

Spring and Fall:

to a young child

Márgarét, áre you grieving
Over Goldengrove unleaving?
Leáves, líke the things of man, you
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?
Áh! ás the heart grows older
It will come to such sights colder
By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;
And yet you *will* weep and know why.
Now no matter, child, the name:
Sórrów's spríngs áre the same.
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed
What héart héárd of, ghóst guéssed:
It is the blight man was born for,
It is Margaret you mourn for.

--Gerard Manly Hopkins [Written 1880, Published 1918]

- (1) Why is the poem entitled "Spring and Fall?" Is the poem about spring and fall? Or is it about something else?
- (2) The poet addresses his poem "to a young child"? Who is that child? (There may be more than one possibility here.)
- (3) What is Margaret crying about in the opening lines? What does she see that saddens her?
- (4) What does the word "unleaving" mean? How do you know it means that? The poet makes up other non-existent words also. List them.
- (5) Why are Margaret's thoughts "fresh"? Why connotations does that word have instead of "innocent" or "immature" or "young"?
- (6) What is strange about the phrase coming to "sights colder"?
- (7) How does the speaker say Margaret will react in the future to the sight of dead plants? (trick question!)
- (8) Why does the poet say that the "name" doesn't matter in line ten? Whose or what's name is he talking about?
- (9) For what purpose are people born, according to the poem?
- (10) What does the speaker suggest Margaret is really crying about, even though she doesn't know it?

Bonus Question: Can you explain an instance of "sprung rhythm" in any of the lines above? **Hint:** Hopkins used his own accent marks to indicate the way passages should be read according to his theory, and I have reproduced those marks here.