**Graham, W.S. (William Sydney) (1918-1986)** Poet.

Born in Greenock, Scotland, W.S. Graham trained as an engineer in Glasgow whilst studying literature and philosophy at night classes. He worked a number of jobs during World War II; afterwards, he travelled widely, teaching for a brief period at New York University in 1948, before settling in Cornwall, where he lived until his death in 1986. His early work of the 1940s, in *Cage Without Grievance* (1942), *The Seven Journeys* (1944), *2ND Poems* (1949) and *The White Threshold* (1949), is characterised by dense, sometimes esoteric imagery and labyrinthine syntax that situates it within a current of neo-Romanticism most famously associated with DYLAN THOMAS. *The Nightfishing* (1955), described by T.S. ELIOT as ‘among the more important poetical achievements of our time’, eschews these impulses for a greater directness and lucidity that sets the model for his later collections *Malcolm Mooney’s Land* (1970) and *Implements in their Places* (1977). Here, the difficulties of communication itself are the poems’ key concern, as with ‘The Constructed Space’ that attempts to ‘move across / The caught habits of language.’ Though not always fashionable in his lifetime, his posthumous reputation continues to grow, as evinced by the publication of *New Collected Poems* (2004).

**List of Works**

*New Collected Poems* (2004) ed. Matthew Francis, London: Faber and Faber

**References and Further Reading**

Duncan, Ronnie and Jonathan Davidson (ed.) (1994) *The Constructed Space: A Celebration of W.S. Graham* Lincoln: Jackson’s Arm

Lopez, Tony (1989) *The Poetry of W.S. Graham* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

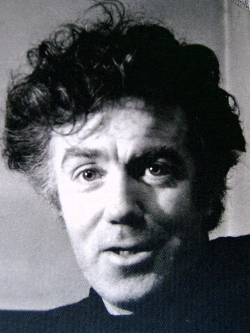


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