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Vote for Your Favourite 20th Century Poets Right IconThis ranking is based on an algorithm that combines various factors, including the votes of our users and search trends on the internet. Rabindranath TagoreBirthplace: Kolkata, West Bengal, IndiaRabindranath Tagore was an Indian polymath who contributed greatly to the fields of literature, art, and philosophy. Referred to as the Bard of Bengal, Tagore is credited with reshaping Bengali literature and music. The first non-European to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature, Tagore is also credited with composing the national anthems of India and Bangladesh.Maya Angelou(American Poet and Civil Rights Activist Known for Her Autobiography 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings')Birthplace: St. Louis, Missouri, United StatesPoet, author, and civil rights activist Maya Angelou was a champion of black feminism and is best remembered for her autobiography, 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sing'. The recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom and over 50 honorary degrees was also a child sex abuse survivor.Sylvia Plath(Famous for Her Books 'The Bell Jar' and 'Ariel')Birthdate: October 27, 1932Birthplace: Boston, Massachusetts, United StatesSylvia Plath was an American short-story writer, novelist, and poet. Plath is credited with popularizing confessional poetry and won a posthumous Pulitzer Prize in Poetry. Sylvia Plath achieved popularity and critical acclaim despite suffering from clinical depression for the most part of her adult life. Her story inspired the 2003 film Sylvia in which she was portrayed by Gwyneth Paltrow.Recommended Lists: Robert Frost(American Poet Who was Known for His Realistic Depictions of Rural Life)Birthdate: March 26, 1874Birthplace: San Francisco, California, United StatesRobert Frost was an American poet. An influential poet, Frost was honored with four Pulitzer Prizes for Poetry, the only poet to receive four such awards. One of America's public literary figures, Robert Frost received the Congressional Gold Medal in 1960. His works influenced other poets like Robert Francis, James Wright, Edward Thomas, Richard Wilbur, and Seamus Heaney.T. S. Eliot(Best Known as a Leader of the Modernist Movement in Poetry)Birthdate: September 26, 1888Birthplace: St. Louis, Missouri, United StatesAmerican-born British poet T. S. Eliot is best remembered for his poems The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock, The Waste Land, and Ash Wednesday, and his plays such as Murder in the Cathedral. He won the Nobel Prize for literature and became a prominent figure of Modernist poetry. Sarojini Naidu(Indian Political Activist, Poet, and 1st Governor of United Provinces)Birthdate: February 13, 1879Birthplace: Hyderabad, IndiaSarojini Naidu was an Indian poet and political activist. An important figure in the Indian Independence Movement, she was a proponent of anti-imperialistic ideas, women's rights, and civil rights. Her illustrious career as a poet earned her the nickname Nightingale of India. After India became independent, she became the first woman to hold the office of Governor in the Dominion of India.Langston Hughes(One of the Earliest Innovators of the Literary Art Form Called Jazz Poetry)Birthdate: February 1, 1901Birthplace: Joplin, Missouri, United StatesLangston Hughes is best remembered as a prominent leader of the Harlem Renaissance. He was one of the first to write jazz poetry. He also wrote plays and short stories. He was a columnist for The Chicago Defender and wrote the iconic poem The Negro Speaks of Rivers.Birthdate: September 25, 1930Birthplace: Chicago, Illinois, United StatesShel Silverstein was an American writer, playwright, songwriter, and cartoonist. Renowned for his children's books, songs, and cartoons, Silverstein's works have been translated into over 30 languages. The recipient of many prestigious awards, such as Grammy Awards, Shel Silverstein was posthumously inducted into the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame.W B Yeats(One of the Greatest English-Language Poets of the 20th Century and 1923 Nobel Prize for Literature Winner)Birthplace: Sandymount, IrelandNobel Prize-winning Irish poet, playwright, and prose writer W. B. Yeats is remembered as one of the most significant literary figures of the 20th century. Known for works such as The Tower, he also helped establish the Abbey Theatre. An occult enthusiast, he was also part of The Ghost Club.Charles Bukowski(Poet and Author Known for His Work "Mockingbird Wish Me Luck," and "Love Is a Dog from Hell")Birthdate: August 16, 1920Birthplace: Andernach, GermanyGerman-American poet and short story writer, Charles Bukowski, addressed the ordinary lives of poor Americans in most of his works. Since his death, he has been the subject of many critical books and articles. His stories have inspired several films like Tales of Ordinary Madness, Crazy Love, and Factotum.Pablo NerudaBirthplace: Parral, ChileChilean poet-diplomat and politician, Pablo Neruda, won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1971. He was a versatile writer and his works include surrealist poems, historical epics, political manifestos, and love poems. He is considered the national poet of Chile. As a politician, he served a term as a senator for the Chilean Communist Party and held several diplomatic positions. Ted Hughes(Poet and Children's Writer)Birthdate: August 17, 1930Poet and children's author Ted Hughes is best remembered for his iconic poems The Hawk in the Rain, Birthday Letters, and Crow. He was married to poet Sylvia Plath, who eventually committed suicide at 30. Most people blamed him for mistreating Plath and indirectly causing her death. Ezra Pound(American Poet and Critic Known for His Works: 'Riposte', 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' and the Epic Poem 'The Cantos')Birthdate: October 30, 1885Birthplace: Idaho, United StatesAmerican poet Ezra Pound was a significant figure in the modernist poetry movement who developed imagism and gained fame with works such as Riposte and The Cantos. He later promoted social credit theory. During World War II, he supported fascism, participating in radio broadcasts against the U.S. and Jews. W. H. Auden(One of the Greatest Authors of 20th Century)Birthdate: February 21, 1907Birthplace: York, England, United KingdomW. H. Auden was an Anglo-American poet. His poetry was noted for its technical achievement and versatility. He wrote poems on love, political and social themes, and cultural and psychological themes. Throughout his career, Auden was both influential and controversial. His personal life also attracted attention as he had sexual relationships with men, which was unusual at the time.Rainer Maria Rilke(Austrian Poet and Novelist Known for His Poetry Collections 'Duino Elegies' and 'Sonnets to Orpheus')Birthdate: December 4, 1875Birthplace: Prague, Czech RepublicBohemian-Austrian poet and author Rainer Maria Rilke is best remembered for his numerous poetry collections and his only novel, The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge. His works contain metaphors, contradictions, and elements drawn from Greek mythology. Though most of his works were in German, he had also written in French.Birthdate: August 9, 1922Birthplace: Radford, Coventry, United KingdomRobert GravesBirthplace: Wimbledon, EnglandD. H. Lawrence(English Writer and Poet Known for His Novels: 'Sons and Lovers', 'The Rainbow' and 'Women in Love')Birthdate: September 11, 1885Birthplace: Eastwood, England, United KingdomEnglish writer, D. H. Lawrence, was known for exploring sensitive issues, such as sexuality, emotional health, and instinct. In his works, he often reflected upon the dehumanizing effects of modernity and industrialization. The sexual nature of his writings earned him many enemies. Even though he died at the relatively young age of 44, he left behind a rich literary legacy.J. R. R. Tolkien(Author of 'The Hobbit' & 'The Lord of the Rings')Birthdate: January 3, 1892Birthplace: Bloemfontein, South AfricaConsidered one of the greatest authors, J.R.R. Tolkien is popularly called the father of the modern fantasy literature. He is best known for his high fantasy classic works The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings, which is set in a conceived world called the Middle-earth. Many years after his death, Tolkien continues to be one of the best-selling writers.Edna St. Vincent MillayBirthdate: Februay 22, 1892Birthplace: Rockland, Maine, United StatesAllen Ginsberg(Best Known for His Poem 'Howl,' Which is One of the Most Significant Products of the 'Beat Movement')Birthplace: Newark, New Jersey, United StatesAllen Ginsberg, a Beat Generation poet, is best remembered for his 1956 poem Howl, which criticized U.S. capitalism and described homosexual acts, and was thus banned. He earned the National Book Award for The Fall of America and was a Pulitzer Prize finalist for Cosmopolitan Greetings: Poems 1986-1992.A. A. Milne(Best Known for His Books about the Teddy Bear 'Winnie-the-Pooh' and Children's Poetry)Birthdate: January 18, 1882Birthplace: London, EnglandA. A. Milne was an English author best known for his books about the teddy bear Winnie-the-Pooh. He joined the British Army as a young man and served in both World War I and World War II. In his career as a writer, he wrote several novels, non-fiction pieces, articles, poems, screenplays, and children's stories.William Faulkner(Regarded as One of the Most Significant American Writers of All Time)Birthdate: September 25, 1897Birthplace: New Albany, Mississippi, United StatesNobel Prize-winning Southern author William Faulkner is remembered for works The Sound and the Fury, A Rose for Emily, and As I Lay Dying. He immortalized Mississippi as the fictional 'Yoknapatawpha County' in his works. He also won two Pulitzerz, one each for A Fable and The Reivers.Vladimir Nabokov(Best Known For His Novels 'Invitation' and 'Pale Fire')Birthdate: April 23, 1899Birthplace: Saint Petersburg, RussiaRussian author Vladimir Nabokov, also known by his pen name, Vladimir Sirin, is best remembered for his controversial novel Invitation. His other works include the novel Pale Fire and his memoir, Speak, Memory. He was also an entomologist, specializing in lepidoptery. He also liked composing chess problems.Jack Kerouac(Novelist and Poet Best Known for His Novels: 'On the Road', 'The Dharma Bums' and 'Desire Under the Star')Birthdate: March 12, 1922Birthplace: Lowell, Massachusetts, United StatesJack Kerouac is remembered as a prominent figure of the Beat Generation. His works, consisting of several novels and poems, write their focus on spiritualty, drugs, travel, sex, and jazz paved the way for the hippie movement. He is best known for his pathbreaking novel On the Road/French writer, poet, aristocrat, and journalist, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, is best remembered for his novella, The Little Prince. He was a pioneering aviator as a young man. A successful commercial pilot before World War II, he joined the French Air Force at the start of the war. Equally successful as a writer, he won several of France's highest literary awards.Bertolt Brecht(Theatre Practitioner, Playwright, and Poet Known for His Plays: 'The Threepenny Opera' and 'Life of Galileo')Birthdate: February 10, 1898Birthplace: Augsburg, GermanyGerman playwright, poet, and theater director, Bertolt Brecht, is best known for co-writing the play, The Threepenny Opera, with Kurt Weill. Growing up in war-torn Germany in the early 20th century, he had a difficult life. A hardcore Marxist, he lived in exile during the Nazi period. He returned to Germany after the war and established a theater company.Chinua AchebeBirthdate: November 16, 1930Birthplace: Ogidì, Nigeria ProtectorateChinua Achebe was a Nigerian poet, novelist, professor, and critic. Often described as Africa's greatest storyteller, Achebe is widely regarded as the father of modern African writing. He was the recipient of several awards and honors, including the Man Booker International Prize 2007. His novel Things Fall Apart is one of the most read books in Africa.Hermann Hesse(Poet, Novelist & Painter Who Won the 1946 Nobel Prize in Literature)Birthplace: Calw, GermanyGerman-born Swiss poet, novelist, and painter Hermann Hesse received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1946. He explored individuals' search for authenticity, self-knowledge, and spirituality in his works. An intense and headstrong person from childhood, he developed an early interest in reading. He started writing as a young man and became an influential author in the German-speaking world. Birthdate: March 26, 1859Birthplace: Fockbury, EnglandMargaret Atwood(Poet, Novelist, Literary Critic & Environmental Activist)Birthdate: November 18, 1939Birthplace: Ottawa, CanadaMargaret Atwood is a Canadian poet and novelist. Her works encompass themes, such as religion and myth, climate change, and gender and identity. An award-winning writer, many of Atwood's works have been made into films and television series; her work, The Handmaid's Tale, has had several adaptations. Perhaps, Margaret Atwood's most important contribution is her invention of the LongPen device.Gilbert K. Chesterton(One of the Greatest Writers of the 20th Century Best Known as the 'Prince of Paradox')Birthplace: Kensington, London, United KingdomGilbert K. Chesterton was an English writer, philosopher, and art critic. A prolific writer, he composed around 80 books, hundreds of poems, around 200 short stories, and 4,000 essays. Often referred to as the "prince of paradox", he had as many detractors as he had admirers. He is considered a successor to Victorian authors like Matthew Arnold and John Ruskin.Michael Rosen(Children's author and poet who has written 140 books)Birthplace: Harrow, Middlesex, England, United KingdomJean Cocteau(French Author and Artist Who Was One of the Foremost Creatives of the 'Surrealist,' 'Avant-Garde,' and 'Dadaist' Movements)Birthplace: Maisons-Laffitte, FranceWhile Jean Cocteau preferred calling himself a poet, his multidimensional works consisted of novels such as Les Enfants Terribles and films directed by him such as La Belle et la Bête. Cocteau relied on motifs such as eyes, blood, and mirrors, and mingled mythology and modernism.Boris Pasternak(Russian Poet & Novelist Who Won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1958)Birthdate: February 10, 1890Birthplace: Moscow, RussiaSon of an artist father and a pianist mother, Boris Pasternak initially wished to become a musician. He is best known for his novel Doctor Zhivago, set against backdrop of the Russian Revolution. The Soviet Communists forced him to decline the Nobel Prize, which his descendants later accepted.John UpdikeBirthdate: March 18, 1932Birthplace: Reading, Pennsylvania, United StatesRobert Ludlum(Author of 27 thriller novels, best known as the creator of Jason Bourne from the original The Bourne Trilogy series)Birthplace: New York City, United StatesDylan Thomas(1923-1953) Welsh poet, poet laureate, and actor. He was known for his powerful and evocative poetry. His use of language is often poetic and evocative, and his poems often explore themes of nature, love, and life's struggles. His use of metaphors and symbols makes his poetry accessible and relatable, while still managing to be thought-provoking and beautiful. Lawrence's poetry is a wonderful way to explore the depths of human emotion and to find beauty in the everyday. Thomas Hardy: You must know him as a novelist and poet about nature, animals, and the people of India and Pakistan. Kipling's poetry is a testament to his skill and insight as a poet and has inspired countless others to explore the art of poetry. Ted Hughes: Ted Hughes' poetry is relevant today because it is steeped in a deep sense of the environment, both natural and cultural. His work often explores the relationship between humans and nature, and his use of vivid and often dark imagery has a powerful effect. Hughes' style was deeply rooted in the traditional forms and structures of English poetry, but he was also able to experiment with surreal and abstract language and concepts to create his own unique style. His use of symbolism, figurative language and poetic devices such as metaphor and allusion adds to the complexity and depth of his work. His poems are often thought-provoking and can be seen as a commentary on the human experience. Philip Larkin: Philip Larkin's poetry is some of the most beautiful and powerful writing ever composed. His intricate use of imagery and poetic devices make each poem a captivating and thought-provoking experience. Whether you're a fan of poetry or not, his work is definitely worth exploring. Enjoy! Rudyard Kipling: Rudyard Kipling was one of the most famous poets of the late 19th and 20th century and his works are still celebrated today. His poetry is known for its vivid imagery and rhythmic patterns. Kipling often wrote about the British Empire and its relationship to the lands it colonized. He also wrote about nature-war world, and about squared encounters in bedstis to chatter in East End pubs. The allusions to nymphs, Erisias, and Elizabethan England suggest at once a continuity with the past and a break with it – everything is simultaneously worse than it used to be, and yet the same as it ever was. In some ways, Eliot's poem expresses the end of civilisation as Shakespeare, Greek myth, and various holy texts go through the literary waste-disposal, regurgitated only as fragments. One of the high points of the modernist movement and one of the most important and influential poems of the twentieth century. 4. Langston Hughes, 'I, Too'. The finest poet of the Harlem Renaissance, Hughes (1902-67) often wrote about the lives of African Americans living in America, especially in New York, in the early twentieth century. In an allusive nod to Walt Whitman's poem 'I Hear America Singing', Hughes – describing himself as the 'darker brother' – highlights the plight of African Americans at the time, having to eat separately from everyone else in the kitchen when guests arrive, but determined to strive and succeed in the 'Land of the Free'. 5. W. H. Auden, 'September 1, 1939'. Auden (1907-73) had the opposite trajectory to Eliot's: born in Yorkshire, he emigrated to the United States shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, and wrote this, one of his most famous poems, on the day that Nazi Germany invaded Poland. The poem earns its place on this list for two reasons: Auden's was an important poetic voice in the mid-twentieth century, and he wrote about many atrocities, wars, and injustices from the Holocaust to the Japanese invasion of China, but the poem also has an immediacy in being written so soon after the events which plunged Europe, and eventually the rest of the world, into another major conflict. Although Auden disowned the poem, it remains well-loved by many of his readers. It also struck a chord with many people reading it in the wake of the September 11 attacks of 2001. 6. Allen Ginsberg, 'Howl'. 'I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness', this classic poem of the Beat Generation famously begins. Completed in 1955, 'Howl' is dedicated to Carl Solomon, whom Ginsberg had met in a mental institution, and the poem is, in one sense, an extended meditation on mental instability and despair. Are those who we consider 'sane' really so? And are those who are branded 'mad' really insane? This is the quintessential Beat poem. 7. Sylvia Plath, 'Lady Lazarus'. The 1960s was the great decade of Confessional poetry, best typified by American poets such as John Berryman, Robert Lowell, Anne Sexton, and most famously of all, Sylvia Plath. Plath's poem is about her numerous suicide attempts and addresses the challenging subject matter in a direct and honest way, yet the poem is also technically dextrous and weaves in references to mythology and unlikely poetic frames of reference too. 8. Philip Larkin, 'This Be The Verse'. Poets had used naughty swear words before 1971, but Philip Larkin's famous poem about parents really marked a watershed in twentieth-century poetry, with his colloquial and no-nonsense opening line cutting through the pretentiousness (as he saw it) of high modernism and offering something more relatable and universal. The poem was published three years later in Larkin's final collection, High Windows (1974) and is one of the most famous poems to come out of 'the Movement', the mid-century anti-modernist movement to which Larkin belonged. We have analysed this poem here. 9. Maya Angelou, 'Life Doesn't Frighten Me'. An important voice in the Civil Rights movement and its aftermath in the second half of the twentieth century, Maya Angelou became one of the most popular poets of her lifetime, both in the United States and elsewhere. A poem about overcoming fear and not allowing it to master you, 'Life Doesn't Frighten Me' is a powerful declaration of self-belief and the importance of facing one's fears. Angelou lists a number of things, from barking dogs to grotesque fairy tales in the Mother Goose tradition, but comes back to her mantra: 'Life doesn't frighten me at all'. We're especially fond of Angelou's image of walking the ocean floor and never having to breathe. 10. Carol Ann Duffy, 'Warming Her Pearls'. When H. D. was writing imagist poetry at the beginning of the twentieth century, the poet's bisexuality could only be hinted at through coded symbol and allusion. By the end of the twentieth century, the Scottish poet Carol Ann Duffy (born 1955) could explore same-sex desire in a more direct way, as in this beautiful poem about hidden love and desire between a servant and her mistress. Subscribe to get the latest poets sent to your email. 403 The 20th century was a time of dramatic change in British literature, with poetry undergoing a significant evolution. From the experimentation with modernist techniques to the emergence of new voices that represented a broader spectrum of society, British poets in this period contributed enormously to the global literary landscape. This article explores 15 of the most influential British poets of the 20th century, focusing on their literary contributions, notable works, and the lasting influence they had on poetry and culture. 15 British Poets Of The 20th Century 1. T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) Literary Contributions T. S. Eliot is widely regarded as one of the most important modernist poets of the 20th century. He introduced a fragmented, symbolic, and often elusive style, which broke with the romantic and Victorian traditions of poetry. Eliot's work often reflects themes of disillusionment, alienation, and the quest for meaning in an increasingly chaotic world. Notable Works Eliot's major works include The Waste Land (1922), The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock (1915), and The Hollow Men (1925). The Waste Land is particularly influential, offering a stark portrayal of post-World War I society. His Four Quartets (1943) stands as a profound exploration of time, spirituality, and the human condition. Influence Eliot's modernist approach transformed English poetry. He introduced techniques such as stream-of-consciousness and intertextuality. His works influenced numerous poets and writers, including W.H. Auden, Ezra Pound, and even American writers like Wallace Stevens. 2. W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) Literary Contributions Although Yeats began his career in the late 19th century, his poetry evolved significantly in the 20th century. His early works were steeped in Irish nationalism and mysticism, while his later poems reflected a more introspective and philosophical approach. Yeats explored themes of politics, spirituality, and the passage of time, ultimately becoming one of the key figures in modern poetry. Notable Works Yeats's most notable works include The Second Coming (1919), Sailing to Byzantium (1928), and The Tower (1928). His Collected Poems remain a cornerstone of modern British poetry. Influence Yeats played a crucial role in the Irish literary revival and influenced many poets who followed him, including Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes. His exploration of myth, folklore, and history left a lasting legacy in the development of modern poetry. 3. W.H. Auden (1907-1973) Literary Contributions Auden was one of the most significant poets of the 20th century. His works spanned a wide range of subjects, including politics, society, love, and individual identity. Auden was known for his technical skill and use of rhyme and meter, as well as for his profound moral and social insights. Notable Works Some of Auden's most famous poems include Funeral Blues (1936), The Shield of Achilles (1955), and In Memory of W.B. Yeats (1939). His Collected Poems provides a comprehensive look at his literary output. Influence Auden's ability to address political and social issues through poetry made him a central figure in the literary world. His influence extended to poets like Sylvia Plath and Seamus Heaney, and his legacy continues to resonate in contemporary poetry. 4. Dylan Thomas (1914-1953) Literary Contributions Dylan Thomas is remembered for his lush, lyrical style and his use of striking imagery. His poetry often conveys an intense emotional depth, marked by themes of death, time, and the human spirit. His work, though rooted in tradition, anticipated much of the modernist experimentation that would come to define mid-20th-century poetry. Notable Works Some of Thomas's best-known works include Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night (1951), Fern Hill (1945), and Under Milk Wood (1954). The former is widely regarded as one of the most powerful poems in the English language. Influence Thomas's unique voice and bold use of language had a profound influence on both British and American poets, including Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney. His emotive and musical style continues to inspire contemporary poets. 5. Ted Hughes (1930-1998) Literary Contributions Ted Hughes was known for his dark, elemental poetry, which often delved into the natural world, myth, and the human psyche. His work explored the intersection of human nature and the primal forces of life, death, and the environment. Hughes's poetry is characterized by its vivid imagery and raw emotional power. Notable Works Hughes's key works include The Hawk in the Rain (1957), Crow (1970), and Birthday Letters (1998). Crow is often seen as his most important and daring work, blending mythological themes with contemporary themes of human existence. His impact is still felt in contemporary poetry, especially in works concerned with nature and the animal world. 6. Seamus Heaney (1939-2013) Literary Contributions Heaney, one of the greatest poets of his generation, was known for his exploration of Irish history, culture, and politics. His work often dealt with the landscape and the tensions between tradition and modernity. Heaney's poetry is grounded in the physical world, yet deeply philosophical. Notable Works Heaney's most celebrated works include Death of a Naturalist (1966), North (1975), and The Spirit Level (1996). His Collected Poems is a definitive collection of his life's work. Influence Heaney's focus on the Irish experience, particularly in relation to the Troubles, had a lasting impact on both Irish and international poetry. His poetic voice continues to influence poets, particularly those writing about politics, history, and identity. 7. Philip Larkin (1922-1985) Literary Contributions Philip Larkin was a prominent figure in post-war British poetry. Known for his precise and unadorned style, Larkin's poetry often explores themes of isolation, love, and death. His work is celebrated for its clarity and intellectual depth, as well as its wit and irony. Notable Works Larkin's notable works include Aubade (1977), The Whitens Weddings (1964), and High Windows (1974). His poetry is often marked by its bleak outlook on modern life, but it also contains moments of profound insight and beauty. Influence Larkin's influence extends beyond poetry into broader cultural realms. His work has been widely studied, and he remains a touchstone for poets exploring themes of mortality and the human condition. 8. Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) Literary Contributions Sylvia Plath was an American-born poet who spent much of her life in England. Her work is known for its intense emotional power, particularly her explorations of mental illness, depression, and personal identity. Plath's poetry often blends confessional and surreal elements, making her one of the most distinctive voices of her time. Notable Works Plath's most famous works include The Bell Jar (1963), The Colossus (1960), and The Bell Jar (1963). The latter is considered a masterpiece of modern poetry, offering a candid and often haunting depiction of the poet's struggles. Influence Plath's poetry has had a profound influence on both the confessional movement and feminist literary theory. Her ability to express personal suffering with such precision and power has resonated with readers and writers alike. 9. Rupert Brooke (1887-1915) Literary Contributions Rupert Brooke is often remembered as the poet of World War I. His works capture the romantic idealism of the early stages of the war, before the harsh realities of battle set in. Brooke's poems, characterized by their lyricism and optimism, are marked by their devotion to country and duty. Notable Works Brooke's best-known works include The Soldier (1914) and The 1914 Poems. His poetry reflects the emotional and patriotic sentiments of the time. Influence Although Brooke's reputation as a war poet has been overshadowed by poets like Wilfred Owen, his work had a lasting impact on the way war poetry was perceived and written in the early 20th century. 10. Stephen Spender (1909-1995) Literary Contributions Stephen Spender was known for his intellectual poetry and his advocacy of left-wing politics. His works often focused on themes of social justice, class struggle, and the individual's role in society. Spender's early work was influenced by his involvement in the political and cultural movements of his time. Notable Works Spender's notable works include The Making of a Poem (1934) and World Within World (1951). His poems often depict the struggles of marginalized individuals within society. Influence Spender's focus on social and political issues influenced a number of poets and writers. His works continue to be studied for their exploration of class, power, and politics. 11. Louis MacNeice (1907-1963) Literary Contributions Louis MacNeice was a leading poet of the early 20th century, known for his nuanced and often ironic verse. His poetry explores themes of love, war, and the disillusionment of the post-war world. MacNeice's work is marked by its clarity, formal innovation, and intellectual depth. Notable Works MacNeice's key works include Autumn Journal (1939), The Strings Are False (1948), and Collected Poems. Autumn Journal is a masterful exploration of the troubled political and emotional landscape of the time. Influence MacNeice's wit and intellectual depth, particularly in his political and social commentary, continues to resonate with readers. 12. John Betjeman (1906-1984) Literary Contributions John Betjeman was a prominent English poet, novelist, and broadcaster. His work often reflects nostalgia for a simpler, more traditional England, and his poetry often touches on the themes of social change, architecture, and the passing of time. Notable Works Betjeman's famous works include Summoned by Bells (1960), Metropolitans (1939), and A Few Late Chrysanthemums (1954). His work is both humorous and heartfelt, capturing the essence of mid-20th-century Britain. Influence Betjeman's gentle yet incisive observations on English life have influenced a number of poets, particularly those writing about place and identity. 13. Thom Gunn (1929-2004) Literary Contributions Thom Gunn's poetry is known for its exploration of themes such as sexuality, friendship, and the human experience. His works blend formal structure with contemporary concerns, making his style both innovative and accessible. Notable Works Gunn's best-known works include The Man with Night Sweats (1992) and Moly (1971). His work is known for its directness and emotional clarity. Influence Gunn's work has influenced contemporary poets, particularly in the areas of LGBTQ+ poetry and the exploration of human relationships. 14. Edward Thomas (1878-1917) Literary Contributions Edward Thomas was known for his contemplative poetry about nature, the countryside, and the human condition. His work is often infused with a melancholic tone, reflecting both his personal struggles and the broader societal changes of the time. Notable Works Thomas's best-known works include Alderestrop (1917), The Path (1917), and Collected Poems. His nature poems, in particular, remain enduringly popular. Influence Thomas's portrayal of nature influenced many later poets, particularly those writing about the natural world and the complexities of human emotion. 15. Wilfred Owen (1893-1918) Literary Contributions Wilfred Owen is one of the most famous war poets of the 20th century. His poems are known for their stark realism and emotional intensity, capturing the horrors and futility of war. His work is marked by its vivid imagery and anti-war sentiment. Notable Works Owen's key works include Dulce et Decorum Est (1917), Anthem for Doomed Youth (1917), and Futility (1918). His poetry is often regarded as some of the most powerful in the English language. Influence Owen's impact on war poetry and his anti-war message continues to resonate with readers and poets alike. His works have become essential texts in the study of both war literature and modern poetry. Conclusion The 20th century produced a diverse array of poets who shaped the course of British literature. From the modernist innovations of T.S. Eliot to the confessional explorations of Sylvia Plath, these poets have left an indelible mark on the world of poetry. Their works continue to be read, studied, and appreciated for their emotional depth, technical mastery, and exploration of the human experience. Who are the best 20th century poets? This list includes great poets from the 20th century such as Maya Angelou, T. S. Eliot, James Baldwin, and Robert Frost. Though the genre of poetry has a rich history, dating back many centuries, the 1900s have seen some truly great poets and poetry. From modernist poetry and imagism to more traditional forms, the poets on this list have mastered their craft. Written works have the ability to make us feel. They make us want to believe, be inspired, and live vicariously through the stories on the page. Whether short or long form, poetry is often illusory, and full of rich imagery or hidden meaning. It is these elements which provoke readers to dig deeper. The best poems and poets are read throughout the ages. They are passed from generation to generation and taught throughout schools to young students. Poets and their poetry have the ability to take readers places and into worlds never imagined. Poets can often be tortured souls or great thinkers that allow readers a new view on the world. These greatest 20th century poets provide the kind of emotional connection to the written word that few can, and do so in a modern way. Among them are some of the top writers and poets of all time. Vote up the best poets from the 20th century on the list below, or add a 20th century poet if he or she is not already on the list. Most divisive: Ted HughesOver 6.9K Ranker voters have come together to rank this list of The 75 Best Poets Of The 20th Century. Ranked

