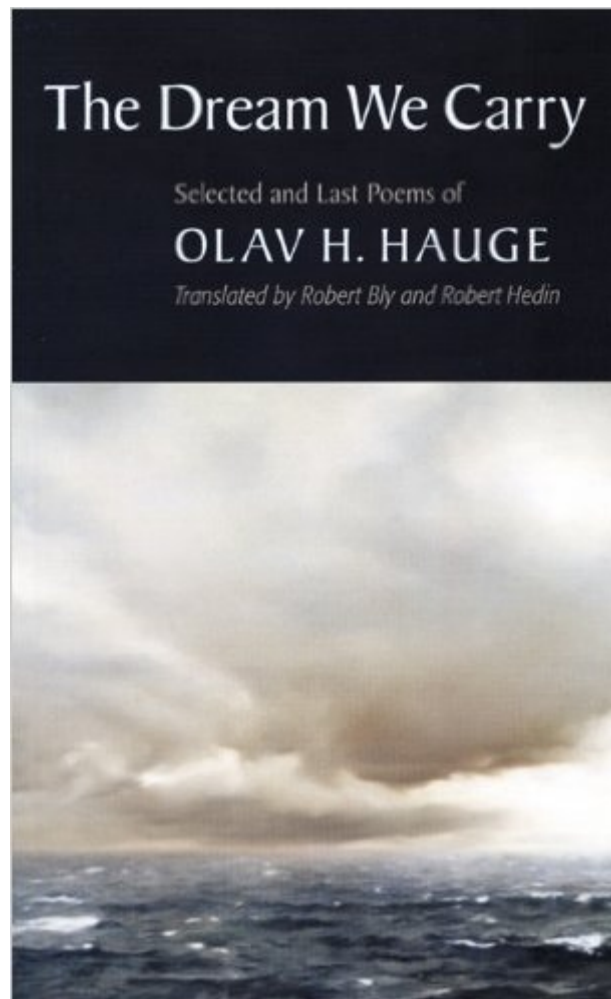


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The Dream We Carry: Selected And Last Poems Of Olav Hauge (Norwegian Edition)



Synopsis

"...spare, psalmlike poems....Together, the poems in this beautifully translated selection...provide us with the autobiography of a poet who felt most at home during winter, in solitude. Hauge deserves a larger American readership, and this book may summon it." — "Publishers Weekly"(Hauge's) poetry is miniaturist, pictorial, and ruminative; personal in that his experience, cognitive and sensual observations, and intentions are everywhere in it. Yet it isn't at all confessional or self-assertive....He is a man who knows where he is and helps us feel that we can know where we are, too." — "Booklist"

— "Booklist" — "If you have a tiny farm, you need to love poetry more than the farm. If you sell apples, you need to love poetry more than the apples." — "Robert Bly, from the introduction"

Olav H. Hauge, one of Norway's most beloved poets, is a major figure of twentieth-century European poetry. This generous bilingual edition — "introduced by Robert Bly" — includes the best poems from each of Hauge's seven books, as well as a gathering of his last poems. Ever sage and plainspoken — "and bearing resemblance to Chinese poetry" — Hauge's compact and classically restrained poems are rooted in his training as an orchardist, his deep reading in world literatures, and a lifetime of careful attention to the beauties and rigors of the western fjordland. His spare imagery and unpretentious tone ranges from bleak to unabashedly joyous, an intricate interplay between head and heart and hand. The rose has been sung about. I want to sing of the thorns, and the root — "how it grips the rock hard, hard as a thin girl's hand. During a writing career that spanned nearly fifty years, Olav H. Hauge produced seven books of poetry, numerous translations, and several volumes of correspondence. A largely self-educated man, he earned his living as a farmer, orchardist, and gardener on a small plot in the fjord region of western Norway.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I am indebted to Robert Bly for introducing me to Hauge through his anthology "The Winged Energy of Delight." From there, I purchased two collections of Hauge's poems: this one translated by Bly and Robert Hedin, and a larger compilation translated by Robin Fulton. The translations by Bly and Hedin, presented along with the original Norwegian, might be of particular value to scholars, or perhaps qualify as more precise literal translations, but Fulton's translations are poems in their own right. I have learned many of them by heart and recite them with much delight. I sense Hauge's voice in Fulton's offerings, as well as Hauge's love of the Chinese poets. The translations by Bly and Hedin don't speak so vividly to me. You might have a different preference. Unfortunately, neither of the publishers of these volumes opted to use 's Look Inside feature, so you can't readily sample their two different styles. A few poems are included in both collections, including this short, light-hearted one. I copied both versions here to serve as an example of the different flavors offered by these translators. Choose the flavor that you prefer.

New Tablecloth[tr. Robert Hedin]A new tablecloth, yellow!And fresh white paper!Words will have to arrive,because the cloth is so fineand the paper so delicate!When ice forms on the fjord, we knowbirds do come and land on it.

New Table-Cloth[tr. Robin Fulton]New yellow cloth on the table.And clean white pages!Here the words must come,such a fine new cloth hereand such fine paper!The ice settled on the fjord,the birds came and alighted.

These poems are small gems in the style of the Japanese and Chinese masters, written by a Norwegian farmer-poet with a clear eye, a musical ear, and deep feeling. This lovely bilingual edition (Norwegian/English) is fun even if you don't know more than how to pronounce the Norwegian since you can get a sense of the poet's careful use of sound that's always lost in translation. If I were to assemble a "catechism for writers", some of these poems would be right up front. Try this one:Don't come to me with the entire truth.Don't bring the ocean if I feel thirsty,nor heaven if I ask for light;but bring a hint, some dew, a particle,as birds carry drops away from a lake,and the wind a grain of salt.

Olav Hauge (1908-1994)was a farmer and orchardist who lived his entire life in the fjord region of western Norway. He was also one of the most important Scandanavian poets of the 20th century.

Robert Bly and Robert Hedin have performed a great literary service in bringing these spare, quirky, and luminous poems into English. This is a beautiful collection with poems inspired by Li Po, Emily Dickinson, even the Norwegian speed skater from the 1960s. Tim Nolan

I gather this poet lived his whole life in one place. On a farm, he lived the life of a farmer and a reader and a poet; from this life, these perfect poems emerged. I find it inspiring. We think we have to see the world, visit museums, take workshops and classes, get an MFA, connect and network -- truth is all we have to do is live life quietly, create because it's what humans feel compelled to do, pay attention to our thoughts, pay attention to the world, watch the light as it changes -- inside and out. This was recommended to me by Karl Ove Knausgaard.

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