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Description:

From Publishers Weekly From recollections of early childhood in Germany and L.A. in the '20s to the unflinching reflections of a grizzled septuagenarian, the stunning directness and infamous "bad attitude" of Bukowski's autobiographical poetry and fiction are as captivating as they are repugnant. Faithfully anthologized here by his longtime editor and arranged in chronological order, these excerpts from more than 20 of Bukowski's published books chronicle--both explicitly and through several recurring personas--the major events of the author's life: childhood, the Depression and WW II, the deaths of parents and lovers, his experience in Hollywood, illness and old age. Bukowski's signature themes are also present: the racetrack, drinking, violence, women, sex and, of course, writing. Set in some half-dozen big cities, and several grim hinterlands in between, they depict protagonists listlessly careening through unusual jobs, seedy bars and squalid apartments where they are observed in fierce lovers' quarrels or in solitary debauch with just some booze and a typewriter. All are rendered with great immediacy, disturbing candor and Bukowski's singular blend

of cynicism, misanthropy and unexpected sentimentality. While devotees may prefer the original volumes in their entirety, this is an effective primer for the uninitiated, or a refresher for past readers who, incredibly, have managed to forget.

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Review "Read by Bukowski, the works take on greater magnitude from the intensity of his soft, almost calm voice... Stunning." -- -- *Houston Daily Cougar*

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