



*from* THE HORSES

I climbed through woods in the hour-before-dawn dark.  
Evil air, a frost-making stillness,

Not a leaf, not a bird –  
A world cast in frost. I came out above the wood

Where my breath left tortuous statues in the iron light.  
But the valleys were draining the darkness

Till the moorline – blackening dregs of the brightening grey –  
Halved the sky ahead. And I saw the horses:

Huge in the dense grey – ten together –  
Megalith-still. They breathed, making no move,

With draped manes and tilted hind-hooves,  
Making no sound.

I passed: not one snorted or jerked its head.  
Grey silent fragments

Of a grey silent world.

*Ted Hughes*



Ted Hughes was a Yorkshireman to his fingertips, born in Mytholmroyd in 1930, raised in the landscape of the Calder Valley and on the Pennine moorland, and speaking with a West Riding accent that enriched his powerful poetry readings. But he spent the latter part of his life living in Devon, in North Tawton. He became Poet Laureate, was appointed to the Order of Merit, and after his death in 1998 was commemorated by a plaque in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey.



