

**University of Victoria Special Collections**

**Hughes, Ted, 1930-1998**

**SC060**

**Title**

Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath collection

**Dates**

1959-1962

**Extent**

4 cm of textual records

**Biographical Sketch**

Ted Hughes was born in West Yorkshire, England and educated at Cambridge, obtaining a B.A. in 1954 and an M.A. in 1959. Principally as a poet, Hughes has also written plays and children's stories. Among his many published collections are *The Hawk in the Rain* (1957), *Lupercal* (1960), *Crow* (1970), *Selected Poems: 1957-1967* (1972) and *Moortown* (1980). He was named Poet Laureate of England in 1984. Sylvia Plath was born in 1932; her family lived in Wellesley, Massachusetts when she attended Smith College and graduated in 1955. Plath met and married Hughes while attending Cambridge in 1956. Among Sylvia Plath's collections of poetry are *The Colossus* (1960), *The Bell Jar* (1963) and *Ariel* (1965). She committed suicide in 1963.

**Scope and Content**

The collection consists of letters (1960-1961) written by Hughes to Graham T. Ackroyd. There are also groupings of drafts of Hughes's "Dully Gumption's Addendum", "Fishing at Dawn", "New Moon" and "Out III: Remembrance Day". Additionally, there are drafts and fragments of other works (often on the versos of the previous drafts); several are by Sylvia Plath.

**Finding Aids**

Box list available.

**Title Source**

Title based on the contents of the collection.

**Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath Collection.**  
**SC060**

**Main Entry**

Hughes, Ted, 1930-1998

**Physical Description**

1 cm of textual records

**Biographies**

Ted Hughes was born in West Yorkshire, England and educated at Cambridge; he obtained a B.A. in 1954 and an M.A. in 1959. Principally known as a poet, Hughes also wrote plays and children's stories. Among his many published collections are *The Hawk in the Rain* (1957), *Lupercal* (1960), *Crow* (1970), *Selected Poems: 1957-1967* (1972), *Moortown* (1980), *Collected Poems* (2003). He was named Poet Laureate of England in 1984.

Sylvia Plath was born in 1932; her family lived in Wellesley, Massachusetts. She attended Smith College and graduated in 1955. Plath met and married Hughes while attending Cambridge in 1956. Among Sylvia Plath's collections of poetry are *The Colossus* (1960), *The Bell Jar* (1963), *Ariel* (1965), *Collected Poems* (1981) and the *Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath* (2000). She committed suicide in 1963.

**Scope and Content**

The collection consists of 4 letters (1960-1961) written by Hughes to Graham T. Ackroyd; draft groupings of Hughes's "Dully Gumption's Addendum", "Fishing at Dawn", "New Moon" and "Out III: Remembrance Day". Additionally, there are drafts fragments of other works (often on the versos of the previous drafts); several are by Sylvia Plath.

**Notes on the Collection and Numbering**

The collection was purchased from the House of El Dieff in 1966.

Works are by Ted Hughes unless otherwise noted.

More extensive poetry drafts have been given folder numbers with both sides of each leaf assigned a decimal number. The specific pages of the draft sequence are noted in brackets.

The drafts were frequently written on leaves previously used for other works. These unrelated works within the folder (usually on the versos) are identified in a separate listing.

The assigned numbering of draft pages are for identification only and do not purport to reflect a chronology.

## **Hughes -- Poetry drafts**

### **Folder:**

**1.1-1.18** "Dully Gumption's Addendum" (*Poetry*, May, 1962) variant title: "Chronicle of a Scapegoat" and "Chronicle of Fallgrief" (total, 9 draft pages: 1.1; 1.3; 1.5; 1.7; 1.9; 1.11; 1.13; 1.15; 1.17).

**2.1-2.22** "Fishing at Dawn" (*New Statesman*, May 26, 1961) variant titles: "Find the reviewer" and "Cities in the Mist -- From the Welsh" (total, 15 draft pages: 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4; 2.5; 2.6; 2.7; 2.9; 2.11; 2.13; 2.15; 2.17; 2.18; 2.19; 2.21).

**3.1-3.21** "New Moon in January" (*Observer*, Jan. 6, 1963) variant titles include "New Moon" and "Truth" (total, 15 draft pages: 3.1; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6; 3.7; 3.8; 3.9; 3.12; [note: 3.11& 3.12 comprise a 35x45 cm sheet of brown paper folded 4 times] 3.13; 3.15; 3.17; 3.19; 3.21).

**4.1-4.16** "Out III: Remembrance Day" (*Wodwo*, 1967; Recorded for *The Poet Speaks: Record 5*, August, 1962) variant title: "Faces". (total, 9 draft pages: 4.1; 4.3; 4.5; 4.7; 4.9; 4.10; 4.11; 4.13; 4.15).

### **Unrelated works on pages in the above folders**

**1.2** "Creatures" 1st page of typescript for BBC Home Service, recorded May 5, 1960.

**1.4** Unidentified poetry, 4 autograph lines, beginning: "I don't like this place / there is no music here."

**1.6** "Urn Burial" typed poem, 1 page with autograph corrections. Page is numbered "21." (*Lupercal*).

**1.8** Unidentified poetry, 16 autograph lines, beginning: "Anyone with a quiet pace / Who walks a gray road in the West...."

**1.8** Unidentified poetry, 4 lines, autograph, beginning: "Setting a [ ]line after sundown / if we went far enough away in the night".

**1.9** "The Calm", (play) 7 lines, autograph.

**1.10** "The Rain Horse" (story), 1 typed page, numbered "8"

(*Harper's Magazine*, Jan. 1960).

**1.11** "The Calm", (play) 17 autograph lines (part of 1.9).

**1.12** "Afternoon at Hardcastle Crag" story by Sylvia Plath, 1 typed page numbered "8".

**1.14** Unidentified draft letter fragment, beginning "Dear John" regarding grant application.

**1.16** "Side-Hall Girl" story by Sylvia Plath, 1 typed page numbered "2".

**1.18** "The Shadow" story by Sylvia Plath, 1 typed page numbered "3".

**2.8** "The Good Life" poem, 1 typed page (*Lupercal*).

**2.10** "*The Devil of the Stairs: Poems by Sylvia Plath*" Title page only of typed MS by "Sylvia Plath / 26 Elmwood Road / Wellesley, Massachusetts" (An early title for *The Colossus*, Hughes states: "in May 1959 she wrote: 'Changed title of poetry book in an inspiration to *The Devil of the Stairs*. . . this title encompasses my book and "explains" the poems of despair, which is as deceitful as hope is.' This title lasted until October, when she was at Yaddo....").

**2.12** "The Sculptor" poem by Sylvia Plath, 1 page carbon typed with autograph corrections. Written in top right: "Grecourt R & Arts in Society". "For Leonard Baskin" written after title. (Published in *Grecourt Review*, May, 1959).

**2.14** "Alicante Lullaby" poem by Sylvia Plath, 1 typed page . On top right corner: "Sylvia Plath / Suite 61 / 9 Willow Street / Boston 8, Mass." (Published in *Crystal Gazer*, 1971).

**2.22** "A Match" poem, 1 page, autograph draft. (Published in *Recklings*, 1966).

**3.2** Unidentified poetry, 24 lines, autograph, beginning: "The bomb had already dropped / at five in the afternoon"

**3.11** Unidentified poetry, approx. 70 lines, autograph draft on a 35x45 cm sheet of brown paper (refers to his uncle, Normandy, and war).

**3.14** TLS, 21st June 1961 from BBC requesting Hughes to read

*Meet my Folks* on the Home Service in August.

**3.16** "The Calm", (play) typescript, 1 page numbered "18".

**3.18** "The Calm", (play) typescript, 1 page numbered "17".

**3.20** Short book reviews by Sylvia Plath, typescript, 1/2 page, page numbered "3" (Human and animal doodles on page, in ink).

**3.22** "Venus in the Seventh" (story) by Plath 1 typed page numbered "62".

**4.4** TLS, 1st June 1962, to Hughes from Rosemary Goad (Faber and Faber) regarding the illustrator of *Meet my Folks*.

**4.6** AL, unfinished draft, 1 page, to "Dear David and Assia" from Hughes.

**4.8** "The Warriors of the North" (*Wodwo*) 1 page, typed, with autograph corrections. On top right corner: "Hughes / Court Green / North Tawton / Devon".

**4.10** "On Westminster Bridge" 1 page, typed, unfinished. [See 4.16] On top right corner: "Hughes / Court Green / North Tawton / Devon"

**4.14** "Fragmentary Event" (poem) 1 typed page. Typed title: "Under the Oak-Leaf" crossed out. On top right corner: "Hughes / Court Green / North Tawton / Devon".

**4.16** "Midnight on Westminster Bridge" 1 typed page, differs from 4.10, and from "On Westminster Bridge" as published (*Poetry*, Dec. 1963). On top right corner: "Hughes / Court Green / North Tawton / Devon".

**5.1** Unidentified poetry draft beginning "When the skull wilted from the pretendings of iron....", 1 page, autograph.

**5.2** TL unfinished draft to N.V. Linklater (The Arts Council of Great Britain).

### **Correspondence from Ted Hughes to Graham Ackroyd (1960-1961)**

**6.1** TLS, May 20, 1960, 1 p. (with envelope)  
Refers to the art of Ackroyd and Leonard Baskin and the theme of death.

**6.2** TLS, August 4, 1960, 1 p. (with envelope)

Refers to an acquired Ackroyd painting arriving Nov. 1; describes city living and a desire to move to the country. A poem later published as "Flanders" in *Recklings* (1966) is introduced with:

"Here's a piece about an ancient battlefield on a rainy day. "

**6.3** ALS, (n.d., with envelope dated Nov. 14, 1960) 4 pp.

Refers to: photos sent by Ackroyd; his daughter; showing his wife "round the bits of England I like"; his like of Windsor chairs; Parkway Gallery; picking up paintings from Ackroyd; Germany travels; describes the origins and symbolism of his play *The House of Aries*, compares it to "the revolution in South Vietnam."

**6.4** ALS, (n.d., with envelope dated Feb. 13, 1961) 1 p. Refers to Ackroyd's painting and asks for an exchange for another; discusses "dramatic piece" [*The House of Aries?*]; comments on the personalities of women models.