The brilliant and immensely prolific Indian writer Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) is known the world over for his accomplished works in an astounding range of genres: fiction, short stories, poetry, drama, and essays. During the final year of his life, while suffering from the painful illness that would eventually end in his death, Tagore completed four volumes of poetry that expressed the emotional turmoil of facing one's own imminent extinction. Appearing here for the first time in English is a selection of these extraordinary poems that captures as closely as possible the beauty and subtlety of Tagore's original Bengali verses. A marked departure from Tagore's earlier work, these poems are, as the translators say, so compact that it is almost as if [he]...were going beyond words, as if language no longer suffices, and yet, of course, the language radiates meaning. Poised between life and death, Tagore is awed by the beauty of this world and glimpses in it the presence of the infinite (Such splendor illuminates a deathlessness/hidden in the everyday by our senses limits). At other times, alone by sorrows last window, he is gripped by the sheer terror of experiencing the relentless approach of death. Tagore was so weak at the end that he had to dictate his poems. Although the pain was often excruciating and the fear and anger overwhelming, he still exulted in life. In these poems, from his deathbed, he conveys the intense joy of living and his ultimate triumph over death.

My Personal Review:
Inheriting a famous family name means nothing unless the bearer of this burden strives to achieve things that are extra-ordinary. I salute & congratulate Saranindranath (Tagore) and the co-author Wendy Barker for taking up the immense challenge of translating Rabindranath's Final Poems. Authors successfully carry the sacred torch of translating Bengali Literature to reach out to the world body in the new millennium that was once ignited by Tagore himself. It is interesting to rediscover this "mystic" poet from India who once became the sensation of America. In 1912, the famous Chicago based "Poetry" magazine ran an issue on Tagore before
his visit to the Americas. Tagore became the Poet's Poet and Writer's Writer of many literary protagonists of west such as W B Yeats, Robert Frost and Ezra Pound. It is all the more befitting to publish this book in a time when the world is discovering the great literary genre of Indian English through the works of Rushdie, Roy and Naipaul. It is a bit unusual to have a 40-page preface (by Wendy Barker) and introduction (by Saranindranath) in poetry book that contains only 59 pages of poems. But after reading these prologues I am convinced that they were necessary. Particularly Saranindranath's lucid explanation of Rabindranath's complex religious philosophy is very interesting. Before his death, Tagore wrote the Final Poems from his sick bed during 1940 and 1941. Through these poems, we understand and feel the maturity of a great genius of all times who explored the human inquiry through thousands of songs & poems, hundreds of essays, short stories, numerous novels & paintings. The Final Poems are divided into three sections: Sickbed, Birthday and Last poems. Being a serious reader of world literature, I completely appreciate the difficulties the translators were subjected to. However one can still smell the aroma original rose in many simple verses such as...Words of emptiness rise, compassion-filled, a meaning beyond understanding...Please read the rest, you will be enlightened.

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