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The Illuminated Rumi

THE
ILLUMINATED
Rumi
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Translations &
Commentary by
Coleman Barks

Illuminations by
Michael Green
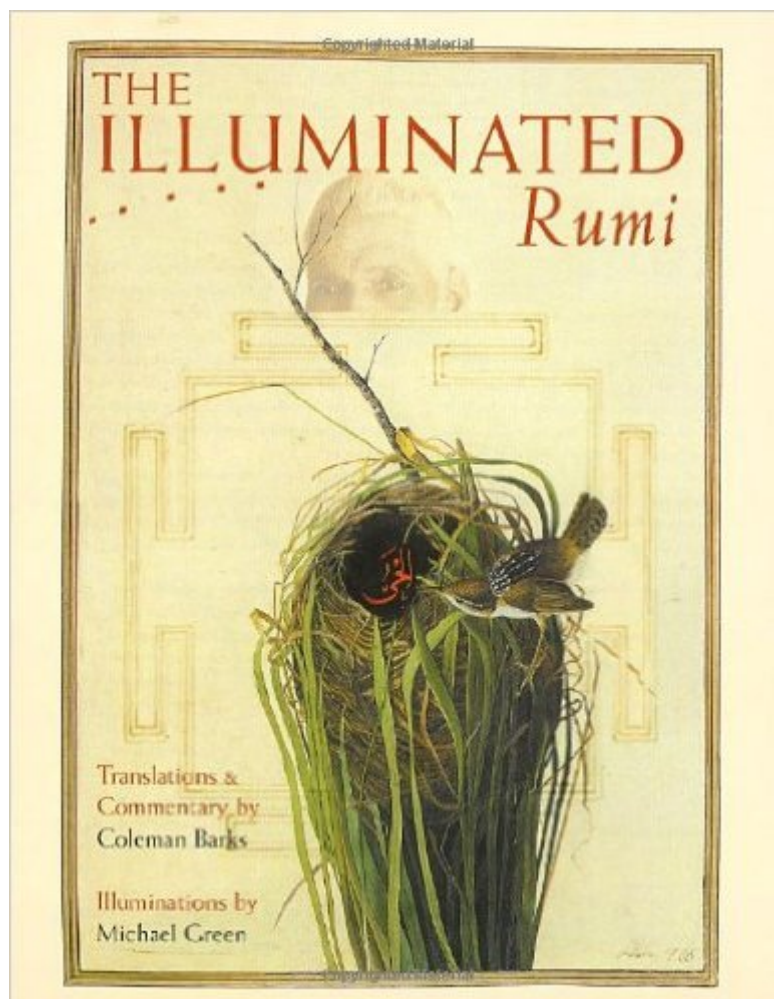
Synopsis

Rise up nimbly and go on your strange journey to the ocean of meanings...In the mid-thirteenth century, in a dusty marketplace in Konya, Turkey, a city where Muslim, Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist travelers mingled, Jelaluddin Rumi, a popular philosopher and scholar, met Shams of Tabriz, a wandering dervish. Â Their meeting forever altered the course of Rumi's life and influenced the mystical evolution of the planet. Â The bond they formed was everlasting--a powerful transcendent friendship that would flow through Rumi as some of the world's best-loved ecstatic poetry.Rumi's passionate, playful poems find and celebrate sacred life in everyday existence. Â They speak across all traditions, to all peoples, and today his relevance and popularity continue to grow. Â In The Illuminated Rumi, Coleman Barks, widely regarded as the world's premier translator of Rumi's writings, presents some of his most brilliant work, including many new translations. Â To complement Rumi's universal vision, Michael Green has worked the ancient art of illumination into a new, visually stunning form that joins typography, original art, old masters, photographs, and prints with sacred images from around the world.The Illuminated Rumi is a truly groundbreaking collaboration that interweaves word and image: a magnificent meeting of ancient tradition and modern interpretation that uniquely captures the spiritual wealth of Rumi's teachings. Â Coleman Barks's wise and witty commentary, together with Michael Green's art, makes this a classic guide to the life of the soul for a whole new generation of seekers.

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Customer Reviews

Coleman Barks has a way with words, which for the past few decades he's put to use casting the poems of 13th-century mystic Jalaluddin Rumi into contemporary language. Though considered one of the greatest poets the world has ever seen, Rumi was relatively unknown in the West until a recent surge in popularity due in no small part to Barks's efforts. THE ILLUMINATED RUMI presents readers with a pretty package indeed: deep thoughts, stirred emotions and illustrations galore. Yet while this would do most poets proud, it's doubtful Rumi would feel that way about his treatment at Barks's hands, if only because Barks speaks not a word of Persian, the language in which Rumi wrote. Barks freely admits he relied entirely on academic translations to concoct his popularized renderings. This would be less of a handicap were Rumi merely trying to entertain or to convey feelings, moods and subjective impressions. But as Barks himself points out, Rumi was a Sufi; and Sufis maintain that, far from being the emotional outpourings appearance might suggest, their poems are actually precise and carefully constructed technical instruments designed to have very specific effects on the reader under the right circumstances. These effects, which depend heavily upon the language in which the poems were written (not to mention the specific audience they were written for, which is another matter entirely), are easily blunted by translation and other forms of tampering. Barks - in translating translations - would seem to be carrying this tampering a step further, despite his good intentions.

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