

Books and Poetry for Children and Grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors

NONFICTION/RECOLLECTION/CHILDREN OF SURVIVOR STORIES

- After Long Silence: A Memoir by Helen Fremont. In her mid-30s Helen Fremont discovered that, although she had been raised in the Midwest as a Catholic, she was in fact the daughter of Polish Jews whose families had been exterminated in the Holocaust. The memoir chronicles the voyage of discovery she took with her older sister, ferreting out information from Jewish organizations and individuals and worrying about its impact on their angry, overpowering father and reticent, nightmare-plagued mother.
- After Such Knowledge by Eva Hoffman. Explores the difficulties of preserving an authentic version of Holocaust events, how 2nd gen should convey its knowledge to others, the effects of traumatic past on its inheritors and the second generation's responsibilities to its received memories.
- Children of the Holocaust: Conversations With Sons and Daughters of Survivors by Helen Epstein. A diary-like account of the experiences of children of survivors.
- Daughter of Absence edited by Mindy Weisel. Twelve essays by daughters of survivors.
- Displaced Persons: Growing Up American After the Holocaust by Joseph Berger Berger. A New York Times reporter recounts what it was like being a child of Polish refugee survivors and details the lives of his parents.
- Fear and Hope: Three Generations of the Holocaust by Dan Bar-On. Five families share their stories across three generations and reveal different ways of confronting the original trauma of the Holocaust. The author identifies themes such as how family members reconstruct major life events, what stories remain untold, and the intergenerational reverberations.
- Hiding Places: A Father and His Sons Retrace Their Family's Escape from the Holocaust by Daniel Asa Rose. The author searches for something that will repair the damage done to his family by divorce, and will connect the family to something larger than themselves. Ultimately, the trip is about finding out why he wants to take the trip.
- I Was A Child of Holocaust Survivors by Bernice Eisenstein. Children of Holocaust survivors carry an unusual burden, but you don't come across many who consider their status a form of "cachet" that they can "socially trade on." Yet not only does Eisenstein freely admit to just that, she does it with an eloquent irreverence and a blend of self-absorption and self-awareness that make her debut captivating. The daughter of Polish refugees who settled in Toronto in the late 1940s, Eisenstein is a gifted artist as well as a wordsmith, and her color illustrations take over here when words are insufficient. She grasps that it was her parents who suffered through the Holocaust, but in describing herself as "some Jewish Sisyphus, pushing history and memory uphill, wondering what I'm supposed to be," she neatly articulates her struggle to understand their suffering and get to know them as human beings. Eisenstein treasures the rare moments when her reticent parents share their past. She seeks connections through relatives, books and other survivors. Her frustration and confusion are palpable, but what emerges most strongly is a deep and abiding love for her parents. "Never forget" is a central tenet of Judaism. In this beautiful tribute, Eisenstein shows she's taken that lesson to heart. (Review by Publisher's Weekly)

- In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Second Generation by Aaron Hass. A clinical psychologist offers an account of the experiences of Holocaust survivors' children.
- Jewels and Ashes by Arnold Zable. The Australian son of Polish Jews travels to Poland to discover his family history and better understand the present-day inner lives of those like him.
- Justice Matters: Legacies of the Holocaust and World War II by Mona Sue Weissmark. Examines the psychology of hatred and ethnic resentments passed from generation to generation, argues that while legal systems offer a structured means for redressing injustice, they do not redress the emotional pain, which, left unresolved, is then passed along, leading to entrenched ethnic tension and group conflict. Chronicles a study of children of survivors and Nazis, finds that story-telling is central to keeping the cycle of ethnic and religious strife alive is, with each side recounting the injustice it suffered and the valor shown by avenging its own group.
- The Keeper of Memory: A Memoir by Irene Reti. Author discovers she is Jewish and the child of survivors at age 17 and tries to integrate her story with her parents' silence and inventions.
- Last Dance at the Hotel Kempinski: Creating a Life in the Shadow of History by Robin Hirsch. A family history beginning with the meeting of the author's parents in prewar Berlin.
- The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million by Daniel Mendelsohn. Author searches for the truth behind his family's tragic past in World War II.
- Miriam's Kitchen by Elizabeth Ehrlich. Preservation of recipes, immigrant stories, childhood memories, droll musings over ritual, and sincere habits of the heart. It is an exploration of the need to connect with the past and with tradition, and of our hunger for meaning in a chaotic world.
- Motherland: Beyond the Holocaust—A Mother-Daughter Journey to Reclaim the Past by Fern Schumer Chapman. Edith Schumer returns to Germany with her daughter, Fern, who knew almost nothing of her mother's past. Finalist for the National Jewish Book Awards.
- Second Generation Voices: Reflections by Children of Holocaust Survivors and Perpetrators edited by Alan L. Berger and Naomi Berger. Twenty-nine writers discuss the effects of being children of survivors and of being children of perpetrators. The survivors' children focus on personal relationships to legacy. Perpetrators' children confront the conflicts of love for parents and condemnation and shame of their parents' sympathies and actions.
- The Silence: How Tragedy Shapes Talk by Ruth Wajnryb. Wajnryb interviews children of survivors and explores communication in survivor families. Explains the effects of trauma on communication and the language of silence that often becomes the first step to healing.
- Sister, Sister by Anna Rosner Blay. Anna, through recollections and dreams, describes the lives of her mother and aunt from the marketplaces of pre-war Krakow, through the Holocaust, to Schindler's factory, and finally in suburban Melbourne.
- Strangers in Their Own Land: Young Jews in Germany and Austria Today by Peter Sichrovsky, Jean Steinberg (Translator). The reflections of 13 COS on being Jewish in a land full of ghosts and hostility. Mostly they are alienated from parents, Germans, and the official Jewish community, and feel rage, despair and a strong need to justify living where they do.

- The War After: Living with the Holocaust by Ann Karpf. The author journeys into her parents' past and examines how it transmitted to her a struggle for identity. Her struggle becomes more clear when she has children.
- Where She Came From: A Daughter's Search For Her Mother's History by Helen Epstein. The author traces her maternal family history through several generations to its Central European roots while exploring the effects of assimilation, national identity, and the Holocaust on Jews living in the Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia.

POETRY

- Black Bread by Blu Greenberg. Infuses everyday activities with references to horrors not personally experienced.
- Bittersweet Legacy-Creative Responses to the Holocaust edited by Cynthia Moskowitz Brody. Emerging from meetings between survivors and children of survivors in the San Francisco area in 1994, these works of art became for many of the contributors a therapeutic way to process either personal experience of the Holocaust, or the emotional legacy passed on by parents who had experienced it.
- Soul Reflections - The Journey: A Survivor's Child Speaks by Miriam Jaskierowicz Arman. Author was born in post-war Germany, came to the U.S. in 1962 and became a voice teacher, a visual artist and a poet.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

- Becoming Gershona by Nava Semel. Living in Tel Aviv in 1958, twelve-year-old Gershona is surrounded by an adult world filled with secrets she doesn't understand.
- Daughters of the Law by Sandy Asher. Ruthie starts a friendship with Denise just when she is having more and more difficulty coping because of her parents' experiences.
- A Hat of Glass by Nava Semel. A collection 10 stories the heroes of which are children of Holocaust survivors. The first Israeli book to focus on the children of Holocaust survivors (translated into German, Italian and Romanian).
- The Rat Laughs by Nava Semel. Over 60 years later, a woman tells her childhood story to her grandchildren.