

The Windhover¹

To Christ our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion,^o king-
 dom of daylight's dauphin,² dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding *darling*
 Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
 High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling³ wing
 In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
 As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
 Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
 Stirred for a bird,—the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
 Buckle!⁴ AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion *knight*
 'Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!^o

No wonder of it: sheer plód makes plough down sillion⁵
 Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
 Fall, gall⁶ themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.

1877

1918

1. Kestrel, a small falcon noted for hovering in the air.
2. A prince who is heir to the French throne.

3. Rippling. "Rung upon the rein": circled at the end of a rein.
4. The verb can be read as imperative or indicative. All three meanings are relevant: to prepare for action, to fasten together, to collapse.
5. The ridge between two furrows of a plowed field.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS (1844-1889)

I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark, Not Day

I wake and feel the fell^o of dark, not day. *bitterness*
 What hours, O what black hours we have spent
 This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!
 And more must, in yet longer light's delay.

- 5 With witness I speak this. But where I say
 Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament
 Is cries countless, cries like dead letters¹ sent
 To dearest him that lives alas! away.

- 10 I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree
 Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;
 Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.

Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see
 The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
 As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.

1885

1918

1. Letters undelivered or returned to the sender by the post office.