



# Love Lessons: Selected Poems of Alda Merini (Facing Pages)

*Alda Merini*

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## Love Lessons: Selected Poems of Alda Merini (Facing Pages) Alda Merini

Alda Merini is one of Italy's most important, and most beloved, living poets. She has won many of the major national literary prizes and has twice been nominated for the Nobel Prize--by the French Academy in 1996 and by Italian PEN in 2001. In *Love Lessons*, the distinguished American poet Susan Stewart brings us the largest and most comprehensive selection of Merini's poetry to appear in English. Complete with the original Italian on facing pages, a critical introduction, and explanatory notes, this collection gathers lyrics, meditations, and aphorisms that span fifty years, from Merini's first books of the 1950s to an unpublished poem from 2001. These accessible and moving poems reflect the experiences of a writer who, after beginning her career at the center of Italian Modernist circles when she was a teenager, went silent in her twenties, spending much of the next two decades in mental hospitals, only to reemerge in the 1970s to a full renewal of her gifts, an outpouring of new work, and great renown.

Whether she is working in the briefest, most incisive lyric mode or the complex time schemes of longer meditations, Merini's deep knowledge of classical and Christian myth gives her work a universal, philosophical resonance, revealing what is at heart her tragic sense of life. At the same time, her ironic wit, delight in nature, and affection for her native Milan underlie even her most harrowing poems of suffering. In Stewart's skillful translations readers will discover a true sibyl of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

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