



Selected Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol

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Poet, philosopher, and sensitive misanthrope, a spectacular fly in the ointment of the refined eleventh-century Andalusian-Jewish elite, Solomon Ibn Gabirol comes down to us as one of the most complicated intellectual figures in the history of post-biblical Judaism. Unlike his worldly predecessor Shmuel HaNagid, the first important poet of the period, Ibn Gabirol was a reclusive, mystically inclined figure whose modern-sounding medieval poems range from sublime descriptions of the heavenly spheres to poisonous jabs at court life and its pretenders. His verse, which demonstrates complete mastery of the classicizing avant-garde poetics of the day, grafted an Arabic aesthetic onto a biblical vocabulary and Jewish setting, taking Hebrew poetry to a level of metaphysical sophistication and devotional power it has not achieved since.

Peter Cole's selection includes poems from nearly all of Ibn Gabirol's secular and liturgical lyric genres, as well as a complete translation of the poet's long masterwork, "Kingdom's Crown." Cole's rich, inventive introduction places the poetry in historical context and charts its influence through the centuries. Extensive annotations accompany the poems. This companion volume to Peter Cole's critically acclaimed *Selected Poems of Shmuel HaNagid* presents the first comprehensive selection of Ibn Gabirol's verse to be published in English and brings to life an astonishing body of poetry by one of the greatest Jewish writers of all time.

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