Roy Campbell (1901 - 1957) was born in Durban, the son of Dr Samuel George Campbell. Roy Campbell co-edited (with William Plomer and Laurens van der Post) the magazine entitled Voorslag in 1926. Campbell is the author of a long poem entitled The Flaming Terrapin (1924), as well as poetry collections entitled Adamastor (1930), Flowering Reeds (1933), Mithraic Emblems (1936) and Talking Bronco (1946). He wrote long satirical poems entitled The Wayzgoose (1928) and The Georgiad (1931) on the South African way of life and intellectual climate. Campbell's autobiographical works include Broken Record (1934) and Light on a Dark Horse (1951). He lived in England and Spain before settling permanently in Portugal where he died in a car accident at the age of fifty six. Campbell was fluent in Spanish and translated poems of St John of the Cross, Baudelaire, Lorca, Paco d'Arcos and novels by Ea de Queirs.

He also wrote critical studies entitled Lorca (1952) and Wyndham Lewis which was completed in 1931 but first published posthumously in 1985. His non-fiction works on travel and social commentary include Taurine Provence (1932) and Portugal (1957). Campbell also wrote an adventure story for children entitled The Mamba's Precipice (1953).

Literary studies on Campbell include David Wright's Roy Campbell (1961), Rowland Smith's Lyr
ic and Polemic: The Literary Personality of Roy Campbell (1973), John Povey's Roy Campbell (1977) and Peter Alexander's Roy Campbell: A Critical Biography (1982). Joseph Pearce is the author of a well received biography and literary study of Campbell entitled Bloomsbury and beyond: The friends and enemies of Roy Campbell (2001, Harper Collins), in which he affirms Campbell's merits as a poet and portrays him as having been greatly under-rated in literary circles. In 2011, Remembering Roy Campbell: The Memoirs of his daughters Anna and Tess, ...
edited by Judith Coullie, was published.

Thanks to The Guardian/NPG for permission to reproduce Jane Brown's 1951 portrait of the author.

Selected Work

The Zebras from *Adamastor* (1930)

From the dark woods that breathe of fallen showers,
Harnessed with level rays in golden reins,
The zebras draw the dawn across the plains
Wading knee-keep among the scarlet flowers.
The sunlight, zithering their flanks with fire,
Flashes between the shadows as they pass
Barred with electric tremors through the grass
Like wind along the gold strings of a lyre.
Into the flushed air snorting rosy plumes
That smoulder round their feet in drifting fumes,
With dove-like voices call the distant fillies,
While round the herds the stallion wheels his flight,
Engine of beauty volted with delight,
To roll his mare among the trampled lilies.

Bibliography


Author Map (Sizela)
{mosmap
width='500'|height='400'|lat='-30.40804'|lon='30.67839'|zoom='10'|zoomType='Small'|zoomNew=0|mapType='Normal'|showMaptype='1'|text=''|tooltip='Sizela'|overview='0'|marker='1'|align='center'}