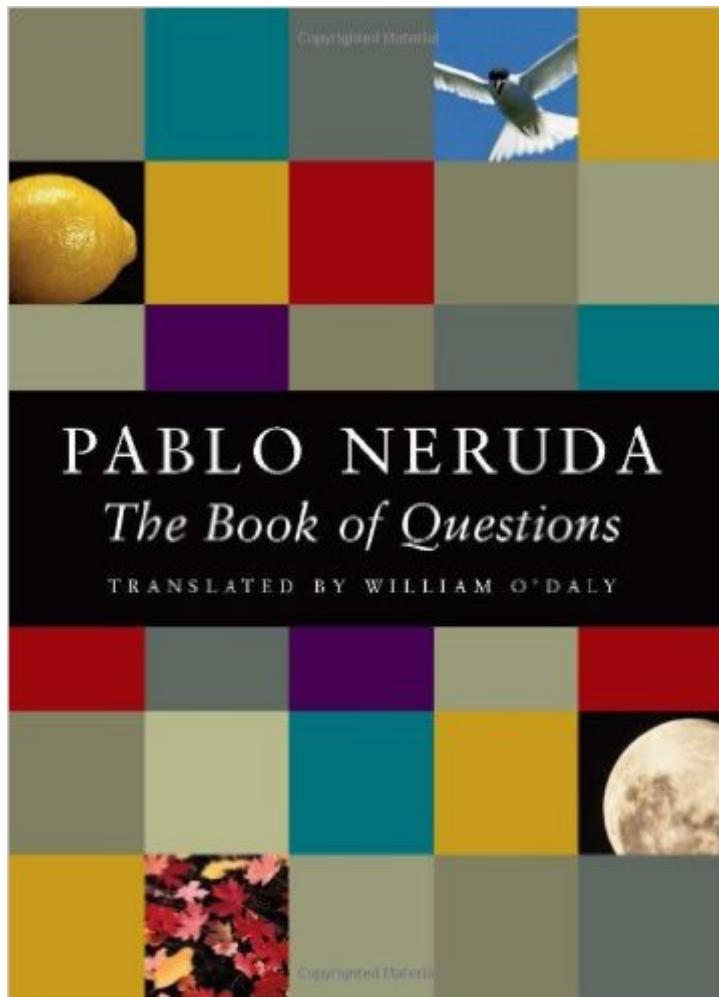


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The Book Of Questions



Synopsis

A best-selling volume of Pablo Neruda's poetry in an English-Spanish edition. Pablo Neruda is one of the world's most popular poets, and in *The Book of Questions*, Neruda refuses to be corralled by the rational mind. Composed of 316 unanswerable questions, these poems integrate the wonder of a child with the experiences of an adult. By turns Orphic, comic, surreal, and poignant, Neruda's questions lead the reader beyond reason into realms of intuition and pure imagination. This complete translation of Pablo Neruda's *El libro de las preguntas* (*The Book of Questions*) features Neruda's original Spanish-language poems alongside William O'Daly's English translations. In his introduction O'Daly, who has translated eight volumes of Pablo Neruda's poetry, writes, "These poems, more so than any of Neruda's other work, remind us that living in a state of visionary surrender to the elemental questions, free of the quiet desperation of clinging too tightly to answers, may be our greatest act of faith." When Neruda died in 1973, *The Book of Questions* was one of eight unpublished poetry manuscripts that lay on his desk. In it, Neruda achieves a deeper vulnerability and vision than in his earlier work—and this unique book is a testament to everything that made Neruda an artist. "Neruda's questions evoke pictures that make sense on a visual level before the reader can grasp them on a literal one. The effect is mildly dazzling [and] O'Daly's translations achieve a tone that is both meditative and spontaneous." --Publishers Weekly

Pablo Neruda, born in southern Chile, led a life charged with poetic and political activity. He was the recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature, the International Peace Prize, and served as Chile's ambassador to several countries, including Burma, France, and Argentina. He died in 1973.

II. Tell me, is the rose naked or is that her only dress? Why do trees conceal the splendor of their roots? Who hears the regrets of the thieving automobile? Is there anything in the world sadder than a train standing in the rain? XIV. And what did the rubies say standing before the juice of pomegranates? Why doesn't Thursday talk itself into coming after Friday? Who shouted with glee when the color blue was born? Why does the earth grieve when the violets appear?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Book of Questions" is a remarkable literary work which transcends genre. The book consists, very simply, of a series of rhetorical questions divided up among 74 untitled poems (each poem contains from 3 to 6 questions). In this bilingual volume, Pablo Neruda's Spanish text is accompanied on each page by William O'Daly's crisp English translation. Neruda asks questions about a dizzying range of topics--the natural world, religion, literature, history, food, the technological world, language, time, truth, justice, perception, and even his own legacy. Some of his questions are funny, some are disturbing. But all are thought-provoking, and the best of them display Neruda's dazzling ability to use words in surprising and illuminating ways. Who but Neruda would ask, "And at whom does rice smile / with infinitely many white teeth?" (section XII). Reading "The Book of Questions," I had the sensation of reading some strange work of scripture--the writings of a prophet who had transcended the normal boundaries of perception and who challenges us to do the same. Although Neruda's prophetic voice varies greatly in mood--sometimes angry, sometimes playful, sometimes melancholy--his mastery of his poetic instrument is consistent, and the breadth of his vision is amazing. He is one of those poets--like William Blake, Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson--whose writings constitute a modern equivalent to the poetic legacy of Buddha, Lao-Tzu, or the author of Ecclesiastes. It's impossible to pick out just a few questions with which to give the reader a full sense of the power of "the Book of Questions." This is a book which one can read at one breathless sitting; it is also a book that, like an inscrutable sage, invites us to return again and again.

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