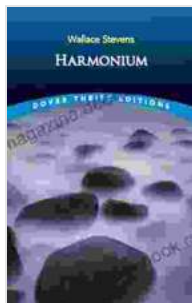


# Harmonium: Dover Thrift Editions Poetry - A Timeless Masterpiece of Modernist Verse

## : A Voyage into the Realm of Imagination and Insight

Wallace Stevens' *Harmonium*, published in 1923, stands as a towering achievement in the annals of modernist poetry. A collection of 125 meticulously crafted poems, *Harmonium* embarks upon a profound exploration of imagination, perception, and the intricate nature of reality. Through its lyrical precision and evocative imagery, the work illuminates the elusive boundaries between the inner and outer worlds, challenging our preconceptions and inviting us into a realm of unbounded possibility.



### Harmonium (Dover Thrift Editions: Poetry) by Rick Gavin

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 515 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Print length	: 104 pages
Lending	: Enabled



## Excavating the Depths of Perception: The Intricacies of Seeing

Stevens' keen eye for detail and mastery of language enables him to capture the nuances of perception with extraordinary clarity. In poems such as "Anecdote of the Jar," he demonstrates how an ordinary object can become a catalyst for profound contemplation, disrupting the familiar and

revealing the hidden layers of our surroundings. Through the act of seeing, Stevens unveils the interconnectedness of all things, leading us to question the boundaries between the subject and the observed.

### **Anecdote Of The Jar**

I placed a jar in Tennessee,  
And round it was, upon a hill.  
It made the slovenly wilderness  
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,  
And sprawled around, no longer wild.  
The jar was round upon the ground  
And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.  
The jar was gray and bare.  
It did not give of bird or bush,  
Like nothing else in Tennessee.

*Wallace Stevens*

### **Imagination as a Source of Transformation: Beyond the Veil of Reality**

Harmonium celebrates the transformative power of imagination, showcasing its ability to transcend the limitations of the real and create new worlds. In "The Emperor of Ice-Cream," the speaker's grief over a young girl's death is juxtaposed with the surreal image of an ice cream vendor,

creating a compelling tension between despair and a childlike sense of wonder. Through imaginative leaps, Stevens invites us to question the nature of reality itself, blurring the lines between the concrete and the abstract.

### **The Emperor Of Ice-Cream**

Call the roller of big cigars,  
The muscular one, and bid him whip  
In kitchen cups concupiscent curds.  
Let the wenchies dawdle in such dress  
As they are used to wear, and let the boys  
Bring flowers in last month's newspapers.  
Let be be finale of seem.  
The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream.

Take from the dresser of deal,  
Lacking the three glass knobs, that sheet  
On which she embroidered fantails once  
And spread it so as to cover her face:  
If her horny feet protrude, they come  
To show how cold she is, and dumb.  
Let the lamp affix its beam.  
The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream.

*Wallace Stevens*

**The Elusive Essence of Reality: A Tapestry of Perspectives**

Stevens' poetry delves into the complexities of reality, acknowledging its multifaceted nature and resisting easy definitions. In "Sunday Morning," the speaker contemplates the loss of traditional religious faith, grappling with the existential questions that arise in the face of modernity. By weaving together multiple perspectives and employing rich symbolism, Stevens creates a tapestry of meaning, inviting readers to embark on their own journeys of understanding and interpretation.

#### SUNDAY MORNING

##### I

Complacencies of the peignoir, and late  
Coffee and oranges in a sunny chair,  
And the green freedom of a cockatoo  
Upon a rug, mingle to dissipate  
The holy hush of ancient sacrifice.  
She dreams a little, and she feels the dark  
Encroachment of that old catastrophe,  
As a calm darkens among water-lights.  
The pungent oranges and bright, green wings  
Seem things in some procession of the dead,  
Winding across wide water, without sound.  
The day is like wide water, without sound,  
Stilled for the passing of her dreaming feet  
Over the sea, to silent Palestine,  
Dominion of the blood and sepulcher.

##### II

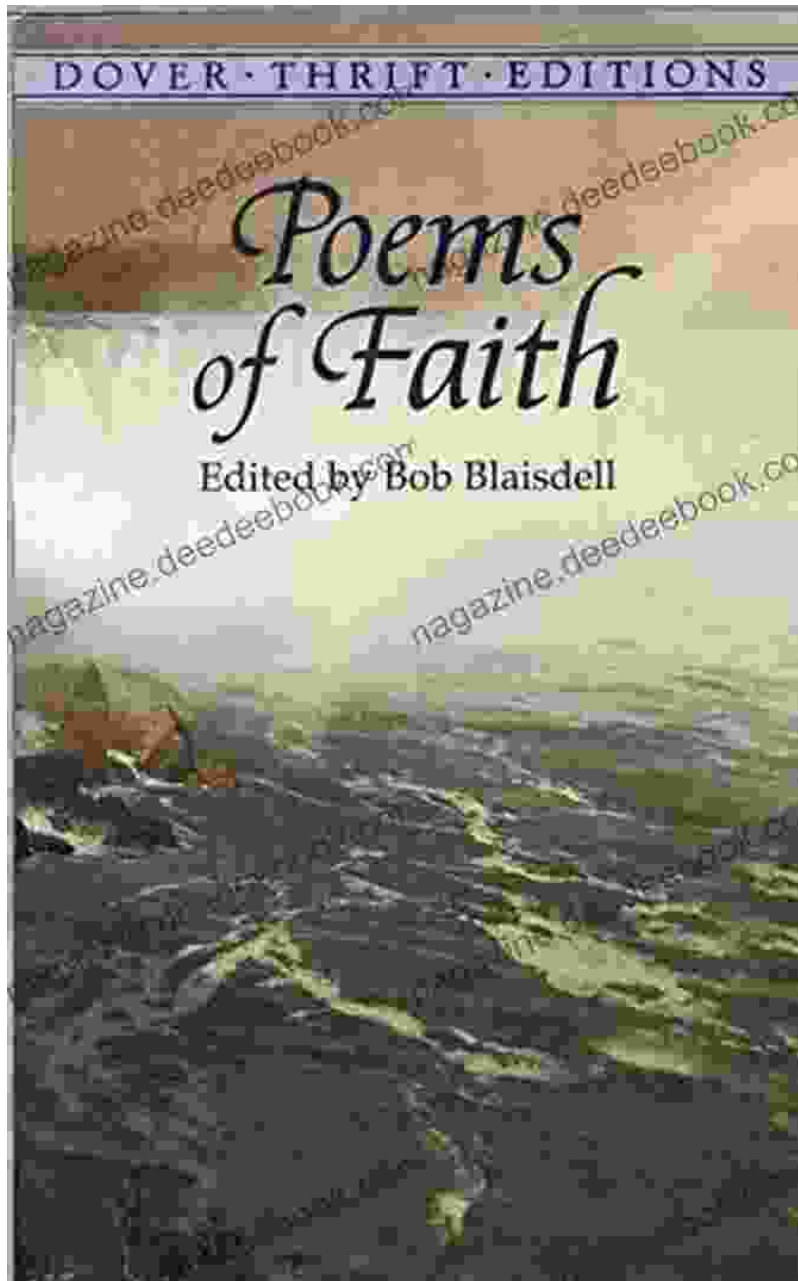
She hears, upon that water without sound,  
A voice that cries, "The tomb in Palestine  
Is not the porch of spirits lingering;  
It is the grave of Jesus, where he lay."  
We live in an old chaos of the sun,  
Or old dependency of day and night,  
Or island solitude, unsponsored, free,  
Of that wide water, inescapable.  
Deer walk upon our mountains, and the quail

## **Harmonium: A Bridge between the Past and the Future**

Wallace Stevens' *Harmonium* emerged at a pivotal moment in literary history, bridging the gap between the traditional forms of the past and the experimental innovations of the future. Its lyrical beauty, philosophical depth, and enduring relevance have cemented its place in the canon of modernism, influencing generations of poets and readers alike. The work continues to inspire and provoke, showcasing the timeless power of poetry to illuminate the complexities of the human experience.

## **Dover Thrift Editions Poetry: Accessibility and Scholarly Value**

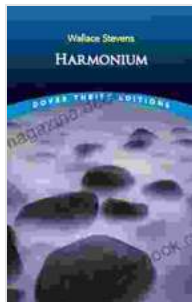
*Harmonium*'s enduring legacy is further enhanced by its inclusion in Dover Thrift Editions Poetry. This affordable and accessible edition makes Stevens' masterpiece widely available, allowing a new generation of readers to engage with its timeless insights. The Dover Thrift Editions also provide valuable scholarly apparatus, including an authoritative , comprehensive notes, and a chronology of Stevens' life and work, enriching the reading experience and fostering deeper understanding.



### **: Harmonium's Enduring Legacy as a Poetic Touchstone**

Wallace Stevens' *Harmonium* remains a touchstone of modernist poetry, a work that continues to challenge, inspire, and reward close examination. Its exploration of imagination, perception, and the nature of reality has resonated deeply with readers for generations, and its insights continue to illuminate our understanding of the human condition. Through the Dover

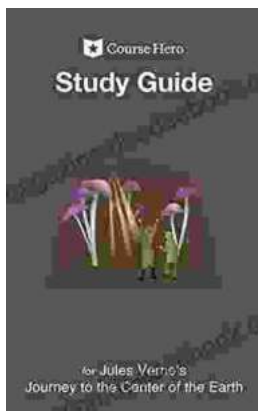
Thrift Editions Poetry, Harmonium is accessible to a wide audience, ensuring that its timeless wisdom and enduring beauty will continue to captivate and enlighten readers for years to come.



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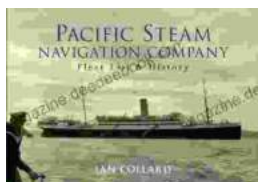
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