



Russian Poets (Everyman's Library Pocket Poets Series)

From Washington, Peter (EDT)

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Russian poets have always been admired for the lyric and emotional intensity with which they forge private and public experience into verse, and this volume gathers together some of the best-loved, and most powerful and immediate poems from the greatest Russian poets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Here is the work of Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, Alexander Blok, Andrei Bely, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Ivan Bunin, Osip Mandelstam, Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, Boris Pasternak, and Joseph Brodsky, among many others.

Arranged by theme—love, mortality, art, and the enduring mystery of Mother Russia herself—and presented in the best available translations, these poems will serve as both an introduction to the mastery of Russian poetry and a wide-ranging selection to be returned to again and again.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Peter Washington is the editor of many Everyman's Library Pocket Poet anthologies, including *Love Poems*, *Erotic Poems*, *Friendship Poems*, and *Poems of Mourning*.

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FOREWORD

This selection of Russian verse is not comprehensive—how could it be, given the richness and abundance of material?—but in addition to well-known figures I have tried to include some less celebrated. Acknowledgments at the back of the book will suggest further reading for those in search of it.

The focus is on lyrics, always difficult to translate, especially when so allusive and intertextual. My choice of poets beyond the famous few has been limited by availability: many have been translated little or not at all, others badly. The poems must also read well in English, rarely the case with verse translations.

For convenience, the text is divided into six sections, but part titles are to be taken as starting points, not limits. Russian poets constantly reflect on their art, so it seems appropriate to begin with the Muse. Their other great topic is Russia herself, explored in parts two and three. Part four presents the inner world, parts five and six traditional themes of love and mortality.

—Peter Washington

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