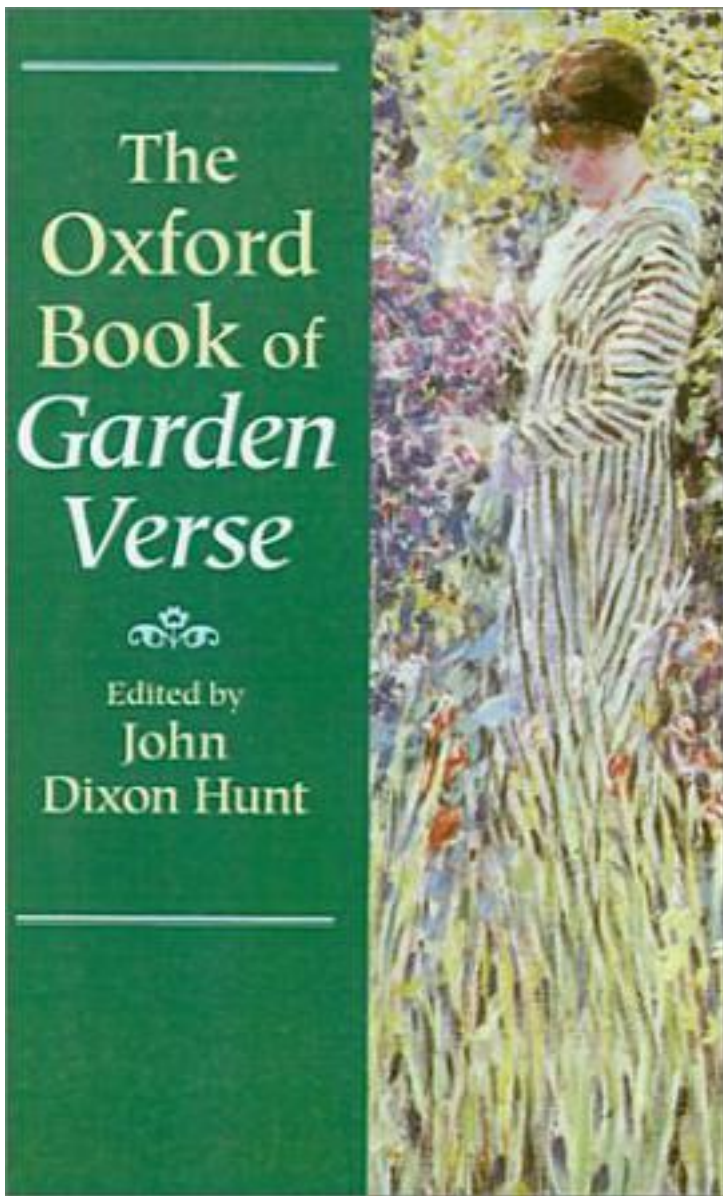


The Oxford Book of Garden Verse



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There have been poems about gardens for as long as there have been gardens. Gardens have been all things to all men and women: paradoxical sites of pleasure and pain, of safety and danger, art and nature, public spaces and private retreats, places of physical labour and metaphysical reflection. This diversity and versatility have always attracted poets, whose repertory of garden themes on the page matches what garden makers have achieved on the ground. In this anthology successive historical periods of gardening - from enclosed garden and landscape park to Victorian flower-garden and modern patio - are mirrored in verse from the Middle Ages to the present day. While poets have eagerly seized upon the metaphorical associations gardens inspire, they have also been attracted to the opportunities they offer for description, both romantic and robust. As well as being microcosms of society, either perfectly maintained or ill-kempt and overrun, where love can blossom alongside the flowers, or withering and decay may presage death, they are sites of real human labour. The gardener is here celebrated as much as his creation, as are his mundane tasks of weeding and making compost, mowing lawns and tending the allotment. In his Introduction John Dixon Hunt identifies certain themes that recur throughout a selection that ranges from Chaucer to Pope, Marvell to Tennyson, Coleridge to Fleur Adcock, W. B. Yeats to Anthony Hecht, and Rudyard Kipling to Anne Sexton. Particularly fertile in modern examples, this anthology is a riot of literary talent to match the most abundant of gardens.

作者介绍:

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