



# The Forbidden Rumi: The Suppressed Poems of Rumi on Love, Heresy, and Intoxication

From Jalal Al-Din Rumi/ Ergin, Nevit Oguz/ Johnson, Will

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The first collection of poems translated into English from the forbidden volume of the *Divan* of Rumi

- Presents Rumi's most heretical and free-form poems
- Includes introductions and commentary that provide both 13th-century context and modern interpretation

After his overwhelming and life-altering encounters with Shams of Tabriz, Rumi, the great thirteenth-century mystic, poet, and originator of the whirling dervishes, let go of many of the precepts of formal religion, insisting that only a complete personal dissolving into the larger energies of God could provide the satisfaction that the heart so desperately seeks. He began to speak spontaneously in the language of poetry, and his followers compiled his 44,000 verses into 23 volumes, collectively called the *Divan*.

When Nevit Ergin decided to translate the *Divan* of Rumi into English, he enlisted the help of the Turkish government, which was happy to participate. The first 22 volumes were published without difficulty, but the government withdrew its support and refused to participate in the publication of the final volume due to its openly heretical nature. Now, in *The Forbidden Rumi*, Will Johnson and Nevit Ergin present for the first time in English Rumi's poems from this forbidden volume. The collection is grouped into three sections: songs to Shams and God, songs of heresy, and songs of advice and admonition. In them Rumi explains that in order to transform our consciousness, we must let go of ingrained habits and embrace new ones. In short, we must become heretics.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

“For the past fifty years Nevit Ergin has been working to bring into English the entirety of Rumi’s vast *Divani Shamsi Tabriz*. This last volume is the most incendiary and it clearly dissolves the boundaries of organized religion and national ego that keep us from the table of friendship that Rumi invites us to. . . . We are very grateful to Dr. Ergin for his life’s work.” (*Coleman Barks, translator of The Essential Rumi*)

“It takes a great deal of courage to read *The Forbidden Rumi* as it may press a lot of buttons, not only about your own pathway to God, but your views and prejudices about love, religion, heresy and Islam.

“All of Rumi’s poems have enjoined us to release the rules and open our hearts to our inner treasure of love, but these most controversial poems cut to the bone.

“This final book of Rumi’s poems is a must-read for any serious student of spiritual ecstasy. They pose questions that make us wonder and re-evaluate our views about a religion that is portrayed as governed by extremists. They reveal a hidden face of Islam that may surprise even moderate Islamists.

“Most importantly, these poems reveal that Islam too has always had a mystical, transcendent element that is its purest gift.” (*Lesley Crossingham, New Dawn, Mar-Apr 2007*)

From the Back Cover

RELIGION / POETRY

“For the past fifty years Nevit Ergin has been working to bring into English the entirety of Rumi’s vast *Divan-i Kebir*. This last volume is the most incendiary, and it clearly dissolves the boundaries of organized religion and national ego that keep us from the table of friendship that Rumi invites us to. . . . We are very grateful to Dr. Ergin for his life’s work.”

**Coleman Barks**, translator of *The Essential Rumi*

After his overwhelming and life-altering encounters with Shams of Tabriz, Rumi, the great thirteenth-century mystic, poet, and originator of the whirling dervishes, let go of many of the precepts of formal religion, insisting that only a complete personal dissolving into the larger energies of God could provide the satisfaction that the heart so desperately seeks. He began to speak spontaneously in the language of poetry, and his followers compiled his more than forty-four thousand verses into twenty-three volumes, collectively called the *Divan-i Kebir*.

When Nevit Ergin decided to translate Rumi’s divan into English, he enlisted the help of the Turkish government, which was happy to participate. The first twenty-two volumes were published without difficulty, but the government withdrew its support and refused to participate in the publication of the final volume due to its openly heretical nature. Now, in *The Forbidden Rumi*, Nevit Ergin and Will Johnson present for the first time in English Rumi’s poems on love and intoxication from this forbidden volume. The collection is grouped into three sections: songs to Shams and God, songs of advice and admonition, and songs of heresy. Rumi explains that in order to transform our consciousness, we must let go of ingrained habits and embrace new ones. In short, we must become heretics.

NEVIT O. ERGIN, a Turkish-born surgeon, is the original translator of the entirety of Rumi's 44,829 verses into English. He has been a student of Sufism and the poetry of Rumi since 1955 and published his first Rumi translation in 1992. With the publication of *The Forbidden Rumi*, his translation of Rumi's work is complete. He lives in California. WILL JOHNSON is the founder and director of the Institute for Embodiment Training, which combines Western somatic psychotherapy with Eastern meditation practices. He is the author of several books, including the award-winning *Rumi: Gazing at the Beloved*. He lives in British Columbia.

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