

# THE IRON MAN

*Ted Hughes*

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## The Coming of the Iron Man

The Iron Man came to the top of the cliff.

How far had he walked? Nobody knows. Where did he come from? Nobody knows. How was he made? Nobody knows.

Taller than a house, the Iron Man stood at the top of the cliff, on the very brink, in the darkness.

The wind sang through his iron fingers. His great iron head, shaped like a dustbin but as big as a bedroom, slowly turned to the right, slowly turned to the left. His iron ears turned, this way, that way. He was hearing the sea. His eyes, like headlamps, glowed white, then red, then infrared, searching the sea. Never before had the Iron Man seen the sea.

He swayed in the strong wind that pressed against his back. He swayed forward, on the brink of the high cliff.

And his right foot, his enormous iron right foot, lifted - up, out into space, and the Iron Man stepped forward, off the cliff, into nothingness.

CRRRAAAASSSSSSH!

Down the cliff the Iron Man came toppling, head over heels.

CRASH!

CRASH!

CRASH!

From rock to rock, snag to snag, tumbling slowly. And as he crashed and crashed and crashed.

His iron legs fell off.

His iron arms broke off, and the hands broke off the arms.

His great iron ears fell off and his eyes fell out.

His great iron head fell off.

All the separate pieces tumbled, scattered, crashing, bumping, clanging, down on to the rocky beach far below.

A few rocks tumbled with him.

Then

Silence.

## Powerful verbs

*Verbs are doing, action or being words.*

Help!

Somebody has stolen all of the powerful verbs and replaced them with boring ones!  
Which words will make these sentences more interesting?

blazed; turned; pressed; whistled; swayed; glowed

1 The wind **went** through his iron fingers.

The wind ..... through his iron fingers.

2 His great iron head slowly **went** to the left.

His great iron head slowly.....to the left.

3 His eyes, like headlamps, **went** white, then **went** red.

His eyes, like headlamps, ..... white, then.....red.

4 He **moved** in the strong wind that **went** against his back.

He ..... in the strong wind that ..... against his back.

wheeling; crashing; waved; splashing; tugging

5 One of the Iron Man's hands **moved** its fingers, like a crab on its back.

One of the Iron Man's hands.....its fingers, like a crab on its back.

6 The stars went on **moving** through the sky.

The stars went on ..... through the sky.

7 The wind went on **blowing** at the grass on the cliff-top.

The wind went on.....at the grass on the cliff-top.

8. The sea went on **moving** and **moving**.

The sea went on .....and .....

spouted; blew; glided; covered; blazed

9. The gulls **went** down low over the great iron head.

The gulls .....down low over the great iron head.

10. The eyes **went** red, level with the wave tops.

The eyes ..... red, level with the wave tops.

11. A big wave **went over** them and foam **went** over the top of the head.

A big wave ..... them and foam .....over the top of the head.