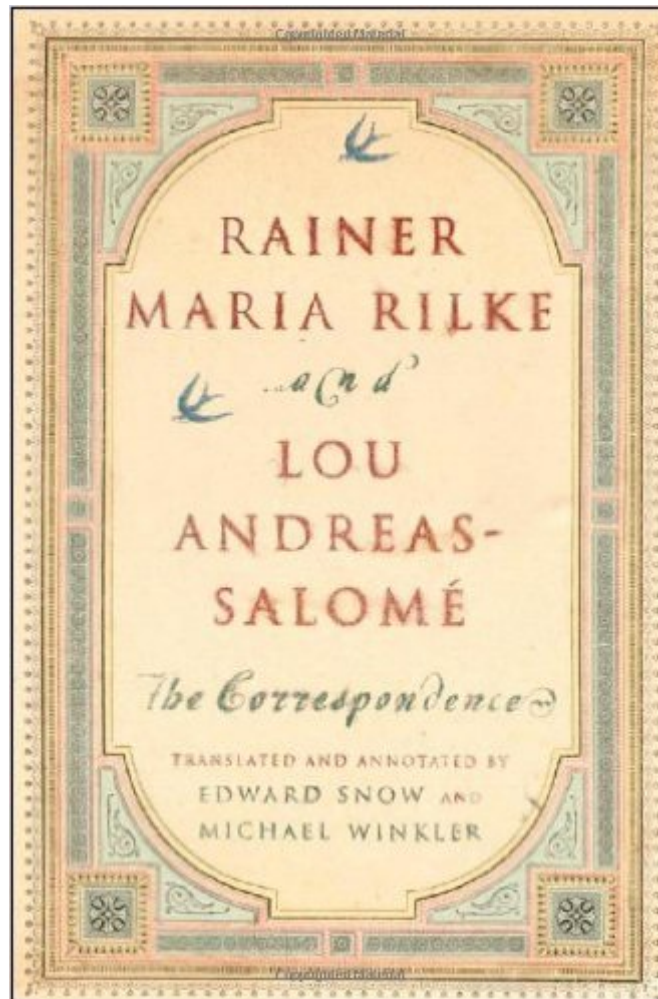


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Rainer Maria Rilke And Lou Andreas-Salomé: The Correspondence



Synopsis

The complete extant correspondence between a key fin-de-siecle intellectual and one of the most revered poets of the twentieth century. He would become one of the most important poets of the twentieth century; she was the Åber-muse of Europe's turn-of-the-century thinkers and artists. In this never-before-translated collection of letters spanning almost thirty years, the poet Rainer Maria Rilke and Lou Andreas-SalomÃ©, a writer and intellectual fourteen years his senior, pen a relationship that moves from that of lovers to that of mentor and protégÃ©, to that of deepest personal and literary allies. From the time of their first meeting and consequent affair to Rilke's death in 1926, Rilke and SalomÃ© reeled through extremes of love, pain, annoyance, desire, and needâ yet guided each other in one of the most fruitful artistic exchanges in twentieth-century literature. Despite illness, distance, and emotional and psychological pain, they managed to cultivate, through strikingly honest prose, an enduring and indispensable friendship, a decades-long heartfelt dialogue that encompassed love, art, and the imagination.

Book Information

Hardcover: 424 pages

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; 1 edition (June 17, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0393049760

ISBN-13: 978-0393049763

Product Dimensions: 6.5 x 1.5 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (5 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #984,952 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #217 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > European > German #742 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > Essays & Correspondence > Letters #839 inÂ Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Literature > World Literature > European

Customer Reviews

There is no reviewing correspondence. There is present either only the (inevitably) voyeuristic pleasure of gazing into dead mens dreams, or nothing at all, at which point we set the book down, and carry on composing our own secrets. But the idea of positing a critical eye on one's letters (unless they are means exclusive of a recipient, as with Seneca) seems to me to be entirely ridiculous. I can only say that I was happy to the point of giddiness to discover the recently published

letters between Rilke and Andreas-Salome. I devoured the book whole, and found myself inspired by Rilke's early uncertainties, and the almost frighteningly composed replies of his one time lover, now become mentor. It offered a glimpse into the world of this beautiful poet, who previously, seemed to have sprung fully formed into the author of the Duino Elegies, as though he were always the master we have come to admire. And here, beset by dread, here overcome by an almost childish enthusiasm, we find him not stripped of his title rather enriched by his likeness to ourselves. And it's as though we always sensed beneath the richness of his language a kinship we could never adequately define, here at last the inexplicable is made manifest. I do not speak to Andreas-Salome, she does not move me, but she was a friend of Rilke's and therefore deserves at least our respect. If you are curious about the genesis and flowering of a poet, you will find no better testament than this collection, and much like the Memoirs of Pablo Neruda, you will find in the simplest relation, a poetry unto itself.

Being that this was one of my impulse purchases, I was surprised when I found myself still awake at 4am pouring over the pages, unable to put it down. Rilke invites the reader (Lou Salome) into his innermost thoughts and psyche in such a visceral and eloquent way. You begin to often see yourself in his words and it sends your mind racing. This alone would be enough. But having it countered by Lou's (often paradigm-shifting) deep understanding and almost clinical input - it makes for one of the most intellectual and enlightened dialogues of the 20th century. This book can feed your soul, if you let it.

Rilke lends the same exquisite clarity and rapture to romantic love as he does to his brilliantly tender hearted observations of the spirit.

Monumental. Desperate. Full of grace, wisdom, joy. Maybe God gave Rilke Lou but Lou sustained Rilke for the rest of us.

Wow!! It lets you inside so much intimacy and thoughts. A great read and an interesting learning experience.

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