



# **Dark Night of the Soul**

Saint John of the Cross

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Written in the 16th century by a reform-minded Carmelite monk, "Dark Night of the Soul" is a treatise focusing on the metaphor of a dark night to represent a lonely phase in one's personal spiritual life. Saint John was a Roman Catholic mystic and a Spanish poet, and this work reflects his mystical stages toward union with God. Divided into two books, the purification of the senses and the spirit, "Dark Night" describes these two phases and additionally explains the ten steps of the ladder of love, which was first expressed by Saint Thomas Aquinas. In Saint John's poem, one comes to understand his belief in a benevolent God, outside of all thought or imagination, who we can only come to know through love. A profound description of absolution, desolation, progress, and love, "Dark Night of the Soul" is a powerful poem that captures the discouragement of doubting yet believing Christians, even as it offers help through spiritual loneliness.



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