

Westminster Abbey



THE DEDICATION OF THE MEMORIAL
TO
TED HUGHES OM
IN POETS' CORNER

Tuesday 6th December 2011
6.00 pm

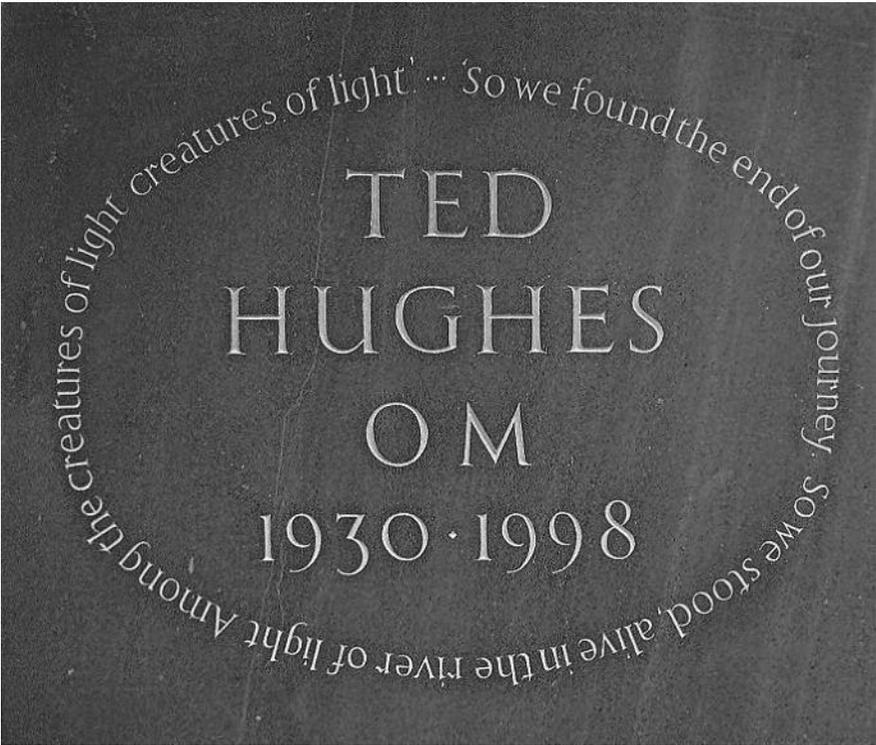
When, in January 1965, Ted Hughes heard that T S Eliot had died, he described his reaction in his journal. It was, he said,

–like a crack over the head, exactly, followed by headache. Heavy after-effects. I've so tangled him into my thoughts, as the guru-in-chief, and dreamed of him so clearly and unambiguously that this will have consequences for me. At once I felt windswept, unsafe. At the same time, realised that from now on everything will be different. He was in my mind constantly, like a rather ever-watchful, ever-powerful father, and now he has gone, I shall have to move – be able to move, maybe.

His being my publisher simply sealed his paternity. How often I've thought of going to ask for his blessing.

In 1998, when Hughes died, the reaction among fellow writers was no less anguished. Seamus Heaney spoke for many when he said, 'No death in my lifetime has hurt poetry or poets more than the death of Ted Hughes.'

It seems entirely fitting then that his memorial should sit in Poets' Corner at the foot of the stone commemorating T S Eliot.



ORDER OF SERVICE

All stand. The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster, gives

THE BIDDING

WE have come to Poets' Corner, where the word is celebrated. Here Geoffrey Chaucer lived and died, and was buried in 1400. Here William Caxton set up his printing press in 1476. Here writing in English and its publication were first achieved.

Buried here is all that could be buried of Edmund Spenser and John Dryden, Tennyson, and Browning. They are remembered; their words live on. Buried elsewhere, but honoured here, are the names of Milton, Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley, Byron, Blake, Hopkins, 20th century poets, and so many more. They are remembered here; their words continue to resonate around the world.

Now the name of Ted Hughes is to be found here too, his ledger stone at the foot of T S Eliot's, his hero and champion. Thus we honour the memory of one of the greatest English poets. May his words continue to inspire, to challenge, to encourage. May his name live for evermore.

All sit. The Lord Evans of Temple Guiting CBE reads

from A LETTER TO SYLVIA PLATH, OCTOBER 1956

Juliet Stevenson CBE reads

FULL MOON AND LITTLE FRIEDA

ANNIVERSARY

WHERE I SIT WRITING MY LETTER

THE ADDRESS

by

Seamus Heaney
Nobel Laureate

All stand for

THE DEDICATION OF THE MEMORIAL

Seamus Heaney unveils the Memorial.

The Lord Evans says:

I ASK you, Mr Dean, to receive into the safe custody of the Dean and Chapter, here in Poets' Corner, this memorial in honour and memory of Ted Hughes.

The Dean replies:

TO the greater glory of God and in thankful memory of Ted Hughes, and of all that he achieved and contributed to the literary world, I dedicate this memorial: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Flowers are laid.

All sit. Daniel Huws reads

IN MEMORY OF TED HUGHES
by R S Thomas (1913–2000)

Seamus Heaney reads

SOME PIKE FOR NICHOLAS
FOR THE DURATION
THAT MORNING

All kneel or remain seated. The Dean leads

THE PRAYERS

Let us remember before God with thanksgiving our departed brother Ted.

ALMIGHTY God, by whose power thy faithful servants walk and do not faint and in whose strength they mount up on wings like eagles: we give thee thanks for the life and skill of thy servant Ted; for his imagination, flair, creativity, and zeal for life. Grant that we, inspired by his memory, may rejoice before thee in celebration for all he has achieved and in thanksgiving for all he has bestowed on us; through him who came that we might have life and have it in abundance, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for those who by their work inspire others to comprehend beauty:

ALMIGHTY God, Beauty beyond measure, we thank thee for all those who, through art or poetry, enrich our hearts with truths eternal. Touch their craft with thy Spirit that they might speak to us thy beauty, thy love, thy transcendent majesty, ever close. And as their inspiration inspires us, work thou thy Spirit within us, that our bodies, minds, and senses might kneel in awed adoration of thee; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us give thanks to God for Ted's writings and for their prophetic voice, and let us give thanks for those who speak where others listen.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast proclaimed thine eternal truth by the voice of prophets and evangelists, and the skill of those who write: direct and bless, we beseech thee, those who in our generation speak where many listen, and write what many read; that they may play their part in making the heart of the people wise, its mind sound, and its will righteous, to the honour of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All these our prayers and praises let us now present before our heavenly Father, in the prayer our Saviour Christ has taught us:

OUR Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

All stand. The Dean pronounces

THE BLESSING

GO forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast that which is good; render to no-one evil for evil; strengthen the faint-hearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Members of the congregation are requested to remain in their places until invited to move by the Stewards.

POETS' CORNER

ALTHOUGH the whole of the South Transept is now often called 'Poets' Corner', it has long housed tombs and memorials of other writers such as historians and theologians. It was not originally designated as the burial place of writers, playwrights, and poets; Geoffrey Chaucer, the first poet to be buried here in 1400, was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey because he had been Clerk of Works to the palace of Westminster, not because he had written the *Canterbury Tales*. Some two hundred years later the author of *The Faerie Queene*, Edmund Spenser—a great admirer of Chaucer's work—chose also to be buried in the eastern aisle of this transept. These two burials began the association of this part of the church with poets and dramatists, and over time the graves and memorials have spread across the transept. A poem of 1733 'Upon the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey' is the first known use of that title, but even before this Joseph Addison had written in *The Spectator* about 'the poetical quarter'. Today the walls, floor, and windows celebrate and commemorate six hundred years of literary and artistic achievement.

The typeface used throughout this Order of Service is Albertus, created by Berthold Wolpe OBE (1905–89).

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