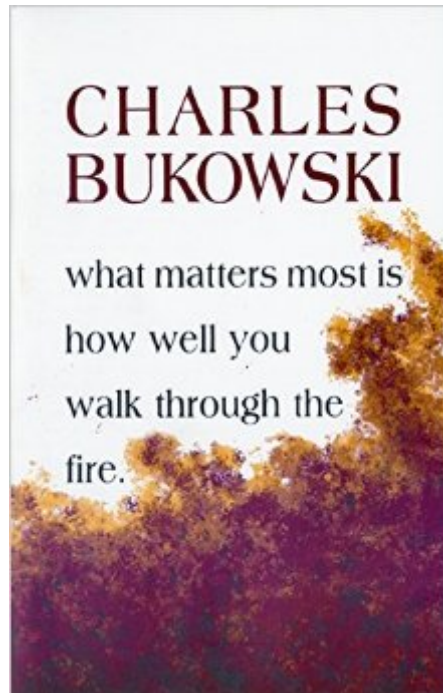


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# What Matters Most Is How Well You Walk Through The Fire



## Synopsis

This second posthumous collection from Charles Bukowski takes readers deep into the raw, wild vein of writing that extends from the early 70s to the 1990s.

## Book Information

Paperback: 409 pages

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Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (51 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #16,966 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #31 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > European](#) #77 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > United States](#) #4922 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > United States](#)

## Customer Reviews

I've been aware of Charles Bukowski's status as a sort of "cult" figure in the world of literature, but had never actually read any of his books. So I picked up "What Matters Most Is How Well You Walk Through the Fire" in a bookstore, opened up to a random poem, and started reading. Well, I was hooked from that moment. "What Matters" is a posthumous volume of poetry by the prolific Bukowski, who died in 1994. According to the acknowledgments on the copyright page, these poems were written between 1970 and 1990 and were part of an archive which the poet left to be published after his death. The poems in "What Matters" are written in free verse. Bukowski's vernacular language has an energy, charm, and down-to-earth accessibility. His main themes are as follows: gambling at the racetrack, drinking, women, death and aging, other writers and artists, poetry itself, and his own public image as a hard-drinking dirty old man. He often writes about people or animals who might be seen as pathetic or seedy. The book is full of intriguing literary references; he mentions Wallace Stevens, Pablo Neruda, Kafka, Rilke, Lorca, Oscar Wilde, Hemingway, Auden, Henry Miller, "gutsy Ezra Pound," and many more writers. There are many narrative poems, often featuring "Henry Chinaski," who appears to be Bukowski's alter ego. "What Matters" is full of the cruder side of urban life: the reader will encounter pimps, gamblers, the "dreary and doped / battalions" of prostitutes, a "flowing / tide of piss" from a clogged Salt Lake City urinal,

etc. There is often suffering. But through it all, Bukowski is often funny, philosophical, and even gentle.

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