

# The Selected Letters of John Berryman: A Journey into the Mind of a Poetic Genius



## The Selected Letters of John Berryman

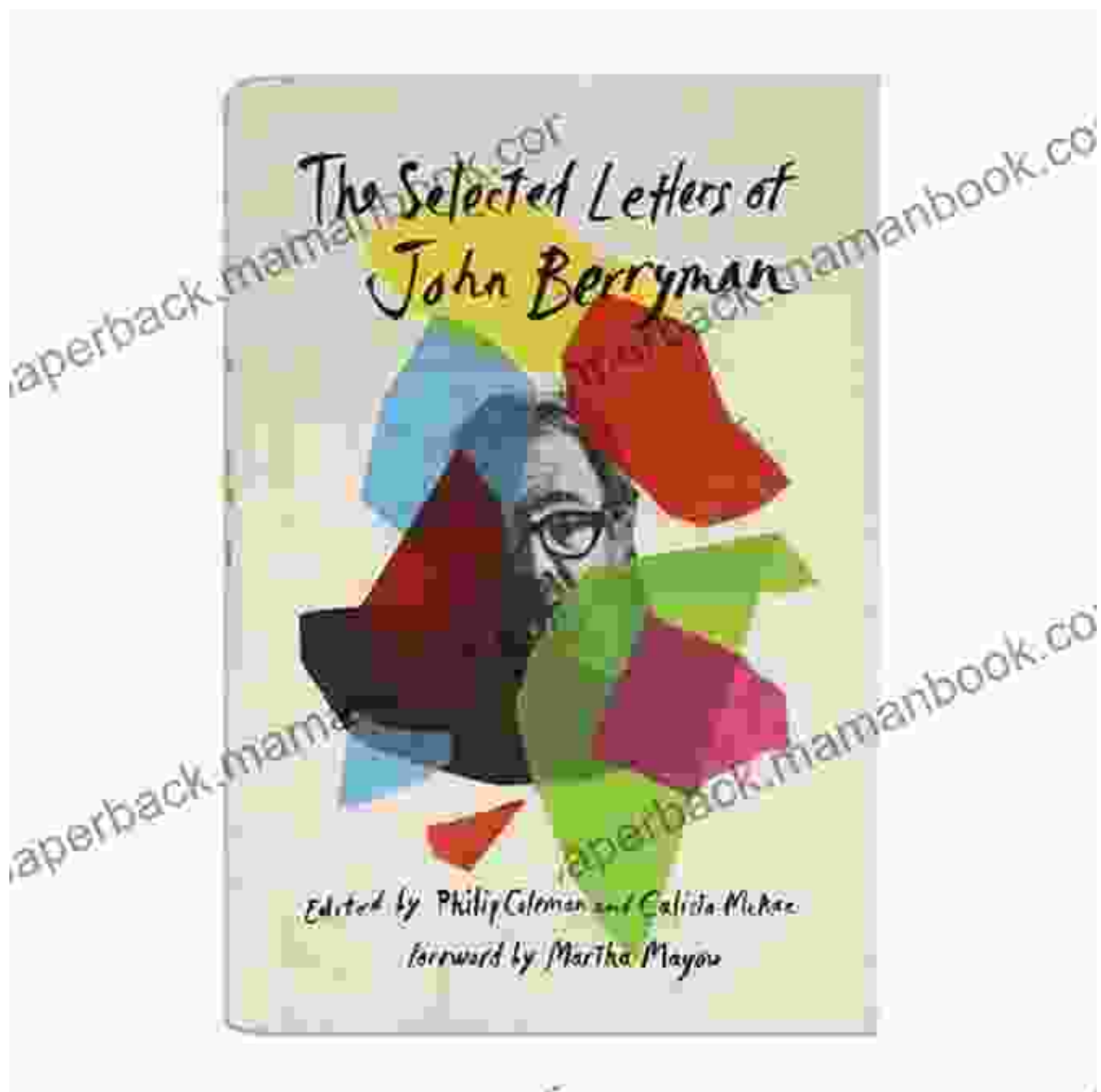
★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language : English  
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Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 727 pages

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## **A Treasure Trove of Poetic Insight**

The publication of *The Selected Letters of John Berryman* in 1999 was a literary event of great significance. It presented a captivating and intimate glimpse into the life and mind of one of the 20th century's most celebrated poets.

Edited by Richard J. Kelly, the collection spans over four decades of Berryman's life and includes correspondence with his friends, family, fellow poets, publishers, and critics. These letters offer a compelling narrative that allows readers to trace the development of Berryman's literary career, as well as his personal struggles and triumphs.

## **The Man Behind the Verse**

Born in 1914, John Berryman grew up in a troubled home and struggled with mental illness throughout his life. Despite these challenges, he emerged as a brilliant poet, known for his confessional and introspective style.

Berryman's letters provide a candid account of his struggles with depression, alcoholism, and suicide attempts. They also reveal a man of great wit, generosity, and a deep love for poetry.

In one particularly poignant letter to his friend Robert Lowell, Berryman writes:

““

***“ My dear Robert,  
I am in the depths of despair. I have lost all hope and I can see no way out. I feel like I am drowning in a sea of sorrow and there is no one to save me.”***

Despite these moments of darkness, Berryman's letters also showcase his unwavering determination to create great poetry.

In a letter to his editor, he writes:



***“ I am working on a new poem. It is about my father and our difficult relationship. I am pouring my heart and soul into it. I believe it will be my best work yet.”***

## **A Literary Legacy**

John Berryman's poetry has had a profound impact on generations of readers. His most famous work, *The Dream Songs*, is a sprawling and ambitious cycle of poems that explores themes of loss, alienation, and the search for redemption.

Berryman's letters shed light on the creative process behind these extraordinary works. They provide a rare glimpse into the mind of a genius and help us to appreciate the depth and complexity of his poetry.

For anyone interested in poetry, literature, or the human condition, *The Selected Letters of John Berryman* is an essential read. It is a deeply moving and insightful collection that offers a unique window into the life and work of one of the most important poets of our time.

John Berryman's letters are a testament to the power of the human spirit. They are a story of struggle, triumph, and the enduring legacy of artistic creation. Through these letters, we come to know a man who was both deeply flawed and profoundly gifted.

*The Selected Letters of John Berryman* is a must-read for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of this extraordinary poet and his enduring contribution to world literature.



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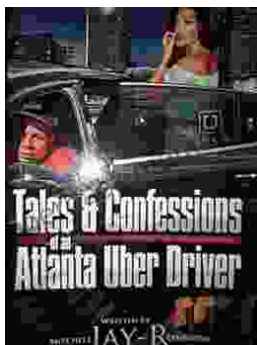
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