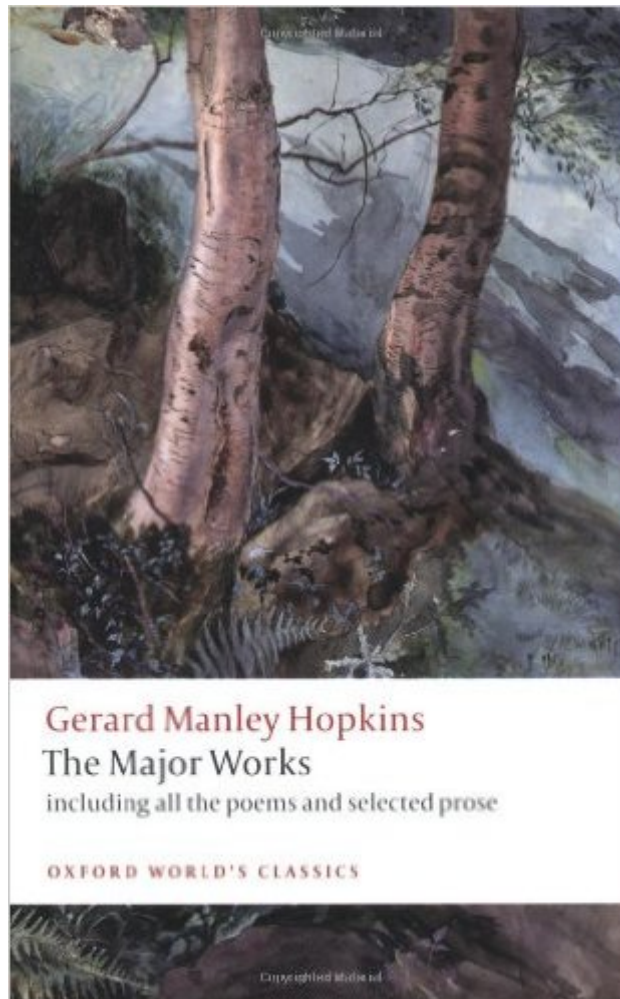


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Gerard Manley Hopkins: The Major Works (Oxford World's Classics)



Synopsis

This authoritative edition brings together all of Hopkins's poetry and a generous selection of his prose writings to explore the essence of his work and thinking. Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89) was one of the most innovative of nineteenth-century poets. During his tragically short life he strove to reconcile his religious and artistic vocations, and this edition demonstrates the range of his interests. It includes all his poetry, from best-known works such as "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and "The Windhover" to translations, foreign language poems, plays, and verse fragments, and the recently discovered poem "Consule Jones". In addition there are excerpts from Hopkins's journals, letters, and spiritual writings. The poems are printed in chronological order to show Hopkins's changing preoccupations, and all the texts have been established from original manuscripts. About the Series: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

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Customer Reviews

Oxford University Press has done it again! This book is an absolutely wonderful compilation of Gerard Manley Hopkins' poetry, letters, and prose. With all of his poems (including fragments of poems), as well as letters and spiritual writings related to his conversion and his joining of the Jesuit

order, this book not only gives the reader a wonderful selection of his work, but also an interesting insight into the life of Fr. Gerard Manley Hopkins. I would recommend this master of sprung verse to all.

For most readers including myself what matters in a poet are the great poems. These are the poems most frequently anthologized and most widely known. These are the ones some of us read over and over again, and even try to memorize. But along with and behind the great poems are the lesser poems. And along with this is the documentation of a life, which in Hopkins case includes many letters. There is too in a critical edition of the poems another benefit for the reader, for in some cases we can see the variants and the transformations the poems undergo before reaching final form. Again all of these background materials would be nothing without the great poems. In Hopkins poems there is the fresh and wildly original connection with Nature, the miraculous inventiveness of language, a way of seeing and saying like no other poet before. There is too the God-consciousness which pervades Hopkins works and makes him one of the greatest of all the religious poets. This volume enables us to deepen in our knowledge of one of the English language's greatest poets.

This is a good, generous selection of Hopkins poetry and letters. I picked it up because I am intrigued by Hopkins innovations in poetry, and by the influence of his religious vocation. I wanted to compare him to Donne and other similar poets. A big volume for the money, it starts with a good introduction. The only reason to downgrade it from a five-star value is that it is a paperback printed on what feels like a pulpy paper, and I wonder how the pages will withstand yellowing and how the binding will hold up if the book sees much use.

... almost as often for great poetry. With the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, the music is built in, and the religion is pure music, making it palatable for a severely non-religious person like me. Hopkins is almost unique in his musical ecstasy, matched in English only by Hart Crane. If you decide to read a Hopkins poem aloud, do it breathlessly, all in a swoop and a swoon. Don't plod sanctimoniously or academically! What Hopkins called his "sprung rhythm" has to spring! THE WINDHOVER
To Christ our Lord
I caught this morning morning's minion,
king-dom of daylight's
dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon,
in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him
steady air, and
striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein
of a wimpling 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!
AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!
No wonder of it: she ploughs
down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear, Fall, gall themselves, and gash
gold-vermilion.
After watching two "end of life" films -- "Amour" and "A Separation" -- on consecutive evenings, I felt a need for a dose of Gerard Manley Hopkins. All his poems are available on-line, but I wanted a book in my hands. Alas, I couldn't find my decades-old edition, so I went to the bookstore and found this one, which contains not only the familiar poetry but newly discovered fragments, letters, and essays.

A great many people would like to read poetry, even recite some, but don't know where to start. Start here. Why? Hopkins is both easy to read and a unique voice. His "sprung rhythm" results in a beat running all through the poem that has something in common with rock music and something else in common with beat poetry and something in common with rap. In short, it's poetry to be read out loud, exulting in the words and the wordplay. Hopkins is too good to be hidden away in dusty tomes for English majors to drag out once in their careers. One of the early editors of the Oxford collection was Charles Williams, a fellow Inkling and friend of C.S. Lewis. His goal was to make Hopkins available to more readers, and later editors seem to have echoed this goal. Almost everyone who reads him gets captivated by a favorite poem. Mine is "God's Grandeur", which begins: "The world is charged with the grandeur of God; it will fan out like shining from shook foil." I don't think "fan" is the right word here; I don't have the book handy and I'm reciting from memory. But that's my point; these are poems that bring back the joy of quoting a few lines here and there. Another great poem is "The Kingfisher". Then there is "The Binsey Poplars". Another reason to dip into Hopkins is that he is so post-modern. He wrestled with the dark night of the soul, the topic of practically all contemporary alt-rock. His own journey led him to join a monastery and give up writing poetry, after which he was deeply sad. Wisely, his insightful director allowed and encouraged him to return to his calling, which in following he produced these amazing poems. This Oxford opens the door to what for many will be a new and delightful world, and if anyone can re-enchant poetry for our generation, it's Hopkins.

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