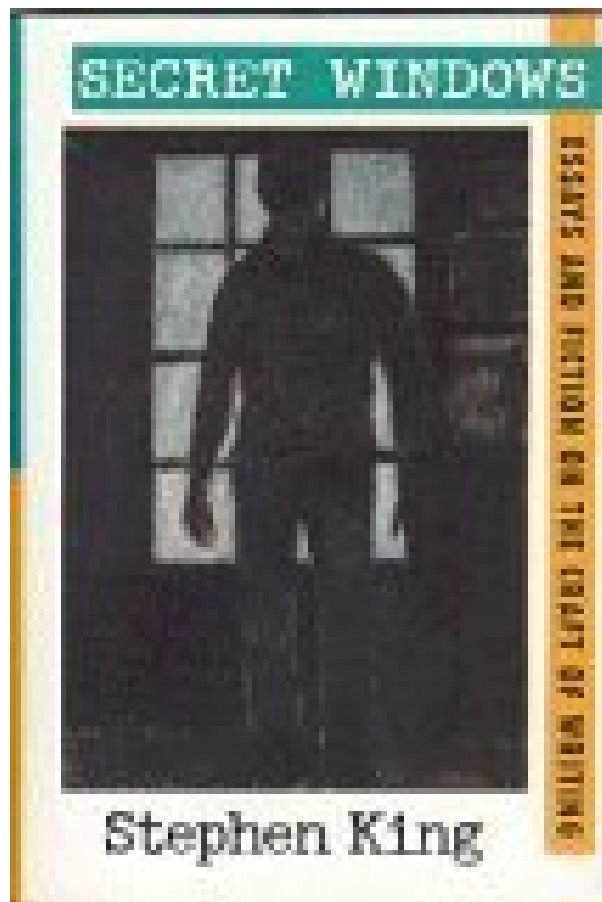
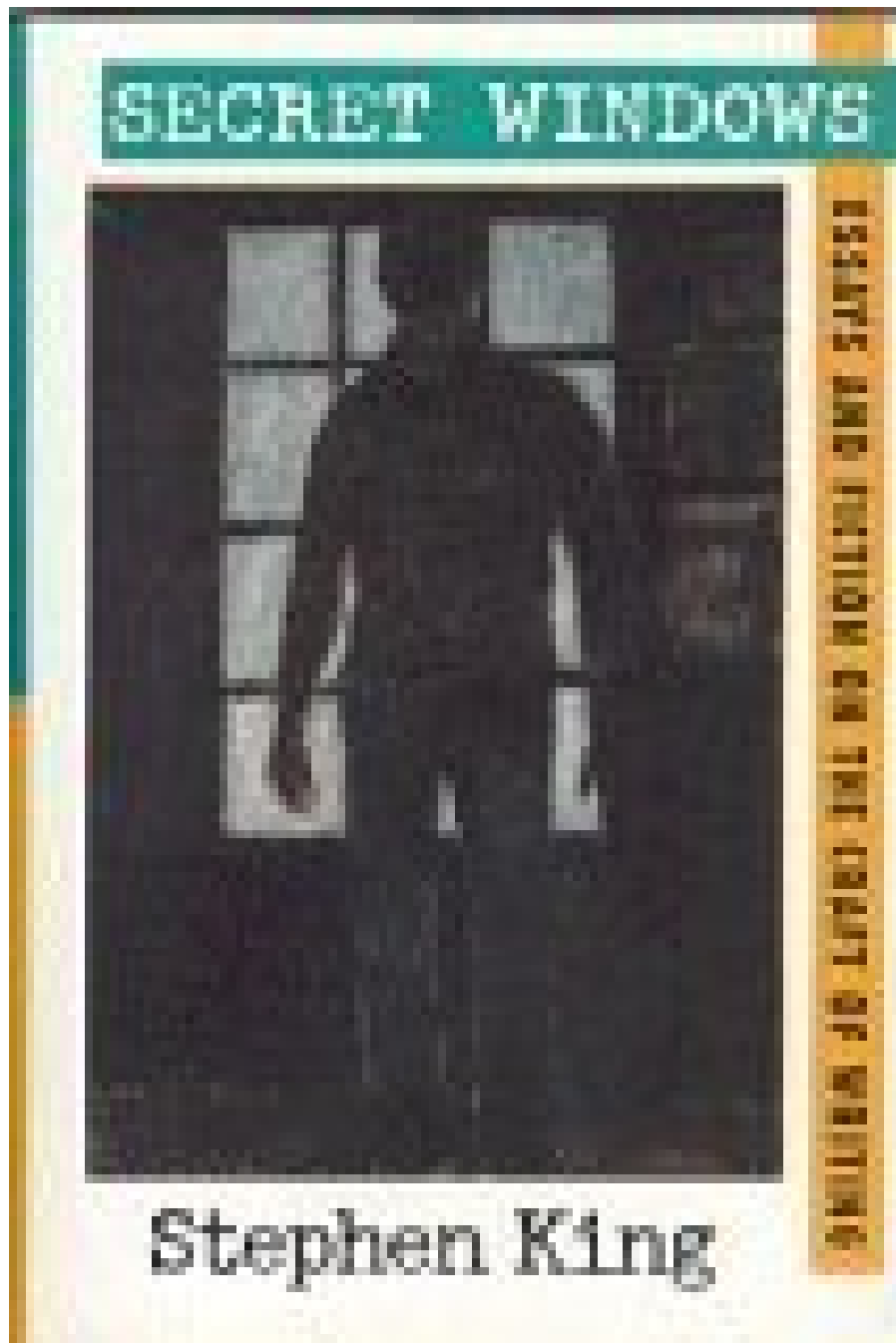


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...Exclusive Book-Of-The-Month-Club anthology of hard to find non-fiction pieces, little known interviews, short stories, and articles about writing for those looking for direction on how to find their own "windows" - or for anyone wishing to be touched by Stephen King's humor and wisdom...Included in this collection are unpublished early fiction(very early; King was 12 when he wrote "Jumper" and "Rush Call"; a pre-Carrie article with tips for selling stories to men's magazines ("The Horror Writer and the Ten Bears: A True Story"); advice to his son on writing (with the look-twice title "Great Hookers I Have Known"); recommendations to teen readers in a 'Seventeen' article ("What Stephen King Does For Love"); a long chapter from his wonderful treatise on the horror genre ("Horror Fiction" from *Danse Macabre*); and even a first-time-in-print short story, "In The Deathroom"(just for fun).

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- Binding: Hardcover
- 433 pages

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41 of 42 people found the following review helpful.

Pretty Near Perfect Complement to *On Writing*

By paul mason

Someone once said, I think it was in fact King himself, with his sense of irony polished that he could write a grocery list and it would be a bestseller. The fact of the matter is King's writing is honest as Straub says in an elegant introduction, which is what inspires legions of fans to want to read everything available that he has written be it fiction or non-fiction.

SECRET WINDOWS is set up as a book of the month club companion piece to King's bestselling memoir/how-to guide *ON WRITING*. Apart from a very heartfelt ode in the introduction by King's fellow master of horror and collaborator Straub it contains various essays and short works of fiction dedicated to the art of writing. The dates of the pieces in the collection range from when Stephen was a wee lad of 12 writing for his brother's paper to the time of publication. There are some well known pieces, such as short stories that have later been published in his *Everything's Eventual* anthology, and an excerpt from his other well-known non-fiction piece *Danse Macabre* to some real hidden gems that have never been published before. One of these gems is a short talk/essay on banned books. Another is great opening lines that are favourite of King's.

In *Secret Windows*, just like in his fiction King's integrity shines through; he claims not to be the best novelist around even if he sells better than some but always promises to deliver the best story he knows how to write. His humour is evident in these pages even when it is self-deprecating and as a reader his same conversational tone that soaks his other works is present here as well. *Danse Macabre* was not the perfect book, *On Writing* is not the perfect book and no even *Secret Windows* is not the perfect book but it is darn close especially when read in conjunction with *On Writing*.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

The Mostly Unknown Stephen King Non-Fiction Collection

By J. Hill

Secret Windows is a companion book to On Writing released by Book-of-the-Month Club, a 430-page collection of all sorts of Stephen King items, from essays, to interviews, to anthology introductions, and even including a previously unpublished short story. An important fact to know before purchasing is that over half of the material in the book can be found in other works dedicated King fans will already have on their shelves. It has about 200 pages of tough-to-find or unpublished work, and the rest comes from Danse Macabre, Night Shift, and Everything's Eventual. Danse Macabre, in fact, is featured with a 160-page "excerpt" (now that's stretching the term to its limits), but the interesting quality here is in how these pieces are presented. Reading them in a collection ties them together thematically and provides an overall view of King's conscious approach, as well as the subconscious underpinnings, to his writing. I'd be hard-pressed to find a reason why people who enjoyed On Writing wouldn't also be impressed with Secret Windows.

Highlights for me include the stories King wrote for his brother's newspaper, Dave's Rag, in 1959-60, complete with a copy of the original December 29, 1959 edition's cover page; the "Ten Bears" article from Writer's Digest, 1973, explaining some of the basics of horror writing; the brief "How IT Happened," from '86 describing what inspired King to write It; and an excellent lecture on book-banning to the Virginia Beach Public Library in 1986, among others. This is a unique collection that I think a majority of King fans would appreciate if they knew about it. It's too bad it wasn't published for mass market.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Theory and Practice (Practice)

By Robert Beveridge

Stephen King, On Writing/Secret Windows (Scribner's, 2000 and BOMC, 2000)

[originally posted 6Nov2000]

"Most of the things you find in books on writing are bull[censored for Amazon consumption]." How can you not like a book on writing that begins so endearingly? Shortly after, King makes a promise to keep the book as short as possible, and for King, he does an admirable job (it weighs in under 300 pages, a short story for this guy). Capitalizing on the publication of On Writing, Book of the Month Club (who are the behind-the-scenes orchestrators of the Stephen King Book Club) contracted with the man to release a companion volume to it called Secret Windows as well.

Much of what King writes in On Writing is simple common sense ("the adverb is not your friend..."), but some of it flies in the face of conventional wisdom. King is a situational writer as opposed to a plotter, and the vast majority of "how to write your novel in days"-style writers' manuals are written by plotters. This alone makes the book valuable to the struggling author; when everyone's told you one thing, and it doesn't work for you, hearing someone validate another way to do things is sometimes the most important thing that can happen to you. And King delivers his advice in simple, straightforward prose, providing examples when necessary (at the very end, he gives us the opening paragraphs of Blood and Smoke's "1408," both in rough and finished drafts, and it's probably the best example of revision I've seen in a how-to-write book). Good, solid stuff, probably the best I've read in recent years, since Natalie Goldberg's first two books.

But even that isn't what makes this book shine. We're all aware that much of what separates great writers from run-of-the-mill hacks is the ability to take one's own events and make mincemeat of them on the page. The first hundred pages of this volume are an encapsulated autobiography of King. It's impressionist, deadpan, as minimal as it can be to give us an idea of where all these books came from (no, he doesn't really

get his ideas in Utica). And while all of King's writing is marked with a particular kind of honesty that resonates with the average reader, these hundred pages stand out. If it's possible to be more than completely honest, he's done it.

Secret Windows is a compilation. Most of it's been previously published. There are a few things here that bear re-reading, a few unpublished (and perhaps should have remained that way, such as the early stuff from his brother's homemade newspaper), and one of King's early attempts at a one-voice tale, a style he mastered in Dolores Claiborne, called "The Ballad of the Flexible Bullet." I can't remember whether this made it into Nightmares and Dreamscapes or not (can't find a full listing of N&D's contents online) [ed. note 2013: no], but if not, this story alone, about an editor's slow descent into alcoholic madness, with its catalyst a story by an already-insane writer, is worth the price of admission. It is not an easily-forgotten piece of work.

Taken together, the two make a good pair: a book on how to write and a collection of fiction, nonfiction, and interviews dealing with the craft of writing. The average non-writing Stephen King fan may be left cold, but for the writer (or the writer wannabe who's never attempted; if you liked Misery better than most King novels, you qualify), they're gold nuggets in the river.

On Writing: ****

Secret Windows: *** ½

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