

# THE CHRONICLES OF A MADMAN

What the reviewers are saying...

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About the anthology as a whole

I highly recommend it to anyone with an open mind and a love of delving into controversial subjects like good versus evil where good doesn't always win. Read it. You'll be glad you did.

S. Joan Popek, MIDWEST BOOK REVIEW

Five stars out of five. Michael LaRocca is an author who knows how to use humor to make you laugh. He is an author who knows how to use thought-provoking material to entertain his readers, and he knows how to use poetry to make you think. He is one talented author. THE CHRONICLES OF A MADMAN is a book that will entertain you, make you think, and will have you yearning for more.

Jennifer L.B. Leese, A STORYWEAVER'S Book Reviews

...sometimes you find a story that's in a class all its own...quite amazing.

Kim Gaona, Kim's Reviews

The whole book is terrifying and sure to leave you thinking...I highly recommend The Chronicles of a Madman.

The Write Stuff Book Reviews

I got The Chronicles Of A Madman yesterday. I am enjoying it thoroughly. I especially liked Daisy's Story. Also really liked Descent Into Madness. You have a very talented way of making the reader see what's not usually obvious -- and you may quote me!

Darrell Bain, author

It's a pleasure to be associated with quality.

Chris Dunne, the graphic artist who drew the cover in 1989

"The Chronicles of a Madman" by Michael LaRocca  
Reviewed by: Tanya Smith (OClark1836@aol.com)  
(From the May 20 2002 issue of Inscriptions Magazine)

"The Chronicles of a Madman" is a collection of 21 short stories and poems, plus a novella. The entries were written over a 20-year time span, most having been published elsewhere.

Don't be fooled by the gonzo title or gross-out cover art. "The Chronicles of a Madman" is no monster mash. With a nuanced pen, LaRocca has created a set of psychologically astute

stories. The prose is thoughtful and the poetry tempered, no undisciplined rants or raves.

LaRocca's knack for nimble rhythms is best showcased in the poem "A Life Without Poetry," where the concrete details of everyday life hang in the balance opposite abstract emotions. The absurd humor of "The Shortest Play" provides a strong counterpunch to the softer musings in "A Life Without Poetry."

"Night Flight," a story about a six-year-old's special powers, is the most solid example of LaRocca's plumb-and-square short stories, which he builds with self-assured, strong openings and solid, weighty endings.

"For Barry," a short story written about a brother's suicide, shows off LaRocca's instinct for startling, unflinching detail: "He put a .357 Magnum into his mouth and spraypainted the back wall."

The novella "Descent into Madness" tracks the footsteps of Bert, a psychologist/dream traveler. LaRocca employs a consistent voice and a nimble technique throughout.

A smart cleverness pervades LaRocca's short stories. This collection is a worthwhile read for fans of intelligent, psychologically infused fantasy, and readers wishing to spend a few hours entertaining the darker side of death, time travel and mental lucidity.

LaRocca is a talented and competent writer, whose work is imaginative, and yet in most cases real, factual, based on the author's life. There is humor too. I enjoyed a dialogue between Judas Iscariot and Jesus, which casts a new, and possibly far more accurate, light on the crucifixion myth.

Every writer ought to be a craftsman of language. As an editor, I know all too well how sadly this is lacking in many cases, but LaRocca is a master of English, and meticulous in his use of writing technique. His stories are passionate, almost embarrassingly personal, gripping with the vividness of detail.

--Dr Bob Rich, <http://bobswriting.com/>

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About "In The Fullness of Time," a Cannongate 2000 nominee  
which appeared in the December 2000 issue of Seeker Magazine

Wow! Michael, you sure know how to weave a story. I'm left wondering what is real and what is not real, and that is great.

Cherie Staples, author, editor of Seeker Magazine

Great story. This is high quality stuff -- really took me by surprise.

Colleen, a reader

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About "For Barry," which appeared in the April 2000 issue of Seeker Magazine

A very touching expression of your thoughts and feelings after your brother's suicide.

Alice Griffin

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About "The Boatman's Getting Restless," which appeared in the June 2000 issue of Seeker Magazine and the December 2000 issue of Writer's Review

I like short short stories, every word in its place...Yes, it is gripping. Curiosity aroused from the first three sentences... Not a wasted word...The voice is crafted well...Best yet...Boatman is a beauty on its own.

S.C. Pak, award-winning author

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About "The Man Who Killed God," never before published

Quite interesting...you've a lot to say...The characters, including the narrator, are very alive. The personalities are well thought of...You take risks in every turn. I like it.

Brian Brotarlo, author

I found it very intriguing. Effective because of short sentences. Dialogue bits are especially arresting...it grabs you immediately...As an excursion into the mental state of a man with a multiple-personality, I think it can be entertaining, even challenging our preconceptions about God, Evil, what is possession? etc.

Ian Ng, author

It starts off so well that I was immediately involved in the ideas. Your writing style is very seductive and smooth. You understate beautifully and create an environment within which the quite original ideas seem at home.

Peter Stephens, author

...a thought-provoking and interesting read. I truly wish I could give you a 20 on Quality of Writing [on a scale of 1-10]. Excruciatingly sharp wit...Excellent work!

An author who refers to him/herself as POSITIVEVIBES

I find your writing well-crafted, easy to read.

An author who refers to him/herself as LEFTY

Nice, punchy sentences...I haven't come across anything quite like this before.

S.C. Pak, award-winning author

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About "Night Flight," which appeared in the October 2000 issue of Bardo Burner

I liked your story very much. A wonderful little piece of magic realism...the story had a very familiar resonance to it. But that actually added to the positive nostalgic feelings for me...Many phrases are beautifully crafted and pleasing to the ear.

Brent Horner, author

The character of a child is very well developed...a very nice clean style.

S.C. Pak, award-winning author

I liked many of the subtleties of the boy's character...some very good images.

Brad Bryant, author

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About "Daisy's Story," which appeared in the July 2000 issue of Seeker Magazine

Wonderful story, beautifully written. I love it. Keep on writing.

G. Stolberg

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About "The Shortest Play," which appeared in the anthology *Imaginary Friends* in 1989, in the June 2000 issue of Purple Prose, and in the July 2000 issue of Short Stories Magazine

I love it. Nice twist at the end. I smiled.

Anneliese Garrison, R.N.

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About "Killing Death," which appeared in the September 2000 issue of Vestal Review Magazine, and in Dark Truths Magazine for most of 2000

This definitely gives one something to think about. In depth thoughts. Good job!

Carolyn Tyler, author

What does one say? It is disturbing and compelling. There are things worse than death.

Alice Woodrome, author

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About "The Seeker," which appeared in the August 2000 issue of Top Write Corner Magazine

Great story. Your words leave indelible images upon the mind.

Theresa Blachura

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About "A Modern Epic," which appeared in Issue 2 of Vestal Review in 2000, and in Dark Truths Magazine for most of 2000

The magic is in the piling up of polarized themes in the tough male idiom: death as the enemy, coming to terms with death, youth and age, modern/post-modern. Heavy stuff!...The characters are very well drawn, both in themselves and in what they represent.

S.C. Pak, award-winning author

Nathaniel Hawthorne Brown is an everyman, a modern day hero expressing the hopes and fears of us all.

Dan Fox, author and publisher

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About "Visit To A Madhouse," which appeared in the August 2000 issue of Top Write Corner Magazine

...very enjoyable. I wouldn't mind taking another visit...extremely entertaining...Very very good job.

An author who refers to him/herself as POSITIVEVIBES

I enjoyed this story a great deal....original thinking...wild imagination, which always manifests original writing.

Jordie Chambers, author