



## The Gift by H.D.: The Complete Text

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"It is a special joy to have the complete text of *The Gift*, a stunning work in the H.D. canon, a work of import for studies in autobiography and the essay, for understanding the spiritual crisis of modernism, and as a climactic work in the career of an extraordinary 20th-century woman writer."--Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Temple University

"All students and teachers of American literature will value this book for the light it throws on the poet who is, I believe, the most important female poet in America since Emily Dickinson, and indeed the most important female poet writing in the English language during the 20th century."--Louis L. Martz, Yale University

In this complete, unabridged edition of H.D.'s visionary memoir, *The Gift*, Jane Augustine makes available for the first time the text as H.D. wrote it and intended it to be read, including H.D.'s coda to the book, her "Notes," never before published in its entirety.

Written in London during the blitz of World War II, *The Gift* re-creates the peaceful childhood of Hilda Doolittle in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where she was born in 1886. As an antidote to war's destructiveness, H.D. invokes the mystical Moravian heritage of her mother's family to convey an ideal world peace and salvation that would come through the spiritual power of women--a power that also endowed her with "the gift" of her own art.

Although H.D.'s androgynous signature first associated her with early 20th-century Imagist poetics, *The Gift* exemplifies her continuing innovations in prose. She uses the child-voice, flashback, and stream-of-consciousness techniques reminiscent of Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, and Dorothy Richardson, but expands the genre of memoir through free-associative meditations on myth and her lengthy essayistic "Notes" on Moravian history, emphasizing the pioneer missionaries' rapport with Native Americans.. *The Gift* is key to intertextual studies of H.D.'s wartime oeuvre and to an understanding of the religious and gender concerns pervading her later work, especially the women-centered poems *Trilogy* and *Helen in Egypt*. Augustine's introduction and annotations, based on extensive research in Moravian archives, provide a biographical and historical context to make this the definitive edition of *The Gift*, essential to students and scholars of H.D., modernism, and feminist literature.

Jane Augustine is associate professor of English and humanities at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York, and has held the H.D. Fellowship in American Literature at Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, the site of H.D.'s collected papers.

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