

Dylan Thomas: Celebrating the Great Welsh Poet [B2]

Il 14 maggio è la Giornata internazionale di Dylan Thomas, una celebrazione della vita e dell'opera del poeta gallese, considerato uno dei più grandi scrittori di tutti i tempi.

Do not go gentle into that good night.” This is the title and first line of what is probably the best-known work by Welsh poet Dylan Thomas. In the 1951 villanelle, Thomas [reflects upon old age](#). Rather than accept that life is [coming to a close](#), he suggests, one should “[rage, rage](#) against the dying of the light”!

INFLUENCE

Thomas himself died at the age of just thirty-nine. A notoriously [heavy drinker](#), the cause of death was actually severe pneumonia exacerbated by the New York [smog](#) + (“f)og”). Thomas’s poem is still widely cited by other artists: it is referenced in the 1996 Hollywood film Independence Day and is read by Iggy Pop on his 2019 album Free. More than seventy years after his death, Thomas’s impact on the world of art and literature remains.

PROLIFIC LIFE

Born in Swansea, Wales in 1914, Thomas was introduced to poetry by his father, an English literature professor. He began writing poems while at school and went on to write many of his famous works in his teenage years. During his lifetime, he published about ninety poems and became known for his ingenious use of words and imagery, as well as for [conveying](#) and evoking intense emotions through his writing. He also wrote books, film scripts and [plays](#), and worked on about 150 [broadcasts](#) for the BBC.

EARLY DEATH

International Dylan Thomas Day on 14 May marks the anniversary of when Thomas's famous radio drama [Under Milk Wood](#) was read on stage for the first time, at the Poetry Center in New York in 1953. It was subsequently performed as a radio drama. By then, Thomas was already well known in the US. Four reading tours brought attention to his poems, but also his erratic behaviour aggravated by alcohol and cortisone injections administered to keep him going. It was after one [rehearsal](#) in New York in November 1953 that Thomas fell into a coma. He never recovered.

Glossary

- **old age** = la vecchiaia
- **plays** = opere teatrali
- **broadcasts** = trasmissioni
- **rehearsal** = prova
- **smog** = nebbia inquinata ("sm(oke)" + ("f)og")
- **conveying** = comunicare
- **Under Milk Wood** = "Sotto il bosco di latte"
- **reflects upon** = riflettere su
- **coming to a close** = stare per finire
- **rage** = infuriarsi
- **heavy drinker** = bevitore accanito