



**Hughes, Ted** Ted Hughes, 1993.

**Ted Hughes** (born August 17, 1930, Mytholmroyd, [Yorkshire](#), England—died October 28, 1998, London) was an English poet whose most characteristic verse is without sentimentality, emphasizing the cunning and savagery of animal life in harsh, sometimes disjunctive lines.

At Pembroke College, Cambridge, he found folklore and [anthropology](#) of particular interest, a concern that was reflected in a number of his poems. In 1956 he married the American poet [Sylvia Plath](#). The couple moved to the [United States](#) in 1957, the year that his first volume of verse, [The Hawk in the Rain](#), was published. Other works soon followed, including the highly praised *Lupercal* (1960) and *Selected Poems*

(1962, with [Thom Gunn](#), a poet whose work is frequently associated with Hughes's as marking a new turn in English verse).

### Quick Facts

**Byname of:** Edward J. Hughes

**Born:** August 17, 1930, Mytholmroyd,  
[Yorkshire, England](#)

**Died:** October 28, 1998, [London](#) (aged 68)

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Hughes stopped [writing poetry](#) almost completely for nearly three years following Plath's suicide in 1963 (the couple had separated the previous year), but thereafter he published prolifically, with volumes of poetry such as *Wodwo* (1967), *Crow* (1970), *Wolfwatching* (1989), and *New Selected Poems, 1957–1994* (1995). In his *Birthday Letters* (1998), he addressed his relationship with Plath after decades of silence. As the executor of her estate, Hughes also edited and published several volumes of her work in the period 1965–98, but he was accused of censoring her writings after he revealed that he had destroyed several journals that she had written before her suicide.



Hughes wrote many books for children, notably *The Iron Man* (1968; also published as *The Iron Giant*; film 1999). *Remains of Elmet* (1979), in which he recalled the world of his childhood, is one of many publications he created in collaboration with photographers and artists. He translated Georges Schehadé's play *The Story of Vasco* from the original French and shaped it into a libretto. The resulting opera, from which significant portions of his text were cut, premiered in 1974. A play based on Hughes's original libretto was staged in 2009. His works also include an [adaptation](#) of [Seneca](#)'s *Oedipus* (1968), nonfiction (*Winter Pollen*, 1994), and translations. He edited many collections of poetry, such as *The Rattle Bag* (1982, with [Seamus Heaney](#)). A collection of his correspondence, edited by Christopher Reid, was released in 2007 as *Letters of Ted Hughes*. A selection of his poems concerning animal life was published as *A Ted Hughes Bestiary* (2014). In 1984 Hughes was appointed Britain's [poet laureate](#).

*The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica*

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# Ted Hughes: biography

Ted Hughes's Biography	
Birth:	17th August 1930
Death:	28th October 1998
Father:	William Henry
Mother:	Edith Farrar
Spouse/Partners:	Sylvia Plath (1956-1963)Assia Wevill (1962-1969)Carol Orchard (1970-1998)
Children:	3
Cause of death:	Heart attack while having treatment for colon cancer.
Famous Works:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>The Hawk in the Rain</i></li><li><i>Tales from Ovid</i></li><li><a href="#">Birthday Letters</a></li></ul>



Nationality:	English
Literary Period:	Postmodernism

Ted Hughes was born on 17 August 1930 in the Yorkshire town of Mytholmroyd. He was a poet, translator, and children's author. Hughes served in the Royal Air Force before going on to study anthropology and archaeology at Cambridge. At Cambridge, Ted Hughes developed an interest in mythology, which later went on to influence his work. In 1956, Hughes married Sylvia Plath, the American author and poet.

In 1957, Ted Hughes won the First Book Contest. The competition was run by the Poetry Center and judged by esteemed poets such as W.H. Auden and Marianne Moore. *The Hawk and the Rain* (1957) won Hughes international acclaim and commercial success.

Ted Hughes' success continued throughout his long career, in his poetry collections, such as *Lupercal* (1960) and [Birthday Letters](#) (1998), children's literature *The Iron Man* (1968), and anthologies such as *The Rattle Bag* (1982). Ted Hughes was also the executor of Sylvia Plath's literary estate, editing much of her work.

Ted Hughes had a troubled personal life. His first wife Sylvia Plath committed suicide shortly after their separation in 1963. The woman Hughes left Plath for, Assia Wevill, also took her own life and, tragically, the life of their young daughter Shura. Ted Hughes married again in 1970 and spent the remainder of his life writing and farming in Devon. He was Poet Laureate from 1984 until his death in 1998 from cancer.

# Controversy

Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath's marriage was a turbulent one. Hughes was unfaithful in their marriage and Plath struggled with mental health difficulties. Hughes faced criticism for his role in their marriage and her death.

As Plath's literary executor, it was revealed that he had destroyed some of Plath's journals and heavily edited her collection *Ariel* (1965). This was seen by some as a form of censorship.

## Ted Hughes: poems

Ted Hughes was hailed as one of the greatest poets of his generation. He even earned the prestigious position of Poet Laureate. Hughes' poetry was inspired largely by animals, nature, and mythology. Often Hughes would take an unsentimental look at the natural world around him. Here we will look at some popular poems from his lengthy career.



Hughes's work is marked by a mythical framework, using the **lyric** and **dramatic monologue** to illustrate intense subject matter. Animals appear frequently throughout his work as deity, **metaphor**, persona, and icon. Perhaps the most famous of his subjects is "Crow," an amalgam of god, bird, and man, whose existence seems pivotal to the knowledge of good and evil.

Hughes won many of Europe's highest literary honors and was appointed poet laureate of England in 1984, a post that he held until his death. He passed away in October 28, 1998, in Devonshire, England.

