

Jules Laforgue: Selected Poems (Penguin Classics)

Jules LaForgue



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Deeply nihilistic yet full of yearning, tender yet savagely self-mocking, Laforgue has a unique voice and vision that nonetheless mark him out as one of the founding fathers of modernism. Like Charles Baudelaire before him, he was determined to face up to the ugly and decadent as well as the conventionally poetic aspects of himself and the world about him. In a career that rivals Arthur Rimbaud's for its tragically brief, accelerated development, he pioneered the use of coarse colloquialism, startling rhymes, and astonishing invented words. His greatest achievement, the posthumous Derniers Vers (1890), was the first complete French volume of free verse. Partly influenced by his translation of Walt Whitman -- the first in the French language -- Derniers Vets is brilliantly effective in capturing the truth of fleeting impressions and inner sensations. It is also, writes Graham Dunstan Martin, "one of the musical masterpieces of literature." This bilingual edition features a generous selection of poems in the original French from Laforgue's Le Sanglot de la Terre, Les Complaintes, L'Imitation de Notre-Dame la Lune, Des Fleurs de Bonne Volonte, and Derniers Vers, with running prose translations at the bottom of each page.



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