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EDITOR'S NOTE

With no disrespect or flippancy intended, it is tempting to describe 1986 as a good year for deaths. The process of selection and elimination—stimulating and tricky in any year—yielded giants in their field with names that are known around the world. At the same time surfaced names that initially rang no bells, but proved to have made significant contributions in dozens of different ways. This volume hopes to do justice to all of them.

As in previous volumes, each entry consists of a descriptive essay followed by a detailed, who's who-style biographical note, which, where appropriate, includes lists of exhibitions and major works, plus extended bibliographies and filmographies.

The compilation of this volume is very much a team effort. Special thanks are due to Nigel Quinney and Jill Shepherd for research, Mary Jean Evers, Tony Henderson and Tim Hitchcock for who's who biographies, Miren Lopategui for editorial help, and the hard-working team of contributors who wrote the 335 essays.

Patricia Burgess
London

Contributors

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Center for Applied Linguistics, 1965–69, Pierpont Morgan Library, 1970, Rosenbach Foundation, 1972–81, New York Public Library, 1975 onwards, Columbia University Press, 1977–82, Winterthur Museum, 1977 onwards, American Trust for the British Library, 1979 onwards; American Philosophical Society, 1977; director, Yaddo, 1979 onwards; managing trustee, Modern Language Association of America; member: American Antiquarian Society; American Council on Education; Phi Beta Kappa. **Awards and honours** Seven battle stars, World War II; Dexter Fellow, 1940–41; Guggenheim Foundation Fellow, 1941–42, 1946, 1956–57; Rockefeller Post-Service Fellow, 1948–49; fellow, Royal Society of Literature, 1948; Litt D: Monmouth College, 1959, Syracuse, 1961, Duke, 1965, University of Illinois, 1968, Northwestern, 1974, Maryland, 1982; LLD: University of New York, 1961, Tulane, 1963, University of California, 1968, Columbia, 1969, University of Southern California, 1974, Pennsylvania, 1978; fellow, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1962; DHL, Indiana University, 1964; Joseph Henry Medal, Smithsonian Institute, 1980. **Publications** (editor) *The Letters and Private Papers of William Makepeace Thackeray*, four volumes, Harvard University Press, 1945–46; (editor) *William Makepeace Thackeray's Rose and the Ring*, 1947; (editor) *History of Henry Esmond*, 1950; (editor) *Contributions to the "Morning Chronicle" by Thackeray*, 1955; *The Buried Life: A Study of the Relation between Thackeray's Fiction and His Personal History*, Harvard University Press, 1952; *Thackeray*, McGraw, Volume I, *The Uses of Adversity, 1811–1846*, 1955, Volume II, *The Age of Wisdom, 1847–1863*, 1958; (with Leon Edel) *Henry James and H.G. Wells*, University of Illinois Press, 1958; (editor) H.G. Wells, *Desert Daisy*, 1957; (editor) *History of Mr Polly*, Houghton, 1961; *H.G. Wells and Rebecca West*, Yale University Press, 1974; *The Illustrator and the Book in England, 1790–1814* (exhibition monograph), 1976; *The Art of the French Illustrated Book, 1700–1914* (exhibition monograph), two volumes, 1982. **Exhibitions** Private collection of books, Pierpont Morgan Library, resulting in three catalogue-monographs; also, chief contributor, Benjamin Disraeli exhibition, Low Memorial Library, Columbia University, 1981. **Cause of death** Heart attack, at age 71.

HENRY REED

British Poet, Playwright and Translator

Born Birmingham, England, 22 February 1914

Died England, 8 December 1986

Henry Reed was a very fine writer. He produced some excellent poetry, was a respected translator, and as a radio dramatist, enriched that medium at a high point in its artistic expression. He was born in 1914, in Birmingham, Warwickshire, where he was educated at King Edward VI Grammar School and the local university. The town is an unprepossessing, industrial one and has never been fashionable, but in the early 1930s it had attracted literary talent. Louis MacNeice was a young assistant lecturer in classics, and he, together with W.H. Auden and Walter Allen, were among Reed's friends. Reed graduated in 1936, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in language, and a Master of Arts awarded for a "brilliant" thesis on Thomas Hardy.

In the three years before World War II, he was a freelance journalist, travelling whenever possible in Italy—which he loved—and supplementing his income with a little teaching.

Conscription came in 1941. He served, or as he said, "studied", in the army for a year, before being seconded to Naval Intelligence. His own choice of verb is perhaps explained by the crash course he took in Japanese, and he served out the war teaching it to Wrens (Womens' Royal Naval Service). Interesting too is Reed's note for *Who's Who* about his last days with the military: "Released VJ Day, 1945; recalled to army, 1945; did not go, 1945; matter silently dropped, 1945."

In 1946 he broke upon the literary world with the stereotypical "slim volume" of poetry called *A Map of Verona*. Here is a restrained distillation of experience, and a highly crafted, individual voice. Some poems reflect Reed's love of Italy, as in the quiet surprise and wonder of "...a shining smile of snowfall, late in spring". In "Chard Whitlow" he produced the definitive parody of T.S. Eliot's "Four Quartets", wickedly capturing tone and cadence:

Seasons return, and today I am fifty-five
And this time last year I was fifty-four,
And this time next year I shall be sixty-two.
I think you will find this put,
Far better than I could ever hope to express it.

"Tintagel", "Philoctetes" and "Chrysothemis" are meditations on mythology. "The Desert" is a sequence much concerned with war, and so are another three poems grouped together as "Lessons of War". These are Reed's best known, much anthologized verses; the wry, dismayed and wistful meditations of a reluctant conscript as the drill sergeant drones in his ear:

This is the lower sling swivel. And this
Is the upper sling swivel, whose use you will see
When you are given your slings. And this is the piling swivel,
Which in your case you have not got.
The branches hold in the gardens their silent, eloquent gestures,
Which in our case we have not got.

Reed's talent for mimicry is again engaged, in the exquisite rhythm of misused syntax:

...maps are of time, not place, so far as the army
Happens to be concerned—the reason being,
Is one which need not delay us.

Reed's *début* was very well received, but there was to be little more poetry. Also in 1946 he produced a concise monograph, *The Novel Since 1939*, after which he aimed to live in Dorset and submerge himself in a biography of his great favourite, who had also haunted that county, Thomas Hardy. It was never to be finished.

In the past 20 years after World War II, the younger British poets, dramatists and composers found much fertile ground in BBC Radio, where a flowering of talent ensued. (The BBC drama department was the first to sponsor plays by Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter and Tom Stoppard, for example.) Reed joined this august and innovative company in 1947, with his script for a radio production of *Moby Dick*. While compressing the story, he preserved emotional and philosophical range, and managed the pace brilliantly from poetic reflection to roaring climax. His work now burgeoned. In 1949 and 1950 he wrote two radio plays in verse on the nineteenth-century Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi. The prevailing tone is sombre, as it is in *The Streets of Pompeii* (1952), which Reed described as a "sort of dramatic poem". It evokes the ruin of the Roman town and contrasts that with the presence of two young lovers from the contemporary world. *The Great Desire I Had* is a *jeu d'esprit* guessing how Shakespeare came to write *The Rape of Lucrece*. *Vincenzo* (1955) encompasses the life and loves of Vincenzo Gonzaga, a princeling in

seventeenth-century Italy. It is characterized by erotic power, delicate satire, and appetizing comedy. Reed had meanwhile abandoned the biography of Hardy, which he had at first attacked intensively, then sporadically, and which he now felt to be a burden. The effort was not wasted though; the experience was simmered in the artistic alembic, and some surprising monsters emerged.

In 1953 the BBC Third Programme (as was) broadcast *A Very Great Man Indeed*, in which an earnest, ingenuous young man chases the biographical material of a fictitious, recently dead novelist. Among much else, he turns up the redoubtably awful Hilda Tablet—the “composeress” of 12-tone music. It is interesting to note, parenthetically, that in those heady days of creative radio, writers, actors, producers and technical staff had little regard for rank, or office hours. The public house was as fertile as the studio—individual abilities spurred each other, and though he was no toper, Reed’s imagination responded. Some regretted his dalliance with the comic muse; Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath were, after all, extant as the sort of radio writer he might have become; however, the composeress it was who carried the day. In *The Private Life of Hilda Tablet* it is she who becomes the cynosure of the piece—“not more than 12 volumes, Bertie, I beg you. It was enough for Gibbon, it was enough for Proust. Let it be enough for you Bertie”—in a bathroom scene which presented full-frontal nudity on radio for the first time. Her all-female opera, *Emily Butter*, sent up the sacred beasts of Covent Garden in 1955. Reed endeavoured to get serious again, but to no avail. A projected drama on Clytemnestra yielded instead the inexorable Hilda, as she and her entourage embarked on a Mediterranean voyage with a Greek millionaire: the trip was documented in *The Primal Scene, As It Were* (1958). Her brother-in-law, General Gland, had also lurched into a life of his own, and like Frankenstein in thrall, Reed acknowledged his latest thing of darkness in *Not a Drum Was Heard: The War Memoirs of General Gland*, in 1959. Also in that year, Ms Tablet, now Dame Hilda, revealed her latest compositions in the mode “musique concrète renforcée”.

As previously adumbrated, the Tablet canon sprang from Reed’s rueful struggle with Thomas Hardy; instead of monumental biography he produced a series of parodic masterpieces. He did not, however, confine himself finally to polished levity. Those of us who cannot read any language other than English might thank him for his translations of plays and novels, notably Betti and Buzzati from the Italian, and Balzac from the French. From 1964 through 1966 he spent time as professor of poetry or assistant professor of English at the University of Washington, Seattle. Here, wrote a commentator, “He seemed happiest, probably.” What did become of the poetry? Only two poems were added to *Lessons of War* before the collection was published in 1970. Earlier, Elizabeth Jennings had written, “Why such a good poet as Henry Reed has written so little poetry is strange...But Henry Reed has written a handful of poems that might well last; these are probably the war poems. His command over verse forms and language is flawless. Perhaps, in old age he will return to poetry again. It would be a great loss to English literature if he did not.” Her fears were well grounded. In later life, Reed’s discrimination about his own work drove one to call him “hypercritical and vain”. He developed a Coleridge-like ability to talk entrancingly, and a corresponding difficulty with putting it on paper. “Though he could be the most entertaining of men, he had a depressive temperament...so that he would worry even over commas to the extent of not publishing at all.” Well, this writer is another incomplete biographer. He suggests that Reed was permanently psychologically exhausted, and that the radio comedies were not such a “trek from progress”, but a not unworthy, if unsuccessful, remedy. Life is, after all, pretty short.

Born Henry Reed. **Parents** Henry and Mary Ann (Ball) Reed. **Education** King Edward VI School, Aston, Birmingham; Birmingham University, BA, 1st class honours, language and literature, 1934, Charles Grant Robertson Scholar, 1934, MA, 1936. **Military service** British

Army, 1941–42; transferred to Naval Intelligence, Foreign Office, 1942–45. **Career** Freelance journalist and teacher, 1937–41; poet and book reviewer, 1945 onwards; fiction reviewer, later radio critic, *New Statesman*; contributor to periodicals, including *Poetry*, *New Yorker*, *Theatre Arts*, *Nation*, *Newsweek*, *Time*; playwright, radio dramatist, prolific translator, particularly of Italian drama, 1946 onwards. **Related activities** Visiting professor of poetry, University of Washington, Seattle, winter, 1964, 1967; assistant professor of English, 1965–66. **Awards and honours** Premio della Radio Italiana, 1953; Pye Gold Award, from Society of Authors, 1979. **Verse** *A Map of Verona*, London, 1946, New York, 1947; *Lessons of the War*, London and New York, 1970. **Plays** (translator and adaptor) *The Queen and the Rebels* by Ugo Betti, broadcast 1954, produced London, 1955, included in *Three Plays*, 1956; (adaptor) *The Burnt Flower-Bed* by Ugo Betti, produced in London, 1955, New York, 1974, included in *Three Plays*, 1956; (adaptor) *Summertime* by Ugo Betti, produced London, 1955, included in *Three Plays*, 1956; (adaptor) *Island of Goats* by Ugo Betti, produced New York, 1955, published as *Crime on Goat Island*, London, 1960, San Francisco, 1961; *Three Plays*, London, 1956, New York, 1958; (adaptor) *Corruption in the Palace of Justice* by Ugo Betti, broadcast 1958, produced New York, 1963; (adaptor) *The Advertisement* by Natalia Ginzburg, produced London, 1968, New York, 1974, published London, 1969; *The Streets of Pompeii and Other Plays for Radio*, includes *Leopardi: The Unblest*, *The Monument*, *The Great Desire I Had*, *Return to Naples*, *Vincenzo*, London, 1971; *Hilda Tablet and Others: Four Pieces for Radio*, includes *A Very Great Man Indeed*, *The Private Life of Hilda Tablet*, *A Hedge*, *Backwards*, *The Primal Scene*, *As It Were...*, London, 1971. **Radio plays** (many adaptations, include) *Noises On*, 1946, expanded as *Noises: Nasty and Nice*, 1947; *Moby Dick*, 1947; *Pytheas*, 1947; *Leopardi: The Unblest* and *The Monument*, 1949–50; *A By-Election in the Nineties*, 1951; *The Dynasts*, 1951; *Malatesta*, 1952; *The Streets of Pompeii*, 1952; *The Great Desire I Had*, 1952; *Return to Naples*, 1953; *All for the Best*, 1953; *A Very Great Man Indeed*, 1953; *The Private Life of Hilda Tablet*, 1954; *Hamlet*, or *The Consequences of Filial Piety*, 1954; *The Battle of the Masks*, 1954; *The Queen and the Rebels*, 1954; *Emily Butter*, 1954; *Holiday Land*, 1955; *Vincenzo*, 1955; *A Hedge*, *Backwards*, 1956; *Don Juan in Love*, 1956; *Alarica*, 1956; *Irene*, 1957; *Corruption in the Palace of Justice*, 1958; *The Primal Scene*, *As It Were...*, 1958; *The Auction Sale*, 1958; *The Island Where the King Is a Child*, 1959; *One Flesh*, 1959; *Not a Drum Was Heard*, 1959; (with Donald Swann) *Musique Discrète*, 1959; *The House on the Water*, 1961; *A Hospital Case*, 1961; *The America Prize*, 1964; *Zone 36*, 1965; *Summertime*, 1969; *The Two Mrs Morlis*, 1971; *The Strawberry Ice*, 1973; *Room for August*, 1974; *Like the Leaves*, 1976; *The Wig*, 1976; *Duologue*, 1977; *The Soul Has Its Rights*, 1977; *Sorrows of Love*, 1978; *I Married You For Fun*, 1980. **Translations** (include) *Perdu and His Father* by Paride Rombi, London, 1954; *Three Plays* by Ugo Betti, London, 1956; New York, 1978; *Crime on Goat Island* by Ugo Betti, 1961; *Larger than Life* by Dino Buzzati, London, 1962; *Père Goriot* by Balzac, New York, 1962; *Eugénie Grandet* by Balzac, New York, 1964; *The Advertisement* by Natalia Ginzburg, London, 1969. **Other** *The Novel Since 1939*, London, 1946. **Cause of death** Undisclosed, at age 72. **Further reading** John Russell Taylor, *Anger and After*, New York, 1962; Vernon Scannell, "Henry Reed and Others" in *Not Without Glory: Poets of the Second World War*, London 1976.