

Classic Poetry Series

Timoshenko Aslanides

- poems -

Publication Date:
2012

Publisher:
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Timoshenko Aslanides(24 December 1943 -)

Timoshenko Aslanides an Australian poet.

Biography

Born in Sydney to John Paul Aslanides and Olive Emma Browne, Timoshenko Aslanides studied music at the University of Sydney and economics at The Australian National University. He began writing poetry after he moved to Canberra in 1972. His first book of poems, *The Greek Connection*, was awarded the British Commonwealth Poetry Prize for 1978 for the best first book of poetry in English published the previous year in all the countries of the British Commonwealth, excluding England; he was the first Australian to win this prize.

Timoshenko Aslanides has worked as a full-time, professional poet since July 1985, when he resigned from the Australian Public Service.

Blakely's Red Gum

In discerning you from a distance with such ease,
I identify myself; grey bark, peeling in patches
like the skin which sometimes flakes from around the neck
of even a hybrid like me. Your burn, though,
shows as pleasure, the glow of which comes after pleasure,
or the satisfactioin of giving it.

Know now that I am native to Canberra, flowering in summer,
and from the Tuggeranong, valleyof sharp winds,
present and preside over sunsets that visitors
in their millions drive wide roads to admire.
(Watch from the long grass near the old hollow limbs
that give night possums, and the late silence of stars.)

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Endymion

I'm quite a handsome fellow, actually,
Even if I do say so myself, but you know
Camping out one night,
On the mountain grass,
Lying on my back
Stoned under the stars,
I could have sworn
That the moon made a pass at me - yes! But whilst
I know that women love to worship
My magnificent body,
There was just no way
I was going to make it
with that rotund lunatic.
God! What with all that
Astronautical debris
Scattered around the Mountain of Venus,
I could do myself a permanent injury.

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Eternity (In Marriage)

Whether or not a priest or celebrant's involved,
the couple that truly weds still marries itself;
everyone else is there for fashion, the forms-of-words,
consumption of cake and far too much champagne.
So when he and she were married in The Pilbara,
they sat themselves in the best they had near water.
She threw a stone. 'Until it floats, I'm true to you.'
He showed her the wedding ring he'd made himself.
'I'll love you till Port Hedland tides no longer race
across the harbour flats to stranded ships;
till Mulga, Paper-Bark and River Red Gum lose
their Pallid Cuckoos, Doves and Diamond Finches;
until those winds that daily roar across The Bight
cease their search for windmills in Esperance.'
'Those things described', she said, 'conceivably could happen.'
He looked her in the eye and touched her cheek.
'I'll love you till it rains in Marble Bar', he said.
She smiled and kissed him, this time as his wife.

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