

BINSEY POPLARS

felled 1879

Gerard Manley Hopkins 1879. Undergraduate in Oxford 1864-7.

My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled,
Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun,
All felled, felled, are all felled;
Of a fresh and following folded rank
 Not spared, not one
 That dandled a sandalled
 Shadow that swam or sank
On meadow and river and wind-wandering weed
 winding bank.

O if we but knew what we do
 When we delve or hew –
 Hack and rack the growing green!
 Since country is so tender
 To touch, her being so slender,
 That, like this sleek and seeing ball
 But a prick will make no eye at all,
 Where we, even where we mean
 To mend her we end her,
 When we hew or delve:
 After-comers cannot guess the beauty been.
 Ten or twelve, only ten or twelve
 Strokes of havoc unselvē
 The sweet especial scene,
 Rural scene, a rural scene,
 Sweet especial rural scene.