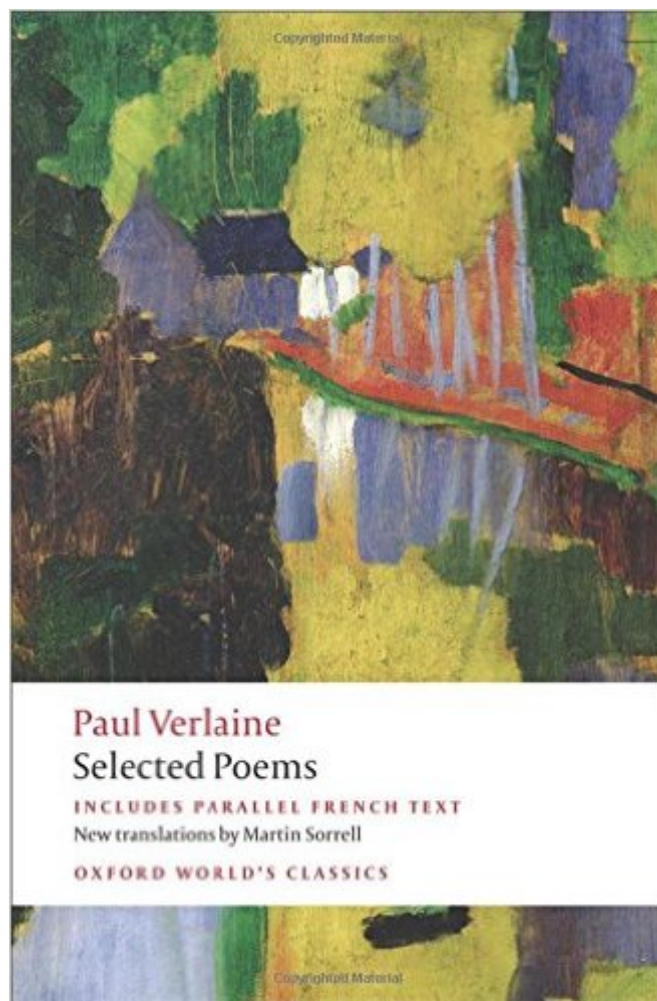


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# Paul Verlaine: Selected Poems (Oxford World's Classics)



## Synopsis

Verlaine ranks alongside Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Rimbaud as one of the most influential poets of late nineteenth-century France. Remarkable not only for his exquisitely crafted verse, Verlaine is also the poet of strong emotions and appetites, with an unrivalled gift for the sheer music of poetry, and an inventive approach to its technique. This bilingual edition provides the most comprehensive selection of his poetry yet, offering some 170 poems in lively and fresh translations. It also offers a lucid introduction which illuminates Verlaine's poetic form within the context of French Impressionism and the poetry of sensation.

About the Series: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is the poem in the original French: Une aube affaiblie  
Verse par les champs  
La mélancolie  
Des soleils couchants.  
La mélancolie  
Berce de doux chants  
Mon coeur qui s'oublie  
Aux soleils couchants.  
Et d'étranges rêves  
Comme des soleils  
Couchants sur les grèves,  
Fantômes  
vermeils, défilent sans trêves,  
Défilent, pareils à des grands soleils  
Couchants sur les grèves.

This is Martin Sorrell's English translation for this Oxford World Classics edition: Setting

Suns  
A sickly dawn  
Spreads over the fields  
The sadnesses  
Lull with soft songs  
My heart lost in  
The setting suns.  
And then strange dreams  
Which seem like suns  
That set on shores  
Vermilion ghosts  
Drift endlessly  
Reminding me  
Of mighty suns  
That set on shores.

This translation, to my mind, goes a fair way to destroying the poem. The four stars are for Verlaine's poems, given in the original French here, and emphatically not for Sorrell's translations. In his introductory "Note On The Text And Translation", Sorrell states that other translations suffer from an "over-reverence for the original" and seem "stuck in the past" whereas he seeks to produce "poems appropriate to the climate of late twentieth-century English-language writing."

When I first heard this poem, it was in Paris in 2005, sung by a Sorbonne student to a guitar. Every subsequent time I heard the poem whilst in France it was in a song, often accompanied by a guitar, piano or, one time, a synthesizer. All of these versions showed a deep "over-reverence?"

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