



The Soul of Rumi: A New Collection of Ecstatic Poems

By Coleman Barks

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Coleman Barks presents entirely new translations of Rumi's poems, published for the first time in *The Soul of Rumi*. The poems range over the breadth of Rumi's themes: silence, emptiness, play, God, peace, grief, sexuality, music, to name just a few. But the focus is on the ecstatic experience of human and divine love and their inseparability, conveyed with Rumi's signature passion, daring, and insights into the human heart and the heart's longings.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

When Rumi was born in Afghanistan in 1207, it was a time of tremendous political turmoil in the Near East. Paradoxically, it was also a time of "brilliant mystical awareness," writes translator Coleman Barks in *The Soul of Rumi*. This brilliance shines through in every passage, as Barks celebrates the ecstatic nature of Rumi's poetry. Barks (*The Essential Rumi*) has been given much credit for leading modern Westerners to this astounding poet. His sensitivity to the reader is evidenced in how he organizes the poetry according to themes. Since Rumi is often quoted at public gatherings, such as weddings and memorial services, this makes referencing especially easy. In the section entitled "When Friend Meets Friend," readers find the poem "The Soul's Friend":

The most living moment comes when those who love each other meet each other's eyes and in what flows between them then. To see your face in a crowd of others, or alone on a frightening street, I weep for that....

Barks offers a gracefully rendered introduction to each section, providing personal and historical background of the poetry. Elegantly designed and printed on cream-colored, heavy-stock paper, this is a delight for Rumi fans. --*Gail Hudson*

From Publishers Weekly

The Islamic mystical poet Rumi (1207- 1273) improvised the evocative poems which his followers wrote down. Translator Coleman Barks's *The Essential Rumi* won the Persian writer American fans, some of whom revere the poet as a religious guide. Now Barks is back with *The Soul of Rumi: A New Collection of Ecstatic Poems*. The giant volume includes part of Rumi's 64,000-line *Masnavi*, as well as many short poems and Barks's copious, informal, personal commentary.

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From Booklist

Coleman Barks' translations of Rumi's poems have been instrumental in making Rumi the cultural icon he has become in America. That is in part due to Barks' willingness, even eagerness, to downplay the Islamic foundation of these ecstatic poems. Barks portrays Rumi as a universal mystic, which may arouse the ire of scholars but doesn't dent the appeal of Barks' versions. This new collection, mostly of poems Barks hasn't previously tackled, is likely to maintain that appeal. Presenting the poems in small thematic groups, Barks may not be as concerned with historical context as are Philip Dunn and his associates in *The Illustrated Rumi* [BKL F 1 01], but he offers the very best of Rumi's beautiful and challenging imagery. The metaphorical representation of *fana*, the annihilation into God, is brought into particularly compelling focus: "A moth flying into the flame says with its wingfire, *try this.*" Many may never know the Qur'anic verses reflected in Rumi's lines, but as long as Barks is translating them, they will remain popular in English. *John Green*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Todd Crain:

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