



Selected Poems

Octavio Paz, Eliot Weinberger (Editor, Translator), Charles Tomlinson (Translator), William Carlos Williams (Translator), Monique Fong Wust (Translator), G. Aroul (Translator), Elizabeth Bishop (Translator), Paul Blackburn (Translator), more... Lysander Kemp (Translator), Denise Levertov (Translator), Muriel Rukeyser (Translator), Mark Strand (Translator) ...less

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Octavio Paz, asserts Eliot Weinberger in his introduction to these Selected Poems, is among the last of the modernists "who drew their own maps of the world." For Latin America's foremost living poet, his native Mexico has been the center of a global mandala, a cultural configuration that, in his life and work, he has traced to its furthest reaches: to Spain, as a young Marxist during the Civil War; to San Francisco and New York in the early 1940s; to Paris, as a surrealist, in the postwar years; to India and Japan in 1952, and to the East again as his country's ambassador to India from 1962 to 1968; and to various universities in the United States throughout the 1970s. A great synthesizer, the rich diversity of Paz's thought is shown here in all its astonishing complexity. Among the sixty-seven selections in this volume, a gathering in English of his most essential poems drawn from nearly fifty years' work, are Muriel Rukeyser's now classic version of "Sun Stone" and new translations by editor Weinberger of "Blanco" and "Maithuna." And since for Paz, forever in motion, there can be no such thing as a "definitive text," all the poems have been revised to conform to the poet's most recent changes in the original Spanish. Besides those by Rukeyser and Weinberger, the translations in the Selected Poems are by G. Aroul, Elizabeth Bishop, Paul Blackburn, Lysander Kemp, Denise Levertov, Mark Strand, Charles Tomlinson, William Carlos Williams, and Monique Fong Wust.

Selected Poems Details

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From Reader Review Selected Poems for online ebook

Paul says

Although I enjoyed it I struggle a bit with translated poetry, worrying if I'm seeing the work of the poet or of the translator, but it was good to read the works of this Nobel Laureate for the first time

Farhan Khalid says

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metaphor says

let the words lay down their arms and the poem be one single
interwoven word,
and may the soul be the blackened grass after fire, the lunar
breast of a sea that's turned to stone and reflects nothing
except splayed dimension, expansion, space lying down upon
itself, spread wings immense,
and may everything be like flame that cuts itself into and freezes
into the rock of diaphanous bowels,
hard blazing resolved now in crystal, peaceable clarity.
And the river goes back upstream, strikes its sails, picks up its
images and coils within itself.

Laura says

this is way sexy and observant. He really plays with time and light.

Sean A. says

I found this collection to be most excellent. It was eerie, with the specters of time, poetics and metaphor constantly haunting the works. It was lush and verdant both in the depth of scenery described as well as the combination of skillfully chosen words that are so powerful and evocative in these works. It was somewhat dense, yet not pretentious and likely to be, at least for those familiar with some poetry, enjoyably approachable. It was magical, with secret tunnels to other worlds, circumstance and mystical and mythical experience throughout, yet the tunnels always brings us somewhat back to our primary reality. The poems range in size from tiny airy haiku to sprawling 10+ page poems of a rollicking free verse variety. Towards the beginning there is also some magical prose poetry which I very much relished.
I don't know a lot about Paz, nor am I familiar with his other works, however, this collection lead me thirsting for more.

Sayantan Dasgupta says

Such a delight!

Konstantin says

[rating = A]

One of my: Best Books of the Year (for 2018)

I have been reading this for some time (years and years), though that's what one is suppose to do with poetry: take one's time. I absolutely love Paz! Although some of his poems can go one for just Forever, I love his use of phrasing and his mix of contemporary and ancient. I would categorize him as a user of magic, as a mystic in a world of disbelievers. His poems speak of the earth and for the Earth. His best poems are those short and simple sort that leaves the reader spellbound, rereading long into the night, trying to understand, to absorb, and collect the wonder of his words! There is no one like Paz, and perhaps I should invest some time in more Spanish poets like Lorca... Anyway, I am happy to be finished with this so that I may go back and read it again. His words are tender and never disrupt the flow of meaning shimmering down the page. I love how his is conscious of himself, his surroundings, and himself in his surroundings. I would mark him beside William Carlos Williams as one of Woolf's androgynous writers, allow the fluidity of the world and of the word to cross between borders and boundaries. A splendor to read.

Triin says

Reading this collection, I felt, at times, lost in the mirrors of language. Octavio Paz turns words metaphysical, turns them into silences, into chiaroscuro. A kind of melange of Paul Celan and John Cage.

The closing lines to *A Draft of Shadows*:

I am where I was:
I walk behind the murmur,
footsteps within me, heard with my eyes,
the murmur is in the mind, I am my footsteps,
I hear the voices that I think,
the voices that think me as I think them.
I am the shadow my words cast.

Andrew Hodgson says

His strength is in essays.

Zebardast Zebardast says

khoondam va khosham ham naioomad.shaiad be zaboonew khodeshoon ghashnage,khoda aaleme;)

peiman-mir5 rezakhani says

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Jeremy says

Another incredible, transcendent collection of Paz's work. Though there is a lot of overlap between this and the configurations collection, there are also a fair amount of different pieces. This volume is much more meditative on the nature of language than configurations. Once again, Paz manages to capture the smallest moments and let them reverberate out into the void.

Imen Benyoub says

A visionary..I lost myself in the labyrinths of his language..

My hands
open the curtains of your being
clothe you in a further nudity
uncover the bodies of your body
My hands
invent another body for your body

Laurie Williams says

I have reread this collection of poems so often, that the pages are tattered. This is one of those books to literally devour. It has coffee and tea stains and clay stains from taking ot to the clay studio. I have repaired the pages and the spine over and over again. I love, love, love this book.

J.M. Hushour says

I love this guy! He definitely puts all the other Mexican, surrealist suckah MC poets in their proper place.
