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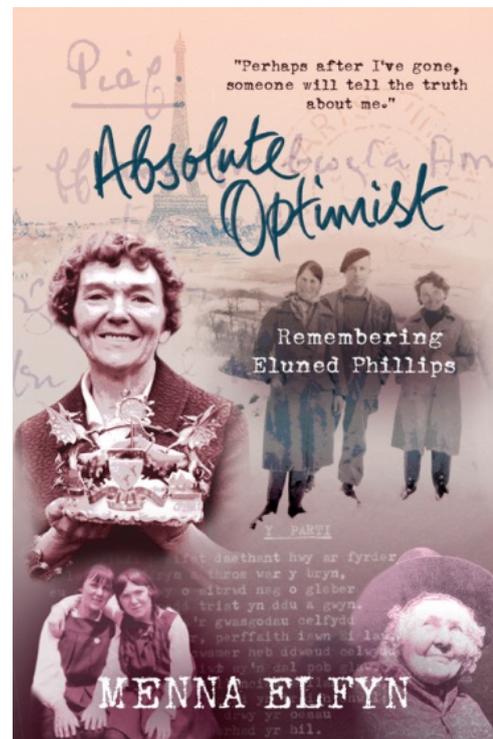
Absolute Optimist: Remembering Eluned Phillips
by Menna Elfyn

Published by Honno in paperback on 19th July
2018 priced £11.99

***“Perhaps after I’ve gone, someone will tell the
truth about me.”***

An affectionate and yet critical biography of Eluned Phillips who lived during a time of great change – taking her from rural Carmarthenshire to bohemian Paris and urban Los Angeles. She was often frowned upon, but never less than true to herself.

She was an important unsung heroine of Welsh literature who lived an unusual and fascinating life for a woman of her time.



‘I don’t give tuppence for all the fuss about equal status for women; I’ve never felt less than equal. When I felt the urge to go travelling on a camel in the African desert, and when I found myself by accident in a harem in Casablanca ... nobody could prevent me from doing these things. Oh no ... if Mam-gu was willing to sail to America with no more than two sentences of English, I’m not going to miss out on life’s adventures because I happen to have been born a girl. [from Eluned’s personal papers]

Eluned Phillips was a passionate woman who ignited equally passionate responses in others. The second woman ever to wear the National Eisteddfod crown – Wales' most prestigious Welsh language literary prize and the only woman to have won it twice in the 20th Century. Unfortunately, her writing life was blemished by rumours over the authorship of her work.

Unusual among Welsh women of her generation, Eluned embraced an unconventional lifestyle which took her to pre-war London and Paris, where she met artists Augustus John, Edith Piaf, and Pablo Picasso, as well as the writer Dewi Emrys, the dissolute ex-preacher and poet whose biography she published in 1971. In France she also fell in with a group of idealistic Bretons who introduced her to romantic love and nationalist politics.



Award-winning poet Menna Elfyn examines Phillips' life and work, including many of Eluned's personal papers, and argues convincingly that Eluned's poetry is undoubtedly hers and more than worthy of two crowns.

Menna is available for interview and to write pieces. Please contact Helena Earnshaw at press@honno.co.uk / 01970 623150

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Editor's Notes

- *Absolute Optimist* was shortlisted for Wales Book of the Year on publication in Welsh. It has been translated for Honno by Elinor Wyn Reynolds.
- *Absolute Optimist, Remembering Eluned Phillips* is available from all good bookshops and online retailers or directly from the publisher, Honno Press, www.honno.co.uk
- Published by Honno Press, 19th July 2018, ISBN: 9781909983809, £11.99
- Menna Elfyn is an award-winning poet and playwright who writes with passion of the Welsh language and identity. She is the best known and most translated of all modern Welsh-language poets. Author of over twenty books of poetry, children's novels and educational books, numerous stage, radio and television plays, she has also written libretti for US & UK composers. Menna is a Professor of Poetry at UWTSO, Lampeter.