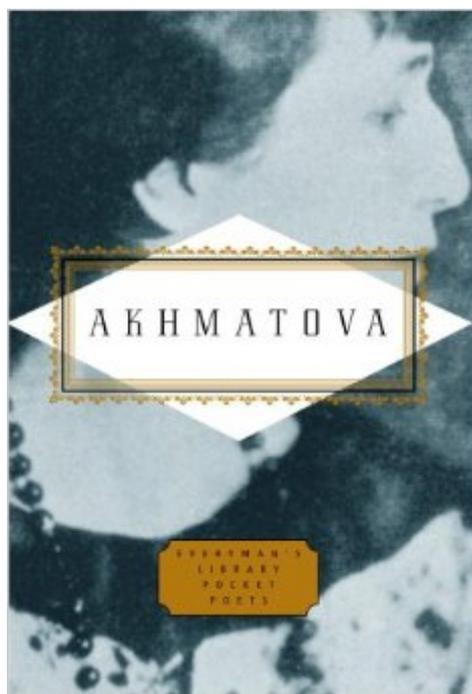


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Anna Akhmatova (Everyman's Library Pocket Poets)



Synopsis

A legend in her own time both for her brilliant poetry and for her resistance to oppression, Anna Akhmatova "denounced by the Soviet regime for her "eroticism, mysticism, and political indifference" "is one of the greatest Russian poets of the twentieth century. Before the revolution, Akhmatova was a wildly popular young poet who lived a bohemian life. She was one of the leaders of a movement of poets whose ideal was "beautiful clarity" in her deeply personal work, themes of love and mourning are conveyed with passionate intensity and economy, her voice by turns tender and fierce. A vocal critic of Stalinism, she saw her work banned for many years and was expelled from the Writers' Union "condemned as "half nun, half harlot." Despite this censorship, her reputation continued to flourish underground, and she is still among Russia's most beloved poets. Here are poems from all her major works "including the magnificent "Requiem" commemorating the victims of Stalin's terror "and some that have been newly translated for this edition.

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Customer Reviews

This is the volume that introduced me to the works of Anna Akhmatova. After having read this in one evening, I could not sleep - I was so moved by her poetry. The translation must have captured her heart and soul because it certainly captured mine - it inspired me to get up in the middle of the night and draw pictures to go with what I had read. I understood at once the love the Russian people

have for her. Since then, I have gobbled up everything translated into English that I can find, but I still think this little volume is the best of all and return to it again and again. Enjoy.....

This is a marvelous book. It is extremely difficult to accurately capture the flavor of the original writing in translation, but Kunitz has done this and more - the English itself is poetry. The book is dual language, so readers of Russian can read the original next to the English. Both are excellent. The selection is fairly representative of Akhmatova's life work, with early poems from 1909, through her affair with the poet Blok in the teens, the Terror and War, to her deathbed in 1961. I particularly enjoyed the translation of the epic "Requiem". Without a doubt, this is the best English version I have ever read. My only complaint is its brevity - at 40 poems, it merely whets the readers appetite for more - a pity, given the outstanding nature of both poet and translator. For those who are not familiar with Anna Akhmatova, this is a gem. If you have read some of her work, this is a must-have volume. Enjoy!

I'm not a great poetry lover, but the simplicity and meaning of her poems is even enough to turn me on to poetry!!!! Her words reach my life experiences and touch my soul.

This is a cop out review. I still don't know enough about poetry to give it a decent review. To do that I would need to put it in some kind of context but I'm such a beginner when it comes to poetry I can't just yet. Maybe later. But I do love the poems in this short volume. I found it because one of my favourite artists, the wonder singer Iris DeMent, just did an album based on her poetry called *The Trackless Woods*. (It is a stunning album but many have trouble with DeMent's voice. I love her voice.) Only one or two of the songs she does can be found in this book but that's okay. A bit of an unorthodox way to discover a poet but what does it really matter?

This particular translation of Anna Akhmatova's work by Stanley Kunitz is by far a literary achievement of epic scale. Russian is a language with many nuances. But Kunitz captures the rhythm and texture like no English writer ever has. It's a gem! If you're considering a discovery of Anna Akhmatova, there is no finer translation in the English language. My only wish is that Kunitz had done more, translating Gogol or Chekhov. but we're left with both masterpieces. I for one am eternally grateful.

I grew up in Russia reading Akhmatova, Esenin and other great poets of the "Silver Period". To this

day, Akhmatova is the poet I turn to when nostalgia hits. So when I wanted to introduce Russian poetry to my English-speaking husband, I bought this volume. I am giving this book only four stars because of the somewhat limited selection of the poems: some of her greatest (and best known in Russia) are missing. Kunitz really shines in being able to relay the mood and (surprisingly) the rhythm of Akhmatova, even if the actual translation is not quite accurate. Overall, this is a great introduction to the poems of a truly talented poet. However, you will soon find yourself shopping for the complete works.

While reading Harrison Salisbury's "Nine Hundred Days" about the siege of Leningrad, I found myself longing to re-read some Russian lit after 35 years. Akhmatova is as profound and powerful as ever, though still mournful and sad, trying to make sense of a world gone mad with killing, jailing and hatred. I read her in college with the hope the world would change, but alas, it has not and the siren song she sang in the 1800's holds the same grip in 2009. She reminds you of the fear and desolation lost love brings while at the same time finds a glimmer of hope to destroy the hatred that has cost so many, many lives. Beautiful and powerful. Michelle Czerner, 2/2009

This is an excellent selection of poems by the great Russian poet Anna Akhmatova. The translations are by the noted Russian scholar Max Hayward and the noted American poet Stanley Kunitz. As a non-Russian speaker, I can't really judge the quality of translations but the end product is terrific. There are a number of wonderful short lyrics. The peak of this selection is a powerful version of the great Requiem, Akhmatova's memorial for the victims of Stalin's purges. A truly great poem.

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