



# Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám (Oxford World's Classics)

*Edward FitzGerald, Daniel Karlin*

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In 1859, Edward FitzGerald translated into English the short, epigrammatic poems (or "rubáiyát") of medieval Persian poet Omar Khayyám. If not a true translation--his Omar seems to have read Shakespeare and the King James Bible--the poem nevertheless conveyed some of the most beautiful and haunting images in English poetry, and some of the sharpest-edged. By the end of the century, it was one of the best-known poems in the English language, admired by Swinburne and Ruskin. Daniel Karlin's richly annotated edition focuses on the poem as a work of Victorian literary art, doing justice to the scope and complexity of FitzGerald's lyrical meditation on "human death and fate." Karlin provides a fascinating critical introduction which documents the poem's treatment of its Persian sources, along with its multiple affiliations with English and Classical literature and to the Bible. A selection of contemporary reviews offers an insight into the poem's early reception, including the first attack on its status as a translation.

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