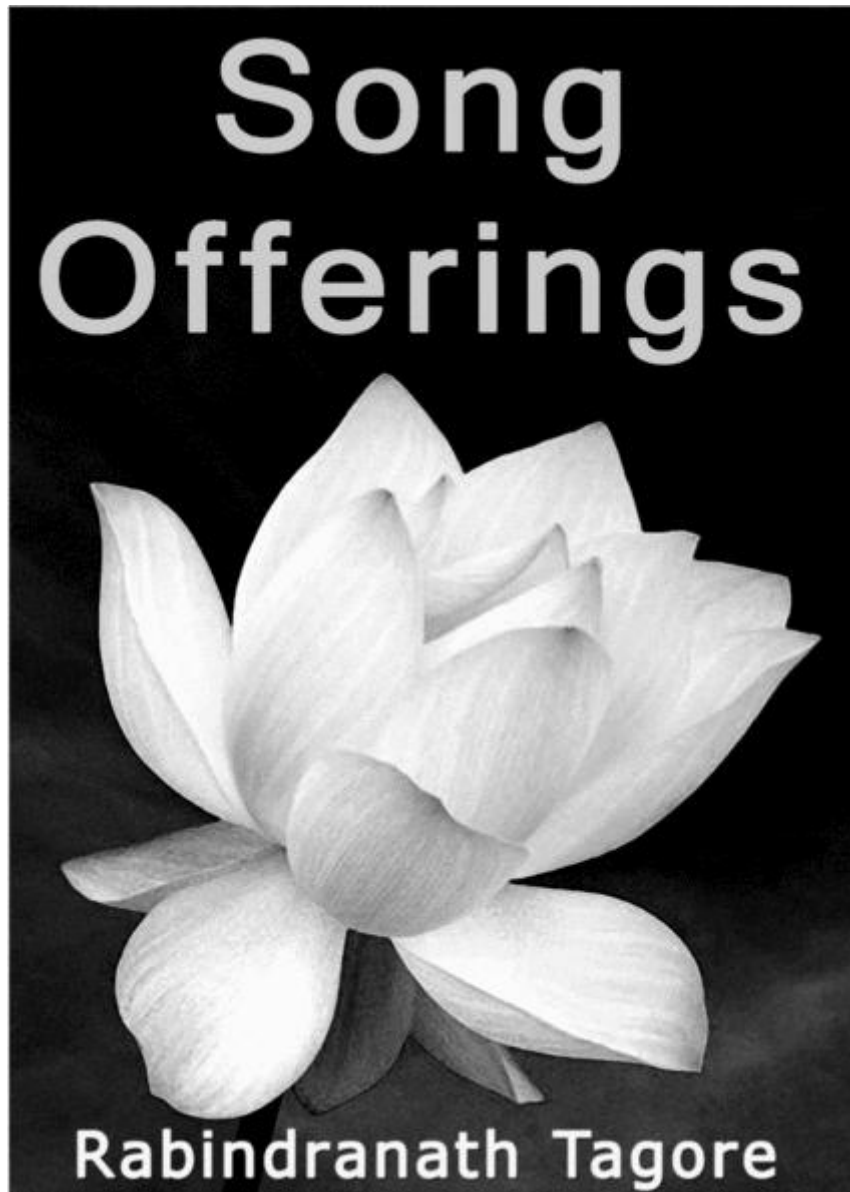


Song Offerings By Tagore



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Song Offerings is a collection of 103 English poems, largely translations, of the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore. The poems of Song Offerings express a largely metaphysical outlook, talking about a union with the supreme; but like much western poetry that explores similar themes, the language suggests the union of two earthly lovers. This type of anthropomorphic depiction of celestial love is quite common in the Vaishnava literature of India since the 12th century (see Vidyapati or Jayadeva). Rabindranath Tagore encountered it also in his interactions with the Baul community in rural Bengal. For example, poem 7 in the English volume renders poem 125 from the Bengali Gitanjali, Amar e gan

chheechhe tar shkol longkar and talks of heavenly love in terms of the lover taking off her jewelry, which is getting in the way of the union. See also the poem 18, at the bottom of this page. Some poems involve themes related to nature, but here, too, the spiritual is subtly present, as in this poem (no. 57), given here along with the Bangla text in Roman script: Light, my light, the world-filling light, the eye-kissing light, heart-sweetening light! Ah, the light dances, my darling, at the centre of my life; the light strikes, my darling, the chords of my love; the sky opens, the wind runs wild, laughter passes over the earth. The butterflies spread their sails on the sea of light. Lilies and jasmines surge up on the crest of the waves of light. The light is shattered into gold on every cloud, my darling, and it scatters gems in profusion. Mirth spreads from leaf to leaf, my darling, and gladness without measure. The heavens river has drowned its banks and the flood of joy is abroad. wikipedia

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