

Classic Poetry Series

Geoffrey Grigson
- poems -

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Geoffrey Grigson(2 March 1905 – 25 November 1985)

Geoffrey Edward Harvey Grigson was a British writer. He was born in Pelynt, a village near Looe in Cornwall.

Life

Geoffrey Grigson was born in 1905, the youngest of seven sons of the Rev. Canon William Shuckforth Grigson (1845-1930), a Norfolk clergyman who had settled in Cornwall as vicar of Pelynt, and Mary Beatrice Boldero, herself the daughter of a clergyman. The inscription on his father's slate headstone in Pelynt churchyard is the work of Eric Gill, 1931. Five of Grigson's six brothers died serving in the first and second world wars, among them John Grigson. This was one of the highest prices paid by any British family during the conflicts of the twentieth century. Grigson's one surviving brother Wilfrid Grigson also died in an air accident in 1948, while serving as Commissioner for Refugees in Pakistan.

Grigson was educated at St John's School, Leatherhead and at St Edmund Hall, Oxford. He first came to prominence in the 1930s as a poet, then as editor from 1933 of the influential poetry magazine *New Verse*. Fiercely combative, he made many literary enemies for his dogmatic views.

At various times he was involved in teaching, journalism and broadcasting. During World War II he worked in the editorial department of the BBC Monitoring Service at Wood Norton near Evesham.

Later in life he was a noted critic, reviewer (for the *New York Review of Books* in particular), and compiler of numerous poetry anthologies. He published 13 collections of poetry, and wrote on travel, on art (notably works on Samuel Palmer, Wyndham Lewis and Henry Moore), on the English countryside, and on botany among other subjects.

Geoffrey Grigson in his later life lived partly in Wiltshire, England and partly in Trôo, a village in the Loir-et-Cher département in France which features in his poetry. He died in Wiltshire in 1985.

Family

Geoffrey Grigson's first wife was Frances Galt (who died in 1937 of tuberculosis). With her, he founded *New Verse*. They had one daughter, Caroline (who was married to the designer Colin Banks). His second marriage was to Berta

(Bertschy) Emma Kunert, who bore him two children, Anna and Lionel Grigson, the jazz musician and educator. Following their divorce, his third and last marriage was to Jane Grigson, née McIntire (1928-90), the writer on food and cookery. Their daughter is the cookery writer Sophie Grigson.

Two Are Together

Two are together, I tell you,
A slope of a vowel, are a corner;
Grass short as a garden,
Bracken
Uncoiling,
Foxgloves, water
Descending,
Quartz in a stone.

This corner:
Mountain-ash (ferns
Up in air).
Then over an edge
This single
Blue wedge of a mountain;
This comfort, you tell me,
Contentment,
Compassion.

This wild-mint-scented scene
And wild roses
And wrinkle of water descending
Tending to laughter;
Together, then
After.

Geoffrey Grigson