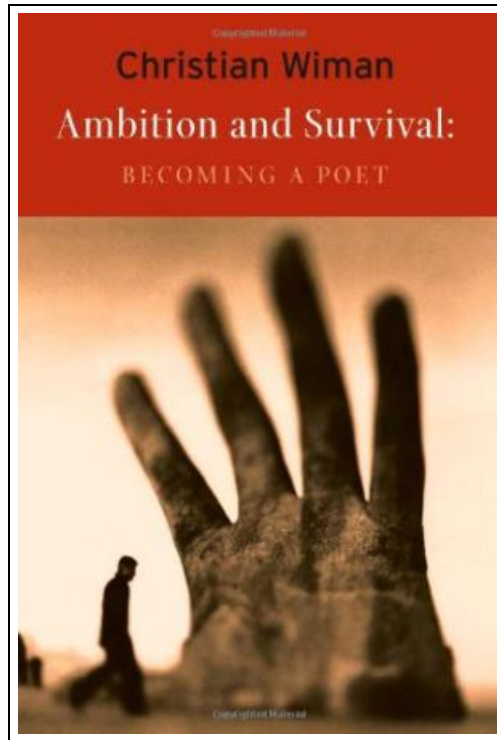


Ambition and Survival: Becoming a Poet



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Reviews

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(Prof. Llewellyn Thiel)*

AMBITION AND SURVIVAL: BECOMING A POET



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Copper Canyon Press, United States, 2007. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 226 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Blazing high style is how The New York Times describes the prose of Christian Wiman, the young editor who transformed Poetry, the country's oldest literary magazine. Ambition and Survival is a collection of stirring personal essays and critical prose on a wide range of subjects: reading Milton in Guatemala, recalling violent episodes of his youth, and traveling in Africa with his eccentric father, as well as a series of penetrating essays on writers as diverse as Thomas Hardy and Janet Lewis. The book concludes with a portrait of Wiman's diagnosis of a rare form of incurable and lethal cancer, and how mortality reignited his religious passions. When I was twenty years old I set out to be a poet. That sounds like I was a sort of frigate raising anchor, and in a way I guess I was, though susceptible to the lightest of winds. . . . When I read Samuel Johnson's comment that any young man could compensate for his poor education by reading five hours a day for five years, that's exactly what I tried to do, practically setting a timer every afternoon to let me know when the little egg of my brain was boiled. It's a small miracle that I didn't take to wearing a cape. Praise for Ambition and Survival That calling, at once religious, ethical, and aesthetic, is one that only a genuine poet can hear--and very few poets can explain it as compellingly as Mr. Wiman does. That gift is what makes Ambition and Survival, not just one of the best books of poetry criticism in a generation, but a spiritual memoir of the first order....



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