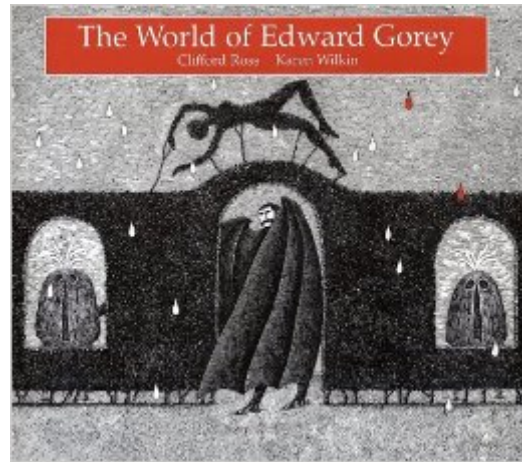


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# The World Of Edward Gorey



## Synopsis

The World of Edward Gorey is the first major book in the devilishly amusing American artist and writer perhaps best known for his witty opening credits for public television's Mystery! series and for such books as Amphigorey, The Doubtful Guest, and Unstrung Harp. An extensive interview with Ross introduces the reader to Gorey himself, his interests, inspirations and obsessions. A selection of Mystery Guild. 200 illustrations, 24 in color.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (9 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

This book features an interesting interview, and then a rather rambling monograph about Gorey's work overall. This essay is an important first attempt to place Gorey's unique vision into some kind of context, and though quite descriptive, it doesn't reveal a whole lot to me. The best part of the book is plates of some of Gorey's less well-known material, his stage curtain backdrops, etc. Fans of Gorey will appreciate a glimpse of these things for their collections. Those unfamiliar with his work would find a better introduction with one of the "Amphigorey" treasuries.

THE WORLD OF EDWARD GOREY, by Clifford Ross and Karen Wilkin, is an overview of the great artist, writer, and droll humorist. While Gorey is one of my favourite literary figures, I found this book to be of limited appeal. The first part of the book is Ross' interview with Gorey, a rather unimpressive piece that sheds little light on Gorey's development. Ross will bring up painters or authors of the past, and Gorey will either mildly approve, or speak badly of them. Gorey doesn't really seem up to

the discussion, and all in all this is a disappointment. What follows, however, is fairly enlightening: Wilkin's essay "Mr. Earbrass Jots Down a Few Visual Notes" explores the various themes of Gorey's work (such as children meeting unfortunate ends), allusions to earlier artists (such as Klee) in his work, and the way he constructs plots. This is a more substantial piece than the interview, though really it will be of interest only to those who wish to deeply explore all facets of Gorey's creations. The second half of the book are the plates, and this is what really might attract casual lovers of Gorey's work even if they already have the "Amphigorey" collections. Here we find examples not from just his well-known books, but also drawings from unpublished ones, simple sketches of what later became mature material, and many of the book covers and theatrical designs he did for other literary works. I was quite surprised to see Gorey's book covers, since to me his style doesn't fit Muriel Spark or Gogol at all, but apparently he was quite sought after back in the day. If you are a really intense fan of Gorey and want to know more about his critical reception, *THE WORLD OF EDWARD GOREY* may be worth looking at. Those who just get an occasional chuckle from his idiosyncrasy, however, should pass.

If you like Edward Gorey then you really owe it to yourself to get a copy of this very fine book. The authors, Clifford Ross and Karen Wilkin are artist and art critic, respectively. Ross begins the book with an interview with Edward Gorey himself in which they talk about other painters (Matisse, Albert York, Picasso, Manet and Max Ernst in particular); Surrealism; the creative process (included are a number of sketches and notes for finished drawings); Gorey's theater pieces; fiction; and television. Wilkin's piece follows next in which she discusses the "band of crypto-Edwardians" that appear so many of Gorey's books as compared to the illustrations he does for books by other authors, for Mystery Theater and for the stage, opera, theater and ballet. She has a very interesting perspective on Gorey's work within both historical and cultural contexts. The second half of the book contains numerous drawings and designs followed by a chronology of Gorey's life (rich with photographs of his home, including one of his cats) and a bibliography. A very interesting book. The only thing I would have added is a section on the Gorey cats (the ones that grace the Amphigorey books).

The author, Clifford Ross, knows his stuff. His interview with Edward Gorey provides some illuminating insights into a great artist and charming soul. However, Ross's style often gives the impression that he is promoting his own material. Gorey's work is a pleasure to enjoy, and the book is worth a buy. (...)

After all the work that Karen has done on Edward Gorey, it amazes me that she knows so little about him. This book was a huge disappointment to me, and most of it was a direct result of Karen Wilkin's romantic ramblings. It seems to me that she should go back and really read her other book, *Ascending Peculiarity*. That one is much better, more informative, and personal.

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