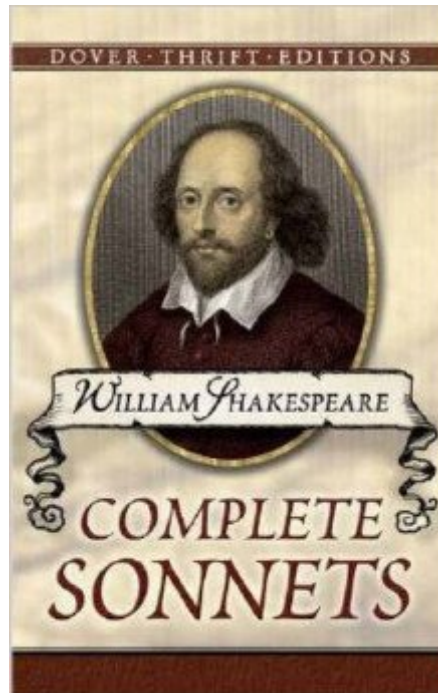


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Complete Sonnets (Dover Thrift Editions)



Synopsis

Without a doubt the most important of Shakespeare's nondramatic works, the sonnets have engendered reams of scholarly disputation as to the identity of "the dark lady" and the "lovely boy" to whom the vast majority are addressed. Controversy has also long simmered over the full name of the "W.H." of the dedication. What is not in dispute is the superior quality of these lyrics, which rank among the finest sonnets ever written in any language. Over 150 poems deal with love, friendship, the tyranny of time, beauty's evanescence in power, death, and other themes in language unsurpassed in power, precision, and beauty. Now this inexpensive Dover edition enables any lover of poetry or fine literature to have this exquisite verse in his or her personal library. A brief glossary illuminates a number of archaic terms.

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Customer Reviews

The Dover Thrift Edition of the Complete Sonnets is exactly that: the complete sonnets, and nothing more. Though often scorned by literary snobs, the entire Dover series does fulfill one very useful function: it provides cheap, easy-to-read, and widely-available versions of literary classics. What you get, in this case, are all of Shakespeare's sonnets (undisputably some of the greatest poems ever written and a true treasure of English literature; obviously, a review of any edition of these poems will inevitably focus not upon the work itself, which is beyond repute, but, rather, on the individual edition as presented) -- and nothing else. Much more expansive (and expensive) versions are available, featuring an introduction to the sonnets with background information, notes and

annotations, a handy list of definitions for archaic and obscure Elizabethian words -- and, more than likely, at least one pretentious individual interpretation of the work. Obviously, if one is looking to study Shakespeare, really go in-depth into the sonnets for scholarly or academic purposes, then one should look into one of the editions just described. If you just want a copy of the sonnets without desiring to spend too much money, you don't need or don't want all of those extras, or you simply want to impress incredulous people by owning a set of Shakespeare's sonnets, however, then you could do worse than picking up this inexpensive little book.

A colleague advised that I assign my college students this edition, and I am glad she did. Rather than reading the few anthologized works together with some handouts, students now own the entire set. For anyone not familiar with Shakespeare's 154 sonnets, this gives an affordable and portable version. For anyone familiar with the works, this book offers them in a beautifully light, compressed format that itself enhances rereading and re-interpretation. The book begins with a helpful one-page background on the sonnet form and on Shakespeare's collection, and ends with an also-helpful alphabetical list of first lines. The two-page glossary of terms at the end may be too little, too late, but the drawbacks of Dover's edition--its lack of notes and its use of roman numerals to number the poems--pale compared with the book's availability. As an enthusiast myself--someone who studied at the Shakespeare Institute, England, writing a 310-page thesis on the Bard--I feel grateful to be able to help others to such an inexpensive and pleasant way to own and explore Shakespeare's entire collection of sonnets. Because I could skim the poems in sequence so quickly and easily with this edition, the interrelationships among Sonnets 113, 114, 115, and the famous 116, "Let me not to the marriage of true minds," for example, struck me in a new way as I reread them in this little book. A highly- recommended edition.

My English major friends kept raving about the sonnets, so I finally decided to spend a buck to get this least expensive edition. It was kind of interesting. I could tell that Shakespeare was really intense about his issues - but I was lost as to why everybody was so crazy about them. I also did not like having paper that was so thin that my highlighting and notes went right through to ruin the other side of the page :(Finally I spent another buck to get an (almost as inexpensive) edition (used) - the Signet edition edited by Burto. That helped a lot - with definitions of terms and hints about lots of secret relationships possibly there for those who would dig further. At last I'm starting to figure out why this guy is considered so awesome. To really get an appreciation of Shake's heart and mind, beginners like me really need more than just the poems.Now I'm borrowing an English major's copy

of Dr. Vendler's edition (Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets). It's pretty heady, so I'm just trying to read her introduction. Whew! I haven't tested out all her theories, but is so much incredible care and complexity going on behind the scenes in these poems - it's no wonder people are still boggled after 400 years. Truly amazing - but unless you're an English major I wouldn't recommend bothering with this doubtful dollar deed. Getting a copy of the Signet or Folger Library editions will make beginners much happier.

The perfect pocket edition of Mr. Shakespeare's sonnets! Of course, if you are wondering what they mean, and all that, you will have to get yourself familiar with Rowse's edition of the sonnets: A. L. Rowse: Shakespeare's Sonnets. But once you know who the principal characters are -- Henry Wriothesley, the young Earl of Southampton, Christopher Marlowe, and Emilia Lanier -- plus young Will Shakespeare himself -- then the Dover will do fine for you and yours. After all, this is exactly the book you could have bought on its first day of publication, four centuries ago!! :-))tfnjimmy

This is in reference to the CD (audiobook) Sonnets read by John Gielgud. Just received my copy and was pleasantly surprised that the remastered 60's recording is remarkably clear. Gielgud was one of the greatest actor/directors of Shakespeare, and to listen to him read the sonnets "...trippingly on the tongue...", (Hamlet, act 3, sc. 2.) is nothing short of historical. Listen to them at night or on a rainy day, or just follow along with a hardcopy of the Sonnets in your hand. You'll be reciting them in short order.

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