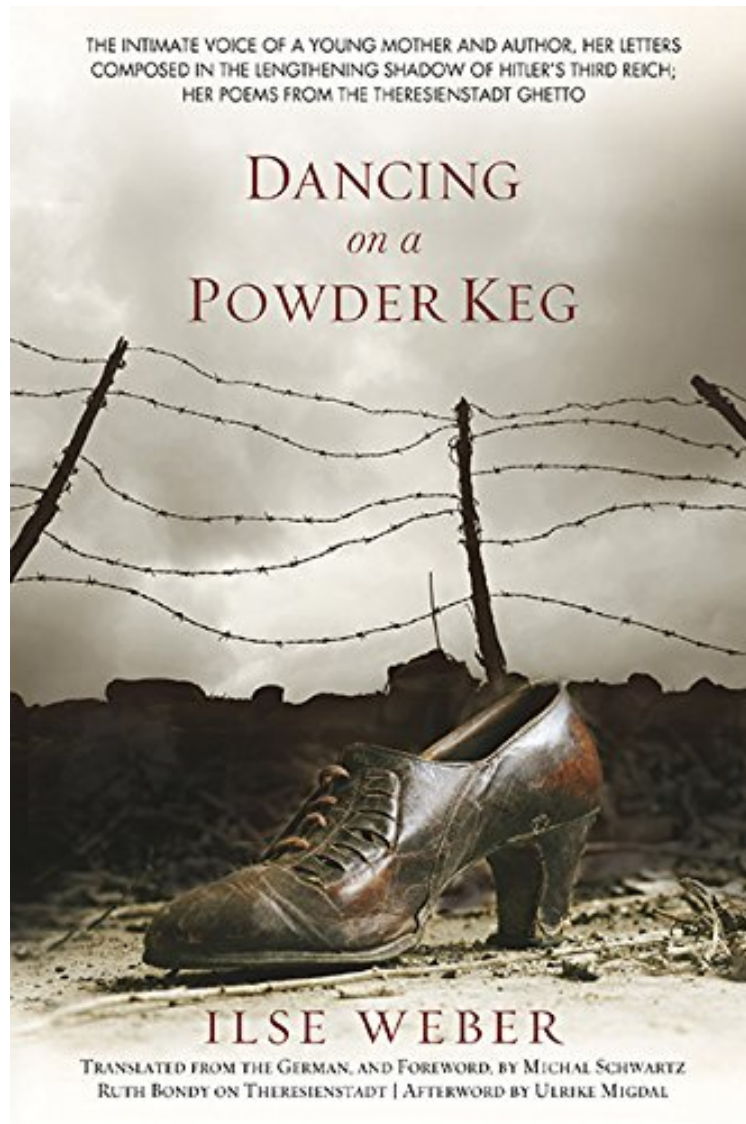


(Ebook free) Dancing on a Powder Keg: The Intimate Voice of a Young Mother and Author, Her Letters Composed in The Lengthening Shadow of Hitler's Third Reich, Her Poems from the Theresienstadt Ghetto

Dancing on a Powder Keg: The Intimate Voice of a Young Mother and Author, Her Letters Composed in The Lengthening Shadow of Hitler's Third Reich, Her Poems from the Theresienstadt Ghetto

Ilse Weber (Author), translated by Michal Schwartz (Author)

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Ilse Weber (Author), translated by Michal Schwartz (Author) : Dancing on a Powder Keg: The Intimate Voice of a Young Mother and Author, Her Letters Composed in The Lengthening Shadow of Hitler's Third Reich, Her Poems from the Theresienstadt Ghetto before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth

my time, and all praised *Dancing on a Powder Keg: The Intimate Voice of a Young Mother and Author, Her Letters Composed in The Lengthening Shadow of Hitler's Third Reich, Her Poems from the Theresienstadt Ghetto*:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. like it is written originally in the English language
By deanna Yan
As soon as I started reading this book, I had to continue without stop. At once I identified with the writer of the letters and at the same time I felt they were written to me. Such insight into what means to be a mother, a daughter, a friend, an artist. All these during Hitler's regime, keeping intact the generosity of her spirit. Even during her time in Theresienstadt, when letters were no longer allowed, her humanity shines in her poems. Although the book is translated from German, it flows so naturally, like it is written originally in the English language.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *Dancing on a Powder Keg*
By Anne Caston
A lovely book. Thank you.
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. *Poetry and letters from Theresienstadt*
By RSS
In 1942, Jewish author Ilse Weber was deported from Prague along with her husband Willi and the younger of her two sons to Theresienstadt, the Jewish ghetto and the Nazis model concentration camp, trotted out as a fake village for events like Red Cross visits. Beginning in 1933 as political and social changes began taking root across Europe, Ilse had been writing prolifically to her friend Lilian, a Swede then living in London. The first part of *Dancing on a Powder Keg* is a collection of these letters, detailing the everyday and the mundane. Eventually, Ilse and her husband sent their older son to Lilian in England on one of the famous Kindertransports, ultimately saving his life. Ilse and her younger son, like millions of others, didn't survive the camp system, perishing in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. Ilse worked in Theresienstadt as a nurse on the children's ward, and volunteered to accompany a transport of sick children east to Poland, even though the camp inmates were already well aware of what that move entailed. In the book's enlightening afterword, details of her actions in this time and her incredible bravery finally emerge after many years. Ilse's husband buried her poems in Theresienstadt, saving them from the chaotic postwar destruction, and some were published without crediting the author. Her surviving son recognized one of these published poems years later, and finally the author was matched to her life's creative work. Along with this identity revelation came stories about how inspirational and comforting her poems and songs had been to others in the camp. The book really gets interesting in its second half, composed of the poems and bits of songs and lullabies Ilse wrote during her imprisonment in Theresienstadt. Even in translation, her words are simple but touching, often heart- and gut-wrenching. She had a strong but sensitive soul, and she pulls back the curtain on what the Nazis tried so hard to obscure from the rest of the world in the ghetto, baring the unimaginable pain and horrors inflicted on the prisoners there. Her poems are absolutely haunting, impossible to read without being deeply affected. Accompanying illustrations by a Czech artist, Bedrich Fritta, created within Theresienstadt, are powerfully haunting and provide fitting imagery to match her emotional poetry. I found that many of the letters to Lilian dragged on and didn't contribute much meaningful content to the book as a whole. I do find it interesting to read about daily lives of another era, especially World War II stories, but I couldn't stay interested in the intricacies of family members and relationships, particularly since so little happened for so long in the course of the letters. They could have been edited for greater impact, because her story was inarguably emotionally impacting and her poems so haunting and beautiful that this could've been a really great historical work. As it is, combined with its telling of her life story, the book is still a worthy testament to a woman who gave not only inspiration and hope to so many in the camps, but with her words and creativity, gave them voices to echo through history and a lasting testament to their experiences. Be kind to one another in word and deed, / otherwise these times will knock us down. I received an advance copy courtesy of the publisher in exchange for review.

Endorsed by Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, as a unique document with literary value, Ilse Weber's letters and poems, 1933-1944, record with vivid immediacy the lives of her small family during a time of increasing danger, when Europe descended from peace to the chaos of war and genocide. Ilse wrote to her Swedish friend, Lilian, who lived in London, and from 1939, also to her older son whom the Webers sent to Lilian on a Kindertransport. In 1942, Ilse, her husband and younger son, were deported to the Theresienstadt ghetto. Working there in the children's infirmary, Ilse eased the daily suffering of her patients and fellow inmates with songs she wrote and set to music, accompanying herself on her contraband guitar. These more than 60 songs and poems that trace Ilse's last years, have been performed by various artists and ensembles from around the world, having become symbols of ghetto life under Nazi occupation.

From the back cover: "The literature about Theresienstadt (Terezin) and the fate of Czech Jewry during the Holocaust is voluminous, but Ilse Weber's story is unique. A tremendously gifted young woman, a poetess and musician, a son who is rescued to Britain and Sweden, a devoted husband, and many of whose wonderful poems have been miraculously rescued, form a unique testimony. Ilse Weber worked as a nurse in a children's sick-room in Theresienstadt, and refused to abandon her charges when they were transported to Auschwitz. Miraculously, again, her last spoken words at the entrance to the gas chamber were preserved. Her husband survived, and her older son finally made this publication possible. I have read many accounts, but this account by someone who did not survive, and

whose story has been reconstructed, is exceptional." -- Prof. Yehuda Bauer, academic adviser to Yad Vashem, academic adviser to the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research, and senior adviser to the Swedish Government on the International Forum on Genocide Prevention. In 1998, he was awarded the Israel Prize, for "history of the Jewish people," primarily in connection with his Holocaust studies. Of the numerous reviews for Ilse Weber's letters and poems' German edition, below is a translated selection of the most significant German-language newspapers. "Ilse's charismatic and helpful personality made these poems not only popular, but for many inmates they became more important than 'water and bread,' as they restored their courage to face life, pride and hope the book's story and the fate of its protagonists, finally wrested from oblivion is absolutely touching it necessitates a filming of Ilse Weber's life it must be recognized by future generations as one of the most important testimonies of the Shoa." -- Florian Hunger, Jdische Zeitung "with her smuggled guitar, this charismatic woman made music secretly half night through Ilse became a legendary figure among the survivors of Theresienstadt." -- Oliver Pfohlmann, Neue Zürcher Zeitung "Reading these [letters] today one remains speechless. Likewise the straightforward and visually expressive poems. They present themselves without flourish and embellishment, and for that they are gripping." -- Roland Maurer, Der Kleine Bund, Zürich "even today, 60 years after the horrible events Ilse Weber's letters and poems manifest the fate of an individual in dark times get 'under our skin.'" -- Hugo Ernst Kufer, Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung "Letters written to a best friend are something very personal One confides things one doesn't dare say loud, one is even afraid to think I read Ilse's letters and at times couldn't hold back the tears: not because this young, educated woman was maudlin, but because I could not stop the calamity. To hope that the course of events would suddenly change is of course naive but one must have hope when we get so close to this woman, get to know her" -- Stefanie Nannen, Hamburger Abendblatt -- sAbout the Author Ilse Weber was born in Vtkovice, in northern Czechoslovakia. A Jewish poet, she wrote in German and published children's books and radio scripts. In 1930 she married Willi Weber. In 1931 she gave birth to her first son, Hanus, and in 1934 to Tommy. In 1938, Hitler's Third Reich annexed Vtkovice and soon after, it occupied all of Czechoslovakia. In the spring of 1939, the Webers sent Hanu with a Kindertransport to England. In 1942, Ilse, Willi and Tommy were deported to the Theresienstadt ghetto. Ilse worked there with sick children, and in 1944, as the entire infirmary was deported, she refused to abandon the children and voluntarily registered to the transport to Auschwitz, where she and her younger son were murdered. Ilse's husband survived and retrieved her poems. The letters were fortuitously discovered decades later, when a London attic was emptied.