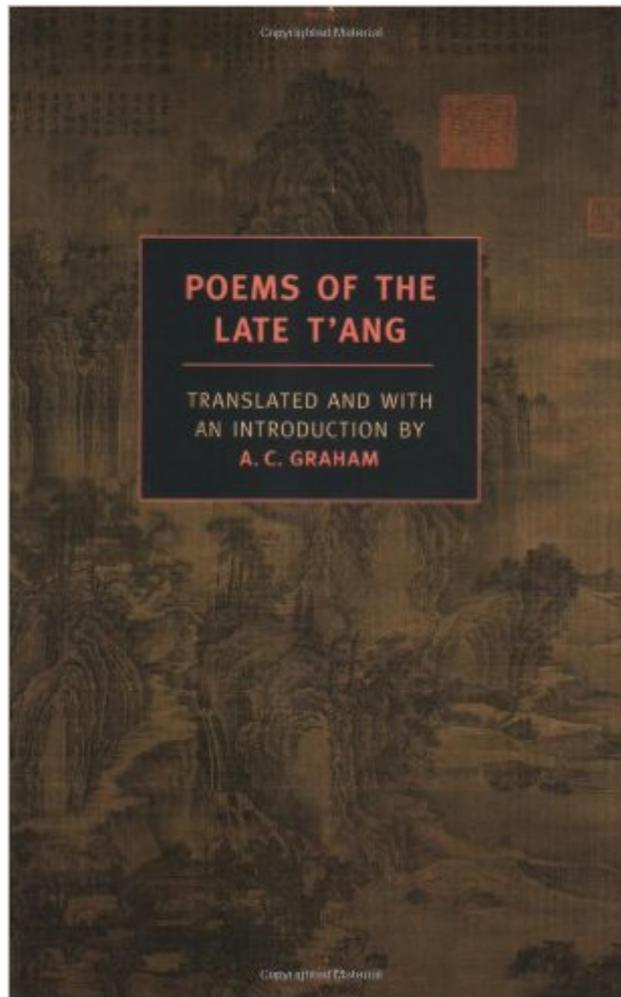


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Poems Of The Late T'ang (New York Review Books Classics)



Synopsis

Classical Chinese poetry reached its pinnacle during the T'ang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.), and the poets of the late T'ang—a period of growing political turmoil and violence—are especially notable for combining striking formal innovation with raw emotional intensity. A. C. Graham's slim but indispensable anthology of late T'ang poetry begins with Tu Fu, commonly recognized as the greatest Chinese poet of all, whose final poems and sequences lament the pains of exile in images of crystalline strangeness. It continues with the work of six other masters, including the cold poet • Meng Chiao, who wrote of retreat from civilization to the remoteness of the high mountains; the troubled and haunting Li Ho, who, as Graham writes, cultivated a wholly personal imagery of ghosts, blood, dying animals, weeping statues, whirlwinds, the will-o'-the-wisp; and the shimmeringly strange poems of illicit love and Taoist initiation of the enigmatic Li Shang-yin. Offering the largest selection of these poets' work available in English in a translation that is a classic in its own right, *Poems of the Late T'ang* also includes Graham's searching essay "The Translation of Chinese Poetry" as well as helpful notes on each of the poets and on many of the individual poems.

Book Information

Series: New York Review Books Classics

Paperback: 184 pages

Publisher: NYRB Classics; Main edition (January 22, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1590172574

ISBN-13: 978-1590172575

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.4 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (6 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #265,972 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #26 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > Asian > Chinese](#) #1161 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry](#)

Customer Reviews

POEMS OF THE LATE T'ANG : Translated with an Introduction by A. C. Graham. 176 pp. (Penguin Classics). Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1970 (1965) and Reissued. Translators of Chinese poetry tend to be of various kinds. On the one hand we have important poets such as Ezra Pound, Gary Snyder

and Kenneth Rexroth, men who though perhaps not expert in Chinese were certainly conversant with it in various degrees and who have given us some truly striking and memorable translations. There are also brilliant scholar-translators such as Arthur Waley, Burton Watson, and the author of the present book, A. C. Graham, men both expert in Chinese and artists in words whose versions can be equally impressive. A. C. Graham, author of the present book and of such major works of scholarship as 'Chuang-Tzu : The Inner Chapters' (1981) and 'Disputers of the Tao' (1989) is generally reckoned, not without justice, to be one of the modern West's three greatest translators of Chinese poetry. His book, after an extremely interesting 23-page essay on 'The Translation of Chinese Poetry,' offers us selections from seven major poets : Tu Fu, Meng Chiao, Han Yu, Lu T'ung, Li Ho, Tu Mu, and Li Shang-yin. Each of the poets is given a brief introduction, and the book ends with a useful list of references to the pages on which the original texts of the poems will be found in the 'Ch'uan T'ang shih' [Complete T'ang Poems] Peking, 1960. 'Poems of the Late T'ang' is one of my favorite books and I've often returned to it. All of Graham's versions read and work like original poems - their lines remain in the mind and become part of you - lines such as Meng Chiao's : "Who will say that the inch of grass in his heart / Is gratitude enough for all the sunshine of spring ? " (p.

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