



Songs of the Island

Ada Negri

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Toward the end of March 1923, the Italian writer Ada Negri, who enjoyed an international reputation for her passionate and frank poetry, enjoyed a brief holiday in Sicily. From there she went to the island of Capri, where she stayed for about a year and wrote "Songs of the Island." Her lyrics of Capri, full of sun, blueness and the perfume of oriental roses, are like a seashell: magical, polyphonic in their infinite melodiousness. These poems represent a sort of parenthesis in Negri's work. They are the result of the blinding light of the island, the ardor of a holiday both physical and spiritual. In the words of one critic, they embody "the magic of the tangible and the flashes of invisible reality," and symbolize the poet's hour of quiet and reflection on her path thus far. Via the impressionistic sweep of these images, the poet transports us with Capri's explosion of light and color. Enchanted by pearls, amethyst and jade, the mythological sea of Ulysses, the unstoppable bleeding of poppies, climbing purple roses, and the castaways of dreams, the reader wants to be seduced, if only for a moment, by this world of the senses. Yet, as if fraught with guilt, through the poet the human spirit aspires to a higher self. Translated by Maria A Costantini. First English translation. Dual-language edition. Introduction, bibliography, map, glossary.

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