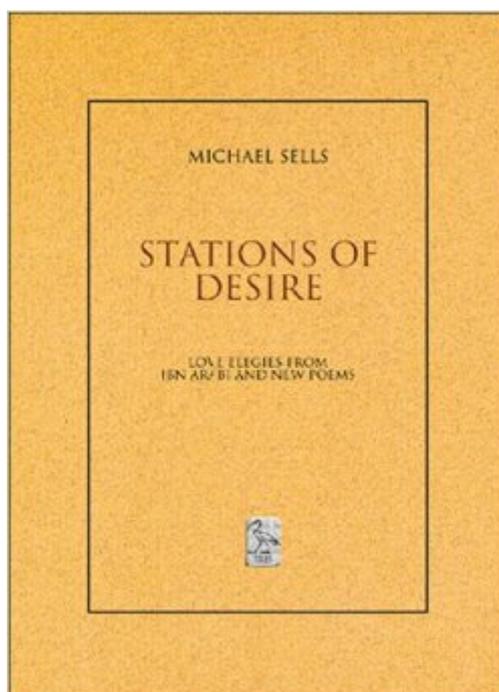


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Stations Of Desire: Love Elegies From Ibn 'Arabi And New Poems (Ibis Editions)



Synopsis

Poetry. Translation. One of the great mystics of all time, Muhyiddin Ibn al-'Arabi was a prolific author who wrote on every aspect of medieval Islamic thought. Michael Sell's STATIONS OF DESIRE contains the first translations of Ibn 'Arabi's TURJUMAN into modern poetic English. Sells, one of the most distinguished contemporary translators of classical Arabic poetry, carries into his translations the supple, resonant quality of the original Arabic. The book also includes a selection of Sell's original poems, which are modeled on the Turjuman and serve as a further commentary on the medieval odes and their extension into the present climate of poetry.

Book Information

Paperback: 136 pages

Publisher: Ibis Editions; 1st edition (January 1, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9659012519

ISBN-13: 978-9659012510

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 4.8 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 3.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (4 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,319,187 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #306 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > Middle Eastern](#)

Customer Reviews

People might have different views of Sells' own poetry, but no one can disagree that he is a great translator. I have read many translations of Arabic poetry, and I must say that Sells' translations are the best. They perfectly convey the rhythm, the poignancy, the beauty of the original language. Ibn Arabi's poems are great in Arabic, but it's a challenge to render them into modern English and still retain their status of great poetry. Sells has done a wonderful job. I think he deserves a national award for his excellent translations that bring a beautiful literature to the modern reader.

The translation and the introduction were my favourite aspects of this book. Michael Sells provides an insightful understanding of Ibn 'Arabi's era, outlook, philosophy, mystical quest and religion. He handles the poetry with a reverent touch, capturing the philosophical and mystical silence of the tone one might find in the original. This is the kind of translation that might influence one to pursue learning Arabic in the hopes of reading the original. The translations were great but I wish there was

more of a commentary following each poem. There is so much more to these poems and I found this book only cursory in its approach. Again, the introduction provided a profound grounding in Sufism, highlighting major influences amongst them, the Qu'ran, Majnun, Ghahyal and 'Umar. It would have been nice to trace these influences, how in each poem they contributed to the greater vastness of 'Arabi's work. What I didn't appreciate was Sells inserting his own poetry into the work. As a reader, I felt interrupted, the flow was marred by these efforts. I merely skipped his poems to continue reading 'Arabi - which is what this book should be completely dedicated to. It would be like going to see a concert and half way through the performance, a groupie of the main act took over the stage to sing a few songs. In their own context, namely a book of his poetry, I might have appreciated Sells's own artistic endeavors but not in this circumstance. If you can find this book at the library, I recommend reading the intro, the translation and the glossary. Skip Sells' own poetry. It is a good, insightful read but not enough to satisfy.

I told them of a lover strange and lost, Surrounded by yearnings, struck by their arrow on target always, wherever he goes. She smiled, showing her side teeth. Lightning flashed. I couldn't tell which of the two split the darkness. Isn't it enough she said I am in his heart where each moment he sees me, isn't it, no? Ibn 'Arabi "As Night Let its Curtains down in Folds" "Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq" The book has a great introduction and a few selections of Ibn 'Arabi's sublime poetry. There is, however, not enough. I had thought that this work would have more of Ibn 'Arabi's poems in it, and I was disappointed that there were not more, and that Sells inserted his own personal poetry into the collection as well--his poetry was fine, but I intended to buy a collection of the poetry of Ibn 'Arabi, not to read poems about trains and such. But, again, the introduction was very good, as were many of the selections of poetry, though I now need to purchase a larger connection, as this was more of an advertisement for the "Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq" than the work itself.

1. The language the translator uses when talking about the prophets is disrespectful. 2. The translator's own poems are rubbish. 3. He is a good translator. Ibn Arabi's poems are full of desire and love.

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