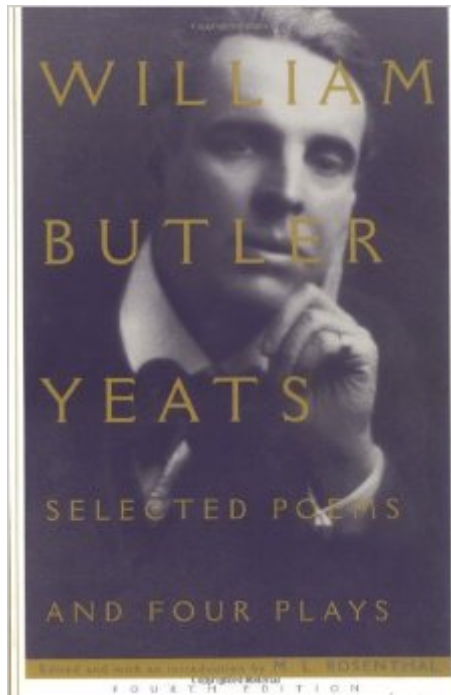


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Selected Poems And Four Plays Of William Butler Yeats



Synopsis

Since its first appearance in 1962, M. L. Rosenthal's classic selection of Yeats's poems and plays has attracted hundreds of thousands of readers. This newly revised edition includes 211 poems and 4 plays. It adds *The Words Upon the Window-Pane*, one of Yeats's most startling dramatic works in its realistic use of a seance as the setting for an eerily powerful reenactment of Jonathan Swift's rigorous idealism, baffling love relationships, and tragic madness. The collection profits from recent scholarship that has helped to establish Yeats's most reliable texts, in the order set by the poet himself. And his powerful lyrical sequences are amply represented, culminating in the selection from *Last Poems and Two Plays*, which reaches its climax in the brilliant poetic plays *The Death of Cuchulain* and *Purgatory*. Scholars, students, and all who delight in Yeats's varied music and sheer quality will rejoice in this expanded edition. As the introduction observes, "Early and late he has the simple, indispensable gift of enchanting the ear....He was also the poet who, while very much of his own day in Ireland, spoke best to the people of all countries. And though he plunged deep into arcane studies, his themes are most clearly the general ones of life and death, love and hate, man's condition, and history's meanings. He began as a sometimes effete post-Romantic, heir to the pre-Raphaelites, and then, quite naturally, became a leading British Symbolist; but he grew at last into the boldest, most vigorous voice of this century." *Selected Poems and Four Plays* represents the essential achievement of the greatest twentieth-century poet to write in English.

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Customer Reviews

During a recent fright when we were escaping our apartment down a ladder, I took two books with

me, thinking that perhaps I would need something strong. Happily Yeats's SELECTED POEMS AND FOUR PLAYS was at hand, together with, well, something private. This book, edited by the late M.L. Rosenthal, is an expanded edition of a previous book by Rosenthal that had the same title except it was called, SELECTED POEMS AND TWO PLAYS. This present edition doubles the number of plays it prints in one stroke, adding the very late THE DEATH OF CUCHULAIN as well as the strange, feverish THE WORDS UPON THE WINDOW-PANE. Previously we had only the two plays PURGATORY and CALGARY. Did I say CALGARY? I meant, CALVARY, and neither of them are worth the paper they're printed on. In college my professor used to tell us that Yeats, together with his patron Lady Gregory, invented the Abbey Theater and kept it going by writing plays annually and encouraging their society friends not only to attend but to pledge money in exchange for participation in a community-based theater. However, according to Rosenthal, some of Yeats' plays were distinctly unpopular even with this subsidized theater and neither the actors nor the audience loved them to death. As a boy, my dad used to quote Yeats on every occasion and he (Yeats) was a patron saint to many Irishfolk. Today not so much, but as I made my way down the ladder I was glad I had the Yeats book tucked into my pants. He is the epitome of the artist who keeps changing through circumstance, open to new influence, even partial to drugs, for many credit his late flowering to the monkey glands he took in Switzerland to rejuvenate his sex life, the precursor to today's Viagra.

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