

Classic Poetry Series

William Ewart Gladstone
Louw
- poems -

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William Ewart Gladstone Louw(1931 - 1980)

William Ewart Gladstone Louw, the youngest brother of N. P. van Wyk Louw, was born on 31 May 1931 in the Karoo village Sutherland, where he spent his childhood.

He matriculated at the S. A. Kollege School in Cape Town.

He studied at the University of Cape Town from 1931 -1935 and received his M.A. with a dissertation on the poetry of J. H. Leopold. He then continued his studies in Holland at the University of Amsterdam, where he obtained a .

He returned to Cape Town in November 1938. Here he completed another Ph.D. with a dissertation on the influence of Gorter on Leopold (Die Invloed van Gorter op Leopold).

W. E. G. Louw was married to the composer Rosa Nepgen in 1944.

In 1945 he founded the independent magazine Standpunte together with N. P. van Wyk Louw and H. A. Mulder.

His first academic position was as professor for Afrikaans and Nederlands at the Rhodes University in Grahams Town .

In 1957 he accepted the post as Arts Editor at Die Burger, and remained there until the end of 1966.

From 1967 he served as professor of Dutch Literature at the University of Stellenbosch

until his retirement in 1978.

W. E. G. Louw died on 24 April 1980 in Stellenbosch.

Amsterdam, September 1939

Vir Ernst

Niks sal ooit weer wees soos dit daardie somer was:
die water van die Spiegelgracht lê swart soos glas;

die brûe, boë, bome en lampe ry op ry
wieg lui-lui heen en weer as 'n bootjie daaroor gly;

en deur die mis wat instoot van die see terwyl
die skemer teen die gewels styg, klink vér en yl,

asof gesprinkel, 'n wysietjie uit 'n toringklok.
Maar dis reeds oorlog! Dié besef tref skielik met 'n skok!

Ons wis dit séker 'n herfsmiddag, later, toe eindelijk
ons skip die oop see kies en ons 'n laaste blik

vergun word van die kus – die strand, die kaal, wit duin
en 'n vuurtoring, donker, teen die donker, lae kruin;

en toe, 'n kwartiertjie later, in die Noordsee, mis ons boot
rakelings 'n myn wat los dryf in die see – en óns die dood.

Ons vaar dan verder: 'n helder driekleur aan die mas ...
Maar niks sou ooit weer wees, soos dit daardie somer was.

William Ewart Gladstone Louw