

The Caged Skylark

BY GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

As a dare-gale skylark scanted in a dull cage,
Man's mounting spirit in his bone-house, mean house, dwells —
That bird beyond the remembering his free fells;
This in drudgery, day-labouring-out life's age.
Though aloft on turf or perch or poor low stage
Both sing sometimes the sweetest, sweetest spells,
Yet both droop deadly sometimes in their cells
Or wring their barriers in bursts of fear or rage.

Not that the sweet-fowl, song-fowl, needs no rest —
Why, hear him, hear him babble & drop down to his nest,
But his own nest, wild nest, no prison.

Man's spirit will be flesh-bound, when found at best,
But uncumberèd: meadow-down is not distressed
For a rainbow footing it nor he for his bones risen.