



Ariel's Gift: Ted Hughes, Sylvia Plath, and the Story of Birthday Letters

Erica Wagner

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"This erudite critical study...breathes new life into Plath scholarship."?Publishers Weekly, starred review

When Ted Hughes's *Birthday Letters* was published in 1998, it was greeted with astonishment and acclaim, immediately landing on the bestseller list. Few suspected that Hughes had been at work for a quarter of a century on this cycle of poems addressed to his first wife, Sylvia Plath. In *Ariel's Gift*, Erica Wagner explores the destructive relationship between these two poets through their lives and their writings. She provides a commentary to the poems in *Birthday Letters*, showing the events that shaped them and, crucially, showing how they draw upon Plath's own work. "Both narratively engaging and scholastically comprehensive."?Thomas Lynch, *Los Angeles Times* "Wagner has set the poems of Hughes's *Birthday Letters* in the context of his marriage to Plath with great delicacy."?Times Literary Supplement 8 pages of b/w photographs

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