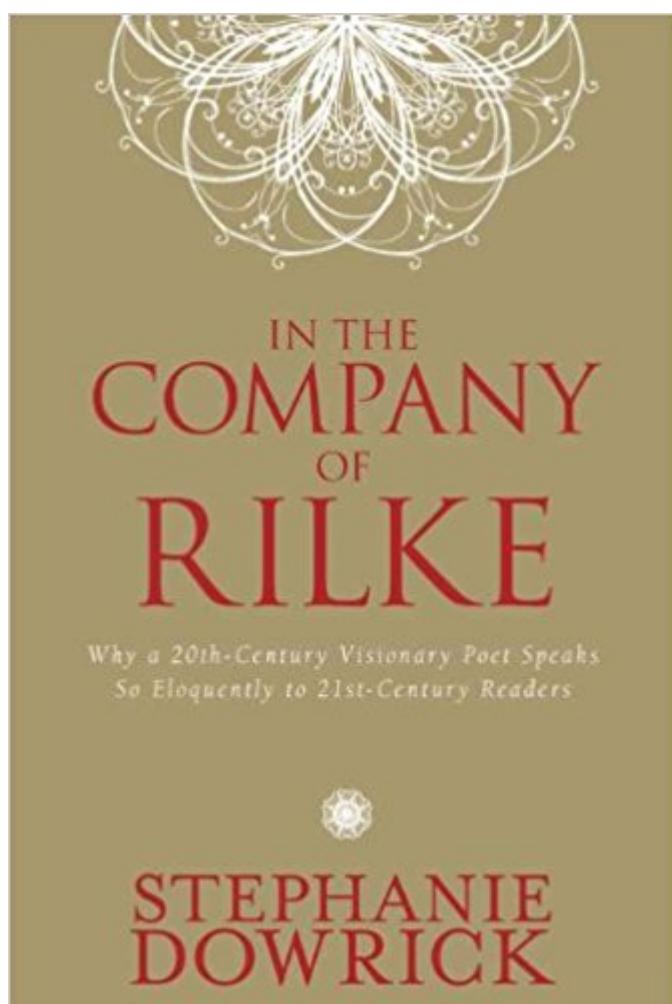


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In The Company Of Rilke: Why A 20th-Century Visionary Poet Speaks So Eloquently To 21st-Century Readers (Tarcher Master Mind Editions)





Synopsis

Connecting to your inner life through the transformative poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke. In the Company of Rilke is a rare book about a rare poet. Rainer Maria Rilke was a giant of twentieth-century writing who remains a visionary voice for our own time, captivating readers not only with his brilliance but also his fearlessness about the "deepest things." Speaking through his own contradictions and ambivalences, he gives readers a profound understanding of the complex beauty of human existence. Here, questions matter more than answers. Here, a poet can speak directly to God while also doubting God. Astonishingly, this is the first major study of Rilke from a spiritual perspective, even though the greatest of Rilke's gifts was to show how inevitably life centers upon a profound mystery-to which we can freely open ourselves. Drawing on her deep understanding of the gifts of Rilke's writings, as well as her own personal spiritual seeking, Stephanie Dowrick offers an intimate and accessible appreciation of this most exceptional poet and his transcendent work.

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Customer Reviews

I have been trying on and off for a decade to get into Rilke. His manner is captivating - refined and mysterious -, but what is he talking about? Not about the external world, but some mental realm of his own, esoteric and indefinable. It is a formidable task to make this intelligible, but Dowrick takes it up with verve and an infectious enthusiasm. Her book is intended to get one into Rilke, and with me,

at least, it has succeeded. She does not take one through the various stages of Rilke's development, or even offer a close reading of a single poem; but instead she presents a general take on the poet's mind and aims. According to her presentation, Rilke was, above all, a seeker after God - not the God of the dogmatic religions, the transcendent law-giver, but a God who is impersonal and immanent in the world, a God to whom we can attain only through an attentive waiting, and an openness of the spirit to transformation, to seeing everything in a new way. This is, in effect, to give priority to the Rilke of his early volume 'The Book of Hours', but there is also much in later Rilke that, as Dowrick shows, picks up the same themes. Much of this book could be described as a New Age spirituality, illustrated by reference to Rilke, supplemented by references to other gurus, such as Rumi and Bede Griffiths. But Dowrick is disarmingly frank, and gives her reader plenty of ammunition to support other views of her favourite poet. Her treatment of Rilke's life and personal relationships will give support to those who dismiss him as incorrigibly self-centred, Narcissistic, snobbish, feline and manipulative, and as someone who guarded his privacy with no respect at all for the most basic social duties - such as visiting one's mother or attending one's daughter's wedding.

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