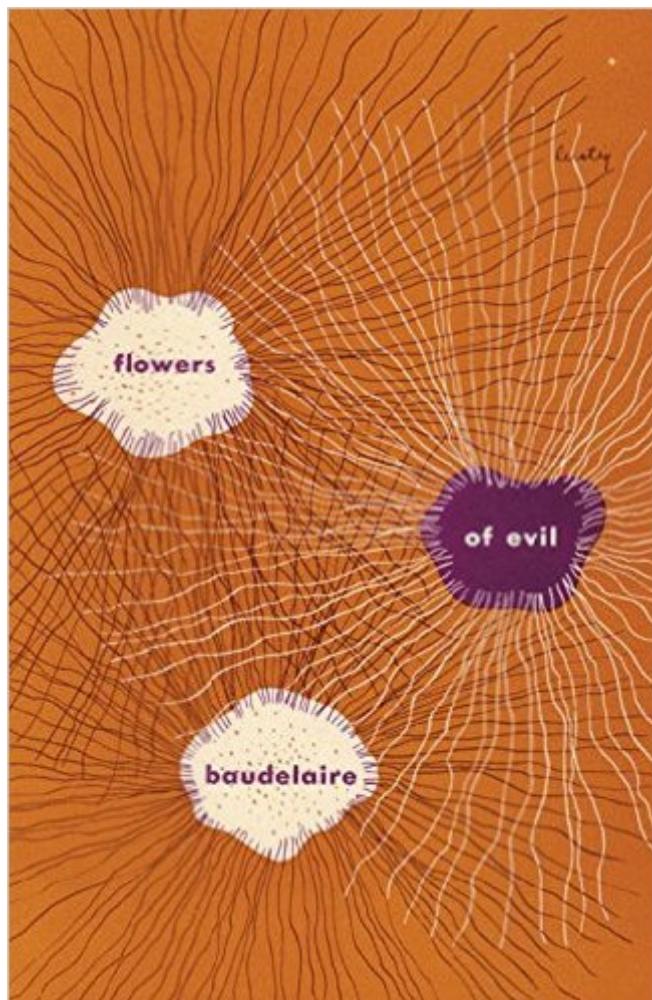


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The Flowers Of Evil (Bilingual Edition) (New Directions Paperbook)



Synopsis

In the annals of literature, few single volumes of poetry have achieved the influence and notoriety of *The Flowers of Evil* (*Les Fleurs du Mal*) by Charles Baudelaire. Banned and slighted in his lifetime, the book that contains all of Baudelaire's verses has opened up vistas to the imagination and quickened sensibilities of poets everywhere. Yet it is questionable whether a single translator can give adequate voice to Baudelaire's full poetic range. In compiling their classic, bilingual edition of *The Flowers of Evil*, the late Marthiel and Jackson Mathews chose from the work of forty-one translators to create a collection that is "a commentary on the present state of the art of translation." The Mathews' volume is a poets' homage to Baudelaire as well. Among the contributors are: Robert Fitzgerald, Anthony Hecht, Aldous Huxley, Stanley Kunitz, Robert Lowell, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Karl Shapiro, Allen Tate, Richard Wilbur, Yvon Winters.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Advantages/features of the New Directions edition:--Diverse translator-palate represented from various repertoires (complete&original ordering).--Inclusion of material censored in the first edition.--Inclusion of preface drafts.--Appearances by high-profile names from the translation world in its era of first publication for this edition (1955).--None of Richard Howard's prose travesties grace this volume. Disadvantages&faults:--Quality, method, ear-for-Baudelaire-magnitude, and command of English varies greatly. Most of the efforts fall on their face (Particularly Kunitz&Lowell: who start

off the volume. Not good.) Among the stronger attempts: F.P. Sturm, C.F. Macintyre, Aldous Huxely (for one poem: Lesbians)--Dated edition, first published in '55. Lowell has a volume of a complete LFDM which attempts to retain the rhyme-scheme and conform to a 10 syllable-per-line basis, as compared to C.B.'s twelve. The result is mostly obtuse, un-lyrical and ponderously banal. His brief appearance in the book (some 10 poems --or not much more) is fortunate. * * *Summary: The New Directions edition recommends itself, given the proliferation of less-than-scholarly efforts whom are transmogrifying permutations on a theme: anything but THE Baudelaire we know in French, in GOOD English! It's the only of its kind that presents LFDM in complete form with the original, together with something approaching intelligent editorship. What is clear from this publisher's effort: the state of translation presented is a very sorry one, though, not the fault of the compilers.

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