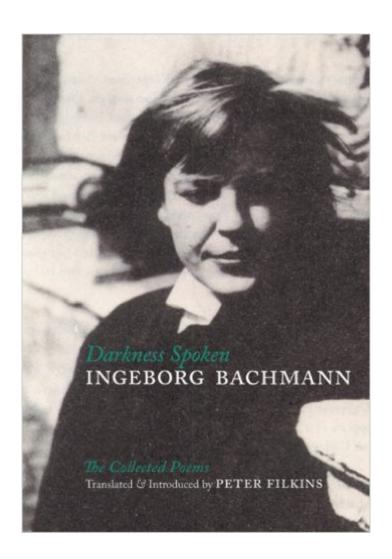# Darkness Spoken: The Collected Poems Of Ingeborg Bachmann (German Edition)

Synopsis

Darkness Spoken gathers together Ingeborg Bachmannâ ™s two celebrated books of poetry, as well as early and late poems not collected in book form, over 100 of them appearing in English for the first time, as well as 25 poems never before published in German. Bachmann is considered one of the most important poets to emerge in postwar German letters, and this volume represents the largest collection available in English translation. Influencing numerous writers from Thomas Bernhard to Christa Wolf to Elfriede Jelinek (winner of the 2004 Nobel Prize in Literature), Bachmannâ ™s poetic investigation into the nature and limits of language in the face of historical violence remains unmatched in its ability to combine philosophical insight with haunting lyricism.Bachmann was born in 1926 in Klagenfurt, Austria. She studied philosophy at the universities of Innsbruck, Graz, and Vienna. In 1953 she received the poetry prize from Gruppe 47 for her first volume, Borrowed Time (Die gestundete Zeit). Her second collection, Invocation of the Great Bear (Anrufung des groÃ en BÃ¤ren), appeared in 1956. Her various awards include the Georg BÃ chner Prize, the Berlin Critics Prize, the Bremen Award, and the Austrian State Prize for Literature. Writing and publishing essays, opera libretti, short stories, and novels as well, she divided her time between Munich, Zurich, Berlin, and Rome, where she died from a fire in her apartment in 1973.Peter Filkins has published two volumes of poetry, What She Knew (1998) and After Homer (2002), and has translated Bachmannâ ™s The Book of Franza and Requiem for Fanny Goldmann. He is the recipient of an Outstanding Translation Award from the American Literary Translators Association and the Berlin Prize from the American Academy in Berlin. He teaches at Simonâ ™s Rock College of Bard in Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

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Customer Reviews

Darkness Spoken: The Collected Poems of Ingeborg BachmannThe hauntingly beautiful poems in this volume give expression to a deep and often brooding poetic consciousness which is one and the same as language. Set free--the word is not casually chosen--language reconfigures itself in an act of renewal, achieving a new vitality. Thus, ultimately, no matter how somber they may be, in their very existence, the poems strike a note of historic victory over all of those forces of darkenss that surround the poet."Libraries," a poem from 1945 - 1956, is revealing of the quality and historic importance of the poems:"The shelves sag./The volumes are weighted down with the past./ Their sweat is dust./ The impulse is rigidity./ They no longer sturggle./ They have saved themselves/upon the island of knowledge./Soometimes they've lost their conscience./Here and there, protruding/from them, human fingers/point directly towards life/or twards heaven.Clearly, language is mired in the past, is petrified, no longer engaged in any vitality-giving struggle, and no longer engaged in acts of conscience. The final four lines are mysterious; but one possibility is that even within this stagnant heap of language, encouraging human signs are to be found. These, surely, are the inspiration for Ingeborg Bachmann's poetry, here collected.This reviewer is in no position to comapare Filkins' translations with the original German texts that accompany them. In their own right, at the very least, they are pleasant enough.

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