



Sir Gawain and the Green Knight; Patience; Pearl

Unknown , Marie Borroff (Translator)

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"These translations by Marie Borroff not only are one of the great achievements of the translator's craft but are works of art in their own right."--Lee Patterson, Frederick W. Hilles Professor of English and Chairman of Medieval Studies, Yale University.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight; Patience; Pearl Details

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From Reader Review *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*; *Patience*; *Pearl* for online ebook

The Scarlet Pervygirl says

Pearl is not only astonishingly skilfully crafted for maximum beauty and limpidity; it is also the most feminine erotic poem I have ever read.

[This review is of *Pearl* only. The other two works in the collection are translated by Borroff and are entirely separate entities from *Pearl*.]

Christen says

I actually listened to the audiobook translated by Simon Armitage and narrated by Bill Wallis. Although I have read the Barroff Edition as an undergrad. I recommend the audio as it contains readings of the translation and a reading of the middle English manuscript. And really, it is meant to be listened to.

Walker Womack says

Lively translation that ranks with Tolkien's as one of best, combining clarity of meaning with faithfulness to form in beautifully rendered alliterative verse. Daring use of archaic or dialectical English does not obscure from but instead heightens text, making this not simply a pale vessel for the wonderfully wrought medieval tale but a worthy telling in and of itself.

Lauren says

I enjoyed finally being able to finish *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. My english lit. book in highschool had told the first part, but did not finish it. So for about 2 years I was doomed to wondering how Gawain got out of it alive-or if he even did. I was therefore please when I found a copy in my university library. I enjoyed these translations very much, and the notes for the text were helpful and informative.

Kristi says

I'm sure I would have liked it better if I understood it. It did help that I had to read it for a class so my professor could help us explore the value of it. Literature like this is hard because there is usually one surviving copy that all translations are based on. Even so, I generally enjoy any story that deals with the Knights of the Round Table, so that was enough to hold my attention even though a lot of it was lost on me.

Shannon says

The technical and poetic skill of the Pearl Poet, combined with the technical and poetic skill of translator Marie Borroff=magnificence!

All the introductory essays help tremendously with cultural context and what to look for.

Gawain remains one of my favorite tales of all time. So many books lose their luster upon rereading, but this one gains in power and beauty with each read-through.

Lauren says

Maybe it's because this is for my English seminar class, and maybe it's because I do love that class/community, but for someone who had no interest in medieval poetry, this is a fantastic translation. The themes are relevant and the writing is something fantastic. Will I pick up more medieval lit? Eh, you never know. But I'm glad I read this.

Karl Steel says

Nearly done teaching it. Borroff's translation is, I guess, tied for the best available, but--and I hate to be a snob about it--there's really no substitute for the original. I doubt Borroff would disagree with me.

which isn't to say that the translation can't be improved* in places: for example, a nice short piece by R. J. Dingley in *Explicator* some years back suggested that the "gyn" of *Patience* 146 ("Hit wat3 a ioyles gyn þat Jonas wat3 inne") be glossed as "craft," while Borroff does it as...well, my Borroff's in my office. But trust me. If you're writing a paper on this, *please* look to the original and don't be afraid of the Middle English dictionary.

* Of course depending on what counts as an improvement: is the translator trying to capture the 'feel' of the original or the sense? Borroff's translation tends to go for the feel and is quite good at that particular task.

David says

I only read *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, but I learned a lot from it...after a discussion led by a professional! Don't attempt this one on your own! It's short, but there's a lot packed in there.

Chris says

Amateur medievalists: this translation is quite good.

If you're interested in this volume at all, I'm guessing you can hack your way through Chaucer in the original

but not the Gawain poet. That's my situation, anyway: The Gawain poet's Middle English is a little much for me. I found Borroff's verse elegant and highly readable, but with a broadly faithful rendering of the original alliterative and rhyming schemes.

Mark Adderley says

This is a nice translation of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. It reads very smoothly, and is quite accurate to the original Middle English.

Jesse says

A descriptively vivid and highly alliterative musical style gives this poem, just superficially, a high interest. Beyond that, we have one of the greatest allegories of romance ever conceived, and a masterfully woven plot that guides the reader along as if on gently sloping hills. Gawain is so difficult to categorize, however, because the plot seems light and breezy, there is literally laughter throughout the whole poem, but the events tell a tale of a profound limitation hidden within human nature and must be considered as philosophically significant as a tale by Dostoyevsky. Surprisingly moving and entertaining, if you think chilvaric romances are for children, this tale will thrill your naive brain to ribbons!

Jason Farley says

Just lost the spine on this one. Great translation of a wonderful epic. My wife won't let me name our new son Gawain or Beowulf. Good thing she is around.

Jennifer James says

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is one of my favorite poems. I've struggled through it in the original for English class, but this translation was much easier and therefore more fun to read. She did a great job with all the alliteration. On a related note, I really like Heather Dale's song The Green Knight which makes the pagan imagery much more explicit and reveals the Green Knight to be the Green Man, a pagan god.

Abby says

One of the wonderful things about Medieval literature is that its tools and templates are quite strict and often familiar, and I still don't know how it's going to end. I was pulled through this poem on the basis of sheer anticipation. The ending still threw me for a loop.

Lately I want books about heroes: people who do the hard thing even when they don't have to, who suffer discomfort without complaint, who rely on their wits and strength and "curteisy" toward others. I don't

really want to be Gawain, sleeping in armor in the freezing rain and creeping loneliness of the Welsh countryside. I don't want to find myself in that moment when he lies awake, listening to the furious wind outside and contemplating his guilty conscience and his own impending death. I want to read about people whose shoes I would never want to fill, but always wonder if I could. And Gawain is exactly the kind of hero who, if he were here, would tell you it's hard but he believes you could do it.
