



Rilke's Late Poetry

Rainer Rilke, Graham Good

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The late poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926) is one of the summits of European poetry in the twentieth century. Completed in 1922, as were T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and James Joyce's *Ulysses*, *Duino Elegies* ranks with them as a classic of literary Modernism and as an inquiry into the spiritual crisis of modernity. 1922 also saw the unexpected birth and completion of a new work, *The Sonnets to Orpheus*, a cycle of 55 sonnets giving lyrical expression to the philosophical insights gained in the *Elegies*. The third part of the late poetry consists of the less known brief lyrics Rilke wrote in the five years prior to his death in December 1926. Graham Good's edition is the first to combine translations of all three into a single volume. His versions represent the meanings and echo the sound patterns of the original within fluid and readable English verse, while the introduction and detailed commentary elucidate the contexts, themes and allusions to help make Rilke's late poetry accessible to contemporary poetry lovers and spiritual seekers.

"Graham Good's translations of Rilke read like fresh, original poems. Fresh in their English rhymes and cadences, fresh as Rilke in transforming elegy into eulogy, sorrow into consolation, and the unforgiving world around us into a place where we can recreate ourselves. Good has heard and obeyed Pound's rallying-cry of "Make it new!"—and now he offers to restore us, as Rilke would restore us, through the poise and passion of his language."

—Robert Fagles, Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at Princeton University, and translator of best-selling editions of Homer, Aeschylus and Sophocles.

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