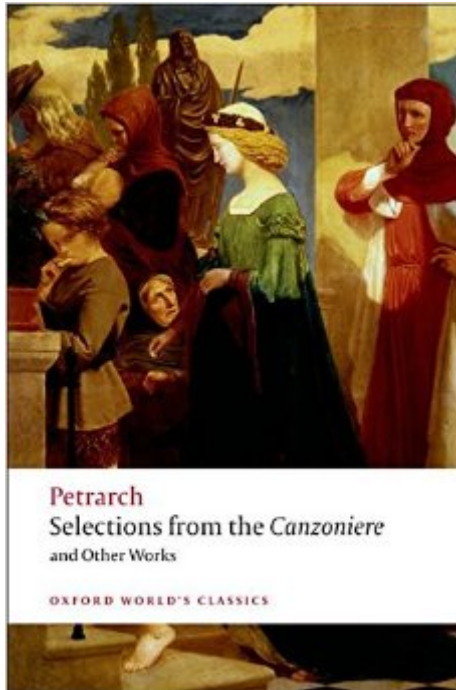


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Selections From The Canzoniere And Other Works (Oxford World's Classics)



Synopsis

This entirely new translation includes Petrarch's short autobiographical prose works, *The Letter to Posterity* and *The Ascent of Mount Ventoux*, and a selection of twenty-seven poems from the *Canzoniere*, Petrarch's best-known work in Italian. About the Series: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

Book Information

Series: Oxford World's Classics

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (July 15, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0199540691

ISBN-13: 978-0199540693

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 0.6 x 5 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (8 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #114,634 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #11 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Regional & Cultural > European > Italian](#) #127 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Anthologies](#) #275 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > European](#)

Customer Reviews

The Italian philosopher, Francesco Petrarca (1304-74), who was responsible for the recovery of many Latin manuscripts, who was one of the primary causes of the revival of Latin letters, and who, like Dante, wrote much of his poetry in the vulgar tongue, is one of the greatest poets of all time and one of the most influential men in the history of the western world. Of the poems he wrote in his native Italian, 366 have survived under the name "Canzoniere" (short-song). Roughly 45 of the 366 poems are provided here in an excellent, faithful translation which steers clear of that cancerous and faulty element in poetry--the rhyme. They were carefully selected for their content, so the discouraging number of 45 poems seems bigger when the editor's subtle discretion is taken into account. The basis of these poems--like Dante's Beatrice and Catullus' Lesbia--rests mostly upon

Petrarch's undying love for Laura, but at times his verse resounds with political and religious themes, and with praises of Rome's past and the Italy of his own time. Every poem will be an enjoyable read; they are always profound and inspiring in their glorification of feminine beauty; and the vivid and picturesque allusions to nature are always soothing and edifying. One may easily see, after reading Petrarch's "Canzoniere," Horace handing Petrarch his pen and Virgil his laurel crown, for they were as real to him as the lines of his poetry. They guided him through the fields of Italy and lent him breaths of inspiration along the way. Petrarch was anything but a mean and vulgar poet; he deservedly stands out as great amongst the greatest. Also included are some short prose works (letters) which throw some significant light upon the life and character of Petrarch. This conveniently sized collection of the poet laureate's works is thoroughly recommended.

The influence by Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374) on the poetry of Italy and the rest of western Europe was remarkable. But as important as his Italian poems were his letters and essays. These writings discussed a way of life and thinking that formed the basis of Humanism (where - in short - the emphasis is on human accomplishments and not on God). As a writer of letters (mainly his correspondence with friends and colleagues) he wrote in the style and used the accomplished tradition of classic writers such as Cicero and Seneca. But in spite of the influence of this tradition Petrarca's letters are very personal and authentic. In a vivid way these letters describe the author and his surroundings. He writes about the many travels he made and his interest in Antiquity. One of the most important documents by his hand is his description of him walking up the Mount Ventoux and the description of the thoughts he had during that long walk are one of the most important building stones of the Italian Renaissance, the start of a new kind of life.

Petrarch just isn't my favorite. That said, he is worth reading, savoring; his verse and prose are worth reflecting upon. This is a great writer and mind of an important time period in Western European history and culture that is often overlooked. Petrarch is a product of Feudal Italy and the Western Schism (the Avignon Popes) and his writings give a new dimension to the time period, particularly for anyone who already enjoys the history, music, painting, tapestries, sculptures and architecture of this era. Italy and France are on the very verge of that explosion of cultural growth and development we now call the Renaissance. This is that very pregnant spot on the time line of Western European history when everything is about to change (within a hundred years or so) and Petrarch is an important voice and a significant person of the time. The end notes and introduction are both very well done -- as one would expect of anything associated with Oxford's World Classics

series. Both the introduction and the notes add significant contextual value to the author's works. This little selection of his works in translation is a volume very worthy of any Anglophone's bookcase.

how can you not love Petrarch. He is sublime and so very representative of all the tugs and pulls of the spiritual, the carnal, the intellectual and the poetic. I always loved Dante, but Petrarch spoke to me in a way that Dante never did.

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