



The Soul Is Here For Its Own Joy: Sacred Poems from Many Cultures

Robert Bly

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Robert Bly's ground-breaking anthology of spiritual poems, the result of over a decade of personal research, celebrates the ongoing role of the divine in literature. For as long as people have lived together in communities and built enduring cultures, they have sung and written about their relationship with the God or gods they believed in. In the words of the Irish writer Sean O'Faolain, "all good writing in the end is the writer's argument with God."

The Soul Is Here For Its Own Joy gathers poems from a wide range of cultures and traditions and divides them into ten parts, each forming a resonant exploration of a specific and timeless spiritual question. Selections include the work of Dante, Dogen, Goethe, Hafez, Juan Ramon Jimenez, Kabir, Lalla, Li Po, Mirabai, Mary Oliver, Owl Woman, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Rumi, in addition to Blake, Dickinson, Donne, Hopkins, Stevens, Yeats, and other important English and American poets. Together these poems form both a celebration and a quest--a kind of pilgrim's progress that embraces all the rich wisdom of East and West, ancient and modern, male and female, spirit and flesh.

The Soul Is Here For Its Own Joy: Sacred Poems from Many Cultures Details

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Robyn says

This is a book which is almost beyond description, it is so good. Robert bly's translations of Rumi are amazing. To hear the words of Rumi, from all those years ago and to be transported by his words is an experience that is with me each day. His words speak directly to the heart. I have read others of rumi's poems and also Kabir and Hafez, but these are truly awe-inspiring.

Gineen says

what a beautiful book- found women sufi mystic poets i'd never heard of !
very deep soul drink here...

Sandy says

READINGS THAT MIRROR THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Beautiful book, arranged like the spiritual journey: At first, you feel the call, have a big experience, make a commitment, then forget it all, do your thing in the world until you get in trouble, then commit to spirit again, forget it, go back to the world, mess up, back to spirit, etc. Until you finally really commit. Takes the reader through poetry demonstrating a deeper and deeper commitment to and knowledge of the sacred. Many traditions. Great introduction to the Indian and Middle eastern poets: Poems by Rumi, Kabir, Mirabai, Lalli, all in one volume.

Stanley says

This is not a book you can ever say you "Read" as if you actually finished it and then put it on the shelf. This book is a bible, a companion, a map to the soul, to life and all the Universe. You will carry it with you around the house, keep it on your desk, in your bathroom, in your backpack - wherever it is you may need quick access to enlightened poetry and guidance. If you are up, this book will provide confirmation. If you are down, this book will give you answers and reasons to keep searching, keep trying to know love. If you are in love, this book will make you realize what it is you have gotten yourself into.

What can you say about Bly? He was truly one of the most enlightened minds of our era. His abilities to translate the inner-workings of the soul into written words us sub-humans can understand were a gift from the heavens. We would be lost without his work.

Ivan Granger says

Another good, wide-ranging selection of sacred poetry gathered by Robert Bly. From Hafiz to Freidrich Holderlin, Mirabai to Mirza Ghalib, Rumi to Rilke. A very good book to pick up, open to a random page, and then disappear...

Patti K says

A 1995 anthology edited by Robert Bly is a thoughtful and nourishing book. It includes a rich variety of poets showcasing their relationships with the spiritual element of lives. Rumi and Kabir as well as Rilke, Machado, Hafez and Hopkins are featured. Many ecstatic poems and queries into the deeper concerns of consciousness from around the world. Very good.

Karen deVries says

I have kept this book of poems near my bed for the last several years. They've helped light my path on some of the darkest days. They're not all "hits" for me, but the majority of them come close.

Joseph McCaleb says

I returned to this collection, having probably read most of it about 20 years ago when it was published. Robert Bly magnificently collects, organizes, translates a few of the amazing poems, and provides his incisive comments for each of the ten sections. The flow perhaps reached its peak for me in this reading in the final section in the middle of a poem by Attar (version by Coleman Barks), titled "The Newborn" with these lines: "Let loving lead your soul./Make it a place to retire to,/ a kind of monastery cave, a retreat/ for the deepest core of being./ Then build a road/ from there to God."

Glen Gersmehl says

one of the best, most readable, most inspiring anthologies of poetry in print

Margaret Brown says

Bly is perhaps the greatest translator of poetry in our time. He also has an amazing eye. Here he links poets like Emily Dickinson with Rumi and Machado. Spiritual truths connect in the most amazing places.

Steven says

A gift from my wife Kendel on our 28th anniversary.

Darice says

I liked the organization of the poems into the stages of spiritual journey, beginning with the difficulties of starting the path, going into struggles with greed, including love personal and divine. Also, the large collections of two poets, Rumi and Hafiz, explored the details of a spiritual structure that was altogether not inhibiting but rather inclusive. However, it got a little dry and felt a little safe, but altogether good for a solid, unbiased foundation of spiritual poetry.

Amy Paget says

The Soul is Here for its Own Joy is a great collection edited by Robert Bly. Subtitled "Sacred poems from Many Cultures" it provided superb reflection opportunities at a recent "Quiet Day" that I attended. It lends itself to 'straight through' reading. There's minimal information on the various poets...only copyright permissions at the back of the book. Hear the power in this first stanza In "The Scattered Congregation" by Tomas Transtromer:

'We got ready and showed our home.
The visitor thought: you live well.
The slum must be inside you.
