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The Collected Poems Of Georges Bataille



Synopsis

This is the first collected English translation of Bataille's poems. Bataille's poetry is definitely the poetry of a philosopher, but it is also a poetry with an obsessively erotic, often scatological edge, frequently pushing the boundary of what is or isn't obscene. Bataille believed that everything relates to the workings of desire and death in sexuality, but he also believed that poetry was the product of "hate" (and other extreme emotions), just as much as erotic pleasure accedes to self-annihilation. But Bataille was interested in actual action, not just disengaged hypothesis concerning the sexual act. Dufour Editions is pleased to bring Bataille's poetry to print in English. "This is the audacious, frightful side of surrealism."-Library Journal "Bataille produced some of the most transcendent, pointedly filthy literature of the century, and these poems, together in English for the first time, are no exception."-Publishers Weekly

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I'm a fan of Bataille, but I'm afraid that in most translations into English this major thinker comes across as being merely silly about sex and excrement and the Absolute. From his own febrile, pathological alluvium located in a fertile triangle between Eros and Thanatos, anus and genitals, Bataille (said in the helpful introduction by the translator to be using poetry to reach the Eternal) comes up with cuties like these: The Wall A hatchet give me a hatchet so I can frighten myself with my shadow on the wall ennu feeling of emptiness fatigue. I have to admit feeling like that myself recently. And: Laughing To laugh and laugh at the sun at the nettles at the pebbles at the ducks at the rain at the pope's p**at mommy and a coffin full of sh**. It doesn't get any better than that folks, although

Bataille makes lots of references to the void, Zarathustra, Heraclitus, and other touchstones of modern Western culture. I do admire his mixture of profundity and scatology and wish that more post-modern writers would follow Bataille's example. Why let the makers of popular movies and television sit-coms get a jump on the rest of us?

Bataille's poetry is often beautiful, using words and ideas to paint vague emotional pictures. You might get bored when he goes on and on about immensity or death, but it's worth it for the good parts.

Georges Bataille is not traditionally thought of as a poet. It's true that he wrote little "poetry" (that which one might consider a poem). Nevertheless, he must be considered a poet among his other titles. Unfortunately, this book fails to give Bataille's readers an appreciation of his poetry. The translator and editor, Mark Spitzer, haphazardly compiles Bataille's poems together, neglecting to contextualize them and provide them a useful order, while his translations fall short of capturing Bataille's words as it prefers lyrical consistency to poetic accuracy. Moreover, at least one poem (GLORIA IN EXCELSIS MIHI) is missing nearly half of the original. Spitzer also neglects to add a useful notes section to clarify the difficult choices a translator of Bataille must make. Readers beware!

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