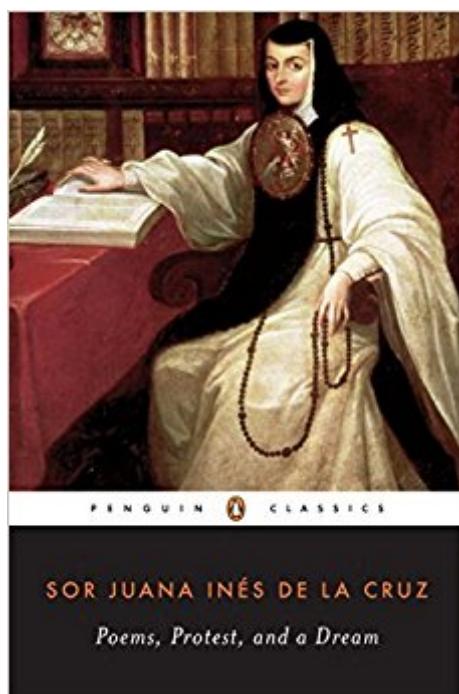


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Poems, Protest, And A Dream: Selected Writings (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

A bilingual edition of writings by Latin America's finest baroque poet Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz (1648-1695) wrote her most famous prose work, *La Respuesta a Sor Filotea*, in 1691 in response to her bishop's injunction against her intellectual pursuits. A passionate and subversive defense of the rights of women to study, to teach, and to write, it predates by almost a century and a half serious writings on any continent about the position and education of women. Also included in this wide-ranging selection is a new translation of Sor Juana's masterpiece, the epistemological poem "Primero Sueño," as well as revealing autobiographical sonnets, reverential religious poetry, secular love poems (which have excited speculation through three centuries), playful verses, and lyrical tributes to New World culture that are among the earliest writings celebrating the people and the customs of this hemisphere. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, Spanish (translation) Original Language: Spanish

Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz (1648-1695) wrote her most famous prose work, *La Respuesta a Sor Filotea*, in 1691 in response to her bishop's injunction against her intellectual pursuits. A passionate and subversive defense of the rights of women to study, to teach, and to write, it predates by almost a century and a half serious writings on any continent about the position and education of women. Moreover, notes Ilan Stavans in his introduction, it has become "a cornerstone of Hispanic-American identity ... at once a chronicle of the tense gender relations in the Western Hemisphere, a rich portrait of the social behavior that prevailed more than a century before independence from Spain was gained in 1810, and the very first intellectual autobiography written by a criolla in a hemisphere known for its solipsism, introversion, and allergy to public confessions. Also included in this wide-ranging selection is a new translation of Sor Juana's masterpiece, the epistemological poem "Primero Sueño", as well as revealing autobiographical sonnets, reverential religious poetry, secular love poems (which have excited speculation through three centuries), playful verses, and lyrical tributes to New World culture that are among the earliest writings celebrating the people and the customs of this hemisphere.

Coming from someone who has a tattoo of one of Sor Juana's signatures on her back and is always on the lookout for anything and everything printed about her, take my word for it: this is simply the best translation of Sor Juana's "Primero Sueño" and other poems. To make it short and sweet, I'll tell you this: I understood the poem much more reading the English translation than reading the original in Spanish. If you're bilingual, you'll notice this right away. Sor Juana is hard to understand but this perfect little volume will make it all clearer for you. It includes mythological and other obscure references at the end and is absolutely beautifully translated. It also has a prologue that will acquaint you better with Sor Juana's life and work. The Penguin edition is a perfect introduction to Sor Juana, as it includes her magnificent and unrivaled poem "Primero Sueño" and her *Protest*, which is a kind of autobiography.

Fabulous, bi-lingual edition of Sor Juana. Helps reduce dictionary checks for we whose 17th century Spanish is a bit rusty. As she might say, "Vosotros serais bendecidos."

Wonderful book, I love reading Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz in Spanish and I wanted to share her poetry with an English speaking friend. This book was the solution for me because the translation is spotless and does not lose context nor shape. I highly recommend it.

An excellent selection of texts--from the "Response" to the long poem "First I Dream" to some wonderful short poems and the "loa" or dramatic prologue to the drama "The Divine Narcissus." Margaret Peden's translations are fluent and readable, and the Spanish is on facing pages so you see the original easily. Ilan Stavans' introduction is very helpful, giving the facts of Sor Juana's life (insofar as known), the complexities of the situation that the "Response" addresses, and some help with the context and conventions of her poetry. Sor Juana is an astounding writer--her subtlety and complexities unfold more and more as you read and reflect on her writings. The "Response" is a rhetorical complex defense of her position as a "learned" woman, gathering the rhetorical authority to defend herself out of the very sources (the Bible, church teachings) that were used to attack her and turning the persona under which her Bishop attacked her (a letter pretending to be by a fellow nun) into a deft weapon against him. She articulates a tradition of women's learning and turns a seemingly self-effacing self-limitation to the "philosophy of the kitchen" into a far-reaching claim to a unique female source of knowledge. The "loa" presents dramatically the complex interaction between a colonizing and colonized culture, native language and a Spanish that is becoming at home in the New World, and a native religion which is not simply abandoned for Catholicism but already contains truths which Catholicism confirms and validates even in the process of converting it. She is one of the great writers of the Seventeenth Century and especially interesting in relation to contemporary multicultural identities and cultural interactions.

Great Book!

I love it! I really like it. I don't want to say more about it. Thanks for reading. Thank you.

This was a great buy as well as the quality of the book. Thank you from a greatful student.

I haven't read this book yet, but I just ordered it. I have been dreaming of such a work, because at the moment I'm reading Octavio Paz's book on Sor Juana, entitled "The Traps of Faith," and the quotations in it from her poetry are tantalizingly few. Paz, who won the Nobel Prize in 1990, gave the work of Sor Juana an immense boost when he wrote this book, which is both a biography and a critical meditation on her work. His admiration for her is nearly unlimited and his ability to depict the world she lived in, that of New Spain (Mexico) in the late 1600s, is almost magical. The skill with which Paz brings to life that world, its social codes, laws, customs and morality is astonishing.

Beyond that, he can explain why the literature of Baroque Spain is so alien to the decayed romantic sensibility of our own time. Writers in that century did not confess themselves in their work. Paz explains what they did instead, and shows why Sor Juana was the equal of Lope de Vega or Calderon, and far superior to Gongora. Paz's erudition seems boundless. Of course he knows every major and minor Spanish writer of the last four centuries and can spot the smallest allusion to any of them in Sor Juana's work, but he can also make extremely intelligent comparisons between her and John Donne, Paul Valery or Emily Dickinson. A passing reference to Andrew Marvell was so apt it made me drop my jaw in amazement. And that's just literature. Sor Juana was also vitally interested in theology and philosophy and Paz can discuss all the authors she knew, from the imaginary Hermes Trismegistus to the fabulizing Jesuit Athanasius Kircher. It is good that the work under review, "Poems, Protest and a Dream," includes a 32 page introduction, but trust me, to understand Sor Juana you will need far more than 32 pages, and "The Traps of Faith" by Octavio Paz should be your next purchase. With both volumes in hand, you will have Sor Juana's life and her work. *À Sor Juana: Or, the Traps of Faith*

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