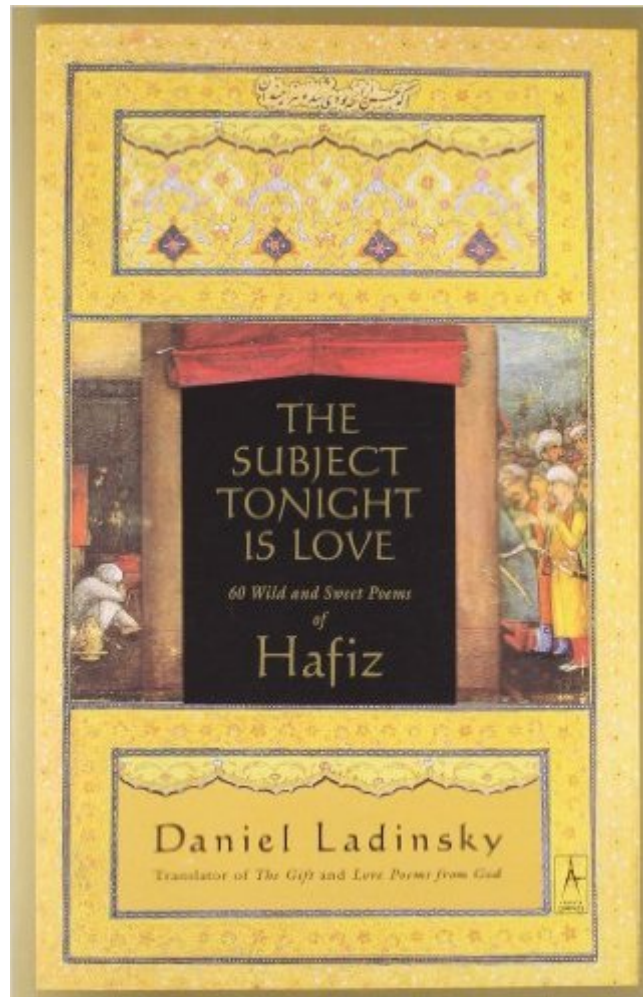


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# The Subject Tonight Is Love: 60 Wild And Sweet Poems Of Hafiz (Compass)



## Synopsis

To Persians, the fourteenth-century poems of Hafiz are not classical literature from a remote past, but cherished love, wisdom, and humor from a dear and intimate friend. Perhaps, more than any other Persian poet, it is Hafiz who most fully accesses the mystical, healing dimensions of poetry. Daniel Ladinsky has made it his life's work to create modern, inspired translations of the world's most profound spiritual poetry. Through Ladinsky's translations, Hafiz's voice comes alive across the centuries singing his message of love.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It is rare to find a book of poetry-or any book- that lifts the spirits and touches the heart as deeply as this one. Daniel Ladinsky's translations of the Sufi poet Hafiz are a unique blend of contemporary images and Persian motifs that evoke scenes that readers will recognize in their own lives. Hafiz, Iran's most treasured poet, is known for an uncanny ability to speak directly to the reader's concerns. His poems have the ability to console the heart throbbing with longing or aching after a few hard knocks. I would especially recommend it for those bouts of Seasonal Affective Disorder that afflict many of us this time of year. I carried this book around with me on the subway during an especially cold winter in New York City and it seemed to transmit a warm, tingly feeling, like a glass of good wine, that warded off the intrusion of depressing thoughts. One poem in particular was helpful which said; Don't surrender your loneliness So quickly Let it cut more deep. Let it ferment and

season you  
As few human  
Or even divine ingredients can  
Something missing in my heart tonight  
Has made my eyes so soft,  
My voice  
So tender,  
My need of God  
Absolutely  
Clear.  
Only a wise old master  
like Hafiz could give advice like that, in a few choice words that are the equivalent in comfort to hours of professional counseling or several trips to the spa. His poetry gives us an appreciation of the wonderful gifts of the soul that we all possess, but rarely take the trouble to access. This book would be a wonderful gift for anyone and especially for yourself!.

Hafiz... each piece falls like rain, like butterfly light, like a gentle knowing laugh and like quiet gems..  
jeez... as a writer I am dumbfounded by his infallible heart and purely penetrative selection of the word.... I'd surely like to share my prayer mat with him when those days come to me.... do not pass go folks... read it by candle light or thrum of rain while your lover looks on... or the silent room embraces you... hafiz is a master.

This was the 2nd collection of Daniel Ladinsky's translations of Hafiz that I read. As with "I Heard God Laughing," this one is gorgeous. Ladinsky translates Hafiz in a way that no one else manages to do, conveying his exuberance and outrageousness. What a place Hafiz can take you to, across time and culture, when he is translated as he deserves. This is another "must have" book.

The wisdom of a disciple of a living Master rings through this awe-filled version of Hafiz. It's obvious that one who has experienced first hand the miracle of a Master/Disciple relationship can write such beauty. Is this Hafiz' experience or your own, Daniel? You have reminded those who seek the "highest love affair" of all...

A lifelong fan (dare I say devoted?) to Hafiz and his many works, this book is a must have. Nothing compares to reading Hafiz in Persian, but this book comes very, very close. Hafiz is enlightening, spiritual, refreshing, and above all, very full of wisdom. His works are truly magical, especially considering after all these years, people are still compelled to his work and mystified by his writings. Classic.

Hafiz is, together with Rumi, simply one of the greatest poets to have walked on this earth (in my opinion), and Ladinsky's translations bring them to English speakers in a way that we can easily and deliciously assimilate. This book of enlightening poems will make your soul glow and shiver with delight, if only you let it...

Translation is complicated in that the veracity of the work must be taken on faith if one does not know the original language. Thus good translators are careful to account for their approach to the craft and take seriously the need to educate their readership. This is especially the case with languages and traditions that are removed from European cultural experience and when translated for an English speaking public which is often monolingual. Unfortunately, such is not the case with the several publications of Daniel Ladinsky that variously purport to be either translations or versions of the great and inimitable Hafez of Shiraz. Hafez is treasured by Persian speakers as the greatest poet of what is perhaps the world's greatest poetic tradition. To misrepresent him so blatantly, thoroughly and consistently over time as Ladinsky has done, is breathtaking. His work in "translation" does not represent the ghazal form, is not based on the Persian text and can not be referred to extant English translations and versions. The ghazal in Persian commonly has anywhere from seven to fourteen couplets with an aa, ba, ca, da etc rhyme scheme. The poet "signs" his ghazal with a pen name. Each Persian line in English translation has, on average, about fourteen syllables. The following is my translation of a Hafezian ghazal to illustrate structure, rhyme and typical themes: Ghazal #332, Khanlari

Although I see the like a vat of wine from love's ferment,  
I drink blood with sealed lips that keep me silent.  
It is the soul's resolve to possess the beloved's lips;  
Look at me, whose struggle with soul has left me spent!  
How can I be free from heart's sorrow when each breath  
The idol's black curl rings my ear with the slave's ornament.  
God forbid that I fall in love with my own devotion;  
This much is true: I drink a glass when the time is cogent.  
I hope that on Judgement Day upon the enemy's note,  
The burden of His grace doesn't leave me twisted and bent.  
My father sold the green of heaven for two grains of wheat;  
Why not sell for less this garden that blooms but a moment?  
My wearing the dervish frock is not about religion;  
It is a covering to conceal a hundred torments.  
I who wish to drink only pure and filtered wine, what can I do but remain  
with the wise Magian conversant?  
If in this way our minstrel plays in the mode of love,  
Hafez's verse when heard will create astonishment.  
The ghazal is a song composed of couplets which tells a story, one not based on linear narrative but rather on deeply associated themes. The most consistent theme in Hafez's ghazals is the religion of love. Ladinsky's work on Hafez does not remotely resemble the ghazal in its Persian line arrangement, as illustrated above. Now, his work need not necessarily mirror the formal qualities of the Persian ghazal in order to convey the meaning and spirit of a given ghazal. However, the problem is much worse than that of form. Ladinsky does not work from the Persian but has claimed to work from various English translations, notably Wilberforce Clark's literal, stilted, Victorian era crib of the Divan-e-Hafez. But since he does not

"translate" whole ghazals, but fragments of ghazals, and does not identify what material is the basis for a given "translation/ version", it is impossible to establish even an abstract connection with any text at all. When I read Ladinsky's work, I am not reminded of Hafez in the slightest, and I have translated some eighty Hafez ghazals from the Persian. There is not even a faint echo of Hafez in Ladinsky's work. So where do Ladinsky's "celebrated" translations come from? Fortunately, Ladinsky has himself supplied the answer. He has been compelled to explain, without the slightest hint of self contradiction or embarrassment, that what he refers to as translation and version is in fact the result of channeling, ie Hafez came to him in some kind of vision and supplied him with the spiritual and linguistic essence of his work. This being the explanation that Ladinsky has supplied to account for his literary modus operandi, why did he and his publisher not publish his work as New Age spiritual transmission, or the like? It is abundantly clear that the answer has more to do with marketing and sales than a gift for honest representation.

this is one of the best collection of poems i have ever read. it helps to bring Hafiz's work to a wider audience. the best poem deals with ego and its annihilation. happy reading!

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