



The Collected Poems of Alberto Caeiro

By Fernando Pessoa

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This is the only integral collection of Pessoa's Caeiro heteronym in English, and the poems are accompanied by the introductions of Ricardo Reis and a memoir by Álvaro de Campos, two of Pessoa's other major poetic heteronyms, as well as a poem dedicated to Caeiro by Coelho Pacheco, believed by many commentators to be another one-off heteronym. Ricardo Reis says: "Alberto Caeiro da Silva was born in Lisbon on April 16, 1889, and died of tuberculosis in the same city on (. . .), 1915. He spent nearly all his life in a village in Ribatejo, and only returned to the city of his birth in his final months. In Ribatejo he wrote nearly all his poems . . ." Fernando Pessoa was educated in English in Durban, as the stepson of a Portuguese diplomat, and was completely bilingual. During his lifetime he was to publish only one collection of his poems in Portuguese, although many appeared in literary journals, under a number of alter egos, or heteronyms, chief amongst them Alberto Caeiro, Alvaro de Campos and Ricardo Reis. At his death in 1935, Pessoa left more than 20,000 manuscripts - poetry and prose - in a large trunk, the contents of which are still being transcribed and deciphered to this day. He is the greatest modern poet in the Portuguese language, but always considered himself a poet in the English tradition.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Fernando Pessoa is one of the great poets of the 20th Century, and is still something of a mystery to readers outside Portugal and Brazil, where his work has been elevated to classic status. Most puzzling for his readers, perhaps, is the fact that Pessoa wrote under a series of other names -- heteronyms, as he called them -- and confusingly also under the 'orthonym' Fernando Pessoa, who is not the same person as the man born with that name. The major poetic heteronyms are Caeiro, Campos and Ricardo Reis, but Pessoa had a whole range of others: journalists, prose-writers, essayists, as well as two English poets in the form of Charles Robert Anon and Alexander Search, heteronyms used by Pessoa before the break-through year of 1914, when Reis, Caeiro and Campos all came into existence. Little of his work was published in book form during his lifetime: two slim volumes of English verse and the mature collection Mensagem (Message), but he left a trunk full of manuscripts and fragments -- some 25,000 all told -- and these have been mined by scholars ever since.

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