

Herbert: Poems (Everyman's Library Pocket Poets)

George Herbert



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George Herbert (1593-1633) has come to be one of the most admired of the metaphysical poets. Though he is a profoundly religious poet, even secular readers respond to his quiet intensity and exuberant inventiveness, which are amply showcased in this selection.

Herbert experimented brilliantly with a remarkable variety of forms, from hymns and sonnets to pattern poems, the shapes of which reveal their subjects. Such technical agility never seems ostentatious, however, for precision of language and expression of genuine feeling were the primary concerns of this poet, who admonished his readers to "dare to be true." An Anglican priest who took his calling with deep seriousness, he brought to his work a religious reverence richly allied with a playful wit and with literary and musical gifts of the highest order. His best-loved poems, from "The Collar" and "Jordan" to "The Altar" and "Easter Wings," achieve a perfection of form and feeling, a rare luminosity, and a timeless metaphysical grandeur.



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