

Sylvia Plath A Biography Linda Wagner Martin

Since her suicide at age thirty, Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) has been celebrated for her impeccable and ruthless poetry, which excels at describing the most extreme reaches of Plath's consciousness and passions. Her work includes the autobiographical novel, *The Bell Jar*, and such collections as *The Collossus*, *Ariel*, and the Pulitzer Prize -- winning *Collected Poems*. Based on exclusive interviews and extensive archival research, *Rough Magic* probes the events of Plath's life -- including her turbulent marriage to the English poet Ted Hughes -- in a biography that stands alone in its compassionate view of this fiercely talented, deeply troubled artist.

"A dual biography of poets, friends, and rivals Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton"-- Draws on the recently opened archives of Ted Hughes to offer new insights into the iconic poet's psyche and literary achievements, in a portrait that includes previously unpublished papers and dozens of letters exchanged between Plath and Hughes.

"A comprehensive critical and biographical reading of Maya Angelou's life and work, from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970) to *His Day Is Done*, A Nelson Mandela Tribute (2014)"--

By examining the works and life of Sylvia Plath, Linda Wagner-Martin achieves to make the story of her growth into a consummate artist both dramatic and convincing. In her narrative of the accomplished, yet tentative American girl, Wagner-Martin brings the desire to become a writer to the center of Plath's life. By this, she humanizes Plath and brings her from the status of myth and legend to the normality of a talented woman who guides her life by her continuous attempts to achieve her literary aims.

A revealing collection of letters from Pulitzer Prize–winning poet Anne Sexton While confessional poet Anne Sexton included details of her life and battle with mental illness in her published work, her letters to family, friends, and fellow poets provide an even more intimate glimpse into her private world. Selected from thousands of letters and edited by Linda Gray Sexton, the poet's daughter, and Lois Ames, one of her closest friends, this collection exposes Sexton's inner life from her boarding school days through her years of growing fame and ultimately to the months leading up to her suicide. Correspondence with writers like W. D. Snodgrass, Robert Lowell, and May Swenson reveals Sexton's growing confidence in her identity as a poet as she discusses her craft, publications, and teaching appointments. Her private letters chart her marriage to Alfred "Kayo" Sexton, from the giddy excitement following their elopement to their eventual divorce; her grief over the death of her parents; her great love for her daughters balanced with her frustration with the endless tasks of being a housewife; and her persistent struggle with depression. Going beyond the angst and neuroses of her poetry, these letters portray the full complexities of the woman behind the art: passionate, anguished, ambitious, and yearning for

connection.

"A scintillating and poignant autobiography in letters. . . . Her letters blaze with fresh and stunning revelations, with more to come."—Booklist on *The Letters of Sylvia Plath Vol 1* The second volume in the definitive, complete collection of the letters of Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, Sylvia Plath, from the early years of her marriage to Ted Hughes to the final days leading to her suicide in 1963, many never before seen. One of the most talented and beloved poets, Sylvia Plath continues to fascinate and inspire the modern literary imagination. The tragedy of her untimely death at age thirty, almost fifty-five years ago, has left much unknown about her creative and personal life. In this remarkable second volume of the iconic poet and writer's collected letters, the full range of Plath's ambitions, talents, fears, and perspective is made visible through her own powerful words. As engaging as they are revealing, these remarkable letters cover the years from 1957 to 1963. They detail the last six tumultuous and prolific years of her life, covering her marriage to Ted Hughes, the births of her children Frieda and Nicholas, her early success, including the publication of the classic *The Bell Jar*, and her ongoing struggle with depression. The first compendium of its kind to include all of Plath's letters from this period, *The Letters of Sylvia Plath Volume 2* offers an intimate portrait of the writing life and mind of one of the most celebrated poets in literary history.

New York Times Notable Book: A "beautifully written" memoir by the daughter of the brilliant, troubled poet (Detroit Free Press). This is an honest, unsparing account of the anguish and fierce love that bound a difficult mother and the daughter she left behind. Linda Sexton was twenty-one when her mother killed herself, and now she looks back, remembers, and tries to come to terms with her mother's life. Growing up with Anne Sexton was a wild mixture of suicidal depression and manic happiness, inappropriate behavior and midnight trips to the psychiatric ward. Anne taught Linda how to write, how to see, how to imagine—and only Linda could have written a book that captures so vividly the intimate details and lingering emotions of their life together. Searching for Mercy Street speaks to everyone who admires Anne Sexton and to every daughter or son who knows the pain of an imperfect childhood. "Sexton forcefully communicates the fear, repulsion, neediness, and sorrow that filled her childhood, as well as the agony of her own mental breakdown and her terror of becoming like her mother, in lucid and vivid prose." —The Boston Globe "A candid, often painful depiction of a daughter's struggles to come to terms with her powerful and emotionally troubled mother." —The New York Times

In an astonishing feat of literary detection, one of the most provocative critics of our time and the author of *In the Freud Archives* and *The Purloined Clinic* offers an elegantly reasoned meditation on the art of biography. In *The Silent Woman*, Janet Malcolm examines the biographies of Sylvia Plath to create a book not about Plath's life but about her afterlife: how her estranged husband, the poet Ted Hughes, as executor of her estate, tried to serve two masters—Plath's art

and his own need for privacy; and how it fell to his sister, Olwyn Hughes, as literary agent for the estate, to protect him by limiting access to Plath's work. Even as Malcolm brings her skepticism to bear on the claims of biography to present the truth about a life, a portrait of Sylvia Plath emerges that gives us a sense of "knowing" this tragic poet in a way we have never known her before. And she dispels forever the innocence with which most of us have approached the reading of any biography.

"I dreamed of New York, I am going there." On May 31, 1953, twenty-year-old Sylvia Plath arrived in New York City for a one-month stint at "the intellectual fashion magazine" *Mademoiselle* to be a guest editor for its prestigious annual college issue. Over the next twenty-six days, the bright, blond New England collegian lived at the Barbizon Hotel, attended Balanchine ballets, watched a game at Yankee Stadium, and danced at the West Side Tennis Club. She typed rejection letters to writers from *The New Yorker* and ate an entire bowl of caviar at an advertising luncheon. She stalked Dylan Thomas and fought off an aggressive diamond-wielding delegate from the United Nations. She took hot baths, had her hair done, and discovered her signature drink (vodka, no ice). Young, beautiful, and on the cusp of an advantageous career, she was supposed to be having the time of her life. Drawing on in-depth interviews with fellow guest editors whose memories infuse these pages, Elizabeth Winder reveals how these twenty-six days indelibly altered how Plath saw herself, her mother, her friendships, and her romantic relationships, and how this period shaped her emerging identity as a woman and as a writer. Pain, Parties, Work—the three words Plath used to describe that time—shows how Manhattan's alien atmosphere unleashed an anxiety that would stay with her for the rest of her all-too-short life. Thoughtful and illuminating, this captivating portrait invites us to see Sylvia Plath before *The Bell Jar*, before she became an icon—a young woman with everything to live for.

The controversies that surround Sylvia Plath's life and work mean that her poems are more read and studied now than ever before. This Companion provides a comprehensive and authoritative overview of Sylvia Plath's poetry, prose, letters and journals and of their place in twentieth-century culture. These essays by leading international scholars represent a spectrum of critical perspectives. They pay particular attention to key debates and to well-known texts such as *Ariel* and *The Bell Jar*, while offering thought-provoking readings to new as well as more experienced Plath readers. The Companion also discusses three additions to the field: Ted Hughes's *Birthday Letters*, Plath's complete *Journals* and the 'Restored' edition of *Ariel*. With its invaluable guide to further reading and chronology of Plath's life and work, this Companion will help students and scholars understand and enjoy Plath's work and its continuing relevance. Given in memory of Ethel A. Tsutsui, Ph. D. and Minoru Tsutsui, Ph. D. Linda Wagner-Martin's *Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald* is a twenty-first century story. Using cultural and gender studies as contexts, Wagner-Martin brings new

information to the story of the Alabama judge's daughter who, at seventeen, met her husband-to-be, Scott Fitzgerald. Swept away from her stable home life into Jazz Age New York and Paris, Zelda eventually learned to be a writer and a painter; and she came close to being a ballerina. An evocative portrayal of a talented woman's professional and emotional conflicts, this study contains extensive notes and new photographs.

Recounts the troubled life of the American poet and uses her unpublished letters and journals to depict the feelings that led her to suicide

A major literary event--the complete, uncensored journals of Sylvia Plath, published in their entirety for the first time. Sylvia Plath's journals were originally published in 1982 in a heavily abridged version authorized by Plath's husband, Ted Hughes. This new edition is an exact and complete transcription of the diaries Plath kept during the last twelve years of her life. Sixty percent of the book is material that has never before been made public, more fully revealing the intensity of the poet's personal and literary struggles, and providing fresh insight into both her frequent desperation and the bravery with which she faced down her demons. The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath is essential reading for all who have been moved and fascinated by Plath's life and work.

A biography of the American poet Sylvia Plath which presents a different view of her life and death by shifting any blame away from Plath's husband, Ted Hughes, and suggesting the problems lay in her personality difficulties.

In her last days, Sylvia Plath struggled to break out from the control of the towering figure of her husband Ted Hughes. In the antique mythology of his retinue, she had become the gorgon threatening to bring down the House of Hughes. Drawing on recently available court records, archives, and interviews, and reevaluating the memoirs of the formidable Hughes contingent who treated Plath as a female hysteric, Carl Rollyson rehabilitates the image of a woman too often viewed solely within the confines of what Hughes and his collaborators wanted to be written. Rollyson is the first biographer to gain access to the papers of Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse at Smith College, a key figure in the poet's final days. Barnhouse was a therapist who may have been the only person to whom Plath believed she could reveal her whole self. Barnhouse went beyond the protocols of her profession, serving more as Plath's ally, seeking a way out of the imprisoning charisma of Ted Hughes and friends he counted on to support a regime of antipathy against her. The Last Days of Sylvia Plath focuses on the train of events that plagued Plath's last seven months when she tried to recover her own life in the midst of Hughes's alternating threats and reassurances. In a siege-like atmosphere a tormented Plath continued to write, reach out to friends, and care for her two children. Why Barnhouse seemed, in Hughes's malign view, his wife's undoing, and how biographers, Hughes, and his cohort parsed the events that led to the poet's death, form the charged and contentious story this book has to tell.

This is the first full-length biography of Sylvia Plath, whose suicide in made her a misinterpreted cause celebre and catapulted her into the ranks of the major confessional voices of her generation.

An overview of the novel features a biographical sketch of the American author, a list of

characters, a summary of the plot, and critical and analytical views of the work. Criticism and reviews of Joyce Carol Oates' novels, such as *Them*, *Wonderland*, and *The Assassins*, are collected along with analyses of her fiction techniques and poetry. Sylvia Plath is widely recognized as one of the leading figures in twentieth-century Anglo-American literature and culture. Her work has constantly remained in print in the UK and US (and in numerous translated editions) since the appearance of her first collection in 1960. Plath's own writing has been supplemented over the decades by a wealth of critical and biographical material. The *Cambridge Introduction to Sylvia Plath* provides an authoritative and comprehensive guide to the poetry, prose and autobiographical writings of Sylvia Plath. It offers a critical overview of key readings, debates and issues from almost fifty years of Plath scholarship, draws attention to the historical, literary, national and gender contexts which frame her writing and presents informed and attentive readings of her own work. This accessibly written book will be of great use to students beginning their explorations of this important writer.

Sylvia Plath: A Literary Life examines the way Plath made herself into a writer. Close analysis of Plath's reading and apprenticeship writing both in fiction and poetry sheds considerable light on Plath's work in the late 1960s. In this updated edition there will be discussion of the aftermath of Plath's death, including the publication of her *Collected Poems*--edited by Ted Hughes--which won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1982.

Biographies of Plath will be examined along with the publication of Hughes's *Birthday Letters*. A chronology maps out key events and publications both in Plath's lifetime and posthumously.

A selection of critical essays and reviews on the work of the American poet.

"Brings together a unique collection of personal documents and critical essays to help illuminate both the legend that Sylvia Plath became and the reality behind its inception. The introduction combines a thoughtful consideration of Sylvia Plath's life and art with a fascinating account of the difficulties involved in trying to resurrect the 'real' woman from the ashes scattered in her wake after her suicide" --from back cover.

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A realistic and emotional look at a woman who falls into the grips of insanity written by the iconic American writer Sylvia Plath "It is this perfectly wrought prose and the freshness of Plath's voice in *The Bell Jar* that make this book enduring in its appeal." — USA Today *The Bell Jar* chronicles the crack-up of Esther Greenwood: brilliant, beautiful, enormously talented, and successful, but slowly going under—maybe for the last time. Sylvia Plath masterfully draws the reader into Esther's breakdown with such intensity that Esther's insanity becomes completely real and even rational, as probable and accessible an experience as going to the movies. Such deep penetration into the dark and harrowing corners of the psyche is an extraordinary accomplishment and has made *The Bell Jar* a haunting American classic. This P.S. edition features an extra 16 pages of insights into the book, including author interviews, recommended reading, and more.

"Though her life was brief, the American poet and novelist Sylvia Plath (1932-63) exerted a profound influence on contemporary writers, particularly women writers of the sixties and

seventies. Just as to her Pulitzer Prize-winning poetry Plath brought a decidedly feminist perspective, so too did she etch in her novel *The Bell Jar* a disturbing vision of life for young women in America at midcentury. *The Bell Jar* - based on Plath's own experiences as a student at Smith College, an intern at *Mademoiselle*, and a young woman battling for her own sanity amid societal mores of the times - was initially published in England under a pseudonym, its American publication stifled for years by the writer's family. When, however, the 1963 novel was finally released to U.S. audiences in 1971, it achieved both critical and popular success, and has since become a classic of feminist literature and a unique vehicle for better appreciating Plath's gifts." "It is through a multifaceted lens that Linda Wagner-Martin examines *The Bell Jar* in this new study. Whereas past critical attention has centered on *The Bell Jar* as autobiography, Wagner-Martin transcends that approach, looking as well at the novel in its larger context of the social and historical forces shaping women's lives in America during the fifties and sixties. Thus eschewing a simplistic reading of the novel, the author plumbs issues of gender, genre, and narrative voice. Arguing that Plath's troubled personal history was the product of her struggle against contemporary social forces, Wagner-Martin reviews the writer's prior work and inspects earlier, partial versions of the novel; explores Plath's use of humor and sarcasm; traces the writer's representation of patriarchal structures in the novel; and ultimately places the novel squarely in the tradition of works about women at odds with a society dominated by patriarchal values. A brilliantly argued, eminently readable approach to this masterpiece, *The Bell Jar: A Novel of the Fifties* is certain to be lauded by scholars and students alike."--BOOK JACKET.Title Summary field provided by Blackwell North America, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award in Biography • "One of the most beautiful biographies I've ever read." —Glennon Doyle, author of #1 New York Times Bestseller, *Untamed* The highly anticipated biography of Sylvia Plath that focuses on her remarkable literary and intellectual achievements, while restoring the woman behind the long-held myths about her life and art. With a wealth of never-before-accessed materials--including unpublished letters and manuscripts; court, police, and psychiatric records; and new interviews--Heather Clark brings to life the brilliant daughter of Wellesley, Massachusetts who had poetic ambition from a very young age and was an accomplished, published writer of poems and stories even before she became a star English student at Smith College in the early 1950s. Determined not to read Plath's work as if her every act, from childhood on, was a harbinger of her tragic fate, Clark evokes a culture in transition, in the shadow of the atom bomb and the Holocaust, as she explores Plath's world: her early relationships and determination not to become a conventional woman and wife; her conflicted ties to her well-meaning, widowed mother; her troubles at the hands of an unenlightened mental-health industry; her Cambridge years and thunderclap meeting with Ted Hughes, a marriage of true minds that would change the course of poetry in English; and much more. Clark's clear-eyed portraits of Hughes, his lover Assia Wevill, and other demonized players in the arena of Plath's suicide promotes a deeper understanding of her final days, with their outpouring of first-rate poems. Along with illuminating readings of the poems themselves, Clark's meticulous, compassionate research brings us closer than ever to the spirited woman and visionary artist who blazed a trail that still lights the way for women poets the world over

Sylvia Plath was one of the most gifted and innovative poets of the twentieth century, yet serious study of her work has often been hampered by a fierce preoccupation with her life and death. Tim Kendall seeks to redress the balance in his detailed and dispassionate examination of her poetry. Taking a roughly chronological structure, he traces the unique nature of Plath's poetic gift, finding - with reference to *Letters Home*, *The Bell Jar*, *The Journals* and the stories and autobiographical reminiscences - an essential unity in her inspiration, tracing the evolution of recurring themes and at the same time exhibiting her accelerated development from the

formal restraint of *The Colossus* through to the ground-breaking techniques of *Ariel*. He shows that Plath was a poet constantly remaking herself, experimenting with different styles, forms and subject matter.

A collection of poetry addressed to Hughes's late wife, poet Sylvia Plath, reexamines the psychological breakdown that led to both some of her greatest poems and to her untimely death. Reprint.

This set comprises 40 volumes covering 19th and 20th century European and American authors. These volumes will be available as a complete set, mini boxed sets (by theme) or as individual volumes. This second set compliments the first 68 volume set of *Critical Heritage* published by Routledge in October 1995.

'Provides a compelling argument for Plath's revision of the painful parts of her life--the failed marriage, her anxiety for success, and her ambivalence towards her mother. . . . The reader will feel the tension in the poetry and the life.' Choice '[Examines] Plath's twin goals of becoming a famous poet and a perfect mother. . . . This book's main points are clearly and forcefully argued: that both poems and babies require 'struggle, pain, endless labor, and . . . fears of monstrous offspring' and that, in the end, Plath ran out of the resources necessary to produce both. Often maligned as a self-indulgent confessional poet, Plath is here retrieved as a passionate theorist.'--Library Journal Susan Van Dyne's reading of twenty-five of Sylvia Plath's *Ariel* poems considers three contexts: Plath's journal entries from 1957 to 1959 (especially as they reveal her conflicts over what it meant to be a middle-class wife and mother and an aspiring writer in 1950s America); the interpretive strategies of feminist theory; and Plath's multiple revisions of the poems.

After the agony of witnessing her mother's multiple—and ultimately successful—suicide attempts, Linda Gray Sexton, daughter of the acclaimed poet Anne Sexton, struggles with an engulfing undertow of depression. Here, with powerful, unsparing prose, Sexton conveys her urgent need to escape the legacy of suicide that consumed her family—a topic rarely explored, even today, in such poignant depth. Linda Gray Sexton tries multiple times to kill herself—even though as a daughter, sister, wife, and most importantly, a mother, she knows the pain her act would cause. But unlike her mother's story, Linda's is ultimately one of triumph. Through the help of family, therapy, and medicine, she confronts deep-seated issues and curbs the haunting cycle of suicide she once seemed destined to inherit.

On a bleak February day in 1963 a young American poet died by her own hand, and passed into a myth that has since imprinted itself on the hearts and minds of millions. She was and is Sylvia Plath and *Your Own, Sylvia* is a portrait of her life, told in poems. With photos and an extensive list of facts and sources to round out the reading experience, *Your Own, Sylvia* is a great curriculum companion to Plath's *The Bell Jar* and *Ariel*, a welcoming introduction for newcomers, and an unflinching valentine for the devoted.

Eye Rhymes brings to light a side of Sylvia Plath that is scarcely known: her serious involvement in the visual arts from a very early age. She moved between art-making and writing constantly, integrating their elements with ease and pleasure. As a child she considered a poem she had written or transcribed to be complete only when illustrated by a picture. As a young teen she recorded 'technicolor' dreams that told complete stories. Her diaries, letters, and school notebooks are full of doodles and self-portraits - all revealing important truths about her. Until her junior year at Smith College, she considered her two favorite disciplines as offering equally promising choices. It was only at the age of 20 that she decided to leave fine art behind her as her chosen career,

and opt for the written word. *Eye Rhymes* presents a magnificent range of Plath's art, most of it seen in print for the first time: childhood sketches, illustrated diaries, portraits, rich modernist and expressionist paintings, fashion images, photographs, and more. The book offers a myriad of new insights into Plath's creative energy, revealing unexpected themes and ideas that first saw light in visual form, to be re-born later in her greatest poetry. Drawing on the large collections of Indiana University's Lilly Library and Smith College's Mortimer Rare Book Room, it presents an in-depth examination of Sylvia Plath's visual art and literary studies, and their uses in her writing career. Kathleen Connors's illuminating account of Plath as artist and writer opens a rich seam of ideas developed further by distinguished Plath scholars Sally Bayley, Christina Britzolakis, Susan Gubar, Langdon Hammer, Fan Jinghua, and Diane Middlebrook. The writers contextualize approximately sixty of Plath's works within her writing oeuvre, starting with juvenilia that reveal the extensive play between her two disciplines. The book gives special attention to Plath's unpublished teen diaries and book reports, which contain drawings and early textual experiments, created years before her famous 'I am I' diary notes of age seventeen, when critical examination of her writing usually begins. The contributors offer new critical approaches to the artist's multidimensional oeuvre, including writing that appropriates sophisticated visual and colour effects years after painting and drawing became her hobby and writing her chosen profession. Essayists demonstrate Plath's visual art interests as they relate to her early identity as a writer in Cambridge, her teen artwork and writing on war, her mid-career 'art poems' on the works of Giorgio de Chirico, her representations of womanhood within mid-century commercial culture, and her visual aesthetics in poetry. *Eye Rhymes* offers exciting new material on the life and work of Sylvia Plath, designed for the general public as well as Plath specialists, on the 75th anniversary of her birth in 1932.

'Assia was my true wife, and the best friend I ever had', wrote Ted Hughes, after his lover surrendered her life and that of their young daughter in 1969, six years after Sylvia Plath had suffered a similar fate. Diva, she-devil, enchantress, muse, Lillith, Jezebel - Assia inspired many epithets during her life. The tragic story of Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes has always been related from one of two points of view: hers or his. Missing for over four decades had been a third: that of Hughes's mistress. This first biography of Assia Wevill views afresh the Plath-Hughes relationship and at the same time, recounts the journey that shaped her life. Wevill's is a complex story, formed as it is by the pull of often contrary forces.

On 25 February 1956, twenty-three-year-old Sylvia Plath walked into a party and immediately spotted Ted Hughes. This encounter - now one of the most famous in all literary history - was recorded by Plath in her journal, where she described Hughes as a 'big, dark, hunky boy'. Sylvia viewed Ted as something of a colossus, and to this day his enormous shadow has obscured Plath's life and work. The sensational aspects of the Plath-Hughes relationship have dominated the cultural landscape to such an extent that their story has taken on the resonance of a modern myth. After Plath's suicide in February 1963, Hughes became Plath's literary executor, the guardian of her writings, and, in effect responsible for how she was perceived. But Hughes did not think much of Plath's prose writing, viewing it as a 'waste product' of her 'false self', and his determination to market her later poetry - poetry written after she had begun her relationship with him - as the crowning glory of her career, has meant that her other

earlier work has been marginalised. Before she met Ted, Plath had lived a complex, creative and disturbing life. Her father had died when she was only eight, she had gone out with literally hundreds of men, had been unofficially engaged, had tried to commit suicide and had written over 200 poems. Mad Girl's Love Song will trace through these early years the sources of her mental instabilities and will examine how a range of personal, economic and societal factors - the real disquieting muses - conspired against her. Drawing on exclusive interviews with friends and lovers who have never spoken openly about Plath before and using previously unavailable archives and papers, this is the first book to focus on the early life of the twentieth century's most popular and enduring female poet. Mad Girl's Love Song reclaims Sylvia Plath from the tangle of emotions associated with her relationship with Ted Hughes and reveals the origins of her unsettled and unsettling voice, a voice that, fifty years after her death, still has the power to haunt and disturb.

Explores the work and tormented life of the American poet, a woman who struggled with mental illness throughout her career, finally taking her own life in 1974

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