

POEMS
of Gerard Manley Hopkins

.....
The First Edition with Preface and Notes by

ROBERT BRIDGES

*Edited with additional Poems, Notes, and a
Biographical Introduction by*

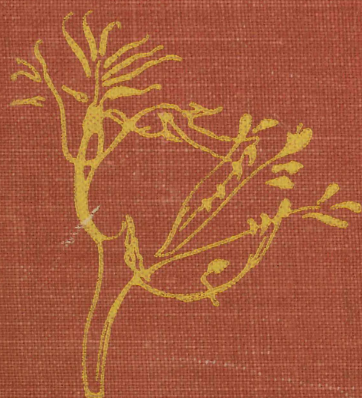
W. H. GARDNER
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To Father Louis -

in friendship

and gratitude

and in prayer

on the occasion of his ordination

Robert T Gray

Ascension Day

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(A) 1864-6?

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(B) 1876-89

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When the thing we freely fórfeit is kept with fonder a care,
Fonder a care kept than we could have kept it, kept
Far with fonder a care (and we, we should have lost it) finer,
fonder

A care kept.—Where kept? Do but tell us where kept,
where.—

Yonder.—What high as that! We follow, now we follow.—

Yonder, yes yonder, yonder,
Yonder.

60

*The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we
Breathe*

WILD air, world-mothering air,
Nestling me everywhere,
That each eyelash or hair
Girdles; goes home betwixt
The fleeciést, frailest-flixed
Snowflake; that's fairly mixed
With, riddles, and is rife
In every least thing's life;
This needful, never spent,
And nursing element;
My more than meat and drink,
My meal at every wink;
This air, which, by life's law,
My lung must draw and draw
Now but to breathe its praise,
Minds me in many ways

10

Of her who not only
Gave God's infinity
Dwindled to infancy
Welcome in womb and breast, 20
Birth, milk, and all the rest
But mothers each new grace
That does now reach our race—
Mary Immaculate,
Merely a woman, yet
Whose presence, power is
Great as no goddess's
Was deemèd, dreamèd; who
This one work has to do—
Let all God's glory through, 30
God's glory which would go
Through her and from her flow
Off, and no way but so.

I say that we are wound
With mercy round and round
As if with air: the same
Is Mary, more by name.
She, wild web, wondrous robe,
Mantles the guilty globe,
Since God has let dispense 40
Her prayers his providence:
Nay, more than almoner,
The sweet alms' self is her
And men are meant to share
Her life as life does air.
If I have understood,

20 She holds high motherhood
Towards all our ghostly good
And plays in grace her part
About man's beating heart,
Laying, like air's fine flood,
The deathdance in his blood;
Yet no part but what will
Be Christ our Saviour still.
Of her flesh he took flesh:
He does take fresh and fresh,
Though much the mystery how,
Not flesh but spirit now
And makes, O marvellous!
30 New Nazareths in us,
Where she shall yet conceive
Him, morning, noon, and eve;
New Bethlems, and he born
There, evening, noon, and morn—
Bethlem or Nazareth,
Men here may draw like breath
More Christ and baffle death;
Who, born so, comes to be
New self and nobler me
In each one and each one
40 More makes, when all is done,
Both God's and Mary's Son.

Again, look overhead
How air is azured;
O how! nay do but stand
Where you can lift your hand
Skywards: rich, rich it laps

Round the four fingergaps.
Yet such a sapphire-shot,
Charged, steepèd sky will not
Stain light. Yea, mark you this:
It does no prejudice.

80

The glass-blue days are those
When every colour glows,
Each shape and shadow shows.
Blue be it: this blue heaven
The seven or seven times seven
Hued sunbeam will transmit
Perfect, not alter it.

Or if there does some soft,
On things aloof, aloft,
Bloom breathe, that one breath more
Earth is the fairer for.

90

Whereas did air not make
This bath of blue and slake
His fire, the sun would shake,
A blear and blinding ball
With blackness bound, and all
The thick stars round him roll
Flashing like flecks of coal,
Quartz-fret, or sparks of salt,
In grimy vasty vault.

100

So God was god of old:
A mother came to mould
Those limbs like ours which are
What must make our daystar
Much dearer to mankind;
Whose glory bare would blind

Or less would win man's mind.
Through her we may see him
Made sweeter, not made dim,
And her hand leaves his light
Sifted to suit our sight.

110

Be thou then, O thou dear
Mother, my atmosphere;
My happier world, wherein
To wend and meet no sin;
Above me, round me lie
Fronting my froward eye
With sweet and scarless sky;
Stir in my ears, speak there
Of God's love, O live air,
Of patience, penance, prayer:
World-mothering air, air wild,
Wound with thee, in thee isled,
Fold home, fast fold thy child.

120

61

To what serves Mortal Beauty?

To what serves mortal beauty ¹—dangerous; does set dancing blood—the O-seal-that-so ¹ feature, flung prouder form
Than Purcell tune lets tread to? ¹ See: it does this: keeps warm
Men's wits to the things that are; ¹ what good means—where
a glance

Master more may than gaze, ¹ gaze out of countenance.
Those lovely lads once, wet-fresh ¹ windfalls of war's storm,