**Contributor: Dan Wylie**

**Entry: Maclennan, Donald Alasdair Calum (Don) (1929-2009)**

Don Maclennan was born in London, educated at the Universities of Witwatersrand and Edinburgh, and taught literature at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, for thirty years until 1994. He first made a name writing plays, notably the modernist *The Voyage of the Santiago* (1977), alongside some literary critical work. He came to poetry relatively late, with *Life Songs* (1977) and his first substantial collection, *Reckonings* (1983). He eventually published some twenty volumes, including the *Selected Poems* (2006) and the posthumous *Dress Rehearsal* (2010). *Solstice* (1997) won the Sanlam Literary Prize. A remarkable late flowering saw ten volumes emerge in as many years, several privately printed. The metaphorically rich earlier work, concerned with the nature of being and love, the textures of the natural world, the excavation of history and prehistory, and the meaning of poetry itself, gave way to a more sparsely lucid style and shorter forms. Typically these later poems combine direct but profound philosophical questions with limpid observations of the everyday world. Almost acidly self-doubting and irreligious, Maclennan revelled in the simple pleasures of life even as he became increasingly preoccupied with impending death. He is widely regarded as the finest poet of his generation.

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