

# A Wishful Artist

There comes a point in any miserable being's life where a crisis sets in. Fame and money all come with a price. You sell your authenticity for cheap thrills. Money pays the bills, but what truly quenches the ill desires? This artist, Ted Hughes, was an intellectual. He had a period where his art was regarded as perfect. His work was marvelled at, and every child was taught to dissect his perfect work. Nevertheless, when one is propped upon a golden pedestal filled with ancient jewels, it becomes thick with slippery ice. With one wrong slice, you can slip into oblivion. I would be lying if I said to you that you could get much higher. It becomes dire after a while. You become that ancient jewel shoved away in some forgotten shopping aisle. So, ride the Nile and follow it to the end of the nocturne.

The engraving by Ted Hughes had become a worn-out ornament. It had become Pablo Picasso, a commercialised rêve sold on a silver platter. His work force-fed on every trite market table. Hughes' was a dove who no longer descended upon lovers. He was no symbol of freedom, or a servant of peace. Women wept at his ineptitude. They slept at the thought of him. Mami swept his paintings under the sofa, hoping her pompous master would not upbraid her for leaving them out too long. Ted sat puzzled, troubled, and perplexed at how he had let his fame shame him. He sat by his amber whiskey, humming the tune of Alabama's prehistoric national anthem. O' don't ask why! The door stared him right in the glaucous eye. His glass whispered, loathing him for becoming a fly on the wall. Why don't you just die? said a shadowy scourge. All he heard were the school bullies deriding his worth. He refilled his crystal ship and drank from it. Each sip sinking him deeper into unconsciousness. Each sip broke him through to the other side. The forbidden fruit lay his arse bare; on occasion, letting out an unruly snare. Suddenly the phone rang. It had a queer tang to it. He begrudgingly picked her up, and placed her to his blocked ear. No one bothered to ring nowadays. It left him with a bitter sting, a tight G-string between his crotches. A voice spoke so gently and kindly, that he had forgotten people could be affable.

"Hughes, look, Brother, we need this project finished soon. We gave you the canvas, studio—everything you need." Hoarsening their voice, "Will you be able to finish her within a week?" It sounded so caring and so sincere. His alcohol-ridden breath seeped through the landline, like a salty brine.

“Michael, I physically can’t; my mind bends and ends with the same conclusion. Nothing seems to work. Even liquor has disowned me.” Hughes mewed his pity.

“Look, you have your duties; I got you this fucking job; don’t be a yob. Make anything Hughes—anything. Paint a fucking rose, a self-portrait—SOMETHING I BEG OF YOU!” A desperate taciturnity besought Hughes, and then, the line went dumb. His last friend had forsaken him. Hughes’s anger grew fat, and impregnated with a righteous self-importance.

Who did Michael think he was? Why doesn’t he try so hard, if it really is that simple?

Hughes stood up and wandered to his blank, emotionless canvas. He had turned her the other way, so as to avoid her reprove: it reminded him of his beloved mother. They never got along; she always dug her nails in him. Hammering, hammering, building resentment into him, as she had likewise done to their father. Who, inevitably, did the honourable thing and took his own life due to these harrying circumstances. What was Hughes to paint? He had no faint idea. A saint? O’ how quaint! No, he needed something rife with emotions.

Five minutes had passed by now, and nothing came from his mind. Was he really so purblind? His third eye, a once all-seeing, all-knowing mind, had become but blind. The canvas stared at him, cursing, just like his mother used to. He downed his glass of whiskey, and threw it at the wall. Stand tall, don’t let her lowball you. He wrought to empower himself, feel something besides abashment, alas, he could not do so, with the serpentine scorn of his mother in his ear. He was always a slave to his mother’s temper. In a rueful instant, his legs broke, crashing to the floor. He wept, his childhood trauma crept, knocking on Present’s door.

God impromptu shone a brilliant light. It gave him a jolly good fright, for, at last, he knew what was wrong. His vision, and eyes, had been deceiving him. They were holding him back. Preventing the true Einstein from being unleashed upon the idiotic world. If only he could eviscerate them from their gorges, his whole existence would be whirled into a novel kind of productivity. He raised his hands to the sky, and with all the pity left within him, he cried out:

“O lord, if you hear me, with your finest tweezers, pluck out my eyes! Clear me of my useless sight. Let it cause me great spite! All I plead for is a need of sightless clarity! Think of the endless possibilities.” Tears flooded from his wobegone face. He, after much prayerful vanity, decided it was now time to slumber. There was, after all, no God. No big man is watching hidden in the empyrean above. That had just been one sick game to control the peasants in the mediaeval ages. Tomorrow is but a day away, thought Hughes. Another lonesome day for him to keep his daemons at bay.

He lifted his sterile, anaemia-white duvet open. She let him inside. He, after all, needed a place to reside. His mother never comforted him at night, never joined him in bed, and lent a shoulder to cry upon. Here, in this homely bed, he sought an easeful connection. He hefted his arthritic thumb, placed it betwixt his two front teeth, and heaved. His thumb was constricted under such enormous pressure, nevertheless, it was his way of cossetting himself. His last thoughts, before he drifted into paralytic insomnolence, were of the morrow. He had to deliver something, lest he wished to dissolve amongst

irrelevancies alike. Being the lauded Ted Hughes, though, he was inoculated against these strains of ailments—or so he believed.

The birds burped their ungentlemanly songs, waking him from his inert sopor. There was an awkward cumber, blockading his eyes from opening. The room seemed so dark, and yet it was April. The Berlin Wall seemed to have been built during his rest, commanded by doltish Trump. Had Hughes himself contracted some overnight lurgy? Had a non-self-organism initiated war? He pried his lids ajar, however, no light passed through; he saw but a thick gloaming. His pupils were vacant to anything save the colour black. An onyx would have been brighter than what he saw. His jaw was in awe. Saliva drooled down his pores and neck. The Three Gorges gave way to copious amounts of sweat. London Bridge was to fall. His head began pounding with a megrim. He hankered for paracetamol. But how was he to find this remedy in the ocean of shades before him? A tsunami of guilt rushed his nervous system. He recalled his damnatory wish.

Alas, how many times had he asked and supplicated the aid from an angel in heaven, and been given no such avail?!

He must have summoned Lucifer, for this was he who was to suffer. He had become an artistic martyr. His mind had been reduced to a Windows XP buffer.

His fear began to subside, it soon became his newly-wedded bride. What does a blind man feel? Do they suffer from their own prejudices? The white man's burden. One man's pride is another man's prejudice. The black man deals with racism, the female is handed misogyny, but what did the blind man face? Was he his own individual race? All these toilsome notions were injected into Hughes's cell membrane. He was coming to terms with the life beggared in his fore.

Light started to glisten, as he shivered inside his carapace. He removed his cancerous self-contempt from where it resided, and handed it an eviction slip. He bit his lip, haemorrhaging blood. The metallic taste poured over his feverous senses. Images flashed within his erratic mind. He saw colours; these colours had no real form, all the same, they caused a swarm of philosophical thoughts to brew. Thunder fulgurated, and struck him. Paintings inundated his imagination: olde mosaics, ruined temples, otherworldly images. Lisas moaning and shouting at their husbands. He envisaged screams, contrasting with the sombrous clowns that sat uttering no words. The devil dressed in a cochineal, Prada jester suit reposed atop nothing, locked to his immaterial chair in a stalwart trance, locked in an infinite stance. He saw two lovers wrapped in their silken amour, and gold duvets, making sweet, sweet love! Above, he saw a starry night stirring, both the argent moon and the orange sun eclipsed, joined to the hip like Siamese twins. God had pardoned all their sins.

Not all of his visions, however, were so elegant. Some were ribald and grotesque, delineating a harlot fellating an unshorn fawn. In an additional instance, Saturn had, recently, been placed in a mental asylum and developed a mania, inducing him to devour his beloved son. It was no fun being overrun by suffusive horrors, and peculiar oddities.

At the start, he was able to cart these negative prohibitions, and shun them to a land bereft. He had,

somehow, reached the ground floor. He bore many scars from his tumescent tumbles. He had, nonetheless, attained his fatidic destination—his final destination even.

His hand had evolved; it was as if losing his sight had caused some inhuman mutation within his other senses. He pondered to himself if this was worth all the fleshly expenses? An all inclusive surgical procedure, excepting the physical extortion and pain. When he commenced his endeavours, a spasmodic jerk would occur. He ascribed it to his body acclimatising to its new toy, for he was having too much joy.

The clock struck eight o'clock, when his brush gave way to the friction it had so endured—all day long. Its wheels had burned out. No doubt, so had he. You see, he had been tireless since we last checked his attendance sheet. The canvas was not the sole thing he had been molesting, since, whilst protesting, he had been embalmed by these saturnine feelings. His laces had been tied to each other with the utmost malice, causing Humpty Dumpty to crack and smack upon the floor. Metaphorically, of course.

Hughes had been enlightened with the divine gift of never-ending inner conceptions, eternising throughout his now fanciful mausoleum, however, these were his illusory deceptions. He knew not what he was, in reality, painting. Was it worth the hassle? Did he care enough to battle for the Man in the High Castle's tassel? The pellucid diamonds, gauzy silk, woollen cashmere, and prosaic rhinestones. He had jumped in the wishing well, as a desperate attempt to retrieve his sanity. Greta had run out of breadcrumbs to help him find his way back. He was entombed alive, suffocating in visceral excruciations. He had lost his wits.

He remembered not having transgressed such bounds, but he was the assailant who had cleaved his eyes out of their fatuous little head, as of pygmy gadflies. He had operated upon himself, during a hysteria of bashful somnambulism (even sleep despised Hughes), bidding him to manifest his doctoring of his eyes. Or a shedding of their skin, was the terminology Hughes gave. Toilet paper shawled around his head; he looked like a Grecian deity, without a fruitless velleity. He had given up walking, festering a devolution. He lay sprawled on all fours; he was now one of Doctor Moreau's forgotten projects. He was an ill omen. A Roman mural. He had lost all his neural activity. He cackled; his voice had taken the tone of an execrable witch; bewitched by Shaman Blues. His ego had suffered a mighty big bruise. He had found all the booze in the sobriety of his abstinent home. The highest in the room. Wondrous death and dour gloom. He had finally escaped his mother's libellous womb.

He grabbed the nearest blade; he always kept one at hand, in case of suicidal urgencies. He was not shy. Prepared all the time to take an easy ride, and sail along the Styx to the gates of Hades. Mithering his moanful injustices of triviality to Charon the while they travelled. He took a deep breath, as the train dissevered his jugular veins. They burst from such oppressive strain. Sweet Mary Jane. There was almost a poetic taste to this. For, though his work was always hit or miss, he had now become this bottomless abyss. A fleur-de-lis. The prettiest star glinted her last breath, swallowed her lordly pride,

and accepted ineluctable death.

Wishful sin, my children. You can make a deal with the devil, but know he shan't rest until he can revel in your demise. Be careful what you pray for, because it might just come true. Miring you in paralysis upon your loo to spew all your sinful poo. Goodnight, ladies.