



# The Shambhala Anthology of Women's Spiritual Poetry

*Aliki Barnstone*

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The Shambhala Anthology of Women's Spiritual Poetry celebrates the unique spiritual life of women through a rich selection of poetry written over the past four thousand years, from thirty-six different languages and cultures. It ranges from verse by the first recorded poet, a Sumerian priestess named Enheduanna (circa 2,300 BCE), to Anne Sexton; from early Buddhist nuns to Emily Dickinson; from Hildegard of Bingen to Tess Gallagher. Many of the translations are from distinguished authors and poets, such as Coleman Barks, Samuel Beckett, Stanley Kunitz, W. S. Merwin, Kenneth Rexroth, Arthur Waley, and Richard Wilbur. In this book (originally published as *Voices of Light*), the spiritual impulse is expressed broadly as a visionary quest toward self-realization, as well as the desire for union with God, with the source of divine light, with a mystic lover, or with the source of nature. Many of the poets here also remind us that the spiritual is within everyone and unites us through empathy with the suffering and joy of others—a poetry of witness. Contributors include: Anne Bradstreet, Sappho, Sylvia Plath, Hildegard of Bingen, Yosano Akiko, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Tess Gallagher, Anne Sexton, Beatrice of Nazareth, Carolyn Forché, Mary: Mother of Jesus, Denise Levertov, Emily Dickinson, H.D. Linda Hogan, Charlotte Brontë, Louise Erdrich, Lucille Clifton, Anna Akhmatova, Marianne Moore, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Praxilla, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, and many others.

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