Pied Beauty

Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour
as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls;
finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.
All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:

Praise him.
Pointilism

- Circa 1880s = Pointilism
- Seurat knew a lot about dots.
- “Pied Beauty” was written in 1877
- Pointilism encourages viewers to step back and see the beauty in the bigger picture.
Seurat’s *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, 1884-1886
The Windhover

To Christ Our Lord

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,

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!\(^5\) AND\(^6\) the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillon\(^7\)
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermilion.
1. Kestrel, called "windhover" because it hovers in the air, head to wind. This poem, which Hopkins considered "the best thing I ever wrote" (Letters), has been variously explicated. The main thought seems to be that the ecstatic flying of the bird stirs the poet's heart ("in hiding," for the poet is a priest, with his heart hidden away from earthly things in the service of God). In the combination of beauty, strength, and glory which the poet sees in the bird, he sees an emblem of the beauty, strength, and glory of Christ, whom he addresses as "my chevalier" (line 11). It is "dangerous" to see these qualities in Christ, for we look to Christ for lessons in humility and the enduring of suffering. But it is "no wonder" (lines 12-14) that Christ's humility and suffering are bound up with His glory and pride; many things include their opposites; "sheer plod" can make the ploughshare shine, as it cuts its furrow, and a black coal in a fire can fall over and break and reveal its red-hot interior, its "gold-vermilion" gashes suggesting both beauty and pride and Christ's wounds and suffering.

2. Darling.
3. Heir (literally, the title of the eldest son of the King of France); the word carries overtones of chivalry and splendor.
4. There is an implied comparison to a horse circling around its trainer at the end of a long rein. "Wimpling": rippling.
5. The obvious sense here is "join," though some critics have understood it as "bend" or "break" and some have taken it as an imperative in that sense. But see note 1. Hopkins is celebrating the point at which animal beauty, strength, bearing, and fine display all join.
6. Hopkins emphasizes the "AND" to draw attention from the admiration of the bird and to the sense of Christ behind it which that admiration brings. A movement from appreciation of the life of nature to a religious sense of the God reflected in nature is found in very many of Hopkins' poems.
7. The ridge between two furrows of a plowed field. Hopkins uses this archaic word perhaps to suggest an overtone from "silica" (the mineral which in the form of gleaming particles of quartz often makes dull rocks shine).