



# My Education: A Book of Dreams

By William S. Burroughs

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*My Education* is William S. Burroughs's final collection, first published two years before his death in 1997. It is a book of dreams, written over several decades and as personal and close to a memoir as we will see. The dreams cover themes from the mundane and ordinary -- conversations with his friends Allen Ginsberg or Ian Sommerville, feeding his cats, procuring drugs or sex -- to the erotic, bizarre, and visionary. Always a rich source of imagery in Burroughs's own fiction, in this book, dreams become a direct and powerful force in themselves.

"Mr. Burroughs has lost none of his irreverence or wit, but in recent years he has acquired an elegant, elegiac tone." – *The New York Times*

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## My Education: A Book of Dreams By William S. Burroughs Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

A memoir of sorts from beat novelist Burroughs, in which he examines his past through the medium of dreams.

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From Library Journal

Similar in format to Jack Kerouac's *Book of Dreams* (1961), Burroughs's latest offering is a simple dream diary, interspersed with brief interpretive comments and presented in clear, accessible prose. Most of the dreams involve visits to the Land of the Dead, where nearly all of Burroughs's friends and enemies have long since vanished. Kerouac, Brion Gysin, Jean Genet, and hostile critic Anatole Broyard make frequent appearances, along with the author's parents; his wife, Joan; and his son, Billy. Burroughs himself has mellowed considerably. He avoids sex, deplores thievery, rails against gun fanatics, and shares his home with several pampered cats. Because the author's best work incorporates nightmares and hallucinations, his dream record is of genuine literary interest. However, readers unschooled in Beat lore will struggle with cryptic allusions to obscure people and events. This important work for fans will likely win few new converts. Recommended for larger fiction collections.

*Edward B. St. John, Loyola Law Sch. Lib., Los Angeles*

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From [Booklist](#)

Cult figure Burroughs is out to challenge even his die-hard fans with this oddly structured novel. The unusual format takes the form of a series of descriptions of Burroughs' purported dreams, in varying amounts of detail. Some passages are up to three pages in length; others are four lines. The writing is quite evocative--the book can be read for style alone--as these snippets of nocturnal mind wanderings limn sexual situations, people he knows, places he's been, and writing problems and satisfactions he's overcome or enjoyed. The total effect is a fictionalized memoir of a man unafraid to be candid about his private acts and thoughts, but also a man who obviously has believed there is no substitute in life for direct experience. Generally, writers are people with eyes and ears kept more open than other people; and to which these dreams attest, Burroughs' active senses have kept him on a fascinating life journey. This novel is certainly not for traditionalists, but readers with looser interpretations of the form fiction should take will be provoked. *Brad Hooper*

## **Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**Elinor Russell:**

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