

Classic Poetry Series

Shaul Tchernichovsky
- poems -

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Shaul Tchernichovsky(1875 - 1943)

Shaul Tchernichovsky was born in Mikhailovka, Russia, in 1875. He grew up in a religious home and attended a modern Hebrew school, before joining a Russian school at the age of ten. When he was fourteen he went to Odessa to continue his education. He specialised in the study of languages (German, French, English, Greek and Latin) - a skill that would later enable him to translate extensively. He failed to gain admission to a Russian university and so went to Heidelberg to study medicine. On completion of his degree he settled in St. Petersburg.

During the First World War, he served as an army doctor. Following the Bolshevik Revolution Tchernichovsky's economic situation deteriorated and he spent the next years travelling and looking for work. He first returned to Odessa and then moved on to Constantinople before finally settling in Berlin.

Whilst in Berlin, he found work as a writer. Prior to this he'd had a collection of poems published back in his student days in 1892. In Berlin he edited the natural sciences and medicine section of an encyclopaedia, the literary section of a magazine, wrote stories and articles, and mainly devoted himself to translation (Sophocles, Goethe, Moliere, Shakespeare, and others).

In 1931 he was commissioned to edit *The Book of Medical and Scientific Terms* (in Latin, Hebrew and English), and thus was able to settle in Eretz, Israel. Upon completion of the work in he was appointed physician of the municipal schools in Tel Aviv. In 1936 he signed a contract with Schocken Publishing House, and moved to Jerusalem for the remainder of his life.

He died in 1943.

Creed

Laugh, laugh at all my dreams!
What I dream shall yet come true!
Laugh at my belief in man,
At my belief in you.

Freedom still my soul demands,
Unbartered for a calf of gold.
For still I do believe in man,
And in his spirit, strong and bold.

And in the future I still believe
Though it be distant, come it will
When nations shall each other bless,
And peace at last the earth shall fill.

Shaul Tchernichovsky