

Gerard Manley Hopkins
God's Grandeur
Even more challenging questions!

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In this sonnet, Hopkins juxtaposes the wonders of God against the achievements of humankind. God and humankind are presented as opposites, not so much Goodness vs Evil but rather Perfection vs Imperfection.

Humankind, our works and our deeds are portrayed as tainted, common and ugly as opposed to God whose creation is perceived as fresh and warm and sparkling with life and light. In this poem, one should examine closely the words which the poet uses to portray each of these juxtapositions.

1. "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."
 - Comment on the poet's use of rhythm in these lines. (4)
 - Comment on the language devices used in these lines. (4)

2. "The soil is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod."
 - What meaning do you see in the poet's use of antithesis: that the soil is bare but the foot is shod? (4)

3. "And for all this, nature is never spent."
 - What, do you think, does the poet mean when he uses the word "spent"? (4)

4. "There lives the dearest freshness deep down things."
 - Identify the language device being used here and comment on its use in these lines. (4)

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