



The Pleasures of the Damned: Poems, 1951-1993

By Charles Bukowski

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The Pleasures of the Damned: Poems, 1951-1993 By Charles Bukowski

To his legions of fans, Charles Bukowski was—and remains—the quintessential counterculture icon. A hard-drinking wild man of literature and a stubborn outsider to the poetry world, he wrote unflinchingly about booze, work, and women, in raw, street-tough poems whose truth has struck a chord with generations of readers.

Edited by John Martin, the legendary publisher of Black Sparrow Press and a close friend of Bukowski's, *The Pleasures of the Damned* is a selection of the best works from Bukowski's long poetic career, including the last of his never-before-collected poems. Celebrating the full range of the poet's extraordinary and surprising sensibility, and his uncompromising linguistic brilliance, these poems cover a rich lifetime of experiences and speak to Bukowski's “immense intelligence, the caring heart that saw through the sham of our pretenses and had pity on our human condition” (*New York Quarterly*). *The Pleasures of the Damned* is an astonishing poetic treasure trove, essential reading for both longtime fans and those just discovering this unique and legendary American voice.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Bukowski's chatty free verse (and fiction) about disappointment, drunkenness, racetracks, flophouses, lust, sexual failure, poverty and late-life success amassed an enormous following by the time of his death at age 73 in 1994. Billed as the last book with new Bukowski poems in it, this hefty collection also culls from his prior books, and it is all of a piece: the warnings about lost potency, the ironic takes on ailments of mind and body, the comradeship with everyone down at the heels, down on his luck, or down to his last shot of booze. Bukowski's best poems have an exaggerated, B-movie black-and-white aura about them. One new poem warns that/ nothing is wasted:/ either that/ or/ it all is. In another, hell is only what we/ create,/ smoking these cigarettes,/ waiting here,/ wondering here. Near the front of the volume comes a page-and-a-half-long verse manifesto, a poem is a city, that might describe what Bukowski could do: a poem is a city filled with streets and sewers, it begins, filled with saints, heroes, beggars, madmen... banality and booze, and yet a poem is the world. (*Nov.*)

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Review

“This long and well-edited collection is likely to stand as the definitive volume of Bukowski’s poems.”

About the Author

Charles Bukowski is one of America’s best-known contemporary writers of poetry and prose and, many would claim, its most influential and imitated poet. He was born in 1920 in Andernach, Germany, to an American soldier father and a German mother, and brought to the United States at the age of two. He was raised in Los Angeles and lived there for over fifty years. He died in San Pedro, California, on March 9, 1994, at the age of seventy-three, shortly after completing his last novel, *Pulp*.

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