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Mystics

Harmless, William

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Abstrak

Mystics are path-breaking religious practitioners who claim to have experience the infinite, word-defying Mystery that is God. Many have been gifted writers with an uncanny ability to communicate the great realities of life with both a theologian's precision and a poet's lyricism. They usewords to jolt us into recognizing ineffable mysteries surging beneath the surface of our lives and within the depths of our hearts and, by their artistry, can awaken us to see and savor fugitive glimpses of a God-drenched world.In Mystics, William Harmless, S.J., introduces readers to the scholarly study of mysticism. He explores both mystics' extraordinary lives and their no-less-extraordinary writings using a unique case-study method centered on detailed examinations of six major Christian mystics: Thomas Merton,Bernard of Clairvaux, Hildegard of Bingen, Bonaventure, Meister Eckhart, and Evagrius Ponticus. Rather than presenting mysticism as a subtle web of psychological or theological abstractions, Harmless's case-study approach brings things down to earth, restoring mystics to their historical context.Harmless highlights the pungent diversity of mystical experiences and mystical theologies. Stepping beyond Christianity, he also explores mystical elements within Islam and Buddhism, offering a chapter on the popular Sufi poet Rumi and one on the famous Japanese Zen master Dogen. Harmless concludeswith an overview of the century-long scholarly conversation on mysticism and offers a unique, multifaceted optic for understanding mystics, their communities, and their writings. Geared toward a wide audience, Mystics balances state-of-the-art scholarship with accessible, lucid prose.