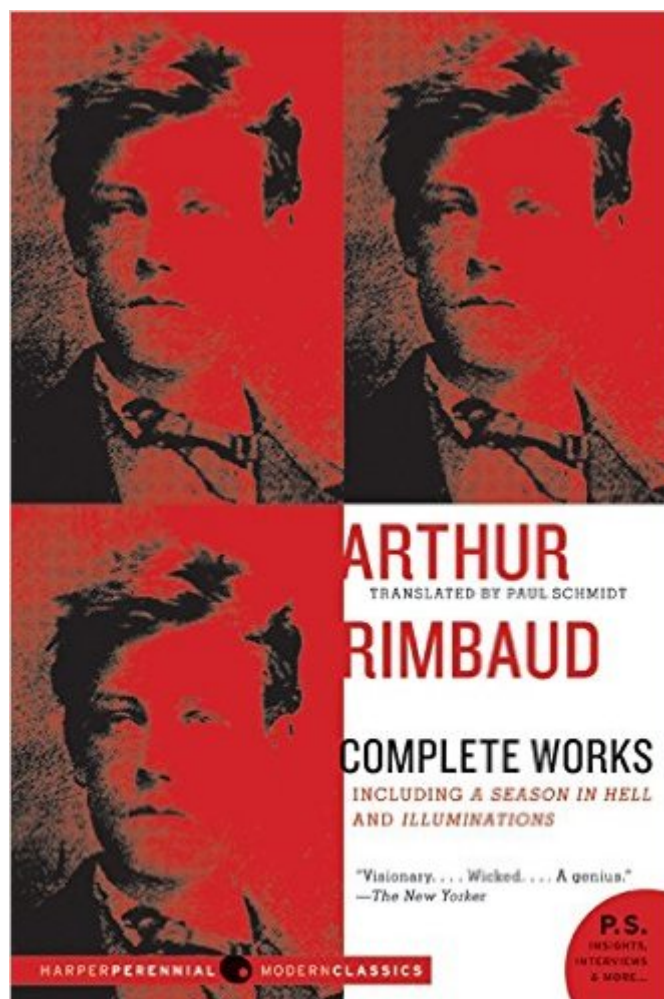


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Arthur Rimbaud: Complete Works



Synopsis

One of the world's most influential poets, Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891) is remembered as much for his volatile personality and tumultuous life as he is for his writings, almost all of which he produced before the age of twenty. Paul Schmidt's acclaimed collection brings together his complete poetry, prose, and letters, including "The Drunken Boat," "The Orphans' New Year," "After the Flood," and "A Season in Hell." Complete Works is divided into eight "seasons"—Childhood, the Open Road, War, the Tormented Heart, the Visionary, the Damned Soul, a Few Belated Cowardices, and the Man with the Wind at His Heels—that reflect the facets of Rimbaud's life. Insightful commentary by Schmidt reveals the courage, vision, and imagination of Rimbaud's poetry and sheds light on one of the most enigmatic figures in letters.

Book Information

Paperback: 400 pages

Publisher: Harper Perennial Modern Classics (July 1, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0061561770

ISBN-13: 978-0061561771

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.9 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars— See all reviews— (25 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #176,035 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > European > French #111 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Essays & Correspondence > Letters #131 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Genres & Styles > Poetry

Customer Reviews

Highly unreliable. Schmidt has produced some very good English-language poetry, but it ain't Rimbaud. He conceals this by not printing the original on a facing page. Worse yet, he prints the Illuminations as free verse, when they were written as prose poems (on the rationale that the prose poem isn't as successful a genre in English as it is in French.) I am sternly against this kind of translation, unless you're going to go all the way and admit that what you're doing is a poem by Paul Schmidt "after" Rimbaud. But he doesn't. Rimbaud newbies are directed instead to Louise Varese's superb versions of Illuminations and A Season in Hell; those who want a complete works should go for Wallace Fowlie's less memorable but more faithful edition; total Rimbaud freaks should learn

French (and mortgage the house in order to be able to afford the magnificent Pleiade edition of the originals).

I have a collection of various translations by Arthur Rimbaud. This book was a revelation to me. The difference is remarkable. By abandoning precise translations, Schmidt allows the full beauty and vulgarity of these works to be free. There is no stilted translation present here. This book is a work of art. It may not be translation in the traditional sense, but it is its own remarkable undertaking - and I believe it will stand the test of time. Congratulations Mr. Schmidt.

I've collected several translations of Rimbaud's poetry over the years, some good and some leave much to be desired. Schmidt accomplishes a very difficult task here - translating the French in a way that does Rimbaud's work justice. This title is my favorite, and the most used translation when referring to his work. If you must buy one - this is the only translation you'll ever need.

This book was one of the most fundamentally influential books for me as a developing poet. I think it's by far the best translation of Rimbaud, much more enjoyable to read than the Pleiade edition, which seems to me outdated. It may be true that Schmidt took some creative license and his translations of these poems may not be as literal or as accurate as others, but his gift for interpretation makes the poems better than in other translations, and that to me is more important than just strict accuracy. When I read these poems, I know I'm reading Rimbaud--the imagery, the atmosphere is all his. It doesn't bother me at all if from time to time the translator must re-position a word here or adjust a phrase there, or even invent an approximate figure-of-speech for one that doesn't exist in English--the main thing is that this translation is compelling and easy to understand and has Rimbaud's poetic style and ideas down to a T. David Rehak author of "Poems From My Bleeding Heart"

Rimbaud is the finest poet that has ever lived and this translation is excellent. It is easy to read, well thought out in its context and the order of the poems. It offers just enough history on the life of Rimbaud for first time readers to want and read more about the man. Most importantly is the letters included in the back from Rimbaud to various friends and family. I believe that these letters are where the real fans of his get to see the real Arthur Rimbaud. Excellent book. I couldn't give it a better review. I carry this book in my bookbag and read it when I am in between classes, and the beauty carries me through the rest of the day.

I wrote an earlier review of this edition of Rimbaud back when I called myself lexo-2; I'd now amend it, if I could, to say that the only translations of Rimbaud that non-French speakers are going to need is Wyatt Mason's superb bilingual edition in two volumes for the Modern Library. Schmidt has a lovely turn of phrase, but this is really a collection of poems by Paul Schmidt inspired by the work of Rimbaud, and not in my view a translation at all.

Glad you do not have to fill in all the blanks to post a review. This is a book of poetry, with some letters of Rimbaud's and some historical background on the poet included. Rimbaud was a strange and highly influential poet who appears to have stopped writing poetry about the time he turned 20. He led a wild and odd life -- the editor calls him a combination of avarice, morality, and gullibility -- a bad combination. But as a poet he was revolutionary, helping found both free verse and the prose poem. Not surprisingly, his poems are often hard to follow -- they sometimes read like Dylan's "Tamborine Man," and Dylan himself acknowledged his debt to this French poet. You might want to start out with "The Drunken Boat" to get a flavor of his writings and move on to his slightly more conventional material such as "A Season in Hell." If you like mind-stretching poetry, you'll like this book

I've read this book in Turkish. Then in English. I think Rimbaud is still the future of poetry. If you are looking for something to hold on to, you should have a look at this book. There is nothing but pure life, smell of the colors and eyes of the light which shows us the meaning. For we can make it bigger. That is what Rimbaud has done. That is what today's poetry and I am looking for I think.

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