

= Lazarus Aaronson =

Lazarus Leonard Aaronson (18 February 1895 ? 9 December 1966) , often published as L. Aaronson , was a British poet and a lecturer in economics . As a young man , he belonged to a group of Jewish friends who are today known as the Whitechapel Boys , many who later achieved fame as writers and artists .

In his twenties , Aaronson converted to Christianity and a large part of his poetry focused on his conversion and spiritual identity as a Jew and an Englishman . In total , he published three collections of poetry : Christ in the Synagogue (1930) , Poems (1933) , and The Homeward Journey and Other Poems (1946) . Although he never achieved widespread recognition , Aaronson gained a cult following of dedicated readers .

Though less radical in his use of language , he has been compared to his more renowned Whitechapel friend , Isaac Rosenberg , in terms of diction and verbal energy . Aaronson 's poetry is characterised as more post @-@ Georgian than modernistic , and reviewers have traced influences from both the English poet John Keats , and Hebrew poets such as Shaul Tchernichovsky and Zalman Shneur in his writings .

Aaronson lived most of his life in London and spent much of his working life as a lecturer in economics at the City of London College . Upon retiring , he moved to Harpenden , Hertfordshire , where he died from heart failure and coronary heart disease on 9 December 1966 . His poetry was not widely publicised , and he left many unpublished poems at his death .

= = Life = =

Aaronson was born on 18 February 1895 at 34 Great Pearl Street , Spitalfields in the East End of London to impoverished Orthodox Jewish parents who had immigrated from Vilna in the Pale of Settlement in Eastern Europe . His father was Louis Aaronson , a master bootmaker , and his mother was Sarah Aaronson , née Kowalski . The young Aaronson attended Whitechapel City Boys ' School and later received a scholarship to attend Hackney Downs grammar school .

His father emigrated to New York in 1905 , and in 1912 , the rest of his family followed except for 17 @-@ year old Lazarus who remained in London . From then on , he lived with the family of Joseph Posener at 292 Commercial Road in the East End of London . At the time , the area was a hub of the Jewish diaspora and at the turn of the 20th century , a quarter of its population were Jews from Central and Eastern Europe . Growing up in the East End , Aaronson was part of a group of friends who are today referred to as the Whitechapel Boys , all of whom were children of Jewish immigrants and shared literary and artistic ambitions . Others in the group who , like Aaronson , later achieved distinction included John Rodker , Isaac Rosenberg , Joseph Leftwich , Samuel Winsten , Clara Birnberg , David Bomberg , and the brothers Abraham and Joseph Fineberg . Aaronson was also involved in the Young Socialist League , where he and other Whitechapel Boys helped organise educational meetings on modern art and radical politics . Aaronson remained a committed socialist throughout adulthood .

Having been diagnosed with tuberculosis and diabetes , Aaronson did not serve in the military during the First World War . Between 1913 and 1915 , and again between 1926 and 1928 , he studied economics at the London School of Economics , but never completed his degree .

Aaronson was married three times . His first wife was the actress Lydia Sherwood , (1906 ? 1989) whom he was married to between 1924 and 1931 . He filed for divorce on grounds of her adultery with the theatre producer Theodore Komisarjevsky , and the suit was undefended . His second marriage , which took place on 9 July 1938 , to Dorothy Beatrice Lewer (1915 ? 2005) , also ended in divorce . On 14 January 1950 , Aaronson married Margaret Olive Ireson (1920 ? 1981) , with whom he had one son , David , who was born in 1953 .

To friends and family , Lazarus Aaronson was known as Laz . He was friends with novelist Stephen Hudson , sculptor Jacob Epstein , media mogul Sidney Bernstein , artists Mark Gertler and Matthew Smith and poets Harold Monro and Samuel Beckett .

Around 1934 , he began working as a lecturer in economics at the City of London College . Upon

his retirement from the university in 1958 , Aaronson was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire in the 1959 New Year Honours , in recognition of his more than twenty @-@ five years of service . He then moved with his family from London to Harpenden , Hertfordshire , where he later died from heart failure and coronary heart disease on 9 December 1966 , at the age of 71 . He was buried in the Westfield Road Cemetery in Harpenden .

= = Poetry = =

Aaronson had literary ambitions from an early age and by 1914 , he was a contributing writer for the influential left @-@ leaning weekly The New Age . He was often published under the name L. Aaronson . In the 1920s , he converted to Christianity . His first collection of poems , Christ in the Synagogue , published by V. Gollancz in 1930 , dealt to a large extent with his conversion and spiritual identity as both a Jew and an Englishman . This subject would become a recurring theme in his numerous mystical poems . Christ in the Synagogue reached only a small audience and received less than a dozen reviews , but The Manchester Guardian , The Nation and Athenaeum , The Times Literary Supplement , and The New Age wrote favourably of it .

Notwithstanding Aaronson 's small readership , V. Gollancz published a second verse collection in 1933 , titled Poems . Despite being little known to the general public , Aaronson gained a cult following of dedicated readers . His third collection , The Homeward Journey and Other Poems , was published by Christophers in 1946 . Some of his works also appeared in journals and anthologies such as the 1953 Faber Book of Twentieth Century Verse .

Since Aaronson 's poetry does not display formal innovation , literature professor William Baker , characterises him as " A post @-@ Georgian rather than a modernist [poet] " . Baker further notes that Aaronson 's poetry deals with several issues of his time , such as the rise of fascism and the Second World War , but points out that Aaronson did not directly write about the Holocaust . Upon Aaronson 's death , the poet Arthur Chaim Jacobs , compared him with Isaac Rosenberg , the more celebrated poet of the same Anglo @-@ Jewish generation . According to Jacobs , Aaronson was " clearly influenced by him in terms of diction , and in a kind of verbal energy which runs through a lot of his poetry . But he was less radical than Rosenberg in his use of language , and tended towards Keatsian luxuriance and sweetness . " Although much of Aaronson 's writings centred on his conversion to Christianity , Jacobs traces a continuing Hebraic mood in his poetry , writing that " His Christianity was hardly familiarly Anglican , and there is in his work an avowed sensuality which could in some ways be compared to that of modern Hebrew poets like Tchernikowsky or Shneur , or later , Avraham Shlonsky . "

Aaronson 's poetry was not widely publicised , and he left many unpublished poems at his death . Little scholarly attention has been paid to his life and poetry . In 1967 , Jacobs stated that " Further assessment of his work awaits more substantial publication " and about 40 years later Baker , who has written most extensively on Aaronson , named him among the Whitechapel intellectual writers and artists " today consigned to oblivion " .