

Duino Elegies and the Sonnets to Orpheus (English and German Edition)

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Rilke is one of the most widely read poets of the 20th century. In his poetry, Rilke addresses the problems of death, God, and "destructive time," and attempts to overcome and transform these problems into an indestructive inner world.

great theorist of the free market believed in Providence. "The happiness of mankind," Smith wrote, "seems to have been the original purpose intended by the Author of nature." The workings of the Lord could be found not in the pages of a holy book, nor in miracles, but in the daily, mundane buying-and-selling of the marketplace. Each purchase might be driven by an individual desire, but behind them all lay "the invisible hand" of the Divine. This invisible hand set prices and wages. It determined supply and demand. It represented the sum of all human wishes. Without relying on any conscious intervention by man, the free market improved agriculture and industry, created surplus wealth, and made sure that the things being produced were the things people wanted to buy. Human beings lacked the wisdom, Smith felt, to improve society deliberately or to achieve Progress through some elaborate plan. But if every man pursued his own self-interest and obeyed only his "passions," the invisible hand would guarantee that everybody else benefited, too.

Published in 1776, *The Wealth of Nations* later had a profound effect upon the nation born that year. The idea that "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" were unalienable rights, endowed by a Creator, fit perfectly with the economic theories of Adam Smith. "Life, liberty and estate" was the well-known phrase that Thomas Jefferson amended slightly for the Declaration of Independence. The United States was the first country to discard feudal and aristocratic traditions and replace them with a republican devotion to marketplace ideals. More than two centuries later, America's leading companies-General Motors, General Electric, ExxonMobil, Microsoft, Wal-Mart, Boeing, et al.-have annual revenues larger than those of many sovereign states. No currency is more powerful than the U.S. dollar, and the closing prices on Wall Street guide the financial markets of Tokyo, London, Paris, and Frankfurt. The unsurpassed wealth of the United States has enabled it to build a military without rival. And yet there is more to the U.S. economy, much more, than meets the eye. In addition to America's famous corporations and brands, the invisible hand has also produced a largely invisible economy, secretive and well hidden, with its own labor demand, price structure, and set of commodities.

"Black," "shadow," "irregular," "informal," "illegal," "subterranean," "u" I have always found the Elegies hard to compare or even read with our own best poems.... Because of Mr. Poulin's translation, I experience the Elegies almost as English. He gives Rilke the crisp speed of English, and yet seems to remain very close to the original meaning." -- Robert Lowell
Other Books

The Essential Rilke, From the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Galway Kinnell and co-translator Hannah Liebmann comes *The Essential Rilke*, with newly translated selections of the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke and an informative introduction. This collection also features all of the poems in their original German on facing pages. German poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) enjoys ever-increasing popularity. His *Duino Elegies* is generally considered one of the greatest long poems of the twentieth century. *The Essential Rilke* includes all the

celebrated Duino Elegies as well as a number of shorter poems--the favorites and the less familiar. Throughout his poetry, Rilke addresses questions of how to live and relate to the world in a voice that is simultaneously prophetic and intensely personal. Kinnell and Liebmann's translations put accuracy first and yet retain the power and grace of poetry. The Essential Rilke adds a valuable bilingual edition to Ecco's popular The Essential Poets series and these translations offer new insight into this complex German poet whose work is read and admired throughout the world.

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