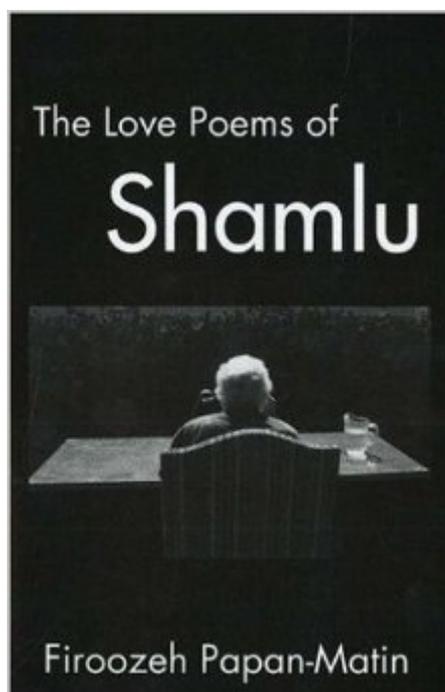


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The Love Poems Of Ahmad Shamlu



Synopsis

Ahmad Shamlu (1925-2000) is among the most celebrated figures of contemporary Iranian literature. The poems presented here, capture Shamlu's unique depictions of love. The narrator in these poems is a man intoxicated by the love of a woman; a woman whom we meet in the body of his love poetry; a female presentation whose characteristics are not fixed. Due to Shamlu's widely recognized prominence within the intellectual opposition, the mainstream approach to his poetry has largely evaluated it in terms of the socio-political background of the poet's era. Taking issue with this limiting approach, the present work emphasizes an alternative reading of Shamlu, based on a primarily aesthetic analysis of the theme of aphrodisiac love in his poetry. More specifically, the present text is focused on the poet/lover's meditation on a beloved elevated to the stature of a goddess. This woman's metaphoric identity casts her as the muse and the audience. She is, with all her attendant dangers, the poet's realization of beauty and desire for being. The Love Poems of Ahmad Shamlu incorporates poems that trace the development of the relationship among the lover, the beloved, and love, in Shamlu's poetry. The selection includes poems that go back to the beginning of Shamlu's career when he was still experimenting with language and style in search of his own poetic voice. The chapters preceding the poems in translation, provide some insight into the life of Shamlu as well as his poetry. This work has valuable scholarly and pedagogic implications. While it is a contribution to the scholarship on the work of Shamlu, it also provides a concise translated collection that can be useful for students of Persian language and literature. This work can also serve as a textbook for courses in comparative and Persian literatures. Considering the growing interest in Persian poetry during the recent years, this book will further be of interest for audiences beyond speakers of Persian.

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Customer Reviews

The Love Poems Of Ahmad Shamlu by Firoozeh Papan-Matin is an erudite translation by Arthur Lane (Professor Emeritus of English, California State University, Northridge) of one of Iran's most influential literary figure, showcasing great works of poetic rhetoric. Epitaph: Nothing active in the leaving/No Stillness in the staying.//Branches would not detach from the root;/the tattling wind/revealed no worthy secret/to the leaves.//The maiden of my love/is an exotic mother./The speeding star/on its despairing route/revolves in an eternal orbit.

These are the best translations I have yet seen of Ostad Shamlou's poems. I am a pretty good amateur poet, who studied poetry at school, and when I got this book I felt despondent; for here are exactly the poems I have tried and failed to write. I had to put the book back on the shelf while I took some time to absorb the shock. Shamlou's work will certainly appeal to readers of Paul Celan or Nazim Hikmet. One small complaint. About the forward by Ms. Firoozeh. Someone should let her know Azerbaijan is not now and has never been in Russia! What a phenomenal error! How could it be. Surely an educated person would know the difference between the Soviet Union and Russia? There are several other pretty glaring factual errors in the forward that I am really quite surprised were missed by either the editor or the co-translator. Oh well, not to worry, the translations themselves are something else.

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