

TED HUGHES

# *'The Hawk in the Rain'*

*I drown in the drumming ploughland, I drag up  
Heel after heel from the swallowing of the earth's mouth,  
From clay that clutches my each step to the ankle  
With the habit of the dogged grave, but the hawk*

*Effortlessly at height hangs his still eye.  
His wings hold all creation in a weightless quiet,  
Steady as a hallucination in the streaming air.  
While banging wind kills these stubborn hedges,*

*Thumbs my eyes, throws my breath, tackles my heart,  
And rain hacks my head to the bone, the hawk hangs  
The diamond point of will that polestars  
The sea drowner's endurance: and I,*

*Bloodily grabbed dazed last-moment-counting  
Morsel in the earth's mouth, strain towards the master-  
Fulcrum of violence where the hawk hangs still,  
That maybe in his own time meets the weather*

*Coming from the wrong way, suffers the air, hurled upside down,  
Fall from his eye, the ponderous shires crash on him,  
The horizon traps him; the round angelic eye  
Smashed, mix his heart's blood with the mire of the land.*



# JOHN KEATS

## 'Bright Star'

Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art—  
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night  
And watching, with eternal lids apart,  
Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,  
The moving waters at their priestlike task  
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,  
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask  
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—  
No—yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,  
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,  
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,  
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,  
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,  
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.



EZRA POUND

*'In a station of the metro'*

*The apparition of these faces in the crowd:*

*Petals on a wet, black bough.*



JAY HULME

*'Metaphors'*

*We're living through a plague, but the plague is a metaphor,  
and our loved ones are dying, and their deaths are metaphors,  
and I write all these poems, and the poems are metaphors,  
and the sun is so bright, and its brightness is a metaphor,  
and the sky is a metaphor, and the lockdown is a metaphor;  
and I call my boyfriend, and the phone is a metaphor,  
the screen is a metaphor, the space is a metaphor.  
and I cry at night, and my tears are metaphors,  
on my cheeks, which are metaphors,  
and the birds are metaphors, and their songs are metaphors,  
and the news is a metaphor, about a government that's a metaphor;  
we are all metaphors, in a world made of metaphors  
Nothing is itself, in times such as these,  
we drown in implications, while trying to breathe - and that, too, is a metaphor.*



JO BRATTEN

*'Blackberries'*

*August comes as it always does and with it  
come the blackberries, tangling up hedgerows  
strangling children and glutting the thrushes.*

*And here they are on the A3205 between  
a Halfords and a bus stop, blobbing darkly  
amongst municipal lavender. Do I dare*

*place one on my tongue? Will it bleed  
diesel? They survey me me with with suspicion;  
no one has ever looked at them this hard.*

*It's not their flesh I want, their summer  
sugared blood- all that bromidic communion*

*Give me a perilous quest, a red thrust*

*into sticky biting thickets, the hunt  
for the thing expected but still unfound,  
just beyond that tree, behind that leaf -*

*that thing at the forest edge where the light  
simpers like it knows you, like it knew how  
you would shred yourself to bits to find you.*