

# BOOKS OF THE YEAR

## Kim Newman

**T**rawling around the edges of genres seems to be where my reading habits are this year. **THOMAS HARRIS' 'THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS'** (Heinemann, £10.95) is compulsive, at once direct and twisted, but it gets into this list by spotlighting the Character of the Decade, psychotic superstar Hannibal Lecter, a functional mass murderer who deserves his own weekly series. **HOWARD WALDROP'S 'STRANGE THINGS IN CLOSE UP'** (Legend 34.50) is a collection of stories classified as sf but nearly unrecognisable as such: a lot of material about movie stars, comedy, world history, rock 'n' roll, monsters and other good things. Which brings me to **GREIL MARCUS' 1977 MYSTERY TRAIN'** (Omnibus £7.95) – not to be confused with the Jim Jarmusch film, although the book highlights some of the movie – which is subtitled 'Images of America in Rock 'N' Roll Music' and weirdly crosses over with the Waldrop in its pointed dissection of Robert Johnson, Sly Stone, the Band, Randy Newman, Stagger Lee and Elvis.