

title. The king is George III, who was over 80 years old and had been insane for many years; he died in 1820 (cf. Byron 5.1.3 e). The ‘field’ is St Peter’s Field in Manchester, where cavalry were used to break up a rally of 80,000 people demanding economic and political reform. Eleven protesters were killed and many hundreds maimed. It became known as ‘The Peterloo Massacre’ by ironic comparison with the Battle of Waterloo (1815).

5.1.2 d ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING, ‘To George Sand –
A Desire’, 1844

Thou large-brained woman and large-hearted man,
Self-called George Sand, whose soul, amid the lions
Of thy tumultuous senses, moans defiance
And answers roar for roar, as spirits can. 5
I would some mild miraculous thunder ran
Above the applauded circus in appliance
Of thine own nobler nature’s strength and science,
Drawing two pinions, white as wings of swan,
From thy strong shoulders, to amaze the place
With holier light! that thou to woman’s claim 10
And man’s, might join beside the angel’s grace
Of a pure genius sanctified from blame,
Till child and maiden pressed to thine embrace
To kiss upon thy lips a stainless fame.

Barrett Browning (1806–61) – far more famous in her lifetime than her husband, Robert – wrote this and another sonnet (*A Recognition*) to the French woman novelist George Sand (1804–76). The latter was (in)famous for her challenging ideas and behaviour, including cross-dressing and using a man’s name.

5.1.2 e GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, ‘The Windhover’, written 1877,
pub. 1918

[*Tips on reading.* This can be a perplexing poem until you get into the swing of sounding it out loud and relish the sense of the French-derived words: ‘minion’ – darling; ‘dauphin’ – prince-in-waiting; ‘chevalier’ – knight; ‘sillion’ – furrow. The two marks over ‘sheer’ and ‘plod’ in line 12 are Hopkins’s indications of especial stress, though weighing where to place the stresses is a major part of the poem’s overall challenge. A windhover is a kestrel, a small falcon that hovers then suddenly swoops.]

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. 5
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! 10

No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion
 Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
 Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold vermilion.

While studying at Oxford, Hopkins (1844–89) was greatly influenced by the **aesthetic** ideas on sensuous beauty of his tutor, Walter Pater, and the conversion to Catholicism of his mentor, Cardinal Newman. Hopkins subsequently became a Jesuit priest, writing but not publishing poetry; first publication was in 1918, long after his death. The heavily alliterative, *stressed verse-form is partly modelled on early English poetic forms (cf. 5.1.1 a, d and e, and the wrenching of sense is an attempt to register what Hopkins calls ‘inshape’. This is a sensuously intense realisation of the ‘thisness’ of a specific event or identity, ultimately leading to an acute apprehension (‘instress’) of God in all things. Hopkins’s subtitle for this poem is *To Christ our Lord*.

5.1.2 f RUPERT BROOKE, ‘The Soldier’, written December 1914,
 pub. June 1915

If I should die, think only this of me:
 That there’s some corner of a foreign field
 That is for ever England. There shall be
 In that rich earth a richer dust concealed; 4
 A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
 Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
 A body of England’s, breathing English air,
 Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home. 8
 And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
 A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
 Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given,
 Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day; 12
 And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
 In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Brooke (1887–1915) was educated at a public (i.e. fee-paying private) school (Rugby) and Cambridge University. He is usually referred to as a ‘Georgian’ poet because of his mixture of patriotism and pastoralism. He died of dysentery and blood poisoning on a troop ship on the way to Gallipoli. Winston Churchill, in a ‘Valediction’ in the *London Times* (1915), used the occasion of the poet’s death and the posthumous publication of his poems a month later to reinforce a recruitment drive (see Abrams 2000, Vol II: 2051):

The thoughts to which he gave expression in the very few incomparable war sonnets which he has left behind will be shared by many thousands of young men moving resolutely and blithely forward into this, the hardest, the cruellest, and the least-rewarded of all the wars that men have fought. They are a whole history and revelation of Rupert Brooke himself. Joyous, fearless, versatile, deeply instructed, with classic symmetry of mind and body, he was all that one would wish England’s