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Survival in Auschwitz and The Reawakening, Two Memoirs

Primo Levi

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The author describes his twenty month ordeal in the Nazi death camp.

From Publishers Weekly"no human experience is without meaning or unworthy of analysis," writes Levinot even the "gigantic biological and social experiment that was Auschwitz." And few accounts of concentration camps are as remarkable and truthful as these twin memoirs, reissued here after being long out of print in hardcover. Levi (The Periodic Table; If Not Now, When?) wrote Survival in Auschwitz soon after his return to Turin in 1945. Although he

strikingly depicts the filth, hunger, sleeplessness and anxiety there, he focuses on the human beings who were his captors and companions—the good and bad, the "drowned and the saved." Writing as witness rather than judge, he sets down only the facts of which he had direct experience. In 1962, Levi wrote *The Reawakening*, about his return odyssey to Turin, and again recalls his experiences mainly in terms of the people he met. Only after many months did he lose the habit of walking with his glance fixed to the ground, as if searching for something to eat or to sell for bread. In an afterword, he tells why he has expressed no hatred for the Germans, no desire for revenge.

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