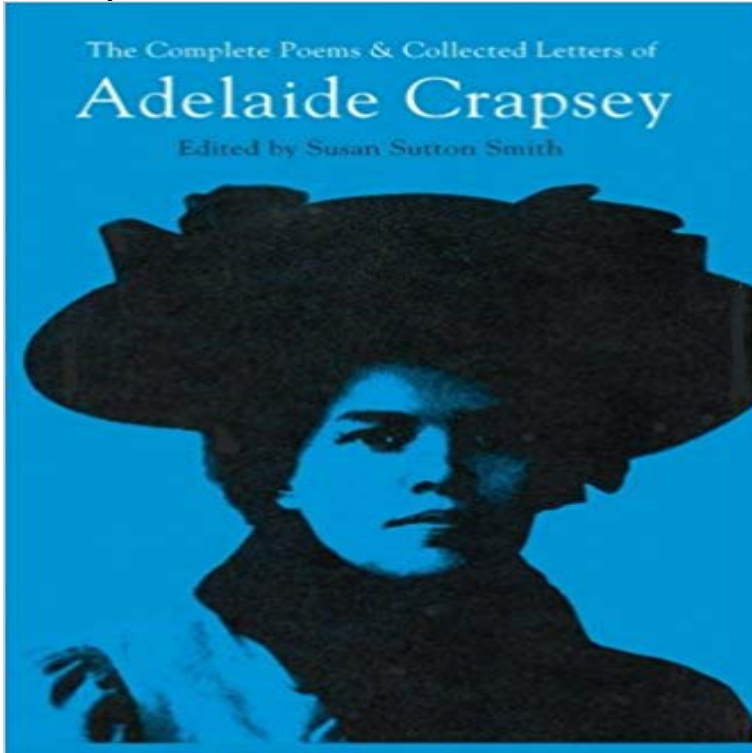


Complete Poems and Collected Letters of Adelaide Crapsey



This book presents the poetry and letters of the American writer Adelaide Crapsey (1878-1914). Her best poetry deserves to be enjoyed by a larger audience, and her letters and newly discovered biographical materials reveal new charm and meaning in an intriguingly elusive character. Crapsey did not live to see any of her mature poetry published: she received notice that her first poem had been accepted for publication only a week before she died. Posthumous editions of her Verse (in 1915, 1922, and 1934), however, brought her recognition and respect. Carl Sandburg paid her a poetic tribute. American critic Yvor Winters praised her as a minor poet of great distinction and felt that her poems remained in their way honest and acutely perceptive. Her best work is compressed, terse, related in this respect to the work of another American poet who won posthumous recognition, Emily Dickinson. Crapsey is best known as the inventor of the cinquain, a poem of five short lines of unequal length: one-stress, two-stress, three-stress, four-stress, and one-stress. The cinquain is one of the few modern verse forms developed in English, and its brevity and characteristic thought pattern seem to have been influenced by Japanese forms. Crapsey's indebtedness to Japanese poetry and her relation to Imagism have long been subjects for debate. As Winters notes, the work of Crapsey achieves more effectively than did almost any of the Imagists the aims of Imagism. The critical introduction by Professor Susan Sutton Smith examines these problems. Much of Crapsey's poetry is reticent, withdrawn, and private, and she believed strongly in the individual's right to privacy. Whatever new biographical materials reveal of her and of her relations with family and friends, however, shows a charming and courageous woman. Her courage and humor show especially well in her correspondence with her friend Esther Lowenthal and in the letters with her friend

Jean Webster McKinney, author of Daddy Long-Legs, who died soon after Crapsey.

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