

# The Wreck of the Deutschland

By Gerard Manley Hopkins

I  
Thou mastering me  
God! giver of breath and bread;  
World's strand, sway of the sea;  
Lord of living and dead;  
Thou hast bound bones & veins in me, fastened me flesh,  
And after it almost unmade, what with dread,  
Thy doing: and dost thou touch me afresh?  
Over again I feel thy finger and find thee.

I did say yes  
O at lightning and lashed rod;  
Thou heardst me truer than tongue confess  
Thy terror, O Christ, O God;  
Thou knowest the walls, altar and hour and night:  
The swoon of a heart that the sweep and the hurl of thee trod  
Hard down with a horror of height:  
And the midriff astrain with leaning of, laced with fire of stress.

The frown of his face  
Before me, the hurtle of hell  
Behind, where, where was a, where was a place?  
I whirled out wings that spell  
And fled with a fling of the heart to the heart of the Host.  
My heart, but you were dovewinged, I can tell,  
Carrier-witted, I am bold to boast,  
To flash from the flame to the flame then, tower from the grace to  
the grace.

I am soft sift  
In an hourglass—at the wall  
Fast, but mined with a motion, a drift,  
And it crowds and it combs to the fall;  
I steady as a water in a well, to a poise, to a pane,  
But roped with, always, all the way down from the tall  
Fells or flanks of the voel, a vein  
Of the gospel proffer, a pressure, a principle, Christ's gift.

I kiss my hand  
To the stars, lovely-asunder  
Starlight, wafting him out of it; and  
Glow, glory in thunder;  
Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west:  
Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,  
His mystery must be instressed, stressed;  
For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand.

Not out of his bliss  
Springs the stress felt  
Nor first from heaven (and few know this)  
Swings the stroke dealt—  
Stroke and a stress that stars and storms deliver,  
That guilt is hushed by, hearts are flushed by and melt—  
But it rides time like riding a river  
(And here the faithful waver, the faithless fable and miss).

It dates from day  
Of his going in Galilee;  
Warm-laid grave of a womb-life grey;  
Manger, maiden's knee;  
The dense and the driven Passion, and frightful sweat;  
Thence the discharge of it, there its swelling to be,  
Though felt before, though in high flood yet—  
What none would have known of it, only the heart, being hard at  
bay,

Is out with it! Oh,  
We lash with the best or worst  
Word last! How a lush-kept plush-capped sloe  
Will, mouthed to flesh-burst,  
Gush!—flush the man, the being with it, sour or sweet,  
Brim, in a flash, full!—Hither then, last or first,  
To hero of Calvary, Christ,'s feet—  
Never ask if meaning it, wanting it, warned of it—men go.

Be adored among men,  
God, three-numberéd form;  
Wring thy rebel, dogged in den,  
Man's malice, with wrecking and storm.  
Beyond saying sweet, past telling of tongue,  
Thou art lightning and love, I found it, a winter and warm;  
Father and fondler of heart thou hast wrung:  
Hast thy dark descending and most art merciful then.

With an anvil-ding  
And with fire in him forge thy will  
Or rather, rather then, stealing as Spring  
Through him, melt him but master him still:  
Whether at once, as once at a crash Paul,  
Or as Austin, a lingering-out swéet skill,  
Make mercy in all of us, out of us all  
Mastery, but be adored, but be adored King.

II

"Some find me a sword; some  
The flange and the rail; flame,  
Fang, or flood" goes Death on drum,  
And storms bugle his fame.  
But wé dréam we are rooted in earth—Dust!  
Flesh falls within sight of us, we, though our flower the same,  
Wave with the meadow, forget that there must  
The sour scythe cringe, and the blear share come.

On Saturday sailed from Bremen,  
American-outward-bound,  
Take settler and seamen, tell men with women,  
Two hundred souls in the round—  
O Father, not under thy feathers nor ever as guessing  
The goal was a shoal, of a fourth the doom to be drowned;  
Yet did the dark side of the bay of thy blessing  
Not vault them, the million of rounds of thy mercy not reeve even  
them in?

Into the snows she sweeps,  
Hurling the haven behind,  
The Deutschland, on Sunday; and so the sky keeps,  
For the infinite air is unkind,  
And the sea flint-flake, black-backed in the regular blow,  
Sitting Eastnortheast, in cursed quarter, the wind;  
Wiry and white-fiery and whirlwind-swivellèd snow  
Spins to the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps.

She drove in the dark to leeward,  
She struck—not a reef or a rock  
But the combs of a smother of sand: night drew her  
Dead to the Kentish Knock;  
And she beat the bank down with her bows and the ride of her keel:  
The breakers rolled on her beam with ruinous shock;  
And canvass and compass, the whorl and the wheel  
Idle for ever to waft her or wind her with, these she endured.

Hope had grown grey hairs,  
Hope had mourning on,  
Trenched with tears, carved with cares,  
Hope was twelve hours gone;  
And frightful a nightfall folded rueful a day  
Nor rescue, only rocket and lightship, shone,  
And lives at last were washing away:  
To the shrouds they took,—they shook in the hurling and horrible airs.

One stirred from the rigging to save  
The wild woman-kind below,  
With a rope's end round the man, handy and brave—  
He was pitched to his death at a blow,  
For all his dreadnought breast and braids of thew:  
They could tell him for hours, dandled the to and fro  
Through the cobbled foam-fleece, what could he do  
With the burl of the fountains of air, buck and the flood of the wave?

They fought with God's cold—  
And they could not and fell to the deck  
(Crushed them) or water (and drowned them) or rolled  
With the sea-romp over the wreck.  
Night roared, with the heart-break hearing a heart-broke rabble,  
The woman's wailing, the crying of child without check—  
Till a lioness arose breasting the babble,  
A prophetess towered in the tumult, a virginal tongue told.

Ah, touched in your bower of bone  
Are you! turned for an exquisite smart,  
Have you! make words break from me here all alone,  
Do you!—mother of being in me, heart.  
O unteachably after evil, but uttering truth,  
Why, tears! is it? tears; such a melting, a madrigal start!  
Never-eldering revel and river of youth,  
What can it be, this glee? the good you have there of your own?

Sister, a sister calling  
A master, her master and mine!—  
And the inboard seas run swirling and hawling;  
The rash smart slogging brine  
Blinds her; but she that weather sees one thing, one;  
Has one fetch in her: she rears herself to divine  
Ears, and the call of the tall nun  
To the men in the tops and the tackle rode over the storm's  
brawling.

She was first of a five and came  
Of a coifèd sisterhood.  
(O Deutschland, double a desperate name!  
O world wide of its good!  
But Gertrude, lily, and Luther, are two of a town,  
Christ's lily and beast of the waste wood:  
From life's dawn it is drawn down,  
Abel is Cain's brother and breasts they have sucked the same.)

Loathed for a love men knew in them,  
Banned by the land of their birth,  
Rhine refused them, Thames would ruin them;  
Surf, snow, river and earth  
Gnashed: but thou art above, thou Orion of light;  
Thy unchancing poisoning palms were weighing the worth,  
Thou martyr-master: in thy sight  
Storm flakes were scroll-leaved flowers, lily showers—sweet heaven  
was astrew in them.

Five! the finding and sake  
And cipher of suffering Christ.  
Mark, the mark is of man's make  
And the word of it Sacrificed.  
But he scores it in scarlet himself on his own bespoken,  
Before-time-taken, dearest prizèd and priced—  
Stigma, signal, cinquefoil token  
For lettering of the lamb's fleece, ruddying of the rose-flake.

Joy fall to thee, father Francis,  
Drawn to the Life that died;  
With the gnarls of the nails in thee, niche of the lance, his  
Lovescape crucified  
And seal of his seraph-arrival! and these thy daughters  
And five-lived and leaved favour and pride,  
Are sisterly sealed in wild waters,  
To bathe in his fall-gold mercies, to breathe in his all-fire glances

Away in the loveable west,  
On a pastoral forehead of Wales,  
I was under a roof here, I was at rest,  
And they the prey of the gales;  
She to the black-about air, to the breaker, the thickly  
Falling flakes, to the throng that catches and quails  
Was calling "O Christ, Christ, come quickly":  
The cross to her she calls Christ to her, christens her wildworst Best.

The majesty! what did she mean?  
Breathe, arch and original Breath.  
Is it love in her of the being as her lover had been?  
Breathe, body of lovely Death.  
They were else-minded then, altogether, the men  
Woke thee with a we are perishing in the weather of Gennesareth.  
Or is it that she cried for the crown then,  
The keener to come at the comfort for feeling the combating keen?



For how to the heart's cheering  
The down-dugged ground-hugged grey  
Hovers off, the jay-blue heavens appearing  
Of pied and peeled May!  
Blue-beating and hoary-glow height; or night, still higher,  
With belled fire and the moth-soft Milky way,  
What by your measure is the heaven of desire,  
The treasure never eyesight got, nor was ever guessed what for the  
hearing?

No, but it was not these.  
The jading and jar of the cart,  
Time's tasking, it is fathers that asking for ease  
Of the sodden-with-its-sorrowing heart,  
Not danger, electrical horror; then further it finds  
The appealing of the Passion is tenderer in prayer apart:  
Other, I gather, in measure her mind's  
Burden, in wind's burly and beat of endragonèd seas.

But how shall I . . . make me room there:  
Reach me a ... Fancy, come faster—  
Strike you the sight of it? look at it loom there,  
Thing that she ... there then! the Master,  
Ipse, the only one, Christ, King, Head:  
He was to cure the extremity where he had cast her;  
Do, deal, lord it with living and dead;  
Let him ride, her pride, in his triumph, despatch and have done with  
his doom there.

Ah! there was a heart right  
There was single eye!  
Read the unshapeable shock night  
And knew the who and the why;  
Wording it how but by him that present and past,  
Heaven and earth are word of, worded by?—  
The Simon Peter of a soul! to the blast  
Tarpeian-fast, but a blown beacon of light.

Jesu, heart's light,  
Jesu, maid's son,  
What was the feast followed the night  
Thou hadst glory of this nun?—  
Feast of the one woman without stain.  
For so conceived, so to conceive thee is done;  
But here was heart-throe, birth of a brain,  
Word, that heard and kept thee and uttered thee outright.

Well, she has thee for the pain, for the  
Patience; but pity of the rest of them!  
Heart, go and bleed at a bitterer vein for the  
Comfortless unconfessed of them—  
No not uncomforted: lovely-felicitous Providence  
Finger of a tender of, O of a feathery delicacy, the breast of the  
Maiden could obey so, be a bell to, ring of it, and  
Startle the poor sheep back! is the shipwreck then a harvest, does  
tempest carry the grain for thee?

I admire thee, master of the tides,  
Of the Yore-flood, of the year's fall;  
The recurb and the recovery of the gulf's sides,  
The girth of it and the wharf of it and the wall;  
Staunching, quenching ocean of a motionable mind;  
Ground of being, and granite of it: past all  
Grasp God, throned behind  
Death with a sovereignty that heeds but hides, bodes but abides;

With a mercy that outrides  
The all of water, an ark  
For the listener; for the lingerer with a love glides  
Lower than death and the dark;  
A vein for the visiting of the past-prayer, pent in prison,  
The-last-breath penitent spirits—the uttermost mark  
Our passion-plungèd giant risen,  
The Christ of the Father compassionate, fetched in the storm of his  
strides.

Now burn, new born to the world,  
Doubled-naturèd name,  
The heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled  
Miracle-in-Mary-of-flame,  
Mid-numbered he in three of the thunder-throne!  
Not a dooms-day dazzle in his coming nor dark as he came;  
Kind, but royally reclaiming his own;  
A released shower, let flash to the shire, not a lightning of fire hard-  
hurled.

Dame, at our door  
Drowned, and among our shoals,  
Remember us in the roads, the heaven-haven of the Reward:  
Our Kíng back, Oh, upon énglish sóuls!  
Let him easter in us, be a dayspring to the dimness of us, be a  
crimson-cressed east,  
More brightening her, rare-dear Britain, as his reign rolls,  
Pride, rose, prince, hero of us, high-priest,  
Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts' chivalry's throng's  
Lord.