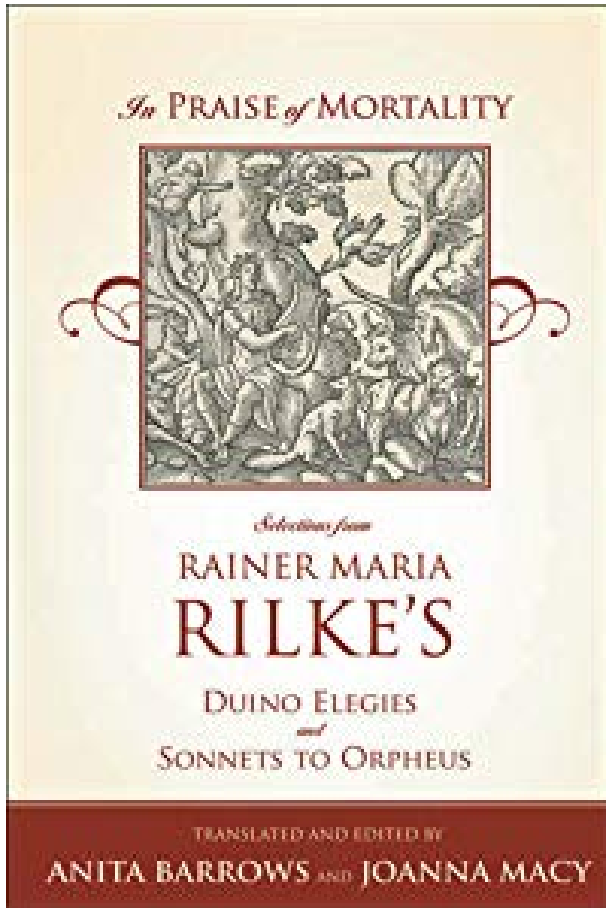


In Praise of Mortality



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A new translation of Rainer Maria Rilke's Sonnets to Orpheus and Duino Elegies, widely regarded as the masterpieces of one of the twentieth century's greatest poets. Loved for its accessibility, time relevance, and musical language, Rilke's poetry is among the finest lyrical verse of the past century. In February 1922, after a decade of writer's block, Rilke created almost this entire body of work. The Sonnets, written that month, are imbued with the poet's deep reverence for nature. He laments the industrial age, which deprives us of time, imagination, and community and gives us an illusion of control over our mortality. And the Elegies, begun some ten years earlier during a visit to Duino Castle on the Adriatic, are meditations on our impermanence, which Rilke embraced as our link to all life and all time. The Sonnets and Elegies were written simultaneously, so Barrows and Macy present their translations together, alongside the original German verse; the reading of one enriches and informs the reading of the other. Barrows, a prize-winning poet, and Macy, a well-known spiritual teacher, bring a remarkable combination of perspective and talent to capture Rilke's spirit in a new way. Rilke believed in the coexistence of the material and spiritual realms, and the glory of this poetry reflects the soul of an artist who would be our bridge between the two.