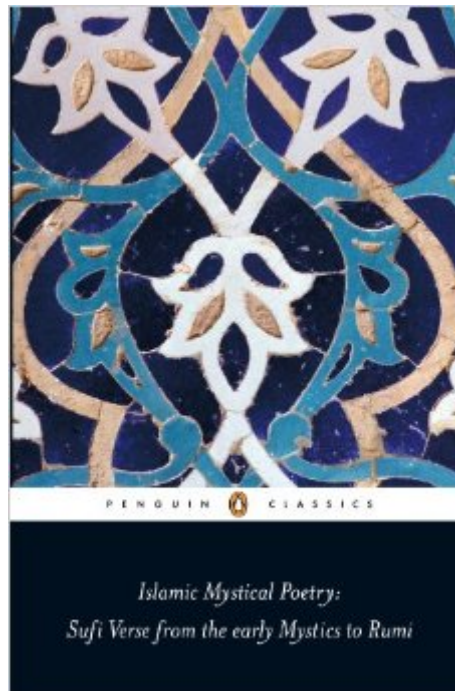


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Islamic Mystical Poetry: Sufi Verse From The Early Mystics To Rumi (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

Written from the ninth to the twentieth century, these poems represent the peak of Islamic Mystical writing, from Rabia Basri to Mian Mohammad Baksh. Reflecting both private devotional love and the attempt to attain union with God and become absorbed into the Divine, many poems in this edition are imbued with the symbols and metaphors that develop many of the central ideas of Sufism: the Lover, the Beloved, the Wine, and the Tavern; while others are more personal and echo the poet's battle to leave earthly love behind. These translations capture the passion of the original poetry and are accompanied by an introduction on Sufism and the common themes apparent in the works. This edition also includes suggested further reading. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

It is no exaggeration to say that were I restricted to owning but one book my choice would be Mahmood Jamal's "Islamic Mystical Poetry: Sufi Verse from the Early Mystics to Rumi." And among the poems chosen for this 332-page anthology, I would be sustained above all by the verse which opens the book. It was written by Mohyuddin Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240), a Spaniard by birth who, Jamal

tells us, "is universally acknowledged as the greatest mystic of Islam." It is as follows: "My heart has become capable of every form: it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks, And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Kaaba and the Tables of the Torah and the book of the Qur'an. I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love's Camels take, that is my religion and my faith." The images and sentiments in this verse thrill. Above all, I am inspired by the appreciation that Ibn 'Arabi expresses for each of the three Abrahamic faiths, a tolerance one needs pray for today. Sufi poetry is most strikingly characterized by recurring references to love, wine-drinking, and ecstatic transports. In some cases, these references are obvious and in other cases more coded, but the general purpose is to express a desire for personal knowledge of the Lord. This goal needs no explanation in a text translation of Abu Hafis Suhrawardi (1145-1234) that is included in the introduction. "The common folk listen to music according to nature, and the novices listen with desire and awe, while the listening of the saints brings them a vision of the Divine gifts and graces, and these are the gnostics to whom listening means contemplation. But finally, there is the listening of the spiritually perfect to whom, through music, God reveals Himself unveiled."

I have not finished the book as yet; this is one of those that really is to be enjoyed, thought upon and just quietly savored. As much of Christian writing does not conform with some of the more unsavory parts of our past, so this book reveals a grace and beauty not often seen in Islam. Many of these poets were killed by the same type of men who martyred saints. Please enjoy. roberttrenlow1@comcast.net

Good

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