



PIED BEAUTY

by
GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

In Praise of the Unusual

"Pied Beauty" is a 14-line poem by the Scottish poet-priest Gerard Manley Hopkins, which celebrates the speckled oddities in nature. I found this poem on the Poetry Foundation website. I remembered reading Hopkins in high school, so I looked for a poem written by him. I like this poem because of its central idea about the beauty found in "all things counter, original, spare, strange." I also love the vivid imagery, quirky language, and made-up words the poet uses.

The poem begins with a colorful list of some of these speckled delights, including "skies of couple-color," the rosy stippling of trout, fire-colored fall leaves, and the wings of finches. The poet also paints a picture of the landscaped earth with its "fold, fallow, and plough" and the intricate tools of various trades.

The second stanza goes beyond these specific images to glorify all the speckled, dappled, unusual things in the world, whose charms are sometimes overlooked: "Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)" The final lines of the poem give praise to the creator of this strange, beautiful universe. Even though I am not religious, the poem makes me wonder how this complicated, dappled universe came into being,

**Glory be to God for dappled things –
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and
plough;
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.**

**All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.**

Gerard Manley Hopkins

PRIEST AND POET

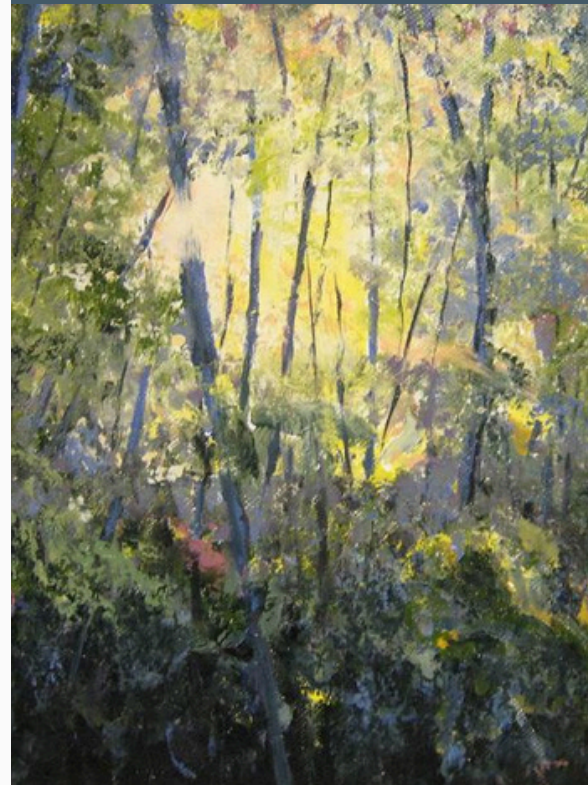
Gerard Manley Hopkins was a Scottish poet born in 1844. His poems often celebrate the beauty of nature and what he saw as the hand of God in its creation. "Pied Beauty," "The Sea and the Skylark," and "the Starlight Night" are just three examples of poems that convey this theme. He also wrote poems paying homage to the Blessed Virgin. One is titled "The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe."



As a young man, Gerard Manley Hopkins felt that he loved the pleasures of the world too much. To curb his passions, he once deprived himself of water for an entire week. Deeply affected by a book by John Henry Newman about his conversion to Catholicism, Hopkins also converted, and soon afterward, became a priest.

In his early days as a Jesuit, Hopkins did not allow himself to write poetry, feeling that this was an expression of human ego that should be suppressed. Only after receiving permission from a superior did he return to writing poetry.

"He
fathers' forth
whose beauty is
past change:
Praise Him."



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