



Complete Poetry, Translations & Selected Prose

Bernard Spencer

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Bernard Spencer (1909-63) was a distinctive voice in 20th-century English poetry, and a central figure in the Personal Landscape group of wartime Cairo writers. He spent much of his life working for the British Council, in Greece, Egypt, Italy, Spain, Turkey and Austria, the settings for many of his poems. He was among the first translators of George Seferis into English, and his expatriate colleagues included Lawrence Durrell and Olivia Manning. A recurrent theme in his poetry is a particular sense of gregarious loneliness, of being someone apart. Living for many years in non-English-speaking communities, he became, quite consciously, 'a stranger here', a poet whose subtly inventive techniques and 'respect for the Object', as Durrell put it, served to fix and define modes of personal, cultural and political unease. He was to publish just two full collections, *Aegean Islands and Other Poems* (1946) and *With Luck Lasting* (1963), during his lifetime. Based on Roger Bowen's pioneering *Collected Poems* (OUP, 1981), this new edition of Spencer's works is the first to include all his poetry, his translations from George Seferis, Odysseus Elytis and Eugenio Montale (made alone, or in collaboration with Lawrence Durrell and Nanos Valaoritis), and selections of his prose - including critical and travel writings, memoirs, interviews, occasional comments on poetry, and his obituary for Keith Douglas. Wherever possible the texts are derived either from manuscript and typescript holdings in the poet's principal archive at the University of Reading and others dispersed elsewhere, or checked against those various sources. The book has an introduction by poet, translator, and literary critic Peter Robinson as well as extensive notes on the published texts and a complete bibliography of Spencer's writings.

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