient than we think: that we will be here, that there will be trees, that there will be books, and readers, and civilization."

Like Atwood before him, the British novelist was tight-lipped about what kind of text he submitted to the project, revealing only its title and saying that "it's somewhat more substantial a thing than I was expecting."

He said the experience of writing the text was exhilarating, given his propensity for constantly revising his manuscripts. He finished writing "From Me Flows What You Call Time" just hours before boarding a plane to Norway.

"Actually I over-polish [my manuscripts]," he said. "But this was very different — I wrote up to the wire. So the first two-thirds were polished, and the final third I didn't have time. And it was a liberation."

[See the most-read stories this hour >>](#)

The manuscripts from Atwood and Mitchell will be kept under lock and key in the New Deichmanske Public Library in Oslo, scheduled to open in 2019.

In a short [essay](#) Mitchell wrote for the Future Library project, he said that the project is a force for good in a society that's grown pessimistic.

"We have to trust our successors, and their successors, and theirs, to steer the project through a hundred years of political skulduggery, climate change, budget cutbacks and zombie apocalypses," he wrote. "We trust that our trust is not misplaced.... Trust is a force for good in our cynical world, and the Future Library is a trust-generator."

Mitchell sounds cautiously optimistic that "From Me Flows What You Call Time" will be worth the wait for readers.

"[I]t better be good," he said. "What a historic fool of epochal proportions I'd look, if they opened it in 2114 and it wasn't any good."