

TO GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS AND OTHER SIRES

You now nebulized into the stuff of poems,
You who planted fiery spores of ~~mighty art~~
That sometimes altered lives and history—
Can you weep for us? Can you forgive us when we
Pervert your fertile offerings on ^{altered} ~~time's~~ altars, and
~~Often~~ waste your energy and imagery in fruitless hybrids?
You will be remembered in spite of us.
You now fused with Sappho and Solomon, earthquakes and
Antelopes, left ~~to~~ us and ~~through us~~ your word-woven
Arras of gold, ^{spice} vermillion and lapis, embroidered with
Lightning, ~~layered tourmaline, and permeated with ancient~~
~~Spices hard to define and find.~~
You framed them in disciplined
Delicate borders, precise like planet paths;
You peeled the blistered skin off your souls,
And ⁺ your eyes, to ^{find give us} ~~learn that poetry is~~
Smelted truth, drained of slag.
~~The~~ Auras of it flow and flower hot in new veins.
How can we propagate and not profane?
It may be that imitation surpasses mutation.
You left nothing to reveal.

(cont.)

II

How your gifts could hurry the blood or push
Orange coals into the loins, or ~~send~~ needles
Of rain into the pores to cleanse the eternal core.
How we search for ~~these~~ certain bass ^{to be that unimagined} and treble ~~notes~~
You pried from wind and sea ~~and~~ ^{to} played in our heads.
You decoded mountain graphs and sun signals, ~~you~~
Heard poetry in the babble of children, in the
Clanging language of lance and shield, in ~~the~~ ^{love's}
~~Climax cry of love~~ ^{outcry}. You felt it at the last breathing,
~~You~~ saw it, a God-ground magnifying mirror
Of man, unsoftened, unretouched.
This is the ^{moving} target you left us
~~As we~~ ^{to} aim with shaky shafts, ~~our~~
Skinny watery quills, ~~our~~ fat fountaining pens.
Our mirrors are smoke-smeared, concave ~~convex~~ warped.
Our furnaces are flawed, ~~and dissipated and~~
Our ore is not ^{as} refined.
But it may be that the purest poetry of all is faith.
Even fading, squirming, on the way out.
And best of all coming back.