



# Dewdrops on a Lotus Leaf: Zen Poems of Ryokan

*Ryokan*

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## **Dewdrops on a Lotus Leaf: Zen Poems of Ryokan** Ryokan

The Japanese poet-recluse Ryokan (1758–1831) is one of the most beloved figures of Asian literature, renowned for his beautiful verse, exquisite calligraphy, and eccentric character. Deceptively simple, Ryokan's poems transcend artifice, presenting spontaneous expressions of pure Zen spirit. Like his contemporary Thoreau, Ryokan celebrates nature and the natural life, but his poems touch the whole range of human experience: joy and sadness, pleasure and pain, enlightenment and illusion, love and loneliness. This collection of translations reflects the full spectrum of Ryokan's spiritual and poetic vision, including Japanese haiku, longer folk songs, and Chinese-style verse. Fifteen ink paintings by Koshi no Sengai (1895–1958) complement these translations and beautifully depict the spirit of this famous poet.

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