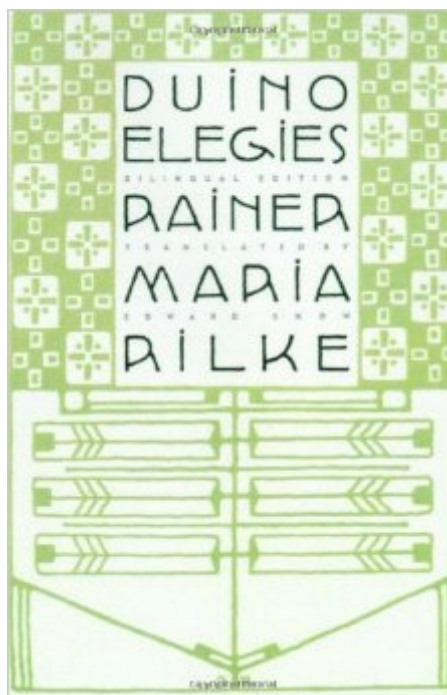


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Duino Elegies: A Bilingual Edition (German Edition)



Synopsis

Who, if I cried out, would hear me among the angelic orders? and even if one of them pressed me suddenly to his heart: I'd be consumed in that overwhelming existence. For beauty is nothing but the beginning of terror, which we can just barely endure, and we stand in awe of it as it coolly disdains to destroy us. Every angel is terrifying.-from "The First Elegy"

Over the last fifteen years, in his two volumes of *New Poems* as well as in *The Book of Images and Uncollected Poems*, Edward Snow has emerged as one of Rainer Maria Rilke's most able English-language interpreters. In his translations, Snow adheres faithfully to the intent of Rilke's German while constructing nuanced, colloquial poems in English. Written in a period of spiritual crisis between 1912 and 1922, the poems that compose the *Duino Elegies* are the ones most frequently identified with the Rilkean sensibility. With their symbolic landscapes, prophetic proclamations, and unsettling intensity, these complex and haunting poems rank among the outstanding visionary works of the century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Edward Snow is one of the most respected translators of Rilke. He's been working his way through Rilke's poetry and now offers a superb version of the "Duino Elegies," long considered the high point of Rilke's career. There are many existing translations of Rilke's masterpiece, of varying quality. Snow's version reads quite well and compares favorably to acclaimed versions by Mitchell and others.

This book of poetry stands head and shoulders above anything else written in the 20th century, including everything I've seen so far by Robert Bly (one of my personal favorites in American

Poetry). Written right around the time when the Great War (World War I) was coming to a close by a young German poet who was staying for a brief time in an Italian castle belonging to a friend, the Duino Elegies are impossible to describe. You must read them for yourself to begin to appreciate the genius of Rainer Maria (his middle name was that of his mother)...This volume, translated by Mr. Snow, contains both the original German and its translation into contemporary American English. The translation compares in precision and depth to Coleman Barks' translations of the 13th century poet Rumi, an Islamic poet who happened to live in the small rural village of Konya (which is now considered part of Turkey), but wrote his poetry in classic Persian (the sacred language in which the Koran is written). For those of you familiar with Rumi's poetry and teaching stories, through Mr. Barks' translations, that is indeed saying something. I can find no fault with Mr. Snow's rendering - not that it can necessarily stand alone without reference to the original German [with poetry one is always advised to consult the original if at all possible] - but that it is consistently brilliant and often surprisingly inspiring. In other words, a delight to read - no matter what one's personal level of experience with the German language.

I purchased this book as one of several to read for my Master's degree in poetry. Of the fifteen books I have read thus far, this is absolutely my favorite book. Although I wish I could read the original German, Snow's translation reads flawlessly. The language is beautiful and obviously carefully chosen. It is also interesting to have both the German and the English running side-by-side. The poetry itself is absolutely stunning. Rilke's use of metaphor and synecdoche are brilliant. I highly recommend this book to any poet, or any admirer of the craft.

Rilkes Duineser Elegien stehen an der Spitze, was die poetische Schärfung des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts betrifft. Sie sind ein metaphysisches Nachdenken über den Menschen und die Realität. Rilke überlegt sich die menschliche Bestimmung. Dafür, dass das Leben eine vorübergehende und peinliche Erfahrung ist, zeigt er uns die Engel als ein überbewusstes Wesen. Im Gegensatz zu dem Menschen wohnen sie an einem offenen Raum. Es gelingt Ihnen das Leben und den Tod zu vereinigen. Dort findet das reine Geschehen statt. Wegen ihres selbstlosen Erlebens sind die Helden, die Liebenden, die Kinder und die früh Verstorbenen nah daran, nach den Ordnungen der Engel zu gelangen. Die verkündete Nacht ist zu der Schein-Unsichtbar Verwandlung geneigt, weil sie eine tiefere Wahrnehmung ermöglicht. Rilkes poetische Sprache, Rhythmus und Bildnis sind atemlos.

One of the greatest poems of the 20th Century in bilingual format, with a wonderful translation. Absurdly low price. I'll probably get "Sonnets to Orpheus" after I finish Duino Elegies.

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