



The Poems of St. John of the Cross

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Saint John's poetry of love and joy describes the soul's passage through dark night to final illumination in mystical union with Absolute Being. The allegory the poet uses is that of earthly love, and the poems are strikingly effective on the immediate level of personal experience, quite apart from their theological meanings.

Many critics regard the work of Saint John of the Cross (1542-91), the 16th-century mystic, to be among the finest poetry Spain has produced. This bilingual edition, the first in modern English, was originally published in hard cover in 1968 by the Indiana University Press. Most of these poems were written during a period of nine months, in 1577-78, when Saint John (San Juan de la Cruz) was imprisoned and tortured in the dungeon of a small Carmelite monastery in Toledo, and their recurrent motifs are both metaphysical and deeply personal.

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