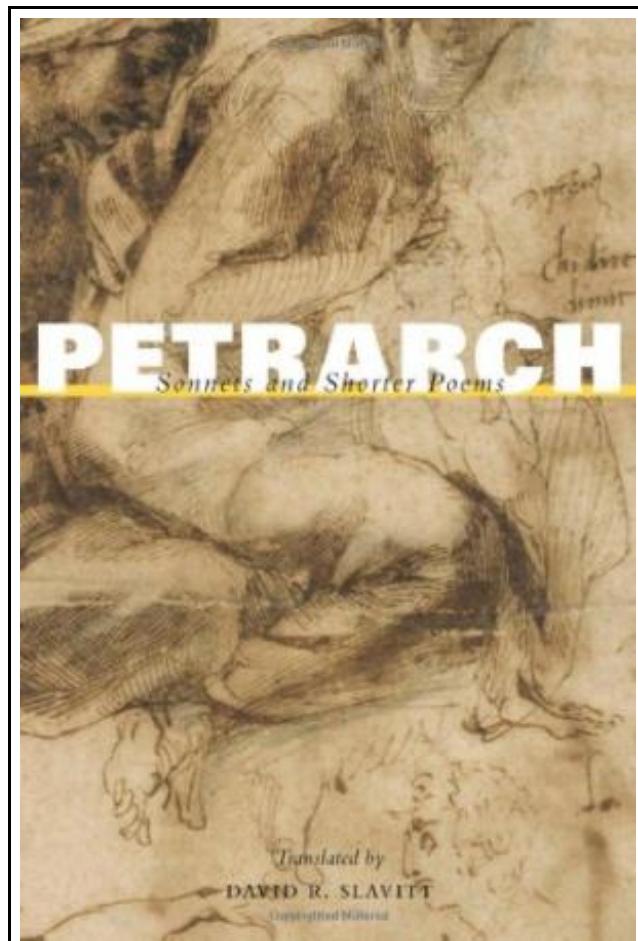


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HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS, United States, 2012. Hardback. Book Condition: New. 211 x 142 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. In this volume, David R. Slavitt, the distinguished translator and author of more than ninety works of fiction, poetry, and drama, turns his skills to the *Canzoniere* (Songbook) by Petrarch, the most influential poet in the history of the sonnet. In Petrarch's hands, lyric verse was transformed from an expression of courtly devotion into a way of conversing with one's own heart and mind. Slavitt renders the sonnets in *Il Canzoniere*, along with the shorter madrigals and ballate, in a sparkling and engaging idiom and in rhythm and rhyme that do justice to Petrarch's achievement. At the center of the *Canzoniere* (also known as *Rime Sparse*, or *Scattered Rhymes*) is Petrarch's obsessive love for Laura, a woman Petrarch asserts he first saw at Easter Mass on April 6, 1327, in the church of Sainte-Claire d'Avignon when he was twenty-two. Though Laura was already married, the sight of her woke in the poet a passion that would last beyond her premature death on April 6, 1348, exactly twenty-one years after he first encountered her. Unlike Dante's Beatrice--a savior leading the poet by the hand toward divine love--Petrarch's Laura elicits more earthbound and erotic feelings. David Slavitt's deft new translation captures the nuanced tone of Petrarch's poems exactly--their joy and despair, and eventually their grief over Laura's death. Readers of poetry and especially those with an interest in the sonnet and its history will welcome this volume.

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