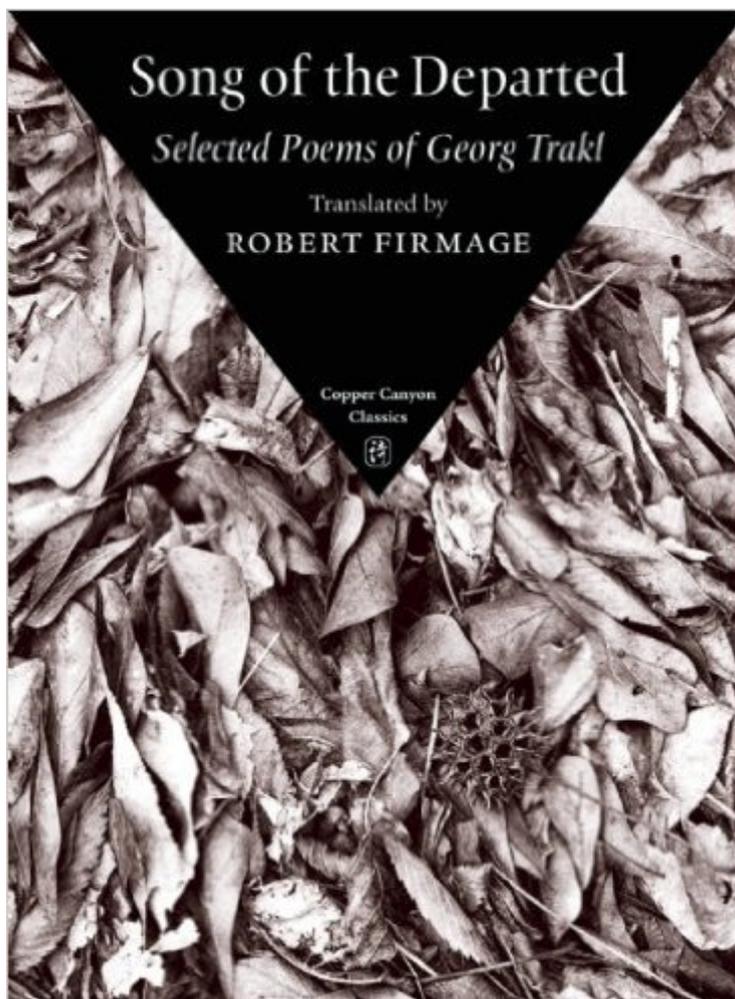


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Song Of The Departed: Selected Poems Of Georg Trakl



Synopsis

"Trakl's poetry is amazing. His reader is gifted with visions of a darker world, an autumnal place of surreal beauty and a dying splendor. It is not a world friendly to people; it is full of death, desolation, and decay, strange creatures and arcane gods. But it is beautiful nonetheless. Hauntingly beautiful."—Chris Faatz, Powells.com "I do not understand them; but their tone pleases me. It is the tone of true genius."—Ludwig Wittgenstein

Song of the Departed brings back into print poems written at the height of Georg Trakl's career. Trakl boldly confronted the conflicts created by the pursuit of truth amidst the fallenness of the human condition, writing of the unspeakable that lies beyond language, creating poetry that is intensely personal and eerily beautiful. Included in this revised edition are several new translations and an introduction by the translator.

All roads disgorge to black decay.
Beneath the golden boughs of night and stars
The sister's shadow flutters through the silent grove
To greet the spirits of the heroes, bleeding heads.
And softly in the reeds drone the dark flutes of autumn.
O prouder grief! you brazen altars;
Tonight a mighty anguish feeds the hot flame of spirit:
Unborn grandchildren.

Georg Trakl was born in Austria in 1887. He served as a medical officer during World War I. As a lyric poet, he set a dark, introspective tone that deeply influenced the course of German expressionism. He died in 1914 after an overdose of cocaine.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I love some of these poems, whose imagery, tone and power of expression feel ahead of their time.

All great poetry is unique, but there is something about Trakl's writing that truly sets it apart. His melancholy is beautifully absorbing and full of hints about a plenteous world which we live in, but may never reach. Some of the poems do become morbid and even grotesque. But I think its worth it anyway.

I greatly admire Robert Firmage. There can be no doubt that he has a scholar's knowledge and a poet's sensitivity. His scholarship is obvious in the introduction which was originally published twenty-six years ago and also in an Afterword: Truth in Trakl, which I believe is here published for the first time. Both pieces will guide you across the threshold into Trakl's unique world so that you can begin immediately your exploration of it. I cannot speak German so I rely on translators, but I feel completely confident I am hearing Trakl's genuine voice. Of the many available translations of Trakl, these are my favorites. Often Trakl's images are so starkly precise that it seems as if they had been carved in stone, and Trakl stands nearby, holding hammer and chisel, covered in dust. I'm thinking of a poem like DE PROFUNDIS, the first Trakl I ever read and still one of my touchstone poems. In other poems, there seems to be a veil drawn between us and the events of the poem, which take on a mysterious aura, as this image from GRODEK reveals: THE SISTER'S SHADOW FLUTTERS THROUGH THE SILENT GROVE/TO GREET THE SPIRITS OF THE HEROES, BLEEDING HEADS. In a poem like this Trakl hardly seems present: he has become one of the Departed, leaving behind only his haunted and haunting words. Robert Firmage's translations will bring you into the poet's presence; you will encounter the amazing savagery and spirituality of his vision.

the only thing more fascinating about Trakl's poetry was his life. Reading the introduction is like the juiciest soap opera in town. Considered on a level with Rilke, Trakl's personality was what stood between him and eternal fame.

No comments

These are very good poems...a little on the dark side...but I liked that about the poems...good introduction section...try it if you have the time

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