



Collected Sonnets

Edna St. Vincent Millay , Ruth Bornschlegel (Designed by) , Norma Millay (Introduction) , Elizabeth Barnett (Preface by)

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More than 180 sonnets selected from Millay's books of poems -- including 20 sonnets from *Mine the Harvest* not contained in previous editions of her *Collected Sonnets* -- are brought together in this new, expanded edition. An introduction by Norma Millay, written expressly for this volume, focuses on examples of the poet's variations in sonnet structure. Here is the voice of Millay, whose prophetic vision, devotion to freedom, and intellectual daring combine with her mastery of the sonnet form to speak eloquently for the human spirit.

Collected Sonnets Details

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From Reader Review Collected Sonnets for online ebook

Lucy says

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When we that wore the myrtle wear the dust,
And years of darkness cover up our eyes,
And all our arrogant laughter and sweet lust
Keep counsel with the scruples of the wise;
When boys and girls that now are in the loins
Of croaking lads, dip oar into the sea,--
And who are these that dive for copper coins?
No longer we, my love, no longer we--
Then let the fortunate breathers of the air,
When we lie speechless in the muffling mould,
Tease not our ghosts with slander, pause not there
To say that love is false and soon grows cold,
But pass in silence the mute grave of two
Who lived and died believing love was true.

Kelsie says

I don't think I can give a fair review of this because I really didn't understand the vast majority of these sonnets and that's more my lack of understanding than the fault of this collection.

I can appreciate Millay has a knack for words, it was beautifully constructed too, however I just didn't understand a lot of them.

The ones I did understand are the ones I liked, so I feel it's only fair to give it a 3 star rating. I don't believe in rating a book low because I didn't get what was being said. So a 3 is a good middle of the road rating.

If you like sonnets then this is probably more for you. I thought I'd give it a try because it was recommended to me.

x

Jinni Pike says

Millay's sonnets are witty, simple, elaborate, clever, morbid, gorgeous, grandiose, detailed...I could go on and on.

She will make you smirk with lines like "I drink - and live - what has destroyed some men."

She'll make you ache with:

"Time does not bring relief; you all have lied
Who told me time would ease me of my pain!
I miss him in the weeping of the rain;
I want him at the shrinking of the tide."

You'll sigh with:

"Between the awful spears of birth and death
I run a grassy gauntlet in the sun;
And curdled in me is my central pith,
Remembering there is dying to be done."

And you'll almost think she's talking directly to you with:

"Oh, friend, forget not, when you fain would note
In me a beauty that was never mine,
How first you knew me in a book I wrote,
How first you loved me for a written line."

I do feel like I know you Edna, and I definitely love you.

E. Mikel Brown says

Insufferable. I haven't disliked poetry this much in ages.

Anna Marie says

I've had some dark days here and there in my life, more there than here anymore and some admittedly of my own making. Days where I allowed such hopelessness and grief to deaden my interest in everything around me. No book or tv program or even the most gorgeous day outside could hold my thoughts for more than a moment. Strangely what did hold my interest would be these sonnets. I'd read them aloud to myself. I'd highlight my favorite lines. I'd announce to the nobody that was listening, "Time does not bring relief! You all have lied who told me it would ease me of my pain!" and it wasn't time that brought relief so much as a poet who had been there.

Even though these days I don't dwell on my losses, I still keep the comforting Sonnets of Edna St. Vincent Millay an arms-reach from my bed.

Christy Baker says

While I enjoy some of Edna St. Vincent Millay's poetry, this was a rather sparse and old, even falling apart little volume that wasn't particularly well curated, but rather felt like a highly random collection of her sonnets. It did have an index of first lines in the back, but no other indicators of order or separation between the poems.

Drew says

Every poem has something that arrests your attention and a good number of them have substantially more than that. I really admire her sense of rhythm, her metaphors, and her willingness to play with form (there's a few written in tetrameter and her end rhyme patterns aren't always predictable). I inevitably read this collections years ago. I'll inevitably read it again. I actually find Millay's poems comforting despite the content not always being so.

Robin Reul says

I'm not usually one who is drawn in by poetry, but something about Edna St. Vincent Millay's sonnets just cuts straight through to my soul. Not only did I thoroughly enjoy reading these, but it inspired me to want to learn more about this fascinating woman's life.

Hannah says

Nobody does it like Millay.

sdw says

There is nothing I love more than the sonnets of Edna St. Vincent Millay.

"Time does not bring relief; you all have lied
Who told me time would ease me of my pain!
I miss him in the weeping of the rain;
I want him at the shrinking of the tide;
The old snows melt from every mountain-side,
And last year's leaves are smoke in every lane;
But last year's bitter loving must remain
Heaped on my heart, and my old thoughts abide,
There are a hundred places where I fear
To go, - so with his memory they brim.
And entering with relief some quiet place
Where never fell his foot or shone his face
I say, 'There is no memory of him here!'
And so stand stricken, so remembering him."

"I shall forget you presently, my dear,
So make the most of this, your little day,
Your little month, your little half a year,
Ere i forget, or die, or move away,
And we are done forever; by and by
I shall forget you, as I said, but now,

If you entreat me with your loveliest lie
I will protest you with my favourite vow.
I would indeed that love were longer-lived,
And oaths were not so brittle as they are,
But so it is, and nature has contrived
To struggle on without a break thus far -,
Where or not we find what we are seeking
Is idle, biologically speaking."

Jennifer says

My poetry tastes tend to run to free verse (see: Frank O'Hara, Richard Siken, Elizabeth Bishop, Bob Hicok), so reading a book made up of formally structured poems was a new experience. (Which may be why it took me four months to finish.) I loved this collection, though. I am completely bowled over by how effective and emotive and beautiful Millay's sonnets are.

Jenna says

If you like Edna St. Vincent Millay, you're fine by me.

Now, I don't dispute the critics who say that Millay was a limited poet; I don't entirely disagree with those who say that Millay's "Look at what a bad girl I am! Look, look: I'm naughty, I love sex and I love talking about sex (as well as nature and, occasionally, world affairs), and I don't care what people say about me!" posturing has a limiting effect on her poetry, such that many of her poems end up saying virtually the same thing as one another. It's similar to how Ashbery's poetry is able to say more than O'Hara's, because Ashbery relies on an autobiographical persona less than O'Hara did. I don't dispute that all this is true; nonetheless, I think Millay is redeemed by her technical proficiency and her clever condensations of big meanings into elegant little turns-of-phrase. Not only is her message sympathetic and compelling, but she speaks it with impeccable eloquence. She is the sort of person who would have taken top marks in the sort of rhetoric classes they used to teach at British boys' schools, the ones that required a solid grounding in Greek and Latin.

Millay's most memorable poems are, I think, the very early love sonnets ("I shall forget you presently, my dear," "I, being born a woman and distressed," etc.), but some of the more mature and polished "Fatal Interview" sonnets are also lovable; even the political sonnets, despite the plenitude of abstract nouns they contain ("mercy," "honor," "allegiance," etc.), manage to save themselves from badness through their rhetorical strength and picturesque wordings ("The barking of a fox has bought us all....Peter warms him in the servants' hall").

Shayla says

that was awesome. Definitely adding Edna to my list of favorite poets. I can't wait to go back and really analyze some of these sonnets

Wealhtheow says

I fell desperately in love with Millay after reading "First Fig" in my history textbook. Some years later, I chose my college partly based upon the fact that she had gone there. Funny, irreverant, passionate and smart, Millay's work has incredible rhythm, rhyme, and impact.

Neil Burton says

I hated clicking "I'm finished" because I will never be finished with this book. I will return to it often and gladly.
