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Selected Poems And Fragments (Penguin Classics: Poets In Translation)



Synopsis

Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) is now recognized as one of Europe's supreme poets. He first found his true voice in the epigrams and odes he wrote when transfigured by his love for the wife of a rich banker. He later embarked on an extraordinarily ambitious sequence of hymns exploring cosmology and history, from mythological times to the discovery of America and his own era. The "Canticles of Night", by contrast, include enigmatic fragments in an unprecedented style, which anticipates the Symbolists and Surrealists. Together the works collected here show Hölderlin's use of Classical and Christian imagery and his exploration of cosmology and history in an attempt to find meaning in an uncertain world.

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Customer Reviews

As a german reader I must say that the author had made excellent translations. You have the feeling that he translated with heart - very rich in his speech and sometimes surprising. Some verses of Hölderlin, which are strange and not easy to understand are in his translations clearer and simpler to understand. " But it is the sea / That takes and gives remembrance, / And love no less keeps eyes attentively fixed, / But what is lasting the poets provide" (Remembrance).

A beautiful book! The cover, a detail from a painting by Caspar David Friedrich of Grecian ruins on an island in the mist, sets the tone for this great selection of the tragic early 19th century poet Holderlin's work, illuminated by Michael Hamburger's sensitive translations and lovely introduction.

Great. Some violence, some sexual content. First person.

I don't have much to say about Holderlin's poetry, which I find a bit stodgy and ungraceful, but I have to say I cannot read it in German, which I believe is a necessary prerequisite to any true read of poetry. I would merely like to share a poem that I found beautiful: Sunset Where are you? Dazzled, drunken my soul grows faint And dark with so much gladness; for even now I listened while, too rich in golden Sounds, the enrapturing youth, the sun-god intoned his evening hymn on a heavenly lyre; All round the hills and forests re-echoed it, Though far from here-to pious nations Who still revere him-by now he's journeyed. Wo bist du? Trunken dammert die Seele mir Von aller deiner Wonne; denn eben ist's, Dass ich gelauscht, wie, goldner Tone Voll der entzukende Sonnenjungling Sein Abendlied af himmlischer Leyer speilt'; Es tonten rings die Walder und Hugel nach. Doch fern ist er zu frommen Volkern, Die ihn noch ehren, hinweggegangen. (pp 16). Enjoy the archaic read.

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