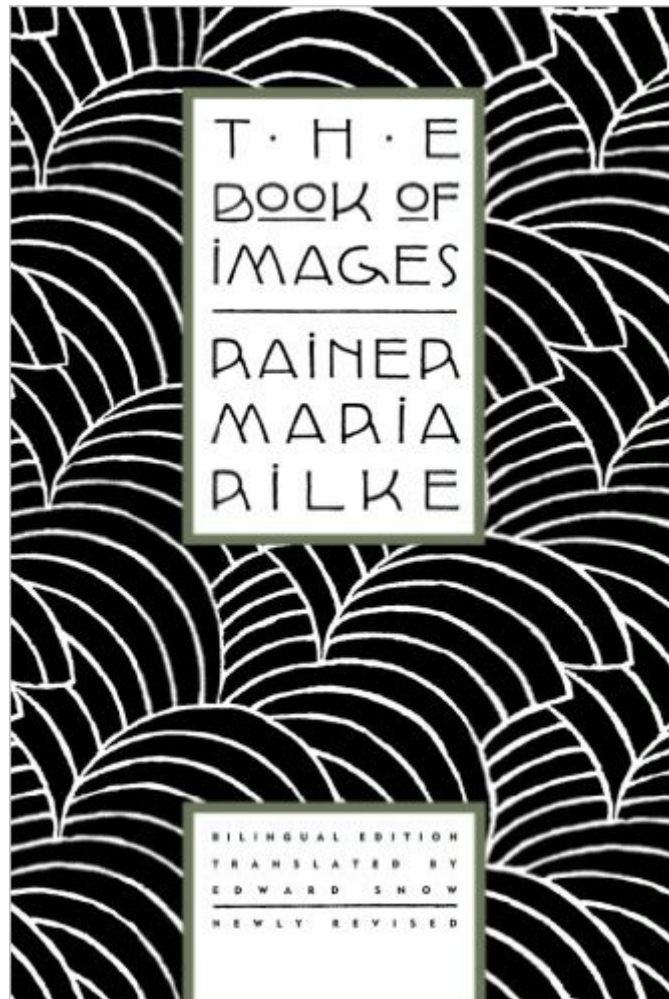


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The Book Of Images: Poems / Revised Bilingual Edition (English And German Edition)



Synopsis

Now substantially revised by Edward Snow, whom Denise Levertov once called "far and away Rilke's best translator," this bilingual edition of *The Book of Images* contains a number of the great poet's previously untranslated pieces. Also included are several of Rilke's best-loved lyrics, such as "Autumn," "Childhood," "Lament," "Evening," and "Entrance."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rilke is that poet that you, if you are tormented by memories of high-school poetry lessons past (dactylic metre sound vaguely familiar?), ought try. His imagery is accessible, his meaning clear...and he manages simultaneously a beautiful degree of both spiritual and metaphorical richness. Snow's translations of Rilke's poetry are superb; he consistently preserves the metric structure and is also conscious of the need to employ every word and consider every nuance of meaning, rather than simply settling for glossing it (a surprisingly common problem in poetry translation). In the challenging world of finding faithful poetry translation, Snow's work is outstanding...and the original material to my sense of literary aesthetics unsurpassed...little of Rilke's beauty is sacrificed in the execution of this translation. Rilke's simultaneous sparseness, sensitivity, and richness endure here; rather than imposing himself upon the reader, Snow succeeds admirably at the translator's task, and brings Rilke to the English-speaking audience.

Edward Snow has captured the essential grace of Rilke's poetry without sacrificing faithfulness to the original text. In this book of wonderful and exquisite poems, the lyric genius of Rilke comes

through; Snow's own poetic sensibility is also clear. Some of my favorite Rilke poems (such as "Autumn" or "Memory") are rendered here in a way that perfectly suits their quiet, holy sense of both solitude and communion. Read it.

Rilke's *Book of Images* is a wonderful way to enter the world of poetry if you are hesitant because of bad memories of tough English courses in high school or college. Beautiful, powerful and accessible, you will love to sit down and get lost in the language and intensity of this work.

Rilke ranks among the world's greatest poets. Each poem in the *Book of Images* is an elegant snapshot of a beautiful world. Snow's translation is superb, and he is commonly regarded as the preeminent English translator of Rilke's poetry. This text contains the translation and the original German side-by-side so that readers can gain a better appreciation of Rilke. The Snow translation of the *Book of Images* is one of the greatest English-language poetic achievements.

There is very little question that Rilke was the greatest German poet of the 20th century. The only question that remains is whether he was the greatest poet in any language. His brief, imaginative poems capture the essence of man in the modern period, alone, isolated, and without meaning. Edward Snow has captured the grace and subtle imagery of Rilke in this altogether outstanding collection of poems, in large part because he is a great poet in his own right. Readers of Rilke will surely be familiar with a number of poems in this bilingual collection, such as *Autumn*: "The leaves are falling, falling as if from far off, as if the heavens distant gardens withered; they fall with gestures that say 'no.' And in the nights the heavy earth falls From all the stars into aloneness. We are falling. This hand is falling. And look at the others: it is in them all. And yet there is One who holds this falling With infinite softness in his hands." (85).

Any reader (or writer) of translation work knows the inherent difficulties--translation is often something like palimpsest or erasure, the voice of the translator becoming too loud or possibly too literal. There is no such thing as a one to one ratio in translation. What Snow's recent work with *Book of Images* (and I recommend his other Rilke translations, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, *Duino Elegies*) demonstrates is a labor of love: it is almost as if he has acquired Cocteau's radio from Orphée and used it to channel Rilke; I simply have not come across any more appealing translations of Rilke than his. The bilingual edition is important, and I wish all translations would do this (though I understand it can be expensive): the *en face* provides one the original text as well as the translated,

so there exists not only a visual representation of the poetic object, but also enables anyone with a bit of knowledge of the foreign language a way in. This is a beautiful work.

I love the dual translation books in general, and found this to be a thoughtful, well-considered English translation of the original. It's amazing to see Rilke's wonderfully simple yet incredibly evocative command of the German language. Some passages feel almost untranslatable to English, not because of the vocabulary per se, but the difficulty in capturing the subtlety, causing me to reflect on the differences between the two languages. Highly recommended, especially for those simultaneously wishing to take their language skills to a higher level.

Rilke transcends your perspective of what poetry is. The depth of his images is ungraspable. The personae you encounter in these poems are ancient quasi-religious titans. Angels, warriors, madmen, martyrs. From a boy to a storm. An apprehension, an evening, a leper. Of the four Rilke collected poetry books I possess this is the most accessible to the average poetry aficionado. 'Selected poems' with the man lying down with the black book jacket would be the best overall collection, but that does not take anything away from this superb collection. This translation is most enjoyable. It is exact and reads comfortably.

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