



## The Songs of Antonio Botto

*Antonio Botto*

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António Botto was one of Portugal's first openly gay writers, a *poète maudit* whose unapologetic and candid verses about homosexual life and passion were both praised and reviled when they appeared in Portuguese in 1922 under the title *Canções*. Botto's poetic voice-confessional, personal, and intimate-revels and luxuriates in eroticism while expressing the ache of longing, silence, and suffering. Yet for all of his acclaim and notoriety-he was both hailed as one of the great poets of his day and condemned for his frank depictions of male-male desire-Botto and his work fell into oblivion after his death.

*The Songs of António Botto* recovers this important, urgent voice in modern poetry by making available-for the first time since its private publication in 1948-the English-language translation of *Canções* that Botto's friend and artistic collaborator, Fernando Pessoa, completed in 1933. Pessoa, Portugal's preeminent modernist literary figure, considered Botto the only Portuguese poet worthy of the label "aesthete" and, as a critic and publisher, championed his work. Featuring an introduction to Botto's work and Pessoa's previously unpublished foreword to the 1948 edition as well as a new translation of Botto's 1941 elegy to Pessoa, *The Songs of António Botto* establishes Botto as a pioneering figure in modern gay literature and places him alongside C. P. Cavafy and Federico García Lorca as one of the major poetic voices of the twentieth century.

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