

Roger Craik

TEACHING PRIMO LEVI'S *IF THIS IS A MAN*

Someone sneezes, whereupon
five or six in unison
bless the sneezer.

I soldier on (en passant taking in
Him *in absentia*
governing the subjunctive mood).

Book and pad splash to the floor.
I'm also used to this.
It's not their fault the desks are small.

Still, there's the reaching down. And talk.
At the front a woman yawns
voluminously.

Soon the rustling will begin
and they'll be trooping out in force,
cell phone in hand, to Christ knows where. . .

The boring Jews.
The boring war.
Boring literature.