

# Praise

## for *Hafiz's Little Book of Life*

This little gem expresses the totality of human experience and beyond, honestly and in the most divinely sublime ways! It sent me on an epic spiritual journey filled with much-needed Soul Food – weeping, as I moved through these pages of separation, isolation, loneliness, betrayal, yearning, and union. Flow in and out of the beautiful, relatable reality of Hafiz and see your own Life reflected in his words, Soul satisfied. — Marja West, Author~Healer, LoveTruthandBeauty.com

A radical collaboration between a Persian and American, this is a break-through version of the most untranslatable classical Sufi poet. Gach and Mojib have carved genuine gems from Hafiz's Persian and set them in a bezel composed of space, time, and the reader's own openness to wisdom. This is translation as a real "carrying-across," as art not artifact. While previous translations attempted to be re-enactments (like re-enacting an old battle in faux costumes), this one drops the reader/listener directly into their own soul-struggle. Immerse yourself and be transformed! — Neil Douglas-Klotz, author of *The Sufi Book of Life* and *The Aramaic Jesus*

Working from adaptations by acclaimed filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami, Erfan Mojib and Gary Gach have delivered a groundbreaking tour de force version of an iconic classical text – bold and bracing and brilliant. Unlocking Hafiz's timeless wisdom and dazzling lyricism for our contemporary age, these bite-sized texts seem to answer one of their own urgent calls to action: "If the work of the world / Seems closed like flower buds / Become a knot-opener / Like the spring breeze." Step right in – multiple, thrilling gardens in bloom await! — Lee Yew Leong, Editor-in-Chief and Poetry Editor, *Asymptote*

How to translate into English what until now has justifiably been called the "untranslatable" Persian verses of Hafiz? From its epigraph ("embrace the random") onward, Erfan Mojib and Gary Gach have given us the answer.

*Hafiz's Little Book of Life* breathes new life into the world of the Sufi poet's 14th-century words, making those words new again. Floating on the white space of the page, gem-like nuggets of word-objects arranged in short cut-off bits and pieces of lines, words and parts of words are divided into five sections: "Garden of World" ("The chief cop / Has chopped off / The lovely hair / Of the harp), "Garden of Wine" ("O, wind ! / Of that wine / Bring to me / A whiff"), "Garden of Love" ("In the circle of fate / We are the dot / Where the compass / Meets the paper"), "Garden of Wisdom" ("It had never stayed / Thus / Nor will it remain / Like / This"), and "Garden of Ecstasy" ("I get a constant high / From the breeze / In the waves / Of your hair"). The reader who walks through these gardens will discover a wonderful new world of earthly (and sometimes other worldly) verbal delights – will even perhaps be lucky enough to find "Beneath this / Turquoise dome," as Hafiz writes "a pearl / Beyond the shell / of space & time." — Stephen Ratcliffe, author *Conversation* and *Listening to Reading*

What I love most about these translations is the range and variety of voices, running the gamut from the Wildean ("Vanity, my dear/ is merely proof/of sheer ignorance") to street snarl ("Hey you/passing through the Alley of the Beloved/Beware/It's walls can break your head too"), with a myriad other voices in between, sly, heartbroken, annoyed, bereft, outraged, bewildered, exalted. I am particularly awed at how these translations take texts from a previous millennium and render them immediate, palpable, rapturous, funny, and stunningly relevant. Notable, too, is the way in which love and the beloved of Hafiz are revealed as non-binary, released from the prison of gender, and raised to the sublime. Hats off, Erfan Mojib and Gary Gach, for gifting us with these treasures "made new." — Larry Mellman, author *The Ballot Boy* Trilogy

The nature and reach of translation is a subject that will remain with us for as long as literature does. We translate words and meanings, even, as is the case with mystical texts, words and meanings oftentimes contradict and negate one another. A mystic speaks of love. A mystic uses the imagery of a lover and a beloved. I have often remarked that a mystic's love is not a "householder's" love, for it is directed at a transcendent, non-physical being. Therefore, whether Hafiz was married, had children to raise, parents to support, and so on, is not something a translator needs to be preoccupied with, except, as with Hafiz, when the message of the poet is that there is no distinction possible between the love of God and the relationship between I and Thou. Erfan Mojib and Gary Gach, with this translation and introduction, have given us a teaching. We read Hafiz in this wonderful book and we understand that Hafiz is talking not about God, but to God, and he's doing his talking by loving us and all beings. — Hune Margulies, author, *Martin Buber and Eastern Wisdom Systems. The Recovery of the Spiritual Imagination*

This is a great book of poetry. The prose introductory materials by Mojib place the poet neatly in both the Persia of the 1300s and the present living cultural tradition of the mid-east. The poetry translations show how much Hafiz deserves to be alive in another language so long after these poems were written, and these translations into American English are miracles in themselves. — J. P. Seaton, translator *The Poetry of Zen* and *Wine of Endless Life*

Acquiring peripatetic echoes from genres as varied as senryu, tanka, and renga, to more free-form micro-poetry born in the digital period, this widely relatable book offers a generous, initiatory experience of Hafiz's intoxicated gardens. — Suhit Bombaywala, writer, poet, journalist

This wonderful *Little Book of Life* plays the music of Hafiz's wisdom and wit, all designed to make hearts dance. The melodies flow with unexpected meanings, often radical and unique, delivered with such clarity that they appear as self evident, simple, delicious truth

— Jonathan Granoff, President Global Security Institute

## FIVE-STAR AMAZON REVIEWS

### here is much-needed Soul Food in this little book!

In Hafiz's Little Book of Life, this little gem expresses the fleeting trials and triumphs of the totality of human experience and beyond honestly and in the most divinely sublime ways!

Efran Mojib and Gary Gach have joined forces to re-vision the vast universal wisdom of Hafiz. They do so in sync with the rhythms of our modern-day challenges and distractions—more than 700 years later, rife with the same ups and downs, toxicity and hypocrisy as Hafiz described.

This book isn't just a poetry book complete with a glossary to gift readers with a deeper context; it is a passionate scholarly treatise and a geographical, historical offering of Hafiz through his unfettered coordination of Heart-Mind-Body-and Soul, who lived precariously amidst censorship, autophobia, and tyrants high on human atrocities, who eventually met unnatural, violent deaths: the juxtaposition of our current uncertain times notwithstanding.

I was sent on an epic spiritual journey filled with lyrical renderings of artful, timeless reminders of the much-needed Soul Food I often deprive myself of, weeping as I moved through these pages of separation, isolation, loneliness, betrayal, yearning, and union.

I highly recommend this beautiful book to everyone, especially those of you who desire a break from the ya-ya-ga-ga-za-za of the Matrix world and desire to flow in and out of the beautiful, relatable reality of Hafiz and see your own Life reflected in his words, Soul satisfied.

### They Did It!

In an age of increasing conflict and crisis, this collaboration is a bridge to the ultimate dimension. Crafted, honed and translated with depth and love.

### An exquisite offering

A wonderful book translated and offered with great sensitivity and love. Each brief poem is a gem in the jewel of Hafez and translators craft. The heart sings as we are inspired to creative reading but the depth and substance of this offering. Deep appreciation for the translators, publisher and, of course the poet.

### A Masterful Bridge Between Cultures

There are ancient cultures rich in knowledge, but accessing their treasures often requires knowing their languages. Many of my peers, colleagues, and friends have asked me how they can enjoy Iranian poems in English. They've sometimes expressed disappointment in the quality of translations, which can dilute the essence and beauty of these poems.

I've been hesitant to recommend Persian books translated into English in the past. However, I wholeheartedly recommend this translation of Hafiz's work. Erfan possesses a deep understanding of both languages and a profound insight into Hafiz's poetry. He doesn't merely translate words but captures the essence and true meaning, the heart of the poems. I highly encourage you to read this book and look forward to more of Erfan's work to share the richness of Iranian philosophy and literature with the world.



## PRAISE FOR HAFIZ

In his poetry Hafiz has inscribed undeniable truth indelibly. ... He is a master of the language of love. ... He is a true friend to all who read him. — Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, author *The Sorrows of Young Werther*; *Faust*; *West-Eastern Divan*

Hafiz is the prince of Persian poets. ... He accounts all topics with an easy audacity. ... Nothing is too high, nothing too low, for his occasion. He fears nothing, he stops for nothing. ... Hafiz is a great teacher, and his lessons are needed in our time. He teaches us to live in the present moment, to enjoy the simple things in life, and to find joy in the love of friends and the beauty of nature. — Ralph Waldo Emerson, author *Self-Reliance*; *The Over-Soul*; *Nature*

Only the most cultivated of beings can benefit from the deepest human joys because within such beings resides a unique freedom and rapture. Their awareness rests in the house of spirit and their soul mates with their awareness — meaning that which is discovered through awareness emanates from their soul and that which shines in the soul is known with awareness. This unity of spirit and mind is the legacy of Hafiz. — Friedrich Nietzsche,

author *The Birth of Tragedy*; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*; *Twilight of the Idols*

The *diwan* of Hafiz is not a mere literary collection: it is beyond literature. It is a book of life. — Baha'eddin Khorramshahi, author *Hafiznameh*

Hafiz was the teacher of kings and at the same time beloved of the people. His influence is still second to none in Persian literature. — Idries Shah, author *The Sufis*; *The Way of the Sufis*; *The Book of the Book*

Hafiz stands unique in his expression, in his depth of thought, in the excellence of his symbolic expression of certain thoughts and philosophy.... Hafiz expressed his soul in poetry. And what poetry! Poetry full of light and shade, line and color, and poetry full of feeling. No poetry in the world can be compared to that of Hafiz in its delicacy. — Hazrat Inayat Khan, author *The Bowl of Saki*; *The Alchemy of Happiness*; *Rassa Shashtra*

This supreme poet, who is called the "Tongue of the Invisible" (*Lisan al-ghayb*), produced poems of magic beauty, poems whose imagery and music transmute the lead of the forgetful soul to the gold of the soul which lives in the longing for its Beloved and in the remembrance of that union which pre-dates man's terrestrial journey. Hafiz was himself aware that his was not simply a human voice. Rather, his poetry was a celestial song which brought the heavens themselves into a state of ecstasy. — Seyyed Hossein Nasr, editor *The Study Quran*; author *Science & Civilization in Islam*; *Knowledge & the Sacred*; *The Garden of Truth*

Delicate and tough, a crafted danger, full of wit as well as abandon, Hafiz's lyric is one of the rare mysteries of world literature. — Coleman Barks, *The Essential Rumi*, Rabindrinath Tagore's *Gitanjali*

