Chris Bean

Ms. Tattam

English 4

5/14/14

Senior Mini Poet Project

For my poet, I decided to choose English Poet Ted Hughes, who has been referred to as one of the best poets of his generation. Hughes was also a Poet Laureate in the U.K., which is an honorary position appointed by the monarchy, from 1984 until his death. He was also married to an American poet, Sylvia Plath, from 1956 until her suicide in 1963. His last work, *Birthday Letters* refers to the circumstances of her death. In 2008 Hughes was ranked as one of the top 50 British Poets since 1945. Now, to more closely examine Hughes’ life.

Ted Hughes was born on August 17, 1930 in Yorkshire. As a child he loved outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, and swimming. Hughes attended Mexborough Grammar School, where he was highly encouraged by teachers to write and pursue his interest in poetry. He then studied English at Pembroke College in 1951, but later transferred to anthropology and archeology which both helped to keep his poetry educated. After graduating, Hughes had many different varied jobs, as many aspiring patrons of the arts often do when attempting to be successful. When celebrating the release of a review with 4 of his poems included in it, Hughes was introduced to Sylvia Plath through a mutual friend. They dated for around 4 months and then were married with only one wedding guest, Plath’s mother. Hughes and Plath had two children and lived happily until Hughes had an affair which heavily influenced Plath’s depression and later suicide. In August 1970, Hughes remarried to Carol Orchard, and stayed with her until his later death. Hughes was appointed to the Order of Merit by Queen Elizabeth II. His social life heavily influenced his career as a poet.

Hughes work as a poet was generally successful. His first collection, *The Hawk in the Rain* received a moderate amount of acclaim by critics. His most respected work is generally known as *The Crow*, which was given a high amount of praise by critics for its cynical point of view, combined with a childlike style of verse. Hughes also worked on his own prose poem, *Gaudete*, for over 10 years, although it did not receive much acclaim. He also wrote translations for a number of European plays. Hughes 1,333 page *Collected Poems*, was released years after his death in 2003. Also, one of his darkest poems, *Last Letter*, which detailed the events leading up to Plath’s suicide. Hughes’ Legacy lives on in many aspects such as a memorial walk established in 2005, which traverses from the village of Belstone to Hughes’ final resting place. Also, in April of 2011, a memorial plaque which was enscribed with Hughes’ poem, *Six Young Men.* Hughes was also commemorated by a slab of limestone that was placed at the feet of the memorial to T.S. Elliot.

Hughes

In conclusion, Ted Hughes was one of the more successful poets in the last century. His poems constantly involved themes of nature, focusing on the environment, and behavior of animals, animals which typically metaphorically represented humans. This was shown through his use of the theme of beauty within violence. For his work, Hughes was well deserved of his title as Poet Laurete and one of the top 50 poets in the last century.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ted_Hughes>

http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/ted-hughes#poet

http://www.poemhunter.com/ted-hughes/biography/