

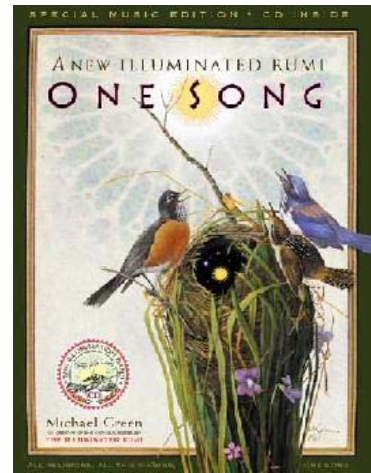
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The New Illuminated Rumi: One Song

by Michael Green with co-creator Coleman Barks
and music by the Illumination Band
Running Press Book Publishers
0-7624-2087-1

Reviewed by Brenda Sutton

This month's addition to the [Recommended Reading / Viewing / Listening List](#) is an interesting combination: spiritual images by Michael Green interweave the poetry of Jelaluddin Rumi translated by Coleman Barks with a cd of western bluegrass and gospel music from the Illumination Band. It sounds like an odd bundle, but you're going to have to trust me on this one — it works. ***The New Illuminated Rumi: One Song*** is a masterful work of art. Each turn of the page is like opening a surprise gift. The collection is expansive, the quality of production impressive, and the juxtaposition wondrous and exhilarating. For a sneak peak at the book, go to the [press release webpage](#) where you can view the layout but not read the poetry.



The poetry...well, it's Coleman Barks' translations of the great Sufi master Rumi. Whack the piñata and watch the sweets tumble out:

This silver, jeweled chalice of roses holds and elegantly engraved invitation:

*"Come!
Let us choose one another as Companions.
Let us sit at one another's feet.*

*Come a little closer now,
so that we may see each other's faces.*

*Inside we share so many secrets —
Do not believe we are simply what these eyes can see.*

*Now we are music together
sharing one cup and an armful of roses.*



That's just one page.

Accompanying this intriguing book is a cd of seven songs by the Illumination Band, a trio that sprang, like Athena from the head of Zeus, from the book. It's not the music one initially associates with Rumi's poetry or with these delicious images, but these songs accomplish something that other similar books have not. They show that archetypal imagery and story erases all boundaries. Rumi's words, "Let music loosen our deafness to beauty..." inspire the gospel song "Let Beauty Now Be." Tight bluegrass and gospel harmonies blend and bend. Guitar, banjo and brushed trap set drums replace the more familiar synthesizer, sitar and dumbek. And Rumi's message shines out from the center of these new melodies.

This collection of words, images and song is a deep, clear pool of inspiration, one you'll dive into over and over again.

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