



Bedouin of the London Evening: Collected Poems: Ebook with audio

Rosemary Tonks

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The disappearance of the poet Rosemary Tonks in the 1970s was one of the literary world's most tantalising mysteries – the subject of a BBC feature in 2009 called *The Poet Who Vanished*.

After publishing two extraordinary poetry collections – and six satirical novels – she turned her back on the literary world after a series of personal tragedies and medical crises which made her question the value of literature and embark on a restless, self-torturing spiritual quest. This involved totally renouncing poetry, and suppressing her own books.

Interviewed earlier in 1967, she spoke of her direct literary forebears as Baudelaire and Rimbaud: 'They were both poets of the modern metropolis as we know it and no one has bothered to learn what there is to be learned from them... The main duty of the poet is to excite – to send the senses reeling.'

Her poetry – published in *Notes on Cafés and Bedrooms* (1963) and *Iliad of Broken Sentences* (1967) – is exuberantly sensuous, a hymn to sixties hedonism set amid the bohemian nighttime world of a London reinvented through French poetic influences and sultry Oriental imagery. She was 'Bedouin of the London evening' in one poem: 'I have been young too long, and in a dressing-gown / My private modern life has gone to waste.' All her published poetry is now available in this edition for the first time in over 40 years, along with a selection of her prose. This ebook edition also includes audio recordings made in 1963 of Rosemary Tonks reading 12 of the poems and of her interview with Peter Orr.

'Poets, of course, as we all know, are either of their time or for all time. Rosemary Tonks was both. She wasn't just a poet of the sixties – she was a true poet of any era – but she has sent us strange messages from them, alive, fresh and surprising today... there is possibly no other poet who has caught with such haughty, self-ironising contempt, the loucheness of the period, or the anger it could touch off in brooding bystanders... Rosemary Tonks' imagery has a daring for which it's hard to find a parallel in British poetry.'

– John Hartley Williams, *Poetry Review*.



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