

THE LIGHTHOUSE AT THE END OF THE WORLD Stephen Marlowe (*Dutton, \$23.95*) It's ironic but fitting that a writer's life and work should serve as grist for someone else's fiction. Marlowe has such delicious fun with Edgar Allan Poe, one wonders why it doesn't happen more often. A straightforward look at the macabre writer—including his drunkenness, self-destructive bouts with the literary establishment, and doomed marriage to a 13-year-old cousin—slowly melds with a fantastic tale of doppelgängers, mesmerism, and a mysterious talisman. It climaxes beautifully with Poe on his deathbed, being questioned by his own creation, the detective C. Auguste Dupin. *Lighthouse* is exceedingly clever, but its elaborate structure and numerous twists never obscure the emotional heart of this story—that a life filled with frustration and sadness was transcended by dazzling acts of imagination. **B** —*Michael Giltz*