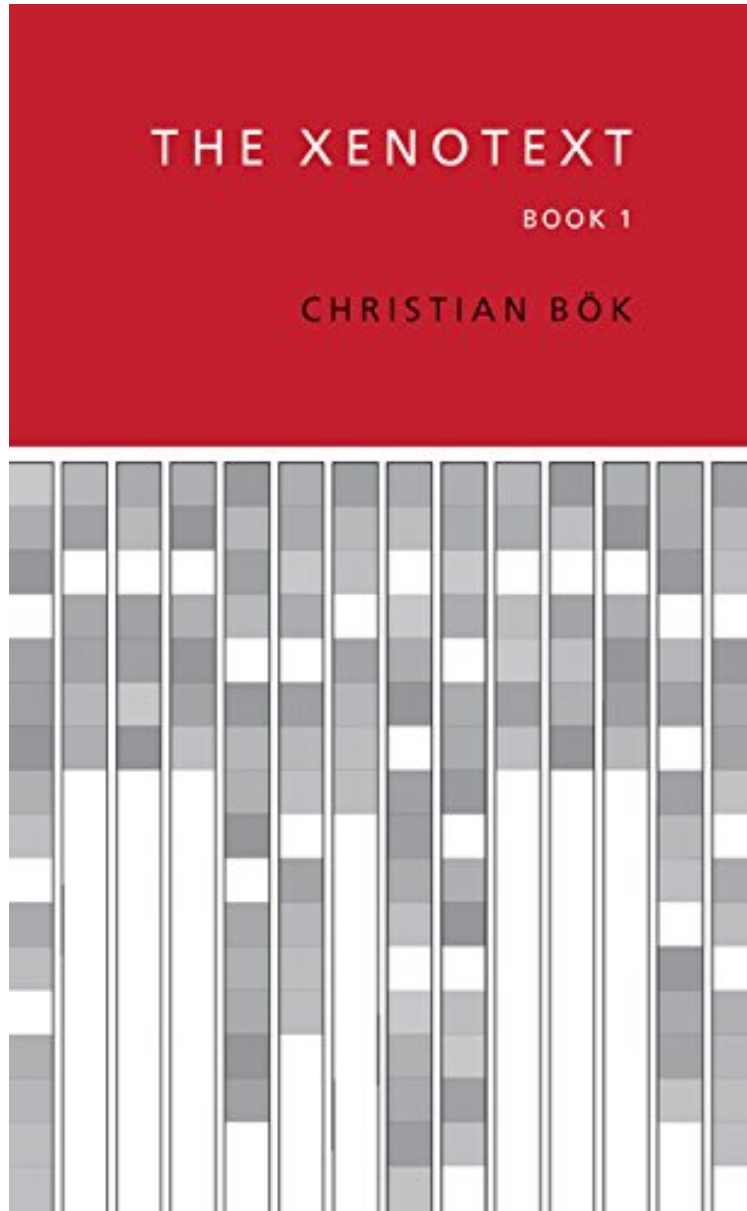


(Ebook free) The Xenotext: Book 1

The Xenotext: Book 1

Christian Bk

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Christian Bk : The Xenotext: Book 1 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Xenotext: Book 1:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. InterestingBy J from NYThough I can't claim to totally understand Christian Bok's poetry, his experimentation with a scientific theory and the translation of into solid experimental

poetry is not something one sees very often (usually because experimental poetry gets a bad rap to the general public, and therefore doesn't get published.) There are also beautiful sections of prose poetry with the scientific illustrations of cells: "Enkindle censers filled with ladanum, then lighten the beggards of thy serfs by piping them molasses through a reed, exhorting each starveling to sip till full. Brew for them a liquor of oaken galls and dried roses (if not a wine quickened to a boil, like a stew, the crushed rasins from Psithian vines, infused with acrid resin, made of knapweed and feverfew). Hunt far from thy pastures for the star wort--a breed of aster, dotting each hill-crest, the lone seed, upthrusting many a stem, its crown all gilt but girl with a muster of blades, a gleam in hues of amethyst." Not that poetry should all be science and math--God help us all, but this is a fascinating collection.

"Many artists seek to attain immortality through their art, but few would expect their work to outlast the human race and live on for billions of years. As Canadian poet Christian Bk has realized, it all comes down to the durability of your materials." The Guardian Internationally best-selling poet Christian Bk has spent more than ten years writing what promises to be the first example of "living poetry." After successfully demonstrating his concept in a colony of *E. coli*, Bk is on the verge of enciphering a beautiful, anomalous poem into the genome of an unkillable bacterium (*Deinococcus radiodurans*), which can, in turn, "read" his text, responding to it by manufacturing a viable, benign protein, whose sequence of amino acids enciphers yet another poem. The engineered organism might conceivably serve as a post-apocalyptic archive, capable of outlasting our civilization. Book I of *The Xenotext* constitutes a kind of "demonic grimoire," providing a scientific framework for the project with a series of poems, texts, and illustrations. A Virgilian welcome to the Inferno, Book I is the "orphan" volume in a diptych, addressing the pastoral heritage of poets, who have sought to supplant nature in both beauty and terror. The book sets the conceptual groundwork for the second volume, which will document the experiment itself. *The Xenotext* is experimental poetry in the truest sense of the term. Christian Bk is the author of *Crystallography* (1994) and *Eunoia* (2001), which won the Griffin Poetry Prize. He teaches at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada.

From Publishers Weekly This book from experimental poet Bk (whose collection *Eunoia* won the 2001 Griffin Poetry Prize) is a poetic diagram to be decoded and deciphered. Bk explores genetic encoding, immortality through text, conservation of meaning, and creation and destruction with virtuoso wordplay and composition that include acrostics, sonnets, catalogues, pastorals, and incantatory repetition, among other forms. Much of the text is translation between genetic markers, from classical text to English, and through encapsulation of and commentary on both found and original poetry. Bk also provides detailed discussion of each section's form and aims in the "Vita Explicata" section, which is useful given that the purposes of individual sections can be obscure until they're given context. The whole of the collection is an intriguing and adroit display of poetic and literary capability, and it ties to a larger project that's even more ambitious: Bk's ongoing attempt to encode into an extremophile bacterium *Deinococcus radiodurans* a poem in DNA form designed to perpetuate and answer/continue itself in replication. The success of that project has yet to be determined, but the collection at least already succeeds in its aims, and is highly recommended. (Oct.)

About the Author Christian Bk is the author not only of *Crystallography* (1994), a pataphysical encyclopedia nominated for the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award, but also of *Eunoia* (2001), a bestselling work of experimental literature, which has gone on to win the Griffin Prize for Poetic Excellence. Bk teaches English at the University of Calgary.