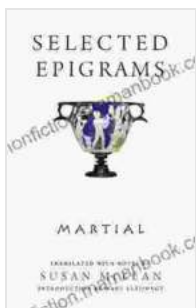


Selected Epigrams: Wisconsin Studies in Classics

In the vast tapestry of ancient literature, there exists a captivating genre known as epigrams—brief, witty, and often pointed poems that encapsulate a thought, observation, or emotion with remarkable conciseness and precision. Among the many collections of epigrams that have survived the passage of time, *Selected Epigrams: Wisconsin Studies in Classics* stands out as a comprehensive and authoritative anthology, offering a rich selection of epigrams from various periods and authors.

Understanding Epigrams: A Literary Genre

Epigrams, as a literary genre, possess several distinguishing characteristics that set them apart from other forms of poetry. First and foremost, they are known for their brevity, typically ranging from a single line to a few short couplets. This condensed form allows the epigram to capture a moment, a feeling, or a thought with remarkable efficiency.



Selected Epigrams (Wisconsin Studies in Classics)

by Michael Morpurgo

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 674 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 189 pages



Secondly, epigrams often employ a witty or satirical tone, using clever wordplay, irony, or humor to convey their message. This playfulness and wit make epigrams both entertaining and thought-provoking, as they invite readers to contemplate the deeper meaning hidden within the brevity.

Finally, epigrams frequently have an epigrammatical point or sting in their tail, a sudden and often unexpected twist that leaves a lasting impression on the reader. This unexpected turn can range from a humorous punchline to a sharp critique or a profound insight.

The Wisconsin Studies in Classics Edition

Selected Epigrams: Wisconsin Studies in Classics is a renowned collection of epigrams gathered and translated by renowned classicists David Sider and Shane Butler. This meticulously compiled anthology spans over two millennia of epigrammatic tradition, featuring works from ancient Greece and Rome to the Byzantine and Modern periods.

One of the key strengths of this edition is its comprehensive scope. The collection includes a wide array of epigrammatic subgenres, from funerary and dedicatory inscriptions to satirical and erotic epigrams. This diversity provides a comprehensive overview of the epigram's evolution and versatility as a literary form.

Moreover, the translations in this volume are both accurate and accessible, allowing readers to appreciate the nuances and subtleties of the original texts without requiring specialized knowledge of ancient languages. The translations are also accompanied by detailed annotations and commentary, providing essential context and background information to enhance the reader's understanding.

Exploring the Collection's Highlights

The *Selected Epigrams: Wisconsin Studies in Classics* anthology features a diverse selection of epigrams, each offering a unique perspective and insight. Among the many gems in the collection, a few stand out as particularly noteworthy.



One such example is a funerary epigram from ancient Greece, inscribed on the tombstone of a young woman named Melinno. The epigram reads:

> "Melinno, once a maiden, now a bride, > And now no more, beneath this stone doth lie."

This poignant epitaph captures the transience of life and the brevity of youth, offering a touchingly simple yet profound reflection on mortality.



Satirical Epigram

Another notable epigram in the collection comes from the Roman poet Martial, known for his sharp wit and satirical humor. The epigram targets a wealthy but miserly individual named Caecilius, who is described as:

> "So rich that he can buy the whole world over, > But so stingy that he won't even buy himself a dinner."

Martial's epigram cleverly exposes the absurdity of Caecilius's excessive wealth and his contradictory behavior, offering a biting critique of greed and avarice.



The collection also includes epigrams from the Byzantine period, demonstrating the genre's continued relevance and evolution throughout history. One such example is an epigram by Empress Eirene, a powerful and influential ruler who reigned in the 8th century. The epigram reads:

> "I am Eirene, born of royal lineage, > And empress by the grace of God. >
> I have ruled with justice and piety, > And my reign has been marked by

peace and prosperity."

Empress Eirene's epigram serves as a self-portrait, celebrating her achievements and asserting her authority as a female ruler in a predominantly male-dominated society.

The Enduring Legacy of Epigrams

The epigram has played a significant role in shaping the literary landscape throughout history, influencing writers from ancient times to the present day. Its brevity, wit, and epigrammatical point have captivated readers across cultures and eras, providing both entertainment and food for thought.

Epigrams have been used for a wide range of purposes, from commemorating the dead to satirizing social follies. They have also been employed as teaching tools, conveying moral lessons or philosophical insights in a memorable and concise manner.

The *Selected Epigrams: Wisconsin Studies in Classics* anthology serves as a valuable resource for anyone interested in exploring the rich tradition of epigrammatic poetry. With its comprehensive selection of epigrams, accurate translations, and insightful commentary, this volume provides a gateway into the world of these captivating and enduring literary gems.



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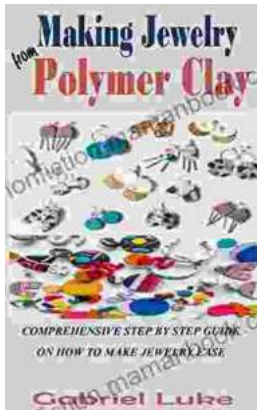
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