

# Unveiling the Beauty of Gerard Manley Hopkins' "The Windhover"

The Windhover  
by Gerard Manley Hopkins

To Christ our Lord

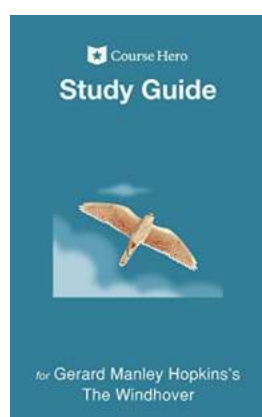
I caught this morning morning's minion, king-  
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding  
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding  
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing  
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,  
As a skate's heel 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: shéer plód makes plough down sillion  
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,  
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermillion.

Gerard Manley Hopkins, an influential English poet of the 19th century, left behind a remarkable collection of poems that delve into his deep spiritual exploration. One of his most renowned works is "The Windhover," a beautiful sonnet that embodies his unique poetic style and explores themes of nature, divinity, and the poet's own struggles. In this study guide, we will delve into the intricate layers of

Hopkins' masterpiece, analyzing its structure, poetic techniques, and underlying meanings.

## Understanding the Sonnet Form

"The Windhover" follows a traditional sonnet form, consisting of 14 lines divided into an octave and a sestet. The poem presents a volta, a shift in tone or focus, after the eighth line. Through this structure, Hopkins effectively captures the readers' attention and guides them towards a deeper understanding of his message.



## Study Guide for Gerard Manley Hopkins's The Windhover by Course Hero ([Print Replica] Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

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Screen Reader : Supported



## Exploring Divine Presence in Nature

Nature is a recurring theme in Hopkins' poetry, often serving as a medium to convey his religious beliefs and experiences. In "The Windhover," the titular bird is portrayed as a symbol of divinity, representing the presence of God in the world. Hopkins carefully describes the bird's majestic flight and its interaction with the wind, evoking a sense of awe and wonderment that mirrors his own spiritual journey.

The use of rich visual imagery and descriptive language allows the reader to visualize the elegant movements of the windhover, heightening the poem's impact and creating a profound connection between nature and the divine. Through this exploration, Hopkins invites readers to contemplate their own connection to the natural world and their spirituality.

## **The Complex Artistry of Hopkins' Language**

Hopkins is renowned for his unique poetic style, which he aptly termed "sprung rhythm." This metrical pattern gives his verse a distinct musical quality, with sharp accents and irregular stresses creating a dynamic composition. In "The Windhover," Hopkins employs this technique masterfully, allowing the poem's rhythm to mirror the bird's flight.

The careful choice of words and syntax in Hopkins' poetry add another layer of complexity to his work. As a Jesuit priest, Hopkins was highly attentive to the nuances of language, using a vast array of vocabulary and capturing subtle meanings in his verse. This linguistic artistry enhances the reader's experience, encouraging them to linger over each line and appreciate the poem's depth.

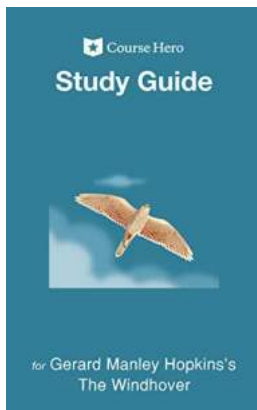
## **Interpreting the Poem's Underlying Meanings**

While Hopkins' poetry often carries a spiritual undertone, "The Windhover" addresses the poet's personal struggles and self-discovery as well. The windhover's flight, with its intricate twists and turns, can be seen as a metaphor for Hopkins' own journey towards self-acceptance and spiritual awakening.

Through the use of vivid imagery and carefully crafted language, Hopkins provides a window into his inner world, allowing readers to empathize with his experiences and find their own path of self-discovery. This emotional connection

is what sets Hopkins' poetry apart, evoking powerful reactions and fostering a deep appreciation for his writing.

Gerard Manley Hopkins' "The Windhover" is a timeless masterpiece that continues to captivate readers with its poetic brilliance and depth of meaning. By understanding the poem's structure, exploring its themes, and appreciating Hopkins' unique artistic techniques, we can unlock the profound beauty hidden within its lines. Join us in this journey of literary exploration and discover the remarkable world of Hopkins' poetry.



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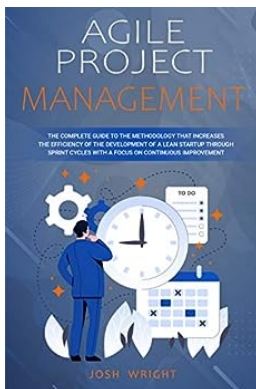
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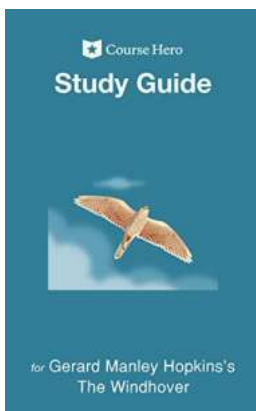
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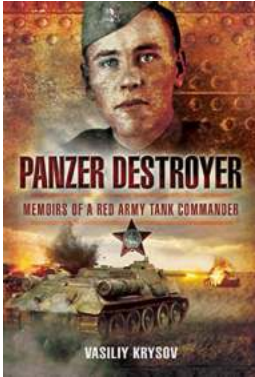
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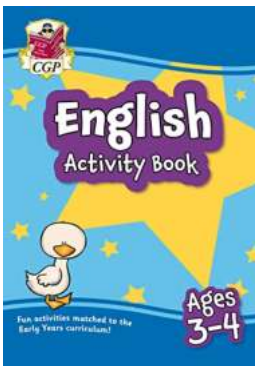
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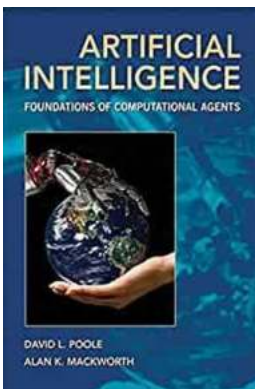
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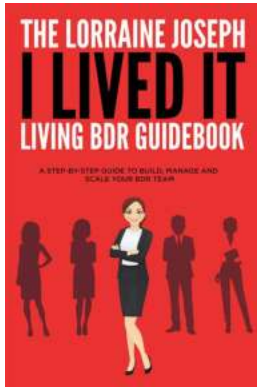
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