

The Tollund Man Key Info

Writer: Seamus Heaney | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

Key Facts

- **Poet:** Seamus Heaney (1939-2013)
- **Full Title:** The Tollund Man
- **First Published:** 1972 in his collection *Wintering Out*
- **Form:** The poem is built from 11 four-line stanzas (or quatrains), divided into three sections.
- **Total Lines:** 44
- **Meter and Rhyme Scheme:** The poem is written in free verse. It means the poem has no strict meter or rhyme scheme.
- **Tone:** Respectful, thoughtful, and sad
- **Setting:** Begins in Aarhus, Denmark, where the Tollund Man's body is kept in a museum. Later shifts to Ireland, during the time of "The Troubles."
- **Speaker:** The poet himself (Heaney)
- **Main Character:** The Tollund Man — an ancient human body found in a Danish bog (wetland), believed to be sacrificed to a goddess
- **Structure:** 3 parts (I, II, III)

- **Famous Line:**

"I will feel lost,

Unhappy and at home."

Key Notes

The Troubles

"The Troubles" was a time of great violence and conflict in Northern Ireland, from the late 1960s to 1998. It happened because two groups of people disagreed about how the country

should be ruled. One group, mostly Catholic, wanted Northern Ireland to join the Republic of Ireland and become one united country. The other group, mostly Protestant, wanted to stay part of the United Kingdom.

Because of this, there were many bombings, shootings, and killings. Thousands of people died, including many innocent men, women, and children. Seamus Heaney wrote during this period. Many of his poems, like "*Punishment*" and "*The Tollund Man*," show his deep sadness about this violence. He used old stories, myths, and bog bodies to talk about how violence and sacrifice still continue in modern times.

LxNotes