



# Hölderlin's Songs of Light: Selected Poems (European Writers)

*Friedrich Hölderlin, Michael Hamburger*

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FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN: HÖLDERLIN'S SONGS OF LIGHT: SELECTED POEMS Translated by Michael Hamburger and edited by Jeremy Mark Robinson The German Romantic poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) is one of the very greatest poets - of any era. Hölderlin's poetry is airy, radiant and incredibly lyrical. This selection features many of his best odes, poems and hymns, from the whole span of his career. Michael Hamburger is a respected poet and critic. He has translated Rilke, Celan and Goethe, among others, as well the whole of Hölderlin's poetry. Hamburger's awards include The Schlegel-Tieck Prize, the Goethe Medal and the European Translation Prize. 'Few can have done more to enhance (and in many cases create) the appreciation of German poetry among an Anglophone audience' (Times Literary Supplement) ? Includes the German text and English translations. Illustrated. With introduction and bibliography. The book has been revised. European Writers Series. Notes & bibliography & illustrations. www.crmoon.com Friedrich Hölderlin was born Johann Friedrich Hölderlin on March 20, 1770 in Lauffen, a Swabian town on the River Neckar. He spent much of his later years, following a mental breakdown, in a house in Tübingen, until his death in 1843. For Ronald Peacock, Hölderlin was the poet of 'radiant purity', 'the one whose name can be uttered only in the tone of veneration'. The chief love in Friedrich Hölderlin's life was Susette Borkenstein Gontard (1769-1802), the 'beautiful, cultured and noble' wife of a Frankfurt banker, J.F. Gontard. Hölderlin taught Gontard's children. He idealized Susette Gontard: she became his Muse, the Diotima in his poetry. 'Schönes Leben! du lebst, wie die zarten Blüthen im Winter', Hölderlin wrote in 'To Diotima'. Just as Novalis worshipped his beloved Sophie as an embodiment of Sophia (Wisdom), a Goddess of transcendent philosophy, so Hölderlin apostrophized Susette Gontard as Diotima in poems such as 'Diotima', 'To Diotima', 'To Her Genius' and 'Menon's Lament for Diotima'. Diotima was the hero's beloved in Hölderlin's novel Hyperion. Many poems are addressed to Diotima, and she is the subject of many pieces. It was with his relationship with Susette Gontard that Hölderlin's poetry began to develop rapidly, achieving a depth and lyricism far beyond the early poems. Susette, as Diotima, was crucial in this poetic development.

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