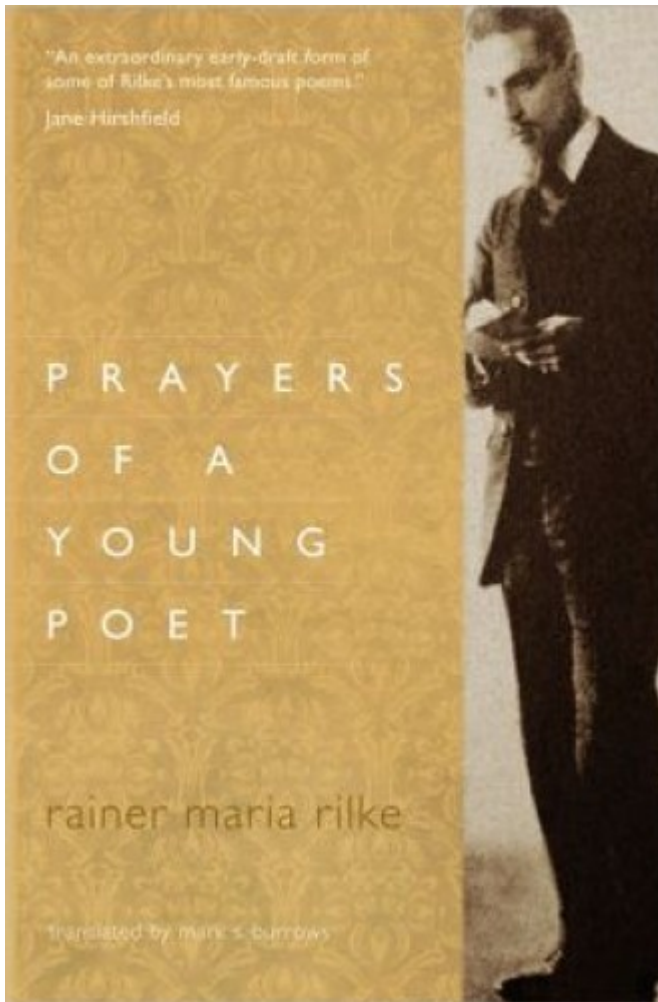


*Prayers of a Young Poet*, by Rainer Maria Rilke

Books in the [August 7, 2013](#) issue

## In Review



### **Prayers of a Young Poet**

By Rainer Maria Rilke, translated by Mark S. Burrows  
Paraclete Press

Rilke is best known for *Letters to a Young Poet*, which encourages readers to “love the questions [of life] themselves . . . and live the questions now.” Before writing those letters, Rilke, after a visit to Russia, composed a series of prayers in which he

presumed to write as a simple Russian Orthodox priest. These prayers, in a translation here by Mark Burrows, who supplies an introduction, became the first cycle of Rilke's poetry collection, *Book of Hours*. In these works Rilke sounds some of his central themes: that the ability to live artistically is found in the journey toward solitude and that we can find God in all experience. Rilke thinks that "dark hours" are the source of both artistic and spiritual generativity.