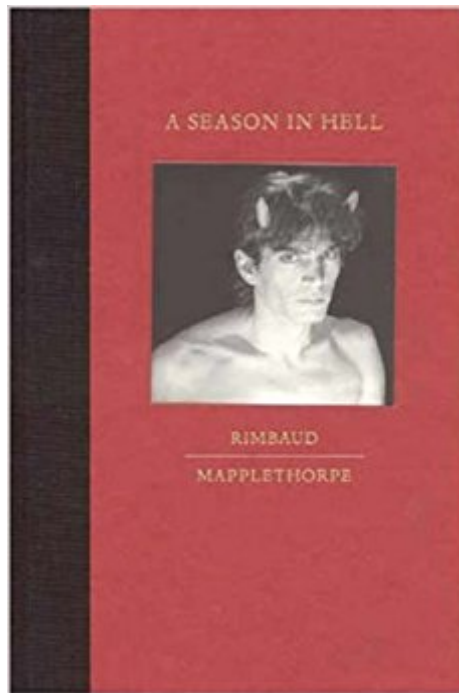




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A Season In Hell



Synopsis

Written by Rimbaud at age 18 in the wake of a tempestuous affair with fellow poet, Paul Verlaine, *A Season in Hell* has been a touchstone for anguished poets, artists and lovers for over a century. This volume presents the text in French and English with photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In the collection of prose poems and verse fragments that make up the short book *A Season in Hell*, begun in April 1873 in an outbuilding at Rimbaud's family farm at the village of Roche and completed by the end of August, he looks back in despair over his life as a poet. In one of the fragments, titled "Ravings number two" he talks about "the history of one of my follies. I invented the colors of the vowels!" he claims, and goes on: "I flattered myself that I had created a poetic language accessible...to all the senses...I expressed the inexpressible. I defined vertigos...I ended up regarding my mental disorder as sacred." Rimbaud draws a picture of his affair with Verlaine in cynical terms, painting Verlaine as a weak and foolish virgin and himself as an "infernal bridegroom," a monster of cruelty. It wasn't far from the truth. The last chapter of *A Season in Hell* is titled "Farewell." It has an air of exhaustion and relief about it. "I have tried to invent new flowers, new stars, new flesh, new tongues. I believed I had acquired supernatural powers. Well! I must bury my imagination and my memories. A fine fame as an artist and story-teller swept away! I who called myself magus or angel, exempt from all morality, I am given back to the earth, with a task to pursue, and wrinkled reality to embrace. A peasant!" *A Season In Hell* was finished in August 1873.

Rimbaud somehow persuaded his thrifty mother to pay to have the book printed in Belgium. He sent his six author's copies to his friends and to men of letters in Paris. Many people see this manuscript as his farewell to literature.

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