



The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám

Translated by Edward FitzGerald (1809 - 1883)

Read by:	Algy Pug	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	2 hours 21 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1100
Language:	English	UPC:	0684758936479
Style:	Solo	MSLP:	\$9.99
Genre:	Poetry		

The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám is the title of a translation by Englishman Edward FitzGerald of poems by the Persian Omar Khayyám, who lived in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The word rubaiyat in Persian combines the term rubai, meaning a two line stanza with two parts per line, and yat, meaning four. Khayyam is thought to have produced over one thousand such stanzas, and they have been translated into many languages with many differing interpretations. The English translations by Fitzgerald are the best known and consist of about one hundred quatrains in each of the five editions, which appeared over the course of thirty years between 1859 and 1889. The translations are by no means literal or exacting. FitzGerald himself referred to them as “transmogrifications” and admittedly took liberties

while taking pains to capture and render the spirit of the original. Numerous phrases that have entered the cultural lexicon have their origins in the Rubaiyat, the most common cited being “A Book of Verses underneath the Bough, A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread--and Thou”. Lines and phrase from the poem have served as titles for many literary and dramatic works.

Omar Khayyam (1048 – 1131) was a Persian poet, mathematician, astronomer and philosopher best known as the author of the Rubaiyat. He was born in Nishapur in northwest Persia (no Iran), a major cultural center on the Silk Road rivaling Cairo and Baghdad and educated in Samarkand, also a Silk Road city now part of Uzbekistan. He achieved fame as a mathematician and is the author of the *Treatise on Demonstration of Problems of Algebra* (1070), an important treatise on algebra. As an astronomer he contributed to a calendar reform still in use in Iran and considered to be more accurate than the Gregorian calendar. His philosophical teachings are less well known but not unimportant. His mausoleum in Nishapur is a masterpiece of Iranian architecture and a national monument visited by many thousands every year.

Edward FitzGerald (1809 – 1883) was an English nobleman and one of the wealthiest men in England. Born Edward Purcell, his father assumed the name and coat of arms of his wife’s family after her father died and left a substantial fortune. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge and was friends with Alfred Lord Tennyson and William Makepeace Thackeray, among others. His was a pleasant and idle life preoccupied with flowers, music and literature. He began a study of Persian literature at Oxford in 1853 with Professor Edward Byles Cowell. Cowell discovered the quatrains of Omar Khayyam in the Asiatic Society library in 1857 and sent them to FitzGerald, who was captivated and set out to translate them, publishing the first edition on January 1859. The attracted little attention at first but was discovered by Rossetti and Swinburne, which gradually brought recognition and demand for subsequent editions.