



Time Peels All to Original White

[Xueyan](#), author
Xueyan Poems



Dedicated to “beautiful souls swallowed by darkness,” this striking collection from Xueyan joins sharply sculpted lines, a penchant for emotionally charged descriptions of nature and divinity, an urgent longing for connection, and a reverence for Christ, whom the poet imagines, in a verse of rhapsodic transformation, first carrying the poet “along the thorny path of blood and flame” while Xueyan is a butterfly on his holy shoulders. A poem like “Valley of the Shadow of Death” unites theme, form, and language: “Answer me: / Where is the valley of the shadow of death? // Is it in the shade /beneath the eternal suffering of the cross? // Or is it within the wrinkles of my mother’s face?”

The short, stinging “Cup,” meanwhile, suggests that love—which in many poems is a redemptive force linked to eternity—can at times feel in short supply: “You empty my cup / by filling / hers.” Xueyan wastes no words in these crisp, pared-down poems, though they’re not short on meaning, mystery, or power. The biblical themes often connect to ideas of perseverance, as “John the Divine” finds in the life of the Baptist of the Gospels the lesson “Passion as paddle / belief as boat.” “Parting: A Red Sea Love Story” at first seems tragicomic, as two fish who have fallen for each other are torn apart as a consequence of Moses’s parting of the Red Sea. But the final lines offer a haunting evocation of a love that endures.

Another potent theme is that of exile. “Wind” reveals its subject as ancient, the “howl of Adam and Eve,” expelled from the Garden, while “Strangers,” “You Did Not,” and other poems about lost or fleeting connection pack maximal feeling into a minimum of words. The sacred, the eternal, the ecstasy of intimacy: Xueyan binds all this together, in tight, gripping verse, writing “Every fleeting moment / we breathe and create together / is eternity.”

Takeaway: Richly emotional poems of faith, connection, and eternity.

Great for fans of: Luci Shaw, Mary Szybist.

Production grades - Cover: **A-** Design and typography: **A.** Illustrations: **N/A.** Editing: **A.** Marketing copy: **B**

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