



# Metamorphoses

*Jorge de Sena*

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## **Metamorphoses** Jorge de Sena

Poetry. Translated from the Portuguese by Francisco C. Fagundes and James Houlihan. Jorge de Sena (1919-1978), widely regarded as the foremost Portuguese poet and man of letters since the Second World War, authored about a hundred books, including over a dozen volumes of poetry and numerous translations of poets like Dickinson and Cavafy, during his life as a civil engineer in Portugal and, beginning in 1959, as a writer-in-exile in Brazil and the United States, where at the time of his death he headed the Comparative Literature Program at the University of California at Santa Barbara. This first English translation of his 1963 masterpiece establishes him as one of the greatest world poets of our day. Borrowing its title from Ovid, it consists of twenty-three poems inspired by twenty acclaimed examples of art and artistry (reproduced here in black and white) from the Archaic Period to the Space Age—from Moorish architecture to paintings by Rembrandt, Goya, and Van Gogh, from Keats's death mask to a sputnik. By turns philosophical and earthy, at once lucid and intense, these fine translations are perfectly pitched to capture Sena's distinctive voice, as he draws on a richly eclectic mix of sources to pay homage to the creative imagination and its man-made meanings in poems that are always formally subtle, deeply intelligent, and passionately human.

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