

# Ursula K. Le Guin

born *October 21, 1929*  
died *January 22, 2018*



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Ursula Kroeber Le Guin was an American author, poet, translator and critic. She is best known for her speculative fiction and the influence her writing had on later science fiction, fantasy and social science fiction authors.

Le Guin earned a Master’s degree in French before traveling to France on a Fulbright scholarship for her doctorate, which she stopped pursuing after she married in 1953. She began publishing her poems and stories in the early 1960s, but acclaim came with her fantasy novel, *A Wizard of Earthsea*, and her science fiction novel, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, both in 1968. Both were unusual for their time, with the former largely populated by people of color (and featuring white-skinned villains) and the latter discussing gender fluidity and non-binary orientation.

Le Guin became the first woman to win a Hugo and Nebula award for best novel with *Left Hand of Darkness*. She did so again with *The Dispossessed* in 1974, making her the only person to win both awards for two different books. Le Guin’s writing career spanned six decades, 20 novels, more than 100 short stories, numerous poems and translations, and 13 children’s stories. Her work was heavily marked by gender dynamics, cultural anthropology, Taoism and coming-of-age themes.

Le Guin became the second woman to receive the title of Grand Master of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America in 2003. She received eight Hugo Awards and six Nebula Awards in all and influenced the writing of Salman Rushdie, Neil Gaiman, David Mitchell and many others.