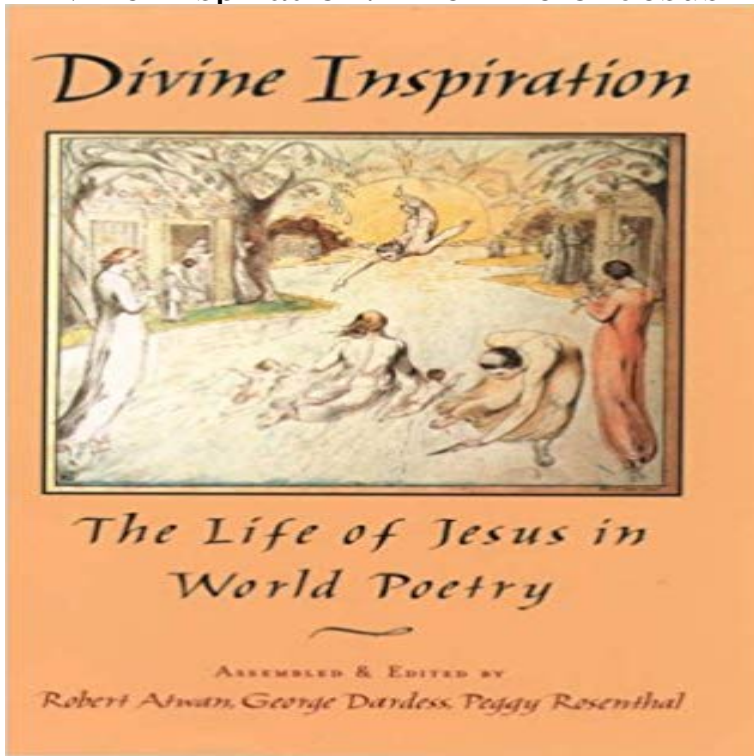


Divine Inspiration: The Life of Jesus in World Poetry



The Bible is by far the leading source of inspiration for Western literature, and in particular, the life of Jesus has drawn the attention of artists and writers throughout the ages. Now, in a volume of astonishing range and originality, Robert Atwan, George Dardess, and Peggy Rosenthal present 280 remarkable poems from world literature focusing on Jesus's life and teaching. Readers accustomed to the predictable inclusions of many anthologies will be surprised and delighted by the diversity of poets represented here, from Aquinas, Dante, de Guevara, Donne, and Sor Juana, to D.H. Lawrence, Gabriela Mistral, Wole Soyinka, Margaret Atwood, Gwendolyn Brooks, Czeslaw Milosz, and Leopold Senghor. Perhaps no other thematically organized anthology could have brought together writers as different as Jorge Luis Borges, Thomas Merton, Alice Walker, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Jack Kerouac. Indeed, simply to turn the page in *Divine Inspiration* is an adventure in itself. And in terms of form, style, modulations of tone and perspective, the variety here is as unparalleled as it is unpredictable. The editors of *Divine Inspiration* have done a masterful job of unifying this vast assortment of poems. Organized chronologically around the life of Jesus, the book is divided into nine sections--from Birth and Infancy, through Healings and Miracles, to the Resurrection-- and presents passages from the Gospels followed by the poems they inspired. This structure gives readers the dual pleasures of a strong narrative pull punctuated by moments of lyric intensity. Our familiarity with the life of Jesus is thus enlivened, deepened, and in some cases wholly transformed by the imaginative power of the poems. In the largest section of the book, on the Passion of Jesus, we find an array of poems by Anna Akhmatova, Antonio Machado, Thomas Hardy, Miguel de Unamuno, Charles

Baudelaire, R.S. Thomas, Andrew Marvell, Federico Garcia Lorca, and Denise Levertov, among others. To see the Passion of Jesus refracted through the lenses of such poets is to see it anew, or more vividly than before. And to encounter Chinese, Korean, Nigerian, Arab, Latin American, Scandinavian, Hungarian, and Greek poets alongside English, French, and German is a testimony both to the editors devoted scholarship and to the power of Jesus's life to inspire great poetry across a spectrum of cultures and eras. An invaluable sourcebook for students, scholars, and general readers alike, Divine Inspiration should prove equally satisfying to readers with a strong interest in religion and to all lovers of poetry.

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