



New Collected Poems

David Gascoyne

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When David Gascoyne celebrated his seventeenth birthday in Paris in 1933, he already had a poetry collection and a novel to his name. He spent much of the next few years in the French capital associating with Eluard, Dalí, Ernst, Breton, Péret and other surrealists. By the age of 20 he had firmly established himself within the movement with the publication of his groundbreaking *A Short Survey of Surrealism* and the poems of *Man's Life Is This Meat*. In 1938 Hölderlin's *Madness* marked his move away from surrealism in 'a renewal of vision', followed by his milestone collection, *Poems 1937-1942*. After the war Gascoyne revisited Paris, publishing *A Vagrant* and other poems in 1950 and *Night Thoughts*, the acclaimed BBC radiophonic poem for voices and orchestra, in 1956. Despite several breakdowns he continued to write, particularly during the latter years of his long life, producing few poems, but many translations, reviews and literary criticism, memoirs and obituaries. Even so it was his contention that he was 'a poet who wrote himself out when young and then went mad'. This self-deprecating judgement could not be further from the opinion of those who know his work and value his achievement. This *New Collected Poems*, compiled by Gascoyne's friend and editor Roger Scott, comprises work that the poet chose to preserve, together with uncollected and unpublished material; all meticulously researched from notebooks and manuscripts held in the British Library and internationally in academic institutions. It falls to present-day readers of Gascoyne's poems to experience the impact of his work, to recognize its significance in twentieth-century literature, and its continuing relevance.

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