



Chapters into Verse: Poetry in English Inspired by the Bible : Genesis to Malachi

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For generations, poets have turned to the Bible for insight and inspiration. What did so many creative minds find in scripture? Is the Bible still a vital source of poetic inspirations?

Chapters Into Verse is the first comprehensive collection ever made of poems written in English inspired by the Bible. A groundbreaking anthology, it introduces readers to a distinct heritage of English poetry: the scriptural tradition. Though frequently ignored and sometimes suppressed, this tradition rivals the classical and is every bit as venerable.

Drawing a unique map of the history of English poetry, the two volumes of *Chapters Into Verse* survey and define the literary legacy of the Scriptures from the fourteenth century to the present. Each volume is arranged in scriptural order, and each poem is preceded by the biblical passage that inspired it. Thus readers can conveniently witness the various ways sacred text has sparked the imagination of poets throughout the ages.

In Volume I, which covers *Genesis* to *Malachi*, almost every book of the Old Testament is represented. The collection features verses both famous and unfamiliar, from Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Lord Byron's *Hebrew Melodies* to Christopher Smart's hymns and Mary Herbert's psalms. The editors have included poems by virtually all the prominent religious poets--among them, John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Edward Taylor, and Gerard Manley Hopkins. Included, too, are devotional and visionary works from a wide range of vintage poets--Robert Burns, William Blake, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Christina Rossetti, Alfred Tennyson, and Robert Browning.

Proving that the Bible is just as powerful a source of inspiration today as it was in the past, the collection assembles a mixed congregation of modern and contemporary poets, such as Marianne Moore, Delmore Schwartz, Dylan Thomas, Robert Frost, William Carlos Williams, Countee Cullen, e.e. cummings, William Butler Yeats, Robert Lowell, Hugh McDiarmid, Laura (Riding) Jackson, Charles Reznikoff, A.D. Hope, Geoffrey Hill, Denise Levertov, Philip Levine, John Ashbery, and Derek Walcott.

Of enduring interest to readers of both scripture and literature, this anthology illuminates key passages of the Old Testament. The measured speech and inspired leaps of poetry offer a spirited alternative to the textual exegesis usually supplied by prose commentary. As such, *Chapters Into Verse* is truly a poets' Bible. In selection after selection, readers will encounter an astonishing variety of religious experiences, as a host of poets from many eras and many backgrounds respond to Holy Scripture spiritually, profoundly, and imaginatively.

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