



## Book of the Sphinx (Texts and Contexts)

*Willis Goth Regier*

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Sought, the Sphinx seems everywhere, whether the guardian of the pyramids on Egypt's Giza plateau or the beautiful man-eater with a deadly riddle, to be approached with awful caution. The Sphinx, that icon painted, sculpted, engraved, and exalted in poetry, fiction, and music, so impressed the philosopher Hegel that he pronounced the creature "the symbol of the symbolic itself." With a wealth of illustrations, *Book of the Sphinx* confirms Hegel's lofty judgment, finding the Sphinx everywhere: in tragedies, paintings, opera, murder mysteries, brothels, bars, and advertisements.

Pursuing the Sphinx through kaleidoscopic sightings and encyclopedic observations, Willis Goth Regier plumbs the symbol's mysteries, conducting the reader down ever more perplexing and intriguing paths. Wonderfully readable, his highly idiosyncratic tour of the ages and the arts leads at last to a conception of the Sphinx that embraces nothing less than all that is unknowable—proving once again that confronting a Sphinx is one of the most dangerous and exhilarating adventures of the imagination.

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