



God's Grandeur, by Gerard Manley Hopkins

In A Nutshell

"God's Grandeur" is a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins, an English poet, Jesuit priest, and teacher. The poem was written in 1877, but like most of Hopkins's poems, it wasn't published until after his death. The poet's life was very short. He died of typhoid fever when he was only forty-five years old.

Hopkins is most famous for his innovations with language and rhythm, especially a kind of rhythm he called "sprung rhythm." Instead of the usual practice of alternating between stressed and unstressed syllables, Hopkins had groups of stressed and unstressed syllables together, which he believed help bring to his poems "the natural rhythm of speech." "God's Grandeur" is a great example of "sprung rhythm," and reading it will give you a chance to look at language in new and different ways.

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Big Picture Study Questions

- 1 What words might Hopkins make up, if he saw the world today?

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- 2 Does this poem have any funny moments? If so, where do you see the humor? Don't be afraid to laugh if you find something funny. What we laugh at tells us lots about who we are, if we examine it. If nothing seems funny, how does its humorlessness add or take away from your appreciation of the poem?
- 3 Is the poem pessimistic, optimistic, realistic, or some combination of all three. Explain your view.

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