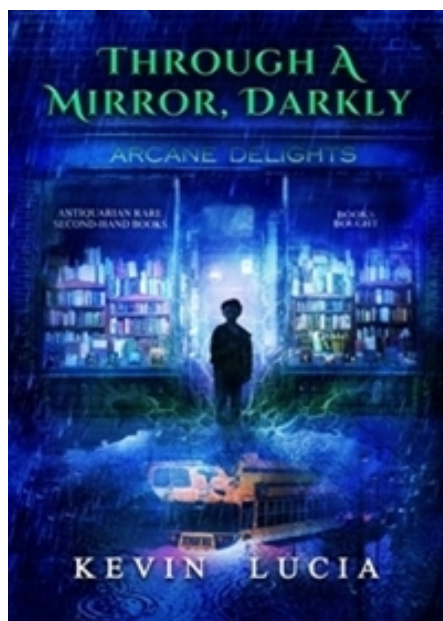




Through a Mirror, Darkly

Kevin Lucia

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Through a Mirror, Darkly Kevin Lucia

Crystal Lake Publishing presents...

Through a Mirror, Darkly is a Supernatural Thriller collection masked as a novel. With elements of mystery, suspense, and otherworldly horror, Through a Mirror, Darkly successfully delves into the worlds of Lovecraft, Grant, and the mysterious Carcosa.

“Arcane Delights. Clifton Heights' premier rare and used bookstore. In it, new owner Kevin Ellison has inherited far more than a family legacy, for inside are tales that will amaze, astound, thrill...and terrify.

An ancient evil thirsty for lost souls. A very different kind of taxi service with destinations not on any known map. Three coins that grant the bearer's fondest wish, and a father whose crippling grief gives birth to something dark and hungry.

Every town harbors secrets. Kevin Ellison is about to discover those that lurk in the shadows of Clifton Heights.”

Through a Mirror, Darkly is a Supernatural Thriller collection masked as a novel. With elements of mystery, suspense, and otherworldly horror, Through a Mirror, Darkly successfully delves into the worlds of Lovecraft, Grant, and the mysterious Carcosa.

“Kevin Lucia writes my favorite kind of horror, the kind not enough folks are writing anymore.” – Kealan Patrick Burke, Bram Stoker Award-winning author of *The Turtle Boy* and *Kin*.

"Through a Mirror, Darkly serves as Kevin Lucia's early-warning system to the horror field - Brace yourselves, folks." - Gary Braunbeck, Bram Stoker Award-winner of *To Each Their Darkness*, *Destinations Unknown*, and the forthcoming *A Cracked and Broken Path*

“Literate and stylish, yet fast-paced and accessible, Through a Mirror, Darkly is a thoroughly engrossing read. Kevin Lucia is a major new voice in the horror genre.” – Jonathan Janz , author of *The Nightmare Girl*

" Through a Mirror, Darkly earns Kevin Lucia a literary place alongside these enduring philosophical horror crafters.” – Mort Castle

"He is a skillful guide through Clifton Heights, telling tales of mystery and horror in a town where dark secrets and ancient evils lurk to prey upon those who read Through a Mirror, Darkly." – Rena Mason, Bram Stoker Award® winning author of *The Evolutionist*.

“With Through a Mirror, Darkly, Kevin Lucia proves once again that it’s only a matter of time before he’s one of the genre’s biggest names.” – James Newman, author of *The Wicked* and *Animosity*

Through a Mirror, Darkly follows on the success of Lucia's *Things Slip Through* collection.

Through a Mirror, Darkly Details

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Author : Kevin Lucia

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From Reader Review Through a Mirror, Darkly for online ebook

Michael Brookes says

From the reviews I was expecting more than I got from this book. That's not to say that it's a bad book, but it didn't quite work for me. It's a collection of shared theme short stories with a thin wrapper for some dark secrets in the town of Clifton Heights. The wrapper felt underdeveloped, so the meat was in the short stories and they're decent stories. They cover some classic horror situations, although they were of varying quality.

The first story concerns an Iraq veteran Chaplain recovering from a supernatural sighting while on tour, only to have the horror seemingly follow him home. This was a predictable story with no real surprise - even for the reveal at the end, but quite well told. It did introduce me to an aspect of the authors writing that impacted my enjoyment of the stories - repetition.

Repetition can be a powerful tool in story telling, it can lull the reader into false assumptions, it can reinforce core concepts, but it needs to be used sparingly. That isn't the case here, it is used far too often and isn't just repetition of concepts, but actual repetition of the same phrase - over and over again, It really spoiled the flow of the stories, and gave them an odd pacing. It also made them longer than they needed to be.

My favourite story was the last one, which had a mysterious and short lived haunting. This had less of the aforementioned repetition and had a reasonably novel premise. As such it was a much tighter story and worked well.

Overall it was worth reading, but felt that it needed much tighter development to really stand out.

Peter says

Clifton Heights, is where the Arcane Delight bookstore is located. Kevin Ellison is the new owner of the bookstore. He inherited the bookstore from his dad. Kevin, is looking through a mysterious box of books, the someone left on his desk. He starts looking through the box and runs across this journal. All of the entries take place in Clifton Heights. The first entry is,

"Suffer The Children Come Unto Me"

Father Ward teaches at a catholic school. In his tour of Afghanistan, he saw many things that jarred his faith. Children are mysteriously disappearing and are never heard from again. Father Ward, must try and put an end to this. This is a classic example of good versus evil.

"Yellow Cab" A young man, who has everything going for him but ends up driving a cab. He picks up some strange fares and some of their destinations can not be found on any maps.

"Admit One" Mr. Jingo's carnival stop in Clifton Heights every August. Bobby. is given another chance to go after something that he let slip away. Three strange coin's might help him get what he wants!

"And I Water it With Tears" Terror breaks out in a line of people waiting to pay their electric bill.

I really like Kevin Lucia's style of writing. He reminds me of the quite horror that Charles L Grant use to write. Kevin Lucia is a very good writer and a excellent storyteller. I highly recommend this book.

Laura Thomas says

I was very happy with these stories. Kevin writes the kind of macabre, eerie and atmospheric horror that I crave.

I would loosely call this a story that embraces four shorter ones. Kevin inherits the Arcane Delights bookstore from his father. After a flood, it's in need of TLC. In the midst of this work a strange box shows up on his desk. Upon opening it he discovers a journal or diary of sorts, containing four stories that, while separate, also tie into each other and the town.

How Kevin's story is connected to these entries is very well handled. And the town of Clifton Heights was actually a bit of a story in itself. Which I became to appreciate even more after I finished the book.

Included are Suffer The Children Come Unto Me, Yellow Cab, Admit One and I Watered It, With Tears. Each of these entries has it's own atmosphere. Some more macabre than horrific. And I liked all of them, with a couple standing out that extra bit more from the rest.

Reading this straight through worked best for me. I was kept enthralled throughout and it created a bigger picture and more connection for me. Whether you read it in parts or all at once, I'm sure it'll capture you too.

Naomi says

Through a Mirror, Darkly is a delightful web of four intertwined novellas taking place in the town of Clifton Heights. Three of them spin around a demon and a certain sigil, while the fourth has subject matter that fits alongside the rest like a velvet glove. Loss and suffering of one kind or another are touched upon in each novella, the darkness of humanity is shown in all of its glory. While somewhat unsettling, this is a wonderful read!

You can read my full review at www.linearreflections.com and purchase the book at <http://getbook.at/AmazonDarkly>

Kimberly says

THROUGH A MIRROR, DARKLY is a collection of four tales, bookended by scenes in the Arcane Delights bookstore. The Arcane Delights has recently been taken over by Kevin Ellison, whose father had owned it before his decline into Alzheimer's. Renovating the shop after a flood had hit their town of Clifton Heights, Kevin's part-time assistant, Cassie Tillman informs him of recent book deliveries--among them, a plain box that was deposited on his desk, without any clue as to where it came from.

When Kevin opens a "journal" of sorts, he has no idea of what he is getting into. Within this journal are the 4 stories presented--each tale taking place in Clifton Heights, and each blending into one another in some way. The beginning and ending at the bookshop brings everything around full-circle, and is so expertly handled, that I didn't even realize all of the connections until AFTER I had finished the entire book.

"Suffer the Children Come Unto Me" is a tale of Father Ward, and centers around mysterious children, sacrifices, and an old school bus that simply doesn't belong in the here and now....

"Yellow Cab" had a distinct Lovecraftian feel to it, for me. The story of a boy who had everything going for him, and how he ended up driving a yellow cab, with passengers that only get off at "particular" destinations. His story is particularly gripping, especially when we see how he comes into his new position.

"Admit One" seemed to be almost an "unselfish love story" built into a much larger picture. This one was very emotive and poignant in the end. It was beautifully, almost poetically written, and the feelings transcribed really jumped off the page.

"And I Watered it, With Tears" is the last separate story in the collection, before the closing scene at Arcane Delights. This was one that I'll have some trouble forgetting anytime soon. If you deny reality, and lock it away with medications, what happens when the medications are gone and the reality finally resurfaces? This is one of the more gruesome stories here, in terms of content, and yet utterly emotional all throughout.

I honestly couldn't point out to even one story that I didn't like to some extent, and 3 of the 4 tales I would individually give five-star ratings to. I've already purchased another book by author Kevin Lucia, as I am very taken with his quiet horror approach, and the way he so cleverly ingrained each of these stories into another by more than just the location. This is an author to watch for in the future!

Highly recommended!

Frank Errington says

Review copy

Through a Mirror, Darkly is a quartet of dark tales set inside the story of Arcane Delights, a used book store preparing to reopen in Clifton Heights, NY, nestled somewhere in the Adirondacks. If you've read any of Keven Lucia's prior works, you may already be familiar with this town. I think it's somewhere between Derry, Maine, and The Twilight Zone.

The proprietor of the bookstore discovers a box he's not seen before and inside there is one, leather-bound, volume of stories about the town he lives in...

The first story within the larger tale is called, "Suffer the Children." Father Ward saw something during his tour in Afghanistan, something that continues to haunt his dreams now that he's a teacher at All Saints Elementary, as well as a local Parish Priest. The result is a delightfully dark and twisted tale of demons and the lost city of Corcosa. If you saw the first season of HBO's True Detective you know that can't be good.

"Yellow Cab" is about a young man who did everything right to get into a good school and ends up throwing it all away and is now driving for Yellow Cab in Clifton Heights. How did he get there? A chilling tale that gave me the creeps more than once. Very effective the way the stories bleed over into one another.

"Admit One" takes place over the years at the Mr. Jingo's, the annual fair that always visits Clifton Heights every August. A bit of fantasy mixed in with the horror in this tale.

And then there's "And I Watered It With Tears," where something as simple as standing in line to pay your electric bill can lead to death, particularly when you live in Clifton Heights.

Kevin Lucas, once again, does an excellent job of weaving all of the stories in this collection into a cohesive volume. Unsettling and entertaining, Through a Mirror, Darkly will leave you wanting to visit Clifton Heights again and again. I just don't want to live there.

Available now in paperback and e-book formats from Crystal Lake Publishing. If you subscribe to Kindle Unlimited you can read this one at no additional charge.

Definitely recommended.

Angela Crawford says

I received an ARC of this novel in exchange for an honest review. This is in no way reflected in my opinion of this book.

Kevin Lucia has done it again! When I read his novel Things Slip Through I was hooked. Now in Through A Mirror, Darkly he takes us back to the town of Clifton Heights, a place with more than it's fair share of secrets and oddities. The stories found here are captivating. Kevin Lucia is a master storyteller who takes the ordinary and twists it until it is dark and at times terrifying. All of the stories in this collection are wonderfully entertaining. Some are scary while others are filled with a haunting sadness that stays with you long after you finish this book. My two favorites in this collection were Admit One & And I Watered It, With Tears. Both deal with love and loss but in very different and somewhat horrifying ways. So come visit Clifton Heights, but be careful, because some things are not what they seem. A fabulous 4.5 star read.

Josh says

Preamble: I had already written a review for the final story in this collection when it was set to be released as a separate novella. Things changed and it's now included in this book. I thought about condensing the original review but figured I'd just throw it in here word for word, because hey, it's one of the best things I've read in a long time.

Through a Mirror, Darkly is Kevin Lucia's second collection of novellas, following Devourer of Souls and the short story collection Things Slip Through. All three books are set in or around Clifton Heights, Lucia's fictional Adirondack town wherein strange and deadly things are extraordinarily abundant. The stories in each collection are bookended by a framing story, also about Clifton Heights residents, that ties everything together. The end result is like a living, breathing fictional universe that's always a pleasure to visit.

Since his first appearance in Things Slip Through, Father Bill Ward has been one of Clifton Heights' most enigmatic and intriguing characters, and he gets some time in the spotlight in the first story, "Suffer the Children". Father Ward, a Catholic school teacher, saw and heard something during his time in Afghanistan that shook his faith to its core. Now he's broken, jumping at shadows, hitting the bottle a little too hard and a little too often. But true evil doesn't rest, especially in Clifton Heights. In Father Ward's case, vanquishing a demon of the present just might help lay to rest some demons from the past. A classic good vs. evil horror tale that's thick with atmosphere, "Suffer the Children" is a strong start to the collection.

The next story, “Yellow Cab”, centers around a taxi driver who finds himself picking up some unusual and uncanny fares, and taking them to a dark place that likely can't be found on any map. As a tragic past meets a bleak present, the aimless protagonist soon finds his calling in a most unexpected way.

“Admit One” is set partly in a carnival that comes through Clifton Heights once a year. Bobby, the main character, is a young man obsessed with the one that got away. Given a chance to give her the one thing she wishes for most (with a helpful bit of the supernatural), he jumps at the opportunity, and together they go on one last ride.

“And I Watered It, With Tears” is a taut, unrelenting novella that covers a lot of horror ground. What starts out as an apparently simple murder mystery gradually evolves into an acute study of grief and the long, perilous road to redemption.

At the outset it follows Andrew McCormick as he sits in his truck, talking to someone on the phone with an air of finality. It then cuts to a line at a bill payment center in Clifton Heights (a town readers of Lucia's previous work will no doubt be familiar with). Andrew waits to pay what he can of his electric bill and makes small talk with the man ahead of him. There's a confrontation between the woman at the front of the line and the receptionist, after which the distressed woman rushes to the restroom. Ten minutes later someone finds the woman drowned, hanging by her head from the sink. The remaining people in the building soon find themselves locked inside, without phone and internet, doors immovable and windows unbreakable, face to face with something that seems to want them dead...

From here on in, Lucia weaves together the horrors of past and present in a dark tapestry that grabs you by the throat, mind, and heart, refusing to let go. The occasional flashback scenes with Andrew in the truck raise all the right questions, and the foreshadowing is as thick as the thunderstorm lashing the building. There's a palpable disquiet that's as timeless and existential as it is immediate. You'll be rooting for everyone to escape intact, wondering at the same time just what the hell is going on with Andrew and what he has to do with everything that's happening.

“And I Watered It, With Tears” is a boon for fans of quiet horror, its sparse visceral imagery punctuating an almost unbearable feeling of silence and seclusion. It's intensely claustrophobic, both in the corridors of the building and the pensive depths of Andrew's mind as his own story unfolds. This, along with the well-placed bits of body horror, the small but well-developed and unique cast of characters, and the methodical pacing, makes for one hell of a horror story.

Aside from the scare factor, one thing I'd be remiss to mention is the sheer emotional weight of the story, especially when all of its puzzle pieces come together. One pivotal late scene is arguably the scariest part of the whole thing, even though you know what's coming, and there's nothing bloody or supernatural about it. The candid, natural-sounding dialogue of the “big reveal” is remarkably well-worded. Without spoiling anything, I'll say there's some absolutely heart-wrenching stuff in here that bleeds off the page and into your mind.

This is the kind of story that can give you chills in one moment and bring you to tears in the next, and I'm willing to bet that it will. Kevin Lucia has been a rising star on the horror scene for a while now, and his writing just keeps getting better. “And I Watered It, With Tears” is a dark, moody descent into the deepest nightmares of the human heart. If you're on the hunt for a story that will break you, look no further. Trust me. You want to read this.

The rest of *Through a Mirror, Darkly* is a damn good read as well, and as a whole I can't recommend the collection enough.

review cross-posted at horrnovelreviews.com

The Behrg says

Through a Mirror, Darkly is a collection of four short stories discovered in a mysterious book by a bookstore owner, whose own story encompasses what amounts to the prologue and epilogue of our tale. Lucia writes in a unique conversational tone, each of the stories part mystery, part supernatural horror. I do wish there was a larger through-line throughout the tales or that there was more of a purpose to the bookstore owner and his discovery, but if this is approached as a collection of stories rather than a novel it's worth the read.

Overall 3.5 stars.

Books says

Thrilling and often frightening, Through A Mirror Darkly is one of the most memorable books I've read so far this year. Although the four novellas that make up this book, can be read as stand alone stories, the combination of all four tell of a town, Clifton Heights, the strange things that happen there and its supernatural connection to a legendary world; the world of Carcosa.

While the first three stories are definitely written in the supernatural thriller genre, the last story falls solidly inside the horror genre. The incorporation of the King in Yellow, Carcosa and Lake Hyades brings a hint of legend and mythology into the book.

The characters, some of whom are mentioned in more than one of the stories, are fleshed out and highly realistic. In every story the main character has to face a trial, real or psychological. Where the MC in the first story has to confront real demons, the MC in the final deals with demons of the psyche and imagination.

Through A Mirror Darkly presents the reader with hours of never-a-dull-moment reading, some depth and enough horror to cause a few nightmares. (Ellen Fritz)

Darrell Grizzle says

A collection of horror tales tied together by a framing story set in a used and rare bookstore called Arcane Delights. The stories are genuinely creepy, especially "Suffer the Children Come Unto Me," about a priest who may or may not be on the verge of madness. All of the stories are related in some way to the Carcosa mythos. Like the best horror fiction, these stories provide scares and suspense but also provoke thought. This is the first book I've read by Kevin Lucia but I'll definitely be searching out more of his works.

Jon Recluse says

When the owner of Arcane Delights, a rare and used bookstore, uncovers a mysterious journal, he learns some dark secrets about his hometown of Clifton Heights.

Much like Charles L. Grant's The Orchard, this collection of four novellas disguised as a novel by the wrap-

around story of Arcane Delights.

And the similarity does not end there. For Clifton Heights shares "unreal estate" with Grant's Oxrun Station, another small town where shadows lurk.

Lucia writes the same quiet, lingering horror that Grant was the master of, and he does the master proud here. And if that wasn't enough, he also invokes Robert W. Chambers' King in Yellow, creating a heady concoction of the cosmic and the quiet that is nothing short of brilliant.

Subtle and disturbing, these tales will haunt your dreams for many nights to come.

Highest possible recommendation. I plan on reading everything Mr. Lucia writes. Clifton Heights is calling, and I find I must return.

Join me.

Jenine Whitehawk says

Well written

Kevin Lucia is a name I plan on remembering. This set of stories, set within a novella reminds me of Ray Bradbury's amazing book The illustrated man. Each story is linked via location, and characters seek a way out of their damaged lives and situations. Bolivia's writing is clear and descriptive.

Each sentence is honed to perfection, nothing frivolous or unnecessary. If you are the type of reader who cherishes good writing I highly suggest this book.

Joseph Falank says

I've had the immense pleasure of reading (and reviewing) author Kevin Lucia's prior two big releases—Things Slip Through, his first short story collection (from Crystal Lake Publishing), and Devourer of Souls, a book made up of two novellas (from Ragnarok Publications). This year Lucia returns once again to his fictional town of Clifton Heights (the setting of the two previous mentioned works) and delves further into the mythology (strangeness) at the core (or black heart, what have you) of the Heights with Through A Mirror, Darkly, a quartet of novellas, which will be released this June from Crystal Lake Publishing.

Like Lucia's previous works, it's difficult to describe much of what you're getting into because of the risk of spoiling the stories, so I'll offer a brief overview. Darkly begins with the new owner of Arcane Delights, a used bookstore in Clifton Heights that is about to celebrate a grand reopening after a recent flood destroyed the shop, coming upon a box of journals and diaries. Inside he finds the writings that make up the four stories in the book.

The first story, "Suffer The Children Come Unto Me" deals with Father Ward—a character that's appeared in the periphery of Lucia's previous works, brought to the forefront for his own tale—who struggles with a past that has caused him great difficulty in terms of his faith. A mystery surrounds him at his school of All Saints, and after some investigating, Ward comes to find that not only is his past still in pursuit of him, but those closest may be involved in the darkness closing in on him. I don't want to spoil much more from this tale, but I will say that you'll look differently at school buses creeping down your road—an eerie image perfectly captured by Lucia.

The second story, “Yellow Cab,” was, by far, my favorite. The story tells of a young nobody taxi driver who has a lot of regrets about where his life has taken him. He aspires for more. Or, at least, his parents expected more from him. I love how this story became a slow descent into madness that you don’t even realize is happening until you’re already there—feeling much like the character does. Again, there’s not much more I can say in order to avoid ruining the story for you other than Lucia’s writing for this one was tight, the tale moody—all in all a perfectly executed piece of business here. If this one were a standalone story expanded to be a novel, there were a few subplots I wouldn’t have minded following (I wanted to know more about the driver’s life before he started driving fares).

Story three, “Admit One” is Lucia’s loose version of a three-wishes tale (think “The Monkey’s Paw”). What I especially liked here was that there was no genie or outside force that appeared and described the rules of the wishes; in fact it doesn’t even become that kind of tale until it’s nearly over. This one, like the others, is character-driven, and so you follow the plight of Bobby Maskel, a young man whose boyhood crush comes back into his life but not in the way he would have preferred. In what has become a signature for Lucia, “Admit One” shares ties with the two tales before it, but, of course, that link is better discovered for yourself rather than me blurting it out here.

The final tale of the quartet, “And I Watered It, With Tears,” originally appeared as a serial in the initial installments of LampLight Magazine (appearing in whole in their first annual volume). What begins as a group of people waiting in line to pay their energy bill during a particularly intense thunderstorm becomes a quick descent into their own personal hell.

OK, review time. A wonderful surprise with this quartet is that you can never really guess what is going to happen. Lucia tells his stories with a rapid-fire intensity that doesn’t pause for breathers (you know, those clichéd beats of character building common in most horror/thriller tales where we know nothing terrible will happen—Lucia builds his characters while they are in the midst of figuring out what is happening to them, making everything on the page crucial). This collection is strong, and a wonderful example of where the author did not get in the way of his characters’ natural progression. While the work is trademark Kevin Lucia, the stories move at such a brisk pace you never stop to admire the handiwork. You just keep reading, whilst slipping deeper down the rabbit hole.

Having followed Lucia’s tales in Clifton Heights, it was nice to get more in the way of mythology. Once again the town plays a pivotal role. If you have read Lucia’s previous works, locations like Bassler House, mentioned briefly here in Darkly, come with their own grisly histories. You can certainly enjoy this collection without having read anything of Lucia’s prior work, but why do that to yourself? Having background knowledge is like catching easter eggs planted in TV shows and films meant for fans to spot and enjoy. My advice: check out Things Slip Through and Devourer of Souls.

Now, after reading Through A Mirror, Darkly, I did have a thought that nagged at me. Lucia has shown he has mastered the short form—short stories and novellas. I am really interested in seeing what he can come up with for a novel (he is currently working to finish and publish his first). I also wonder what a story outside of Clifton Heights would look like through Lucia’s writing. Not that I feel he is too dependent on his fictional town providing the catalyst of strangeness, but I am curious as to what other stories he has burning inside of him that may not fit his usual mold.

Time will tell on what is coming next from Kevin Lucia.

Through A Mirror, Darkly comes out in June.

Kaisersoze says

I've seen the name Kevin Lucia dance through my feed on quite a few occasions, so it was with mild interest I heard about the release of his new collection of stories through Brian Keene's The Horror Show podcast and decided to give it a shot.

And I'm glad I did.

Lucia here collects four novella length tales that are presented via a wrap-around tale much like the quality anthology movies of old. All the stories take place in and around Lucia's small town creation of Clifton Heights. Though the wrap-around only really provides the context and can't be considered a story in its own right, it does seem to have allusions to early works by Lucia - though I will have to check that out when I inevitably go on the hunt for his back catalogue. And hunt I shall, because this is a quality collection of tales: Three of which I found to very good to excellent, with just the one falling into the category of average.

Commencing with SUFFER THE CHILDREN COME UNTO ME, **Through a Mirror, Darkly** sets itself as a slow-burn of a horror collection that eschews blood and gore for slight chills down the spine. That sensibility remains through Lucia's second tale, YELLOW CAB, which for mine was the most disturbing of the lot - a dark, unsettling read that implies a great deal before finally spelling out the central mystery and allowing the full consequences of that to take root in the reader's mind. The third tale, ADMIT ONE, was my least favourite, but served to further cement the link between the stories being the mythical city of Carcosa. This one was a little long and too light on the horror to really be effective for me. But Lucia more than made up for it with his final tale, AND I WATERED IT, WITH TEARS. This was a very effective chiller that was probably the most familiar of the tales, but only until the real pathos underlying the events comes to light.

If **Through a Mirror, Darkly** is any indication, Lucia is an quality new writer who excels playing in the sandbox left behind by some of the grand masters of horror, Charles L Grant included. His prose is top notch, his characterisations the core of his work, and his horror is of the most disquieting kind. I very much look forward to reading more of his work and would strongly recommend fans of more subtle horror do the same.

3.5 rounding up to 4 Mysteriously Appearing Journals for **Through a Mirror, Darkly**.
