

Classic Poetry Series

**Aleksander Stavre  
Drenova  
- poems -**

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# Aleksander Stavre Drenova(1872-1947)

Aleksandër Stavre Drenova, best known under his pen name Asdreni (11 April 1872 - 1947), was one of the most well-known Albanian poets. One of his most recognizable poems is the Albanian National Anthem, Hymni i Flamurit.

Born in the village of Drenovë, near Korçë, he studied at a Greek school in his village. His father died when he was just thirteen. In 1885, Drenova moved to Bucharest, Romania, where he rejoined his brothers. While there, he was exposed to other Albanian writers and nationalists (see Albanians of Romania).

In 1904, Asdreni published his first collection of ninety-nine poems called Rreze dielli ("Sun Rays"), dedicated to Skanderbeg, the Albanian national hero. His second ninety-nine poem collection, Ëndrra e lotë ("Dreams and Tears") was published in 1912 and was dedicated to the British anthropologist Edith Durham. Asdreni's third collection, Psallme murgu ("Psalms of a Monk"), came in 1930.

After a brief return to Albania in 1914, Aleksandër returned to Romania and continued to take interest in the Albanian national movement. He visited Albania again in 1937, but he soon after again returned to Romania, where he lived the rest of his life.

# Forgotten Memories

Where can I find you, oh companions of my youth,  
That I might once more enjoy that beloved time,  
Moments which filled us with such delight  
When we played and frolicked in mirth sublime?  
Not a dropp of sorrow did we feel in our souls,  
Our hearts were so fully transfixed by the spring,  
Little did we know that our lives would be sad,  
And lost youth would nevermore joy to us bring.  
Like the autumn leaves which the wind doth chase  
Like a fleeting moment of glee which escapes,  
Or a summer night's dream that veils its trace,  
You can sense, you can see how our elusive hopes  
Brought surprising delights to us now and again,  
Like the rays of the moon glowing on a parched plain!

Aleksander Stavre Drenova

# Hymni I Flamurit

Rreth flamurit të përbashkuar,  
me një dëshirë e një qëllim.  
Të gjithë atje duke u betuar,  
të lidhim besën për shpëtim.  
Prej lufte veç ai largohet,  
që është lindur tradhëtor.  
Kush është burrë nuk frikohet,  
por vdes, por vdes si një dëshmor.  
Në dorë armët do t'i mbajmë,  
të mbrojmë atdheun në çdo kënd.  
Të drejtat tona ne s'i ndajmë,  
këtu armiqtë s'kanë vend.  
Prej lufte veç ai largohet,  
që është lindur tradhëtor.  
Kush është burrë nuk frikohet,  
por vdes, por vdes si një dëshmor.

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# Pledge To The Flag

United around the flag  
With one desire and one goal  
Let us pledge our word of honor  
To fight for our salvation  
Only he who is a born traitor  
Averts from the struggle  
He who is brave is not daunted  
But falls - a martyr to the cause  
With arms in hand we shall remain  
To guard our fatherland round about  
Our rights we will not bequeath  
Enemies have no place here  
For the Lord Himself has said  
That nations vanish from the earth  
But Albania shall live on  
Because for her, it is for her that we fight

Aleksander Stavre Drenova

# The Flute

Oh flute, I worship you with faith and longing  
For I was raised, the consort of your trill divine  
from the time I was a lad,  
You poured dew into my soul,  
At the height of my joy, my feelings merged  
in a tenderness rare.

With you I felt an unslaked sense  
Of love for Albanian soil  
Which remains day after day in my dreams,  
When your sounds, the treasures of the past,  
Traverse my mind like a summer's breeze  
And with deep ecstasy.

When you speak to me and fill me,  
Unending voices echo and swell  
In waves like a chorus of angels,  
Companions of the peaks, streams and hills,  
From your lips flit fairies  
As if from some majestic palace.

Like starlight and moonbeams in longing,  
Sparkling on the surface of the lake,  
I quiver like a lover,  
As your words, harbingers of a message  
From the Earthly Beauty, with fair tones,  
offer us a breath of spring.

Like the season which begins to blossom,  
Unfolding its wide wings within our bosom  
To give us strength and divine grace,  
So do you lend the world a new face  
And create around us a joyous choir  
When your notes traverse the scales.

With you does the shepherd climb to the mountain pastures  
Moved by your magic melodies,  
Your every note melts his heart,  
With you do young lads take to the dance,

Thrilled by your sacred songs of love  
Welling anew within their breasts.

Like tender leaves quivering in the wind  
Which in their rustling strike up a song  
In perfect harmony,  
Whosoever hears your chant  
Recalls forgotten memories  
Like a symphony from the heavens.

The farmer bent behind his plough  
Or scything ripened sheaves of grain  
Knows not why he slaves,  
Yet with you all his hardship dissolves  
As his thirst abates when he scoops  
And drinks the waters of mountain springs.

From ancient times our ancestors  
Bore you in their belts, sabres brandished,  
Singing their fiery songs  
And spreading courage in the thick of battle,  
Always were they rewarded for their toil,  
As was the legendary Alexander.

With you did the goddess Minerva  
While away the hours in delight,  
Up on flashing Olympia  
And the nymphs around her like tiny stars  
In the rhythmic pacing of the dance  
Teased jealous Bacchus.

Virgil, master and famed singer  
Of ancient times, and Mozart -  
With you, they built their sacred altars,  
With you do nations dream,  
Nourished on lofty ideals  
From a healing source.

So many others have followed,  
As new tokens of progress,  
Which no one on earth can oppose,  
To you, poets will always weave hymns,



For with your strength and courage, magic flute,  
You soar above them all.

Aleksander Stavre Drenova

# The Oracle Of Dodona

In the sombre woods of ancient Dodona  
Was a Dorian temple by expert hand built,  
No other in this world could compare to its beauty,  
Surrounded by statues of silver and gilt.  
Laden with gifts appeared kings from afar  
To honour the priestess, her speech divining,  
Like hermits they huddled in fasting and prayer  
Awaiting their fate, outside they were pining.  
But fate and the future have eyes unbound,  
And lots when cast can quickly turn round,  
A word is enough, if sent from the heavens...  
How many thrones have been toppled and tossed,  
And how many leaders' minds have been lost  
For failing to heed that old woman's words.

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# To The Adriatic

I have beheld you, Adriatic, I have beheld you,  
A nymph from the twinkling heavens  
Sparkling with pearls, your breasts  
Heaving gracefully like a sylph's.  
I knelt before you as before a goddess,  
An apparition of untold beauty.  
The rapture I felt, I could not endure,  
And departed, tears streaming down my cheeks.  
Like molten gold you shimmer,  
A fabled palace full of magic,  
You sway like maidens in the meadow.  
Of youthful grace is your rise and fall,  
Sweet memories, a world of wonder  
Like a vision of divinity itself.

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