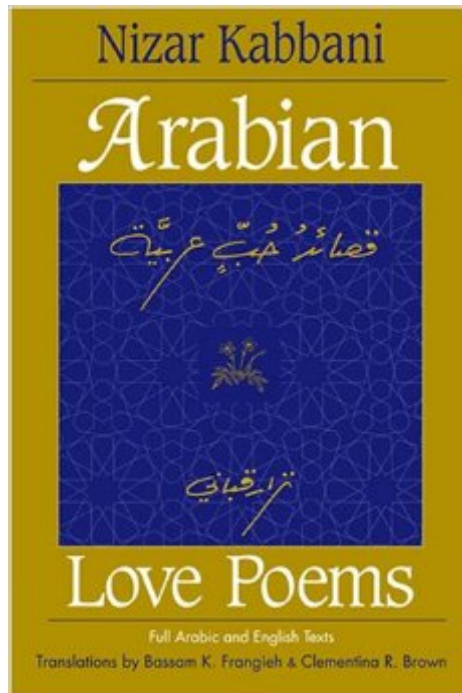


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Arabian Love Poems: Full Arabic And English Texts (Three Continents Press)



Synopsis

Nizar Kabbani's poetry has been described as more powerful than all the Arab regimes put together (Lebanese Daily Star). Reflecting on his death in 1998, Sulhi Al-Wadi wrote (in Tishreen), Qabbani is like water, bread, and the sun in every Arab heart and house. In his poetry the harmony of the heart, and in his blood the melody of love. *Arabian Love Poems* is the first English-language collection of his work. Kabbani was a poet of great simplicity direct, spontaneous, musical, using the language of everyday life. He was a ceaseless campaigner for women's rights, and his verses praise the beauty of the female body, and of love. He was an Arab nationalist, yet he criticized Arab dictators and the lack of freedom in the Arab world. He was the poet of Damascus: I am the Damascene. If you dissect my body, grapes and apples will come out of it. If you open my veins with your knife, you will hear in my blood the voices of those who have departed. Frangieh and Brown's elegant translations are accompanied by the Arabic texts of the poems, penned by Kabbani especially for this collection.

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Customer Reviews

Qabbani was revered by generations of Arabs for his sensual andromantic verse. His work was featured not only in his two dozen volumes of poetry and in regular contributions to the Arabic-language newspaper *Al Hayat*, but in lyrics sung by Lebanese and Syrian vocalists who helped popularize his work. The Syrian poet Youssef Karkoutly said in Damascus today that

Qabbani had been "as necessary to our lives as air." Through a lifetime of writing, Qabbani made women his main theme and inspiration. He earned a reputation for daring with the publication in 1954 of his first volume of verse, "Childhood of a Breast," which broke with the conservative traditions of Arabic literature. But it was not until he resigned from the Syrian diplomatic service in 1966 that Qabbani reached full flower. After the Arab defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, he founded the Nizar Qabbani publishing house in London, and he became a powerful and eloquent voice of lament for Arab causes. Qabbani was a committed Arab nationalist and in recent years his poetry and other writings, including essays and journalism, had become more political. But his writing also often fused themes of romantic and political despair, and it sometimes treated the oppression of women as a metaphor for what he saw as the Arabs' cursed fate. In his poem "Drawing with Words" he wrote: When a man wishes a woman he blows a horn, But when a woman wishes a man she eats the cotton of her pillow. The Egyptian novelist Mona Helmi said of Qabbani today, "His greatness came from his ability to put into beautiful words not only the ordinary actions between men and women, but also between the ruler and ruled and the oppressor and the oppressed.

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