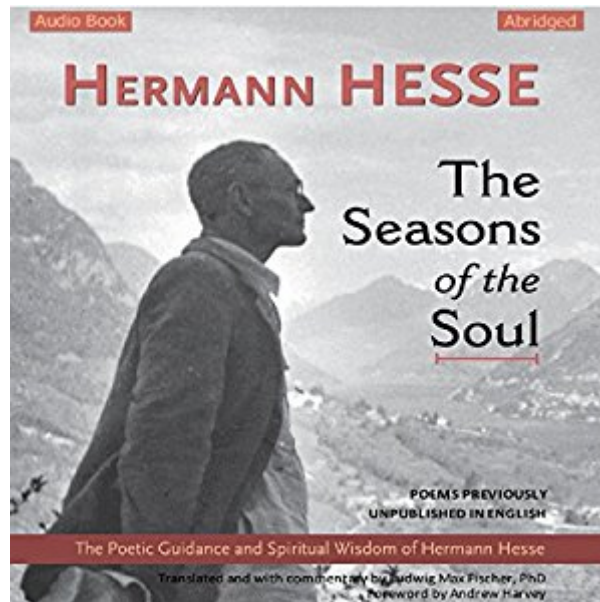


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The Seasons Of The Soul: The Poetic Guidance And Spiritual Wisdom Of Hermann Hesse



Synopsis

Vowing at an early age "to be a poet or nothing at all", Hermann Hesse rebelled against formal education, focusing on a rigorous program of independent study that included literature, philosophy, art, and history. One result of these efforts was a series of novels that became counterculture bibles that remain widely influential today. Another was a body of evocative spiritual poetry. Published for the first time in English, these vivid, probing short works reflect deeply on the challenges of life and provide a spiritual solace that transcends specific denominational hymns, prayers, and rituals. The Seasons of the Soul offers valuable guidance in poetic form for those longing for a more meaningful life, seeking a sense of homecoming in nature, in each stage of life, in a renewed relationship with the divine. Extensive quotations from his prose introduce each theme addressed in the book: love, imagination, nature, the divine, and the passage of time. A foreword by Andrew Harvey reintroduces us to a figure about whom some may have believed everything had already been said. Thoughtful commentary throughout from translator Ludwig Max Fischer helps readers understand the poems within the context of Hesse's life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was excited to purchase and receive this collection, especially after seeing good reviews on . Hesse has been perhaps my favorite author since reading Siddhartha as a teenager, and I keep returning to Steppenwolf, Demian, along with Journey to the East, long after having read each of these for the first time. While there is no doubt, to my mind, that Hesse was one of the greatest writers of his time, the translation you will find here is severely lacking. What struck me as

immediately telling about its quality was the sense that I was reading cheap new-age banter, comprised by the foreward and other exegetical material. This is divided into snippets from both the translator and another person, both of whom seem to offer some fine and accurate remarks, but also a good deal of exposition that is frankly overdone and sappy. The biggest disappointment, however, was the fact that many poems which rhyme in the original German have not retained this feature in the English. Nor have they retained their proper rhythm. I can acknowledge that this would have been no simple feat, but such is the work of good translation. For an example, consider "Stufen," one of Hesse's finest cosmic poems, the one which the collection ends in. Fischer translates the title as "Stages," which gets at the meaning of the poem, but it is precisely this sort of straying from the letter of the piece that illuminates the sort of liberties he's already taken to interpret for the reader. Here's the original German for you: Wie jede Blte welkt und jede Jugend Dem Alter weicht, blhrt jede Lebensstufe, blhrt jede Weisheit auch und jede Tugend Zu ihrer Zeit und darf nicht ewig dauern.

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