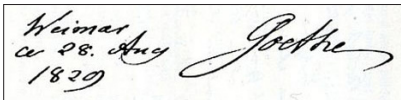


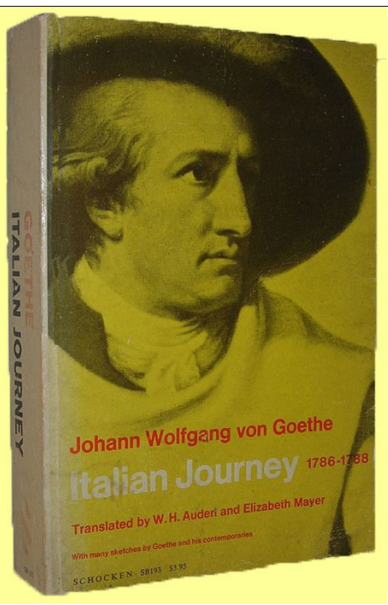
My Hero: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)



Goethe in Rome (1786)
by Wilhelm Tischbein



Goethe [Autograph](#) on his 80th birthday



Italian Journey: 1786-1788
Schocken Books, NY, 1968

When Albert Schweitzer was awarded the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize, he was too busy to go to Oslo because of his hospital duties in Gabon. However when Frankfurt asked Schweitzer to deliver Goethe address (1928-1929), he went. He also gave an address on Goethe Bicentennial at Aspen, Colorado (July 6 & 8, 1949). I wondered who is this Goethe who was more important than the Nobel Prize to Schweitzer. Went to Columbia Library (1960) and saw rows and rows of books by & about Goethe. I read Goethe's *Sorrow of Young Werther*, *Faust*, & Goethe's *Conversations with Eckermann*. In his Goethe Address at Frankfurt (9-28-1928), Schweitzer tells about reading Goethe's *Harzreise*. He was impressed that Goethe "whom we regard as an Olympian should have set out in midst of rains & mist of November 1777 to visit a preacher's son who was plunged in deep spiritual distress, in order to bring him some spiritual assistance." Whenever Schweitzer encountered some person who needed help, he'd say to himself, "That's your *Harzreise*." I'm sharing this Goethe [poem](#) which inspired Schweitzer to such heroic action, and is one of the many reasons why I love Goethe so much.

My Favorite Book of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe—

Goethe, *Italian Journey 1786-1788*, W. H. Auden & Elizabeth Mayer (tr.)—
A few days after his 37th birthday, Goethe set out on a journey to Italy in 1786. During the trip, he kept a journal and wrote many letters that he shaped into the *Italian Journey*. He visited Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples, and Sicily. We now have access to the art & sculpture Goethe saw, the people he met, the nature he studied so avidly— and, most of all, access to the mind of a genius, released to new insight by his contact with a different culture. The translators have captured all the vitality and humor of Goethe's style, bringing new life to the spirit and genius of the writer. But it is the master himself who provides the timeless picture of Italy which will engage the attention of even the most recent traveler. This book has 42 illustrations with many landscape drawings by Goethe. I enjoyed Goethe's climb of Mount Vesuvius, covering his mouth from the dense smoke, walking on hot lava. There are so many moments of epiphany that Goethe shares with us, such as his [inspiration by Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling](#) at the Vatican Museum, that our mind is lifted to a heightened awareness of beauty and bliss.



Goethe postage stamps: Germany East Berlin #10NB6-10NB10 (issued 7-20-1949 for his birth bicentennial)