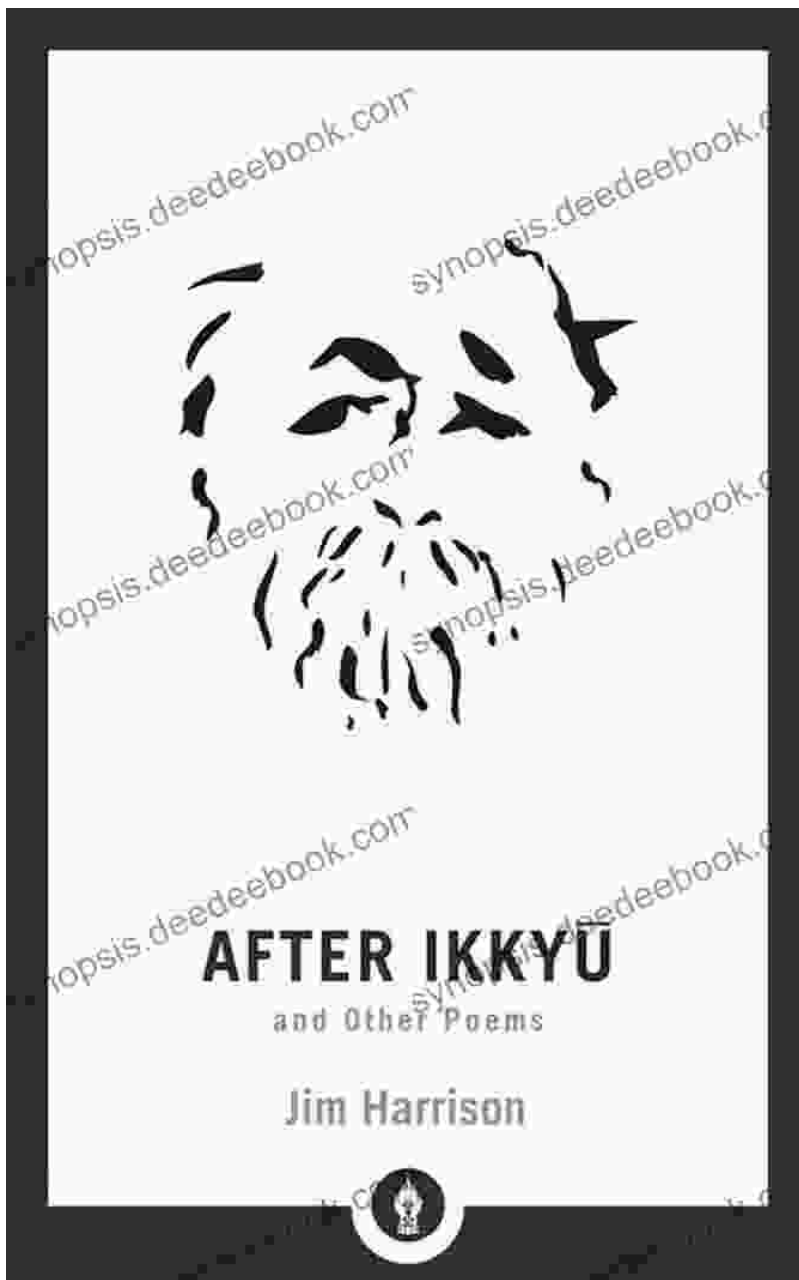


After Ikkyu and Other Poems: A Journey into the Heart of Zen Poetry

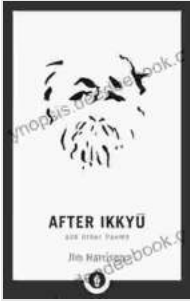


After Ikkyu and Other Poems (Shambhala Pocket

Library Book 23) by Jim Harrison

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English



File size : 740 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Print length : 104 pages



In the realm of poetry, Zen Buddhism has left an indelible mark. Its influence can be found in the haiku, tanka, and free verse forms, where poets strive to capture the essence of the world around them in a few carefully chosen words. 'After Ikkyu and Other Poems,' an anthology edited by John Stevens, offers a captivating glimpse into this rich tradition, bringing together a diverse range of Zen poets from across centuries and cultures.

A Tapestry of Zen Voices

This anthology showcases the works of renowned Zen masters such as Ikkyu, Basho, and Ryokan, alongside contemporary poets who continue to draw inspiration from this ancient tradition. Each poem is a testament to the profound wisdom and beauty found within Zen Buddhism, capturing moments of insight, stillness, and connection with the natural world.

Haiku: Capturing the Fleeting Moment

Haiku, a traditional Japanese form consisting of three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables, is a hallmark of Zen poetry. In 'After Ikkyu,' haiku masters such as Basho and Issa capture the essence of a moment, painting vivid images that evoke a sense of wonder and tranquility.

Consider Basho's famous haiku:

> An old silent pond... > A frog jumps into the pond, > Splash! Silence again.

Here, Basho captures the sudden disruption of stillness, followed by its swift return. The simplicity of the language allows the reader to experience the moment directly, as if they were present beside the pond themselves.

Tanka: Exploring the Depths of Emotion

Tanka, a longer form of Japanese poetry consisting of five unrhymed lines of five, seven, five, seven, and seven syllables, provides a deeper exploration of emotions and experiences. In this anthology, poets such as Ryokan and Saigyō use tanka to express their innermost thoughts and feelings, from profound insights to moments of doubt and longing.

Ryokan, known for his simple and heartfelt poems, writes:

> In this world of dew, > Where all things vanish at dawn, > Why must we cry > When the flowers fade and fall > Under the autumn moon?

Ryokan's tanka reflects on the transience of life, reminding us to appreciate the beauty of the present moment before it passes.

Free Verse: Breaking Boundaries

While haiku and tanka adhere to strict structural guidelines, free verse allows poets to explore their creativity more freely. In 'After Ikkyū,' contemporary poets such as Gary Snyder and Jane Hirshfield embrace free verse to express their unique perspectives on Zen Buddhism.

Snyder, a renowned nature poet, writes:

> Come to the woods > For here is rest. > Give up your month's wages >
For a cabin in the mountains. > Lie down in the grass > And the wind
blowing over you > Will scatter the red petals.

Snyder's poem invites us to escape the hustle and bustle of modern life and find solace in the simplicity of nature. The free verse form allows him to convey a sense of peace and tranquility, encouraging readers to reconnect with their surroundings.

Themes of Zen Poetry

Throughout 'After Ikkyu and Other Poems,' several recurring themes emerge, reflecting the core principles of Zen Buddhism:

Impermanence:

Zen poetry often reminds us of the fleeting nature of existence, urging us to appreciate the beauty of the present moment before it passes.

Simplicity:

Zen poetry values simplicity and directness, stripping away excess ornamentation to reveal the essential truth of an experience.

Nature:

Zen poets find deep inspiration in the natural world, recognizing the interconnectedness of all living things.

Meditation:

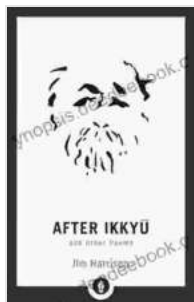
Poetry itself becomes a form of meditation, allowing poets and readers to cultivate mindfulness and presence.

'After Ikkyu and Other Poems' is an invaluable collection that offers a profound exploration of Zen poetry. Through haiku, tanka, and free verse, poets from across centuries and cultures share their insights, experiences, and connection with the natural world. Whether you are new to Zen poetry or a seasoned practitioner, this anthology will undoubtedly resonate with your soul, offering moments of stillness, reflection, and timeless beauty.

As the renowned Zen master Ikkyu once wrote:

> "In the forest of a single leaf > The sound of water > Is loud like thunder."

May the exquisite poems in this anthology inspire you to discover the hidden depths of your own heart and the boundless beauty of the world around you.



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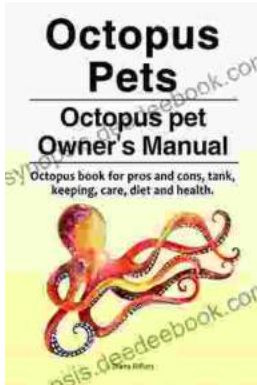
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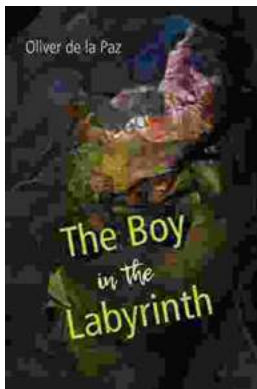
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