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Charles Baudelaire's place among the great poets of the Western world is undisputed, and his influence on the development of poetry since his lifetime has been enormous. In this Companion, essays by outstanding scholars illuminate Baudelaire's writing both for the lay reader and for specialists. In addition to a survey of his life and a study of his social context, the volume includes essays on his verse and prose, analyzing the extraordinary power and effectiveness of his language and style, his exploration of intoxicants like wine and opium, and his art and literary criticism. The volume also discusses the difficulties, successes and failures of translating his poetry and his continuing power to move his readers. Featuring a guide to further reading and a chronology, this Companion provides students and scholars of Baudelaire and of nineteenth-century French and European literature with a comprehensive and stimulating overview of this extraordinary poet.