



## Turn Down the Lights

*Richard Chizmar (Editor) , Stephen King , Norman Partridge , Jack Ketchum , Brian James Freeman , Bentley Little , Ed Gorman , Ronald Kelly , more... Steve Rasnic Tem , Clive Barker , Peter Straub ...less*

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It was December 1988: George Bush had just defeated Michael Dukakis in the Presidential Election. Pitcher Orel Hershisier and the Los Angeles Dodgers had beaten the Oakland A's in five games to win the World Series. People were waiting in line at movie theaters to watch Tom Cruise and Dustin Hoffman in *Rain Man*. Tom Clancy's *The Cardinal of the Kremlin* and Anne Rice's *The Queen of the Damned* were atop the bestseller lists. The most acclaimed genre books of the year were Thomas Harris's *The Silence of the Lambs* and Peter Straub's *Koko*.

And twenty-two year old college student Richard Chizmar had just published the premiere issue of a horror magazine named *Cemetery Dance*.

Twenty-five years later, there have been seventy issues of *Cemetery Dance* magazine. There have been more than 275 signed Limited Edition hardcovers in the Cemetery Dance book line. There have been awards including the World Fantasy Award, the International Horror Critics Guild Award, and the HWA Board of Trustees Excellence in Specialty Press Publishing Award, as well as nominations for the British Fantasy Award, the American Horror Award, and the Bram Stoker Award, just to name a few.

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of that premiere issue of Cemetery Dance, we're proud to announce *Turn Down the Lights*, an anthology of authors who helped make the magazine what it is today. These original horror stories by Stephen King, Norman Partridge, Jack Ketchum, Brian James Freeman, Bentley Little, Ed Gorman, Ronald Kelly, Steve Rasnic Tem, Clive Barker, and Peter Straub capture the genuine love of the genre that pushes Cemetery Dance Publications forward year after year.

*Now, turn down the lights, flip the page, take my hand, and start the dance...*

## Turn Down the Lights Details

Date : Published December 17th 2013 by Cemetery Dance

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Richard Chizmar (Editor) , Stephen King , Norman Partridge , Jack Ketchum , Brian James Freeman , Bentley Little , Ed Gorman , Ronald Kelly , more... Steve Rasnic Tem , Clive Barker , Peter Straub ...less

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# **From Reader Review Turn Down the Lights for online ebook**

## **Randy Eberle says**

In the past, I have never really cared much for short story anthologies. However, as I've gotten older, my opinion has changed somewhat. As a result, I've decided to do something a little different this year. I plan to have three books on my "currently reading" shelf at all times: A novel, an audiobook, and a short story anthology. Turn Down the Lights is my first this year.

Though it is a relatively small book (175 pages), this volume nevertheless bursts at the seams with ten incredible stories by some of the top names in horror. While every one of these short pieces are fantastic in their own right, here are a few that I found to be exceptionally noteworthy.

"Summer Thunder" by Stephen King is a post-apocalyptic tale detailing the final days of what could very well be the last two men on earth...

"The Western Dead" by Jack Ketchum. As one might discern from the title, this story is a zombie tale in which the undead wander the unpaved roads of the old west...

"An Instant Eternity" by Brian James Freeman is probably the only story in this anthology that I wouldn't outright call a "horror" story. This piece is a taut, brilliantly written thriller in which a freelance photographer stationed in the middle east attempts to save the life of a little girl that should have watched her step...

"Flying Solo" by Ed Gorman is probably my personal favorite of the bunch. Two terminally ill men that could not be more different from each other (think The Odd Couple) nevertheless develop a close friendship, spending their last days on earth righting wrongs for the nurses that treat them...

In addition to these are beautifully crafted stories by Norman Partridge, Bentley Little, Ronald Kelly, Steve Rasnic Tem, Clive Barker and Peter Straub, along with an informative introduction by editor and Cemetery Dance founder Richard Chizmar on the birth of Cemetery Dance Publications and an afterward by Thomas F. Monteleone. Turn Down the Lights is a must-have for horror aficionados everywhere.

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## **Todd Nesbitt says**

This book is a celebration of 25 years of Cemetery Dance Magazine. This collection includes writers that have been significant contributors to the magazine's short story content. Stephen King, Peter Straub, Clive Barker...and so on. I enjoyed these stories for what they were intended for. They are not heavily focused on character development or plot devices because they are "short" stories. I enjoyed the stories and this short book of short stories do what they were intended to do. If you are looking for fun, short pieces of fiction that weigh in on the horrific side - this is for you. Mostly read by yours truly for the Stephen King short "Summer Thunder" which was, in my humble opinion, another winner for the king.

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## Squire says

A terrific anthology of new dark fiction by authors who helped shape Cemetery Dance into the imprint it is today. This slim volume was put together by CD publisher Richard Chizmar in two weeks as a way of thanking CD's readers on it's 25th anniversary. His intro is heartfelt as he looks back on CD's origins.

All the stories strike the right note of menace and horror--perfect for a couple hours reading. King's "Summer Thunder" perfectly sets the tone for what is to follow and most of the other authors are at the top of their games. The only story that felt stale to me was "The Collected Short Stories of Freddie Prothero" by Peter Straub (It should have been stuck in the middle somewhere rather than at the end.) But then I find most of Straub's work affluently arrogant and offputting. Still he spins an unsettling scenario that does register a feeling of terror of the unknown.

After Thomas F. Monteleone's amusing Afterword, I was sorry to have this collection come to an end. Here's to another 25 great years of Cemetery Dance.

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## Robert Krone says

This was a great collection stories celebrating the long success of Cemetery Dance. This is the first collection of stories by multiple authors that I have started and finished so far. Normally I get distracted by other, longer, novels or novellas. This collection held my attention though, as I read a story or two each night until finishing it. It likely helped that I am fan of every author in this collection except for a couple that I had never read before. I was, however, wanting to read something from those three authors. King's story was a great way to begin this collection and each story following was very enjoyable for the most part. I was not impressed with the final story from Straub though, but it was a minor blip in a great collection of stories.

4.5/5 stars for this for me. Would have been 5/5 if not for the one story I didn't like.

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## Ron says

There are a couple gems in here. Taken as a whole, I'd say it's okay. The best part was experiencing the blend of writers. Each voice is a separate thing. Not all are horror. Some are suspenseful, and others are just different. I wish Chizmar had included one of his own shorts. I picked it up for that reason, and then realized that he only pens the intro, leaving the stories to fellow contributors (much like the Cemetery Dance Magazine).

*PS. I got a little carried away and wrote something about the first – then just kept going. Can't help myself.*

**Summer Thunder** by Stephen King - It's not often that he writes a story about an apocalypse, and I can't help but get excited when he does. I mean, can people talk about their favorite apocalyptic books without including The Stand? Summer Thunder is more melancholy than his others, which in no way means that it's not good. It's just a couple of characters and a dog, and I liked it. (This short can also be found in The Bazaar of Bad Dreams)

**Incarnadine** by Norman Partridge - I don't remember hearing Partridge's name before this, nor the word

Incarnadine for that matter. The word makes complete sense for this short. The problem is that it's not my cup of joe. More horror than character development.

**The Western Dead** by *Jack Ketchum* - Ketchum I've heard of, but this short sampling of Undead in the Old West is probably my first of his. A decent tale is spun about the origin of the undead in Egypt, while shooting "walkers" that straggle out into the open.

**An Instant Eternity** by *Brian James Freeman* - Freeman puts suspense over scare in this short war story about a photographer who is ready to go home before his time runs out.

**In the Room** by *Bentley Little* - "*In the room, I do my dance*" These are the last words a father speaks his son before leaving the family, while he was sleeping no less. The words make no sense. Why would they? Over time they will, and they are prophetic. The writing flows, but the ending does not.

**Flying Solo** by *Ed Gorman* - Two self-described old guys being treated for cancer and make things right for nurses in need – cause they know what life is like Flying Solo. Feels like a noir thriller. Liked it immediately for its voice.

\*\*\*The three stories sandwiched here between 6 and 10, by Kelly, Tem, and Barker were short and forgettable, and so I leave blank.

**The Collected Short Stories of Freddie Prothero** by *Peter Straub* - Straub tells of a boy haunted by a monster, and what makes this interesting (and strange) is its "real factor". The intro is like a mini-bio that then leads to the "actual" stories penned by Freddie.

PS. I heard that the PB version includes 2 additional stories that were not included in this HC.

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## Randolph says

I hate writing reviews on my tablet. Look, don't write. But it's 5 am and I'm too lazy to get out of bed and take the few steps to the PC. One of the cats wants out, excuse me. False alarm, cat just wanted to come into the bedroom.

Well, I suppose you expect a book review here.

This was my first Cemetery Dance Book Club purchase. It is a modest tome bound in cloth with a garish seasonal dj.

This is a fun horror anthology. These stories aren't humorous, I'm talking about why we read horror in the first place fun. This is why you picked up that little paperback that used to be right up by the counter. Not many deep thoughts here.

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## ????? ???????????? says

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## Michael says

Really nice collection honoring 25 years of 'Cemetery Dance'. I guess it proves I'm a Stephen King homer since his melancholy apocalypse story, "Summer Thunder", was my favorite. Ed Gorman's "Flying Solo", about two terminally-ill retirees helping others who can't help themselves ran a close second.

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## Peter says

In 1988 the first issue of Cemetery Dance magazine came out. Celebrating 25 years, Richard Chizmar has put together this terrific anthology. Turn Down The Lights gathers some of the best horror writers in the business. My favorite story is, Flying Solo by Ed Gorman.

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## Tatiana says

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## ClubStephenKing says

TURN DOWN THE LIGHTS, is a short anthology that demonstrate Cemetery Dance's skills and know-how to gather famous names to their projects. By putting together short stories that are, in turns, psychological or horrific, the only disappointment regarding TURN DOWN THE LIGHTS is that one devours it too quickly. We can only wish Cemetery Dance a HAPPY BIRTHDAY, and ask them to do not stop treating us with such delightful projects for at least the next 25 years!

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## Sharon/ LFrog1386 says

A wonderful group of short stories, all very different from one another. Some wild and wacky, some for fun

and a few that really know how to get under your skin. A great collection from some amazing authors.

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## Tom says

A great collection of stories from some top notch writers. This is the perfect way for Cemetery Dance publications to celebrate it's 25th anniversary. From Richard Chizmar's introduction to Tom Monteleone's afterword there is something for everyone in this collection. Highly recommended.

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## sj says

Originally posted here.

Anthologies are a tricky business (tricky, tricky, tricky).

Sad to say that most anthologies leave me a bit cold. There will be some gems, but I rarely find that I enjoy EVERY story.

This wasn't the case with Cemetery Dance's upcoming *Turn Down the Lights* (out this month!), no - this time I found myself in the strange position of at least *liking* each story, and even loving a few of them. Okay, loving several of them (Brian James Freeman's "An Instant Eternity" is where the title of this post came from, and that story is fucking *haunting*, yo).

Let me back up.

A month ago I got an email from Cemetery Dance letting me know that there was a review copy of *Turn Down the Lights* on its way to me. No information other than that, except for a note saying that they were looking forward to hearing my thoughts on the first story.

SECRECY! INTRIGUE! OTHER EXCITING WORDS!

A few days later it arrived in my mailbox and I open it to see the first story is Stephen King! I scan the other authors and am mightily impressed.

Jack Ketchum. Clive Barker. Peter Straub.

It's a veritable Who's Who of Horror, y'know?

*Turn Down the Lights* celebrates the 25th anniversary of the very first issue of Cemetery Dance magazine, so it makes sense that they'd pull out all the stops with the big names and I was so glad they did. As I mentioned up there, this collection did not disappoint.

I read devoured the stories in an afternoon, trying to make them last, but unable to control myself. Isn't that what we all want? Books that compel us to just keep reading - more, more, faster! Yeah, this book has that in spades.



Read it for King's "Summer Thunder," which will give you chills even if you're wrapped up in a blanket in front of a fire. King once again tackles the it's-the-end-of-the-world-as-we-know-it-and-I'm-not-feeling-so-fine scenario. The ending is both uplifting as hell and bleak as shit. So there you go.

Read it for Barker's deliciously creepy "Dollie." I don't even have words to talk about this one. It's short and anything I say would be a spoiler. So. You'll have to read it yourself.

Read it for Freeman's (as I mentioned above) hauntingly sad "An Instant Eternity." This is another one I don't really have words for. I've read this one three times already, and still don't know what to say about it.

Read it for Ed Gorman's lovely little revenge tale "Flying Solo." (I haven't read Gorman before, but he's sure as hell on my radar now.) Just because you're a retiree with cancer doesn't mean you're unable to do a little dirty work. Loved this one. Read it twice in a row.

Just read the damn thing, okay? Especially if you're a completist. If you're one of those people who own everything any of these authors has written (even the kinda duds [looking at you, *Cycle of the Werewolf*]) you NEED this book. Need.

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## **Karl says**

Cover art by Steve McGinnis

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