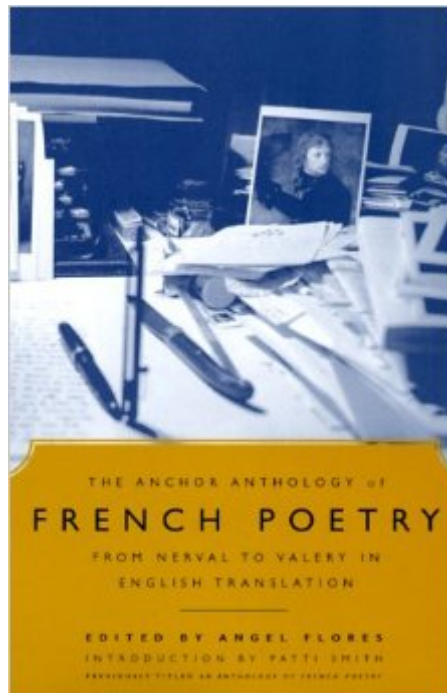


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The Anchor Anthology Of French Poetry: From Nerval To Valery In English Translation



Synopsis

First published in 1958, this collection introduced an indispensable corpus of western poetry to countless American college students, francophiles, and would-be poets -- among them Patti Smith, whose vocation was formed she says, by reading this book. The poetic and cultural tradition forged by the Symbolist poets -- Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Verlaine, Appollinaire, and others -- reverberated throughout the avant garde and counter-cultures of the twentieth century. Modernism, surrealism, abstract impressionism, and the Beat movement are unthinkable without the example of these poets and their theories of art, making this reissue possibly the hippest "dead white European male" anthology ever published. Including translations by Richmond Lattimore, W. S. Merwin, Dudley Fitts, and Richard Wilbur, this anthology has stood the test of time in terms of its selection and scholarly apparatus. Now back in print after twenty years in a fresh new edition, the book features an introduction by Patti Smith that testifies to its epochal impact on her own career, as well as those of other influential latter-day poets, including Lou Reed and Jim Carroll. This rediscovered gem is sure to inspire a new generation.

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Customer Reviews

Frankly speaking, I was not very familiar with French poetry till I bought a copy of this book recently in Paris. This book, which was last published in 1958, has been out of print till now. In fact, book was in the wish list from my brother who is a professor of English in India and who read a copy of this anthology long time ago. According to him, it was the best anthology of French poetry he had

ever read. After reading some of the poems, I not only discovered the beauty of French poetry, but also could understand why my brother has been after this book for a long time. Patty Smith, who wrote the introduction to the new publication of the anthology, like my brother, read this book long time ago when she got a copy of the book on her table by stroke of luck in 1964. She now writes, "I must admit that I pocketed the book as my own, and it became the bible of my life. Edited by the aptly named Angel Flores, this anthology introduced me to some of the greatest poets in French literature It is my pleasure now to reintroduce this humble yet significant volume, so long out of print, to you now. And may I use this as an opportunity to salute and thank that unidentified soul who left this book upon my table in 1964." French poetry has influenced not only people like Patty Smith or my brother in India and many throughout the world, but it has also influenced famous poets like T. S. Eliot and many others. I am very happy to see that this valuable anthology of French poetry has now been published again. Besides my brother, I am also happy for me who is not deep into literature for living, because it has introduced to me the beauty of French poetry for the first time.

This is an excellent anthology of French poetry starting with the work of Gerard de Nerval (1808-1855) and going through Paul Valery (1871-1945). The book is in two major sections: pp. 3-185 contain the English translations of the French poems (each poet has a section of poems--and the poets are presented in chronological order of their birth years); and pp. 289-443 present the same poems in the same order, but in French). There is a very good Table of Contents which tells the titles of the poems and the name and date of the published edition from which the poem comes, or the date of the individual poem itself. In the back of the volume there is an exceptionally good Bibliography with both General citations, as well as specific essays on the particular poets. Each poet also has listed the best edition of his works in that Bibliography. The poets presented in this anthology along with very good selections from their poems (and short biographies) are: Gerard de Nerval; Charles Baudelaire; Tristan Corbiere; Paul Verlaine; Arthur Rimbaud; Stephane Mallarme; Jules Laforgue; Guillaume Apollinaire; and Paul Valery. The English translations are by various people, some famous by name, others not so well known to the general reader. Apparently...not surprisingly...the more provocative and interesting the poet and his poems, the more variety of translators and the more engaged the traducteur et la traductrice travaillent. My own personal favorites from this anthology are the poems of De Nerval, Mallarme, and Valery. Here is a bit of Mallarme's "Weary of Bitter Ease..." ["Las de l'amer repos..."]

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