

### ‘As kingfishers catch fire...’

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 *Whát I dó is me: for that I came.*

I say móre: the just man justices;  
Keeps grace: thát keeps all his goings graces; /  
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is —  
Chríst — for Christ plays in ten thousand places,  
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his  
To the Father through the features of men's faces.

### God's Grandeur

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. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?  
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
And though the last lights off the black West went  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

## **Pied Beauty**

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.

## **Felix Randall**

Felix Randal the farrier, O is he dead then? my duty all ended,  
Who have watched his mould of man, big-boned and hardy-handsome  
Pining, pining, till time when reason rambled in it, and some  
Fatal four disorders, fleshed there, all contended?

Sickness broke him. Impatient, he cursed at first, but mended  
Being anointed and all; though a heavenlier heart began some  
Months earlier, since I had our sweet reprieve and ransom  
Tendered to him. Ah well, God rest him all road ever he offended!

This seeing the sick endears them to us, us too it endears.  
My tongue had taught thee comfort, touch had quenched thy tears,  
Thy tears that touched my heart, child, Felix, poor Felix Randal;

How far from then forethought of, all thy more boisterous years,  
When thou at the random grim forge, powerful amidst peers,  
Didst fettle for the great grey drayhorse his bright and battering  
sandal!

**‘No worst, there is none...’**

No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief,  
More pangs will, schooled at forepangs, wilder wring.  
Comforter, where, where is your comforting?  
Mary, mother of us, where is your relief?  
My cries heave, herds-long; huddle in a main, a chief  
Woe, wórd-sorrow; on an áge-old anvil wince and sing —  
Then lull, then leave off. Fury had shrieked 'No ling-  
ering! Let me be fell: force I must be brief.'"

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall  
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap  
May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small  
Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here! creep,  
Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all  
Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.

**‘*Justus quidem tu es, Domine...*’**

Justus quidem tu es, Domine, si disputem tecum; verumtamen  
justa loquar ad te: Quare via impiorum prosperatur? &c.

Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend  
With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.  
Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must  
Disappointment all I endeavour end?

Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,  
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost  
Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust  
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,  
Sir, life upon thy cause. See, banks and brakes  
Now, leavèd how thick! lacèd they are again  
With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes  
Them; birds build – but not I build; no, but strain,  
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.  
Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.

## **That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection**

Cloud-puffball, torn tufts, tossed pillows | flaunt forth, then chevy on an air-

Built thoroughfare: heaven-roosterers, in gay-gangs | they throng; they glitter in marches.

Down roughcast, down dazzling whitewash, | wherever an elm arches, Shivelights and shadowtackle in long | lashes lace, lance, and pair.

Delightfully the bright wind boisterous | ropes, wrestles, beats earth bare Of yestertempest's creases; | in pool and rut peel parches

Squandering ooze to squeezed | dough, crust, dust; stanches, starches

Squadroned masks and manmarks | treadmire toil there

Footfretted in it. Million-fuelèd, | nature's bonfire burns on.

But quench her bonniest, dearest | to her, her clearest-selvèd spark

Man, how fast his firedint, | his mark on mind, is gone!

Both are in an unfathomable, all is in an enormous dark

Drowned. O pity and indig | nation! Manshape, that shone

Sheer off, disseveral, a star, | death blots black out; nor mark

Is any of him at all so stark

But vastness blurs and time | beats level. Enough! the Resurrection,

A heart's-clarion! Away grief's gasping, | joyless days, dejection.

Across my foundering deck shone

A beacon, an eternal beam. | Flesh fade, and mortal trash

Fall to the residuary worm; | world's wildfire, leave but ash:

In a flash, at a trumpet crash,

I am all at once what Christ is, | since he was what I am, and

This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, | patch, matchwood, immortal diamond,

Is immortal diamond.

## **The Windhover**

*To Christ Our Lord*

I caught this 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: shéer plód makes plough down sillion  
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,

Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.