

[PDF] Burning The Days: Recollection

James Salter - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: Burning the Days: Recollectio

Author: James Salter

Released: 1998-09-29

Language:

Pages: 387

ISBN: 0394759486

ISBN13: 978-0394759487

ASIN: 0394759486



[CLICK HERE FOR DOWNLOAD](#)

pdf, mobi, epub, azw, kindle

Description:

As more and more reminiscences spill down the literary chute, it's clear that the Age of the Memoir has not yet abated. The harvest has been a mixed one, of course. For every Frank McCourt or Mary Karr or Tobias Wolff, there seem to be a dozen score-settling memoirists, many of them less interested in understanding the past than sinking a hatchet into it. Now, however, another major contribution to the genre has appeared: James Salter's *Burning the Days*. This splendid autobiography had its inception in 1986, when the author wrote a trial-balloon recollection for *Esquire*, so he can hardly be accused of faddishness. But his book differs in another way from the current crop of memoirs, which often feature a forbidding gauntlet of familial or societal travails. Salter, contrarily, has led what many would consider a charmed life. Born an upper-middle-class "city child, pale, cared for, unaware," he attended West Point, served in the Korean War as a fighter pilot, and then seemingly ejected into a postwar period of undiluted glamour. To be sure, his early novels, such as *The Hunters*, failed to make Salter a household word. Still, he ran with literary lions

like Irwin Shaw, drifted into the film business during the 1950s, and spent the next couple of decades ping-ponging from New York to Paris to Rome to Aspen and back.

Salter puts the reader on notice from the very beginning that this will be a selective sort of recollection: "If you can think of life, for a moment, as a large house with a nursery, living and dining rooms, bedrooms, study, and so forth, all unfamiliar and bright, the chapters which follow are, in a way, like looking through the windows of this house.... At some windows you may wish to stay longer, but alas. As with any house, all within cannot be seen." What, then, *are* we privileged to see? Salter's airborne years account for perhaps a third of the book, and for this we should be grateful: no contemporary writer has made the experience more vivid or eerily palpable. There are brilliant evocations of New York, Rome, and Paris, some of which rival the virtuosic scene-painting in the author's *A Sport and a Pastime*. More to the point, there are human beings, who tend to get semi-apotheosized by the sheer elegance of Salter's prose. ("I do not worship gods but I like to know they are there," he notes in his preface--although his portrait of, say, Irwin Shaw does seem to be propped up on a private altar.)

Salter's lofty romanticism can sometimes turn to gush. These blemishes are far outweighed, however, by the general splendor of the prose, which alternates Proustian extravagance with Hemingway-inspired economy. And even when the book flirts with frivolity, there is always the undertow of loss, of leave-taking. Many of the things that Salter describes are gone. In addition, he claims to have despoiled whatever remains by the very act of writing about it: "To write of someone thoroughly is to destroy them, use them up.... Things are captured and at the same time drained of life, never to shimmer or give back light again." No doubt his assertion has a grain of truth to it, at least for the author himself. But his loss is the reader's gain: most of what Salter has captured in *Burning the Days* remains alive and, frequently, luminous. --*James Marcus* --This text refers to the edition.

From Library Journal A "writer's writer," despite his *Sport and a Pastime*'s inclusion in the Modern Library, the 72-year-old Salter uses his autobiography not to bathe in the glow of celebrity names (in fact, he makes a point of using noms de plume) but, rather, to discover the overall trajectory of his life thus far?a purpose that perhaps accounts for the book's unwavering tone of humility, candor, and authenticity. A graduate of West Point, where he experienced an emotional about-face from rebellious would-be drop-out to a young man eager to be tested in combat, Salter was trained as a fighter pilot in the mid-1940s but saw combat against the scary Russian MIG-15s in Korea in the early 1950s. Throughout, his writing style?tight, lyrical, and insightful?calls attention to itself. This is a writer's textbook, a sheer pleasure, and the descriptions of flying are perhaps the most vivid yet written. After leaving the Air Force (there are no old jet fighter pilots), Salter gravitated to Europe for its older and more resonant culture. There he met the failing Irwin Shaw and wrote film scripts before graduating to fiction (e.g., *Dusk and Other Stories*, LJ 1/88). The flavors of four decades are here. Highly recommended for all libraries.?Charles C. Nash, Cottley Coll., Nevada, Mo.
Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the edition.

-
- Title: *Burning the Days: Recollection*
 - Author: James Salter

- Released: 1998-09-29
 - Language:
 - Pages: 387
 - ISBN: 0394759486
 - ISBN13: 978-0394759487
 - ASIN: 0394759486
-