

# The Lyric Art of Gerard Manley Hopkins

## Introduction

Hopkins' poetry is a unique and powerful voice in English literature. His work is characterized by its beauty, its originality, and its deep spirituality. Hopkins was a Jesuit priest who lived in the Victorian era, and his poetry reflects his strong faith and his love of nature. He was also a gifted linguist, and his poems are full of rich and evocative language.

Hopkins' poetry is often challenging, but it is also deeply rewarding. He was a master of rhythm and meter, and his poems are full of musicality. He also had a keen eye for detail, and his poems are full of vivid imagery. Hopkins' poetry is a feast for the senses, and it can transport the reader to another world.

One of the most striking things about Hopkins' poetry is his use of language. He was a master of wordplay, and he loved to experiment with new and unusual words and phrases. He also had a deep understanding of the power of language, and he used it to create poems that are both beautiful and meaningful.

Hopkins' poetry is also deeply spiritual. He was a devout Catholic, and his faith was a major source of inspiration for his poetry. His poems are full of references to God, nature, and the beauty of creation. Hopkins' poetry is a testament to the power of faith, and it can inspire readers to see the world in a new way.

Hopkins' poetry is a unique and important contribution to English literature. He was a gifted poet who used his talents to create poems that are both beautiful and meaningful. His work continues to be read and enjoyed by people all over the world.

Hopkins' poetry is a gift to us, and it is a gift that we should cherish. His poems can teach us about the beauty of the world, the power of faith, and the importance of love. They can also inspire us to be better people, and to live our lives to the fullest.

## Book Description

In a world of ordinary words, Gerard Manley Hopkins was a poet who dared to be different. His unique style, his innovative use of language, and his deep spirituality set him apart from his contemporaries and made him one of the most important poets of the Victorian era.

Hopkins' poetry is a feast for the senses. He uses vivid imagery and rich language to create poems that are both beautiful and meaningful. His poems are full of references to nature, God, and the beauty of creation. Hopkins' poetry is a testament to the power of faith, and it can inspire readers to see the world in a new way.

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# Chapter 1: Poetic Genius

## Hopkins' Early Life and Influences

Gerard Manley Hopkins was born in 1844 in Stratford, Essex, England. He was the eldest of nine children born to Manley Hopkins, an Anglican clergyman, and Kate Smith Hopkins. Hopkins' early life was shaped by his family's strong religious faith and his love of nature.

Hopkins was a precocious child, and he began writing poetry at a young age. He was also a gifted musician, and he played the piano and the organ. Hopkins attended Highgate School in London, where he excelled in his studies. He was particularly interested in the classics and in English literature.

After graduating from Highgate School, Hopkins went to Oxford University, where he studied classics and theology. He was a brilliant student, and he graduated with honors in 1867. While at Oxford, Hopkins began to explore his religious beliefs more deeply. He was

drawn to the Catholic Church, and he converted to Catholicism in 1866.

Hopkins' conversion to Catholicism had a profound impact on his life and his poetry. He felt that he had found a spiritual home in the Catholic Church, and his faith became a source of great inspiration for his poetry. Hopkins' early poems are full of references to his religious beliefs and his love of nature.

In 1868, Hopkins entered the Society of Jesus, a Catholic religious order. He spent the next eleven years studying and teaching at Jesuit schools in England and Wales. During this time, he continued to write poetry, but he did not publish any of his poems.

In 1877, Hopkins was ordained a priest. He was then sent to serve as a parish priest in a small village in Wales. Hopkins loved his work as a priest, and he was a devoted pastor to his parishioners. He also continued to write poetry, and he began to experiment with new and innovative poetic forms.

Hopkins' early life and influences shaped him into a unique and gifted poet. His strong religious faith, his love of nature, and his classical education all contributed to his distinctive poetic style. Hopkins' early poems are full of beauty, originality, and spiritual insight.

# Chapter 1: Poetic Genius

## The Nature of Hopkins' Faith

Gerard Manley Hopkins was a devout Catholic, and his faith was a major source of inspiration for his poetry. He saw the world as a reflection of God's glory, and he believed that the beauty of nature was a sign of God's love. Hopkins' faith also led him to be deeply concerned with social justice, and he wrote many poems about the plight of the poor and the working class.

One of the most striking things about Hopkins' poetry is his use of imagery. He often uses images from nature to express his religious beliefs. For example, in the poem "God's Grandeur," he compares the beauty of the natural world to the glory of God. He writes:

The world is charged with the grandeur of  
God. It will flame out, like shining from shook

foil; It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of  
oil Crushed.

Hopkins also uses imagery to express his own personal struggles with faith. In the poem "The Dark Night of the Soul," he describes a period of doubt and despair that he experienced. He writes:

I have no life in me and see not why I should  
be saved or could myself have wished To live,  
but for the lamp within, the will: It is a spark  
almost out, yet there I know That it doth live  
and that I understand

Despite his struggles with doubt, Hopkins never lost his faith. He believed that God was always with him, even in his darkest moments. In the poem "As Kingfishers Catch Fire," he writes:

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw  
flame; As tumbled over rim in roundy wells  
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each

hung bell's Bow swung finds tongue to fling out  
broad its name; Each mortal thing does one  
thing and the same: Deals out that being  
indoors each one dwells; Selves - goes itself;  
myself it speaks and spells, Crying What I do is  
me: for that I came.

Hopkins' faith was a source of great strength and comfort to him. It helped him to see the beauty in the world, even in the midst of suffering. It also inspired him to write some of the most beautiful and moving poetry in the English language.

# Chapter 1: Poetic Genius

## Hopkins' Unique Style

Gerard Manley Hopkins was a unique and innovative poet whose style set him apart from his contemporaries. He experimented with rhythm, meter, and language in ways that were new and challenging for his time.

One of the most distinctive features of Hopkins' style is his use of sprung rhythm. Sprung rhythm is a type of meter that is based on the number of stresses in a line, rather than the number of syllables. This gives Hopkins' poems a sense of freedom and movement that is unlike anything else in Victorian poetry.

Hopkins was also a master of wordplay. He loved to experiment with new and unusual words and phrases, and he often used words in unexpected ways. This can make his poetry difficult to understand at first, but it

also gives his poems a richness and depth that is unmatched by other poets.

In addition to his innovative use of rhythm and language, Hopkins was also a gifted observer of nature. His poems are full of vivid descriptions of the natural world, and he often uses nature as a metaphor for spiritual truths.

Hopkins' unique style has had a profound influence on subsequent generations of poets. He is considered one of the most important poets of the Victorian era, and his work continues to be read and enjoyed by people all over the world.

**This extract presents the opening three sections of the first chapter.**

**Discover the complete 10 chapters and 50 sections by purchasing the book, now available in various formats.**

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