



I Am Providence: The Life and Times of H. P. Lovecraft, Volume 1

S. T. Joshi

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Howard Phillips Lovecraft was born to a well-to-do family in Providence, Rhode Island. As a child, he revealed remarkable precocity in his early interests in literature and science. Ill-health dogged him in youth, rendering his school attendance sporadic; and in 1908 he experienced a nervous breakdown that rendered him a virtual recluse for several years. In 1914 he discovered the world of amateur journalism and began slowly emerging from his hermitry. He wrote tremendous amounts of essays, poetry, and other work; in 1917, under the encouragement from W. Paul Cook and others, he resumed the writing of horror fiction, and his career as a dream-weaver began anew. In 1921 Lovecraft met his future wife, Sonia H. Greene, at an amateur journalism convention. It was at this time that he began expanding his horizons, both geographical and intellectual: he traveled widely, from New England to New York to Cleveland; and he absorbed such literary and intellectual influences as Lord Dunsany, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Arthur Machen. In 1924 he and Sonia decided to marry, and Lovecraft moved to New York to pursue his literary fortune. But, as the first volume of this biography concludes, his metropolitan adventure would be bittersweet at best. S. T. Joshi's award-winning biography *H. P. Lovecraft: A Life* (1996) provided the most detailed portrait of the life, work, and thought of the dreamer from Providence ever published. But that edition was in fact abridged from Joshi's original manuscript, and this expanded and updated two-volume edition restores the 150,000 words that Joshi omitted and, in addition, updates the texts with new findings.

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