



The Selected Poetry

Edna St. Vincent Millay , Nancy Milford (Editor)

Download now

Read Online ➔

The Selected Poetry

Edna St. Vincent Millay , Nancy Milford (Editor)

The Selected Poetry Edna St. Vincent Millay , Nancy Milford (Editor)

One of America's most celebrated poets—and winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1923—Edna St. Vincent Millay defined a generation with her passionate lyrics and intoxicating voice of liberation. Edited by Millay biographer Nancy Milford, this Modern Library Paperback Classics collection captures the poet's unique spirit in works like *Renascence and Other Poems*, *A Few Figs from This-tles*, and *Second April*, as well as in “The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver” and eight sonnets from the early twenties. As Milford writes in her Introduction, “These are the poems that made Edna St. Vincent Millay’s reputation when she was young. Saucy, insolent, flip, and defiant, her little verses sting the page.”

The Selected Poetry Details

Date : Published September 10th 2002 by Modern Library (first published November 28th 1991)

ISBN : 9780375761232

Author : Edna St. Vincent Millay , Nancy Milford (Editor)

Format : Paperback 160 pages

Genre : Poetry, Classics, Fiction, Literature

 [Download The Selected Poetry ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Selected Poetry ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Selected Poetry Edna St. Vincent Millay , Nancy Milford (Editor)

From Reader Review The Selected Poetry for online ebook

Jennifer says

I love Millay's poetry. Her engagement with the natural world, her rather cynical view of romance, her moments of grace and grief, all speak to me.

Jillian says

I picked this up because I came across a snippet of one of Millay's poems somewhere (can't remember now of course):

My candle burns at both ends;
It will not last the night;
But ah my foes, and oh, my friends--
It gives a lovely light!

When I read this, I swamped with work, correcting papers, and choreographing/directing a musical. And those four little lines managed to make me nod my head, smile to myself, and think, "Oh yes. I know exactly what she means." So of course, I scurried over to my library and picked up a selection of Millay's poems.

Of course, not all of the poems spoke to me, but many of them did. I don't usually read a book of poetry from cover to cover, but I had no problem with this little volume. In fact, I forced myself to read it slowly so that I'd have time to savor and reflect on each poem.

For fans of poetry, I'd recommend this--there are definitely some gems in here.

Sarah Koppelkam says

At first I was like "nah, Edna, you use way too many exclamation points and you're way too reverent" but then I got sucked in by the biting, fiercely independent voice lurking beneath the first few poems of this collection. Then Edna reveals herself with poems like "Thursday":

"And if I loved you Wednesday,
Well, what is that to you?
I do not love you Thursday -
So much is true.

And why you come complaining
Is more than I can see.
I loved you Wednesday, - Yes - but what is that to me?"

Edna St. Vincent Millay: the original Millenial, 100 years too soon.

My favorite in the collection is "Witch-Wife"

mwpm says

From *Renaissance*...

I will be the gladdest thing
Under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers
And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds
With quiet eyes,
Watch the wind bow down the grass,
And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show
Up from the town,
I will mark which must be mine,
And then start down!

- **Afternoon on a Hill**, pg. 23

* * *

Love, if I weep it will not matter,
And if you laugh I shall not care;
Foolish am I to think about it,
But it is good to feel you there.

Love, in my sleep I dreamed of waking, -
White and awful the moonlight reached
Over the floor, and somewhere, somewhere,
There was a shutter loose, - it screeched!

Swung in the wind, - and no wind blowing! -
I was afraid, and turned to you,
Put out my hand to you for comfort, -
And you were gone! Cold, cold as dew,

Under my hand the moonlight lay!
Love, if you laugh I shall not care,
But if I weep it will not matter, -
Ah, it is good to feel you there!

- The Dream, pg. 33</blockquote>

* * *

Thou art not lovelier than lilacs, - no,
Nor honeysuckle; thou art not more fair
Than small white single poppies, - I can bear
They beauty; though I bend before thee,
though
From left to right, not knowing where to go,
I turn my troubled eyes, not knowing where to
go,
I turn my troubled eyes, nor here nor there
Find any refuge from thee, yet I swear
So has it been with mist, - with moonlight
so.
Like him who day by day unto his draught
Of delicate poison adds him one drop more
Till he may drink unharmed the death of ten,
Even so, inured to beauty, who have quaffed
Each hour more deeply than the hour before,
I drink - and live - what has destroyed some
men.

- Sonnets I, pg.

40</blockquote></blockquote>

From *A Few Figs from Thistles*</i>...

My candle burns at both
ends;
It will not last the night;
But ah, my foes, and oh, my
friends -
It gives a lovely light!

- First Fig,

pg.

49</blockquote>

* * *

Why do you follow
me? -
Any moment I can
be
Nothing but a
laurel-tree.

Any moment of the
chase

I can leave you in
my place
A pink bough for
your embrace.

Yet if over hill
and hollow
Still it is your
will to follow,
I am off; - to
heel, Apollo!

-
Daphne, pg.
62</block
quote></b
lockquote
>

From
Second
April</i>
...

To what
purpose,
April, do
you come
again?
Beauty is
not
enough.
You can
no longer
quiet me
with the
redness
Of little
leaves
opening
stickily.
I know
what I
know.
The sun
is hot on
my neck
as I

observe
The
spikes of
the
crocus.
The smell
of the
earth is
good.
It is
apparent
that
there is
no death.
But what
does that
signify?
Not only
under
ground
are the
brains of
men
Eaten by
maggots.
Life in
itself
Is
nothing,
An empty
cup, a
flight of
uncarpete
d stairs.
It is not
enough
that
yearly,
down this
hill,
April
Comes
like an
idiot,
babbling
and
strewing
flowers.

-
Spring, pg.
75</block
quote>
* * *

No matter
what I
say,
All that
I really
love
Is the
rain that
flattens
on the
bay,
And the
eel-grass
in the
cove;
The
jingle-sh
ells that
lie and
bleach
At the
tide-
line, and
the trace
Of higher
tides
along the
beach:
Nothing
in this
place.

- Eel-
Grass, pg.
86</block
kquote>
* * *

April
this
year,

not
otherw
e
Than
April of
a year
ago,
Is full
of
whispers
, full
of
sighs,
Of
dazzling
mud and
dingy
snow;
Hepatica
s that
pleased
you so
Are here
again,
and
butterfl
ies.

There
rings a
hammerin
g all
day,
And
shingles
lie
about
the
doors;
In
orchards
near and
far away
The grey
wood-
pecker
taps and
bores;
The men

are
merry at
their
chores,
And
children
earnest
at their
play.

The
larger
streams
run
still
and
deep,
Noisy
and
swift
the
small
brooks
run
Among
the
mullein
stalks
the
sheep
Go up
the
hillside
in the
sun,
Pensivel
y, -
only you
are
gone,
You that
alone I
cared to
keep.

- Song
of a
Second
April

>, pg.
96</bloc
kquote><
/blockqu
ote>

From
*Sonnets</i> and
*Ballad
Harp-
Weaver</i>...
i>...**

When
you,
that at
this
moment
are to
me
Dearer
than
words on
paper,
shall
depart,
And no
more the
warder
of my
heart,
Whereof
again
myself
shell
hold the
key;
And be
no more
- what
now you
seem to
be -
The sun,
from
which
all

excellen
ces
start
In a
round
nimbus,
nor a
broken
dart
Of
moonligh
t, even,
splinter
ed on
the sea;
I shall
remember
only of
this
hour -
And weep
somewhat
, as now
you see
me weep
-
The
pathos
of your
love,
that,
like
flower,
Fearful
of death
yet
amorous
of
sleep,
Droops
for a
moment
and
beholds,
dismayed
,

The wind
whereon
its

petals
shell be
laid.

-
Sonnet</
b>, pg.
149</blo
ckquote>
* * *

"Son,"
said my
mother,
When I
was
knee-hig
h,?
"You've
need of
clothes
to cover
you,
And not
a rag
have I.

"There's
nothing
in the
house
To make
a boy
breeches
,

Nor
shears
to cut a
cloth
with
Nor
thread
to take
stitches
.

"There's
nothing
in the

house
But a
loaf-end
of rye,
And a
harp
with a
woman's
head
Nobody
will
buy,"?
And she
began to
cry.

That was
in the
early
fall.
When
came the
late
fall,?
"Son,"
she
said,
"the
sight of
you?
Makes
your
mother's
blood
crawl,-

"Little
skinny
shoulder
-blades
Sticking
through
your
clothes!
And
where
you'll
get a
jacket

from
God
above
knows.

"It's
lucky
for me,
lad,
Your
daddy's
in the
ground,
And
can't
see the
way I
let
His son
go
around!"
And she
made a
queer
sound.

That was
in the
late
fall.
When the
winter
came,
I'd not
a pair
of
breeches
Nor a
shirt to
my name.

I
couldn't
go to
school,
Or out
of doors
to play.
And all

the
other
little
boys
Passed
our way.

"Son,"
said my
mother,
"Come,
climb
into my
lap,
And I'll
chafe
your
little
bones
While
you take
a nap."

And, oh,
but we
were
silly
For half
an hour
or more,
Me with
my long
legs
Dragging
on the
floor,

A-rock-
rock-
rocking
To a
mother-g
oose
rhyme!
Oh, but
we were
happy
For half
an

hour's
time!

But
there
was I, a
great
boy,
And what
would
folks
say
To hear
my
mother
singing
me
To sleep
all day,
In such
a daft
way?

Men say
the
winter
Was bad
that
year;
Fuel was
scarce,
And food
was
dear.

A wind
with a
wolf's
head
Howled
about
our
door,
And we
burned
up the
chairs
And sat
on the

floor.

All that
was left
us
Was a
chair we
couldn't
break,
And the
harp
with a
woman's
head
Nobody
would
take,
For song
or
pity's
sake.

The
night
before
Christma
s
I cried
with the
cold,
I cried
myself
to sleep
Like a
two-
year-old
.

And in
the deep
night
I felt
my
mother
rise,
And
stare
down
upon me

With
love in
her
eyes.

I saw my
mother
sitting
On the
one good
chair,
A light
falling
on her
From I
couldn't
tell
where,

Looking
nineteen
,

And not
a day
older,
And the
harp
with a
woman's
head
Leaned
against
her
shoulder
.

Her thin
fingers,
moving
In the
thin,
tall
strings,
Were
weav-wea
v-
weaving
Wonderfu
l

things.

Many
bright
threads,
From
where I
couldn't
see,
Were
running
through
the
harp-str
ings
Rapidly,

And gold
threads
whistlin
g
Through
my
mother's
hand.
I saw
the web
grow,
And the
pattern
expand.

She wove
a
child's
jacket,
And when
it was
done
She laid
it on
the
floor
And wove
another
one.

She wove
a red

cloak
So regal
to see,?
"She's
made it
for a
king's
son,"
I said,
"and not
for me."
But I
knew it
was for
me.

She wove
a pair
of
breeches
Quicker
than
that!
She wove
a pair
of boots
And a
little
cocked
hat.

She wove
a pair
of
mittens,
She wove
a little
blouse,
She wove
all
night
In the
still,
cold
house.

She sang
as she
worked,

And the
harp-
strings
spoke;
Her
voice
never
faltered
,

And the
thread
never
broke.

And when
I
awoke,—

There
sat my
mother
With the
harp
against
her
shoulder
Looking
nineteen
And not
a day
older,

A smile
about
her
lips,
And a
light
about
her
head,
And her
hands in
the
harp-str
ings
Frozen
dead.

And

piled up
beside
her
And
toppling
to the
skies,
Were the
clothes
of a
king's
son,
Just my
size.

- The
Ballad
of the
Harp-
Weaver</
b>, pg.
156-
160</blo
ckquote>
</blockq
uote>

**Adam
Ferrel
l says**

The best
sonnet
writer
since
Shakespe
are.

Many of
the
poems in
this
book
have
changed

my
vocabula
ry, my
way of
thinking
, and my
definiti
on of
literary
beauty.

**Kelly
says**

I have
great
difficul
ties
with
poetry.
At
first,
it was
because
I was a
member
of the
"roll
your
eyes and
hold
your
nose"
continge
nt as
regarded
pretty
much the
entire
art
form.
Except
Shakespe
are,
don't
you
know,

because
I was a
cultured
little
thing,
and
well-
how
couldn't
I? That
reason
changed
when all
of a
sudden,
I
encounte
red a
poet I
loved.
And
irony of
ironies,
he was
one of
the
major
roll
your
eyes
poets
even for
people
who
could
enjoy
poetry-
Byron. I
just
loved
it- but
it
didn't
have
anything
to do
with
apprecia
tion for

craft. I

connecte

d to it

on a

deeply

selfish,

personal

level-

so much

of his

writing

is so

appropri

ate for

teenager

s. I

could

just

live in

his

ridiculo

us

yearning

s and

affectat

ions,

because

they

were

mine as

well-

even if

I was

embarras

sed for

him, I

recogniz

ed so

much of

it in

myself.

From

there I

loved

Shelley,

I loved

Tennyson

, I

loved

pieces
of
Dickinson
here
and
there.
But I
was very
very
picky,
very
dependen
t on
transien
t moods,
and a
very
very
unsophis
ticatd
reader
of
poetry-
and
that's
the
stage
that I
remain
at
today.
I'm very
capable
of
scornful
ly
laughing
somethin
g out
the door
without
a second
thought
that I
would
have
loved
yesterda
y, and I

even do
this to
my
favorite
s. I am
cruel to
poets-
for some
reason,
I'm
willing
to give
novelist
s and
playwrig
hts a
lot more
leeway.

Which is
probably
why I'm
somewhat
conflict
ed about
my
feelings
on Edna
St.
Vincent
Millay.
This
particul
ar
edition
chronicl
es her
juvenali
a into
the
writings
of
approach
ing
(what
was for
the
time)
middle

age. I
had
expected
to grow
with her
and like
her
writings
progress
ively
more as
she went
along-
but I
did not
find
that to
be the
case. I
loved
her
first
collecti
on of
works,
*Resananc
e and
Other
Poems,,*
some of
them
written
in her
teens,
and
publishe
d before
she was
in her
mid-
twenties
.
"Resananc
e,"
exactly
suited
my mood-
the
story of

a
troubled
girl on
a
seemingly
perfectly
innocuous
day
who
imagines
herself
dead to
escape
the
world...
but
cannot
ultimate
ly face
the
prospect
. It was
perfect
for what
I
needed-
an
expressi
on of
incredib
le love
for
life,
someone
depresso
d enough
to want
to die,
but too
enthrall
ed with
life to
be able
to. Like
in that
Fellini
film-

with the
girl at
the end
who has
just
been
fucked
over by
life and
men
again
and you
think
she's
going to
do
somethin
g awful
to
herself.
.. but
then
there
are
these
kids
playing,
and
she's
smiling.
Corny,
but I
love it,
and I
needed
that. I
also
loved
"Interim
, " the
story of
the
survivor
s of
death
and
clash of
the Big
Ideas

and
Facts of
Life
with the
everyday
mundane
and how
ridiculo
us it
seems to
do
/anythin
g/ that
isn't
epic
when
such
things
have
happened
to you.
She has
many
other
poems
along
these
lines,
and I
adored
all of
them,
even if
they
were
just
smaller
echoes
of
things
that had
been
expresse
d
before.

By
contrast
, I

really
did not
like the
majority
of
Second
April.
Millay
definite
ly
always
had a
flower
child
sensibil
ity
about
her
(despite
being
raised
in the
'teens,
not the
sixties)
. And I
mean
this
very
literall
y as at
least
half her
poems
mention
flowers
in some
way, and
if its
not
flowers,
she's
marvelin
g about
some
other
wonder
of
nature.

Now, I
have no
problem
with
this
generall
y, and
sometim
e I find
it very
sweet.

There's
a poem
called
Exile
that is
really
about
nothing
else but
the
yearning
for
home-
all she
wants is
to smell
the
water
again. I
can
apprecia
te that.

However-
Second
April
feels
like a
girl who
got too
high on
herself
and went
to
Greenwic
h
Village,
and

wrote
poems to
impress
the
people
there
with how
rebellio
us and
idealist
ic and
well
educated
(waaaay
up with
the
classica
l
referenc
es in
this
one) she
was. It
did not
feel
geniune
in the
least.
Even her
nature
poems
often
felt
twee-
like she
was
looking
for the
wonder
she was
once
able to
write
with,
and not
able to
find it.
I can
understa

nd this
to a
certain
degree,
and I'm
certainl
y at an
age
where I
can
still
remember
that-
but I
don't
admire
it, I
shudder
to think
of it,
and
being
embarras
sed for
it isn't
helping
me
apprecia
te it
more. I
can
understa
nd it in
a
distant,
historic
al
context
way- WWI
had just
ended,
the
atmosphe
re was
thick
with
politica
l
statemen

ts and
heady
with the
sorrow
that
lead to
jazz age
ridiculo
usness.
It just
feels
like a
pose of
a girl-
or a
girl too
stereoty
pical
for me
to even
want to
know.

A Few
Figs was
better,
quieter,
more
consiste
nt. Less
with the
referenc
es to
being
out all
night,
more of
a return
to the
subjects
that
first
fascinat
ed her.
Still a
bit more
pretenti
ous, but
I'll let

that
pass.
After
all, I
do like
Byron,
and she
does
harken
back to
19th
century
styles
to a
certain
degree.

Actually
, I
think
that's
my
favorite
part
about
Edna St.
Vincent
Millay.
Perhaps
this is
to do
with one
of my
historic
al
fascinat
ions
(the
echoes
of the
Old
World
that
always
linger),
but I
love how
she's
one of

the
writers
straddli
ng the
old
world
and the
new- the
techniqu
es of
the
Victoria
n era
were
still
being
taught,
still
being
revered,
and yet,
entirely
modern
sentimen
ts were
being
expresse
d in
"thees"
and
"thous,"
that
clank up
against
your ear
in a
startlin
g and
charming
way,
being
used to
say
things
that one
has
trouble
believin
g they

would
ever
intend
to
express.
I just
loved
the
sound of
it, the
spirit
of it,
and that
gave me
another
way into
understa
nding
it.

I will
revisit
several
of these
poems
again-
they are
inspirin
g, with
beautifu
l images
to hold
onto and
remember
when
they are
needed.

Thank
you to
everyone
who
recommen
ded this
collecti
on to
me.

**Alliso
n Long
says**

I don't
know too
much
about
Edna St.
Vincent
Millay,
but the
more I
read
about
her, the
more I'm
intrigue
d.

I have
always
adored
her poem
'First
Fig', so
I set
out to
read
more of
her
poetry.
'Selecte
d
Poetry'
consists
of both
flippant
verses
and
those
obsessed
with
death
(no
really,
there is
some

morbid
stuff
there).
The
language
is
beautiful
and
sad
because
so much
of it
has
fallen
out of
favor
with
more
contempo
rary
styles.

'Selecte
d
Poetry'
makes
you
wonder
when
reading
poetry
fell out
of favor
and want
to start
a
movement
to bring
it back
again.

**Noah
Goats
says**

From the
precocio

us power
of
Renaissance
ce to
the
sentimental but
surprisingly
effectively Ballad
of the
Harp
Weaver,
this
collection
contains
one
great
poem
after
another.
As far
as I'm
concerned,
Millay
is one
of
American
literature's
greatest
poets,
and
these
lovely
and
witty
poems
show
why.

**David
says**

Everything in life seems to me to be ephemeral, always passing, changing, transforming. Nothing stays the same, nothing lasts. We live in a very narrow slice of infinity, and in our mind we explode every moment of that slice to somethin g enormous, somethin g of incomprehensible significance. We analyze every glance and turn of phrase,

we plan
our days
and
weeks
and
months
and
five-yea
r plans,
and our
retireme
nts
which we
may
never
reach.
We are
always
sad to
let
things
go, it
does not
come
naturall
y to us.
We cling
and hold
fast to
the
things
we love,
even
cling to
pains
that
have
become
dull,
for fear
of new,
harsher
hands
which
may play
upon us.
And yet
we
paradoxi

cally
love the
idea of
new
things.

New
cars,
and the
exciteme
nt of
new
romances
and new
cities,
travels
to new
places,
discover
ing new
books.

"Death
is the
mother
of
beauty"
said
Wallace
Stevens,
which is
to say
that
nothing
beautifu
l is
eternal,
that we
are only
moved by
the
knowledg
e that
what is
will
never be
the same
again.

Like a
photogra
ph

caging a
moment
of
beauty
into
somethin
g of
forever,
so to
does a
poem
capture
that
slice of
dying
Time
forever.

For Edna
St.
Vincent
Millay,
there is
perhaps
no god
in her
poetry
if not
the
omnipote
nce and
unconque
rable
god of
Time.
She is
acutely
aware of
the
passing
of time,
of the
passing
of
loves,
the
passing
of
moments,

like
ships at
sea. As
soon as
a moment
buds, it
has
stepped
closer
to
decay.

As soon
as a
love is
forged,
it is
one day
closer
to rust.

This
seems to
be a
very
cynical
view of
the
world,
that all
is
always
dying,
that
nothing
lasts,
and
nothing
is
certain
but
death
and
ruin.

But
aren't
we moved
by
ruins?
We are
not

moved by
 cities,
 not by
 skyscrap
 ers nor
 apartmen
 t
 building
 s which
 climb
 high
 into the
 sky and
 bustle
 with
 inmates
 and
 house-ca
 ts going
 about
 their
 dailies.
 What
 moves us
 are the
 ruins
 past,
 where no
 one
 lives,
 the
 Pompeii is
 of the
 world
 which
 echo
 with
 ghosts,
 of
 unsolved
 mysterie
 s and
 goings-o
 n which
 have
 long
 been
 dulled
 by the

crawl
and
recessio
n of
time.
Like
sand on
the
beach
always
being
drawn
away,
inch by
inch, so
too does
time
pull
back on
the
present,
transfor
ming it
into the
past.
What
once was
ugly to
us
becomes
beautifu
l in the
nostalgi
c
distance
s of the
past -
for it
was
always
beautifu
l, but
beauty
requires
distance
. If the
only
paradise
s are

paradise
s lost,
then too
are the
only
beauties
lost
beauties
. Millay
is hyper
aware of
the
beauty
in
passing
things,
in
transien
t
things,
in dying
things.

*THE
FIRST
rose on
my rose-
tree
Budded,
bloomed,
and
shattere
d,
During
sad days
when to
me
Nothing
mattered*
.

*Grief of
grief
has
drained
me
clean;
Still it
seems a*

*pity
No one
saw, -it
must
have
been
Very
pretty.*

We hear
recurren
t in Ms.
Millay's
poetry
this
seeming
ambivale
nce
towards
loss and
grief,
this
acceptan
ce that
the best
things
of
yesterda
y have
already
deprecia
ted
immeasur
ably in
time.
She
knows
that we
don't
apprecia
te
beauty
when it
is
present,
beauty
"buds,
blooms"
when

"nothing
matters"
- when
we can't
apprecia
te it,
when it
is too
close,
when we
take it
for
granted,
when we
are
still
aspiring
for
better.
And it
shatters
before
we even
see that
we were
happy.
We are
much
better
at grief
than
gratitud
e. So
much
beauty
goes
unseen
by us
because
we do
not give
it
attentio
n, we do
not
think of
our
happines
s; but

we are
wallower
s in
grief.
Grief
seems to
us an
ocean;
happines
s,
beauty,
a
lightnin
g-flash.
We are
comforde
d by the
endless
vastness
of the
oceans
of
grief,
their
expected
tempo
s
and
waves of
emotion,
which
threaten
imminent
ly to
topple
us over,
to wreck
us. We
see the
flashes
of
beauty
only
peripher
ally, we
never
seem to
catch
them
head-on,

we are
never
ready
with our
cameras,
and even
when we
do they
never
seem
quite
right
captured
. We
look
back on
moments
of great
beauty,
and
think
they
"must
have
been
very
pretty"
- but we
did not
think so
when we
had
them,
when our
rose
bushes
were
blooming
just
outside
our
windows,
on days
we kept
the
windows
shut so
that
bees

wouldn't
come in,
or the
wind
wouldn't
disrupt
the
pages on
our
desks.
Yes,
they
must've
been
very
pretty.

Perhaps
the
crueldest
truth in
love, in
beauty,
is that
we
withhold
it from
ourselves. We
are
citadels
of
grief,
keeping
out
happiness
s, and
hemming
ourselves in
with our
evasions
and
defenses
. We do
not want
to risk
being
struck

by
lightnin
g. We do
not take
chances,
we
vouchsaf
e our
lives to
the
wavering
seas of
time,
bobbing
up and
down
like
corks on
the
waves,
never
secured
in our
happines
s, but
never,
too,
sunk
complete
ly,
always
in flux.
We hurt
ourselve
s with
our own
pride,
we
refuse
to be
subservi
ent to
the idea
of love,
we
champion
ourselve
s as
worthy

of love,
but hold
ourselve
s too
highly.
We never
give up
our
whole
hearts,
and so
instead
we lose
them
piece by
piece.

*Thus
when I
swear,
"I love
with all
my
heart,"
'Tis
with the
heart of
Lilith
that I
swear,
'Tis
with the
love of
Lesbia
and
Lucrece;
And thus
as well
my love
must
lose
some
part
Of what
it is,
had
Helen
been
less*

*fair,
Or
perished
young,
or
stayed
at home
in
Greece.*

While
this is
a lovely
collecti
on, to
anyone
interest
ed in
Millay's
poetry,
I would
rather
recommen
d her
Collecte
d Poems,
as they
include
a
broader
selectio
n of her
poetry,
and more
specific
ally
consolid
ate all
(or at
least
most of)
Millay's
sonnets,
which
are her
stronges
t and
most
poignant

.

**Kaion
says**

I am a
little
irate
that
this
volume
turned
out not
to be
the
promised
*Selected
Poetry
of Edna
St.*
*Vincent
Millay,*
but
instead
should
be
titled
"Poetry
by Edna
St.
*Vincent
Millay*
That
Happens
to be in
the
Public
Domain".
Namely,
this
consists
of the
entirety
of her
first
three
collecti

ons
Renascen
ce and
Other
Poems, A
Few Figs
From
Thistles
, and
Second
April;
as well
as "The
Ballad
of the
Harp
Weaver"
and
addition
al
sonnets
from
American
Poetry,
1922: *A*
Miscella
ny.

There is
somethin
g I find
perpetua
lly
girlish
about
these
poems,
for all
their
claims
of
deathly
romance
and
pretensi
ons of
classica
l
timeless

ness.
Millay
is best
as a
poet of
summer,
effusive
and
energeti
c (and
fond of
those
exclamat
ion
points).
I think
I like
her best
when she
embraces
the
playfuln
ess of
language
, of
rhythm
and
rhyme,
over her
proclama
tions of
loss and
love.

Rating:
2 stars
(
Renansce
nce and
A Few
Figs are
particul
arly
sparse
in
interest
, and I
admit a
disinter

est in
the
sonnets
altogether.

Second
April is
the
early
collection to
pursue
here.)

My
picks:
**"The
Singing-
Woman
from the
Wood's
Edge",
"Journey
",
"Inland"**

**Rowena
says**

These
were
lovely
poems,
pleasant
to read
and with
easy
interpretations.
Some of
her
poems
about

death
had a
very
Sylvia
Plath
feel to
them.
Most of
the
poems
had
nature
elements
. She
describe
d her
love for
the
great
outdoors
in great
detail.
I want
to go
run
around
in a
meadow
now :)

**El
says**

I 'm
really
not all
that
great
with
poetry
yet. I
think
that if
I know
enough
about a
poet 's

personal
life
that I
will
have a
better
apprecia
tion for
their
poetry.
This may
or may
not be
true,
but this
is sort
of my
first
experien
ce of
trying
that
out,
reading
two
biograph
ies
about
Millay
while
reading
this
selectio
n of
poetry
on the
side.

Knowing
more
about
the
author
helps in
one way
- I know
what was
going on
when she

wrote
certain
poems,
how old
she was,
possibly
what was
going on
in the
world
(though
most of
her
poems
had more
to do
with
herself
than
anything
else,
until
later in
her
years).
On the
flip-
side of
the same
coin,
knowing
more
about
the
author
hurt in
some
ways - I
knew
what she
was
writing
as she
got on
in
years,
what she
was
doing to

herself
and her
body,
her
obsessio
ns with
certain
people -
all of
which
likely
took its
toll on
her
writing.

When you
look at
the
first
poem in
this
selectio
n,
"Renasce
nce"
[sic],
and you
read it
with the
knowledg
e that
she was
19 when
she
wrote
it, you
have a
greater
apprecia
tion for
the
skill
and
genius
of
Millay.
I'd give
five

stars to
that
poem
alone.
But as
she got
older,
that
genius
just
wasn't
there in
the same
way. I
attribut
e that
mainly
to her
addictio
n -
there's
no way
that
being on
as much
morphine
as she
was in
her
later
years
(compoun
ded by
the
excess
of
alcohol
she
drank
and the
slew of
other
medicati
ons she
put in
her
body)
didn't
affect

her
mind.
This is
evidence
d in
Nancy
Milford'
s Savage
Beauty:
The Life
of Edna
St.
Vincent
Millay
where
her time
spent
detoxing
in
hospital
s were
written
in great
detail.

Her
poetry
in later
in years
was hit-
or-miss
for me.
Some of
them are
lovely,
but
others
tend to
ramble
and be
vague
and
essentia
lly
unintere
sting.

However,
she led

a
difficul
t and
often
sad
life,
and that
does
come
across
in her
writing,
for
better
or for
worse.
At times
in a
selectio
n like
this it
starts
to drag
a bit,
and
that's
even
when I
would
read
only one
or two
poems an
evening
before
picking
up where
I left
off in
one or
both of
the
biograph
ies.
Some of
her
poems
are so
short

that
it's
easy to
read a
couple
of pages
and wind
up
having
read
four
poems.

Not the
worst
poetry
I've
read,
and
there
are one
or two
of pure
genius
("Renasc
ence"
being
probably
one of
my all-
time new
favorite
poems
EVAH),
but the
rest
left me
feeling
probably
as cold
as her
insides
felt on
all that
freaking
morphine
.

**Samant
ha
(Sundr
essSec
rets)
says**

Head on
over to
my
Instagra
m at
instagra
m.com/sa
manthaiv
yyyy for
reviews

**Richar
d
Smith
says**

I 've
been
tidying
up the
list of
50 or so
books
that I 'm
supposed
ly
"current
ly
reading,
" and
the
terrible
thing is
that I
am
"current
ly
reading"

most of
them,
although
so
intermit-
tently
that I'm
stretching
the
definiti-
on of
"current
ly
reading"
beyond
usefulne-
ss. But
this
book of
poems by
Edna St
Vincent
Millay I
certainly
did
finish,
seven
years
ago. She
was once
the most
famous
poet in
America,
giving
readings
to 20
000
people
with her
distinct-
ive
voice.
Now
she's
out of
fashion.
She's
unashame-

dly
romantic
, a
follower
of
Shelley.
Love and
death,
the
great
themes,
are her
themes,
and I
like her
poetry
very
much. I
return
to it
often.

**Gen
says**

I find
I'm
mostly
alone on
this but
I feel a
distance
between
me and
poetry
like
it's too
personal
for me
to view
no
matter
where
I'm
seeing
it or
how much

I enjoy
it.
Millay's
words
complete
ly
betray
this
feeling,
I
understo
od and
gushed
over the
poems. I
borrowed
a copy
of this
from the
library
but it
looks
like I'm
definite
ly
buying I
need
this on
my shelf
<3.
