



# Majnun Leyla: Poems about Passion

*Joyce Akesson*

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## **Majnun Leyla: Poems about Passion** Joyce Akesson

In the northern Arabian Peninsula during the second half of the 7th century, Qays, later known as Majnun, is in love with his cousin Leyla and decides to praise her in his love poems. Annoyed by all the noise around her, Leyla's parents consider that he has compromised her honor and force her to marry another man. Qays becomes desperate and wanders alone in the desert. His father takes him to Mecca and begs him to seek God's help to free him from his passion, but in vain. The story of Majnun and Leyla has been told in legends, songs, poems, plays and epics from the Caucasus to Africa and from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. It is a story of tragic and endless love, much like the later story of "Tristan and Isolde" and "Romeo and Julia" in Europe. This volume consists of a translation into English of several of Majnun's poems to Leyla together with comments and an introduction. An incurable romanticism, the deepest longing of the heart to its beloved, nostalgia, memories of a lost paradise, idealism, anticipation, joy after a reunion, bitterness after a separation, lovesickness and a consuming passion emerge from the versions that have inspired countless of people more than 1200 years ago and throughout the centuries.

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