



Aurelia & Other Writings

Gerard De Nerval

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Aurelia is French poet and novelist Gérard de Nerval's account of his descent into madness--a condition provoked in part by his unrequited passion for an actress named Jenny Colon. One of the original self-styled "bohemians," Nerval was best known in his own day for parading a lobster on a pale blue ribbon through the gardens of the Palais-Royal, and was posthumously notorious for his suicide in 1855, hanging from an apron string he called the garter of the Queen of Sheba. This hallucinatory document of dreams, obsession and insanity has fascinated artists such as Joseph Cornell, who cited passages from it to explain his own work; Antonin Artaud, who saw his own madness mirrored by Nerval's; and André Breton, who placed Nerval in the highest echelon of Surrealist heroes. Geoffrey Wagner's translation of *Aurélia* was first published by Grove Press in 1959, but has remained out of print for nearly 20 years. Also included in this volume are previously untranslated stories by Marc Lowenthal, and poet Robert Duncan's version of the sonnet cycle *Chimeras*, making this the most complete collection of Nerval's influential oeuvre ever published in English.

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