

# Felix Randal

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889)

Victorian

Ministering to Randall's soul, developed a sense of compassion + connection with the dying man. Recalls him being a big fellow = to most physically demanding job—shoeing large horses  
Reflects on long illness + death of Felix Randal + comments on his own role (as priest) in caring for the dying man. More about Hopkins ministry. Ailments England 1885 cause of death

## Glossary

Farrier — blacksmith shoeing horses  
Mould — shape  
Rambled — talked aimlessly  
Anointed — blessed by a priest  
Reprieve — temporary improvement  
Ransom — deliverance; being saved  
Quenched — stopped  
Boisterous — lively  
Fettle — trim the horse shoe  
Drayhorse — horse pulling a wagon  
Pining—to become ill/waste away

**Tone: (Author's attitude or feelings about the subject)**  
Detached/matter-of-fact then endearing

**Mood: (Readers emotions from reading the text)**  
relief→sympathy→impatience→  
acceptance→comfort→  
admiration→ends with a triumphant + fiercely energetic mood

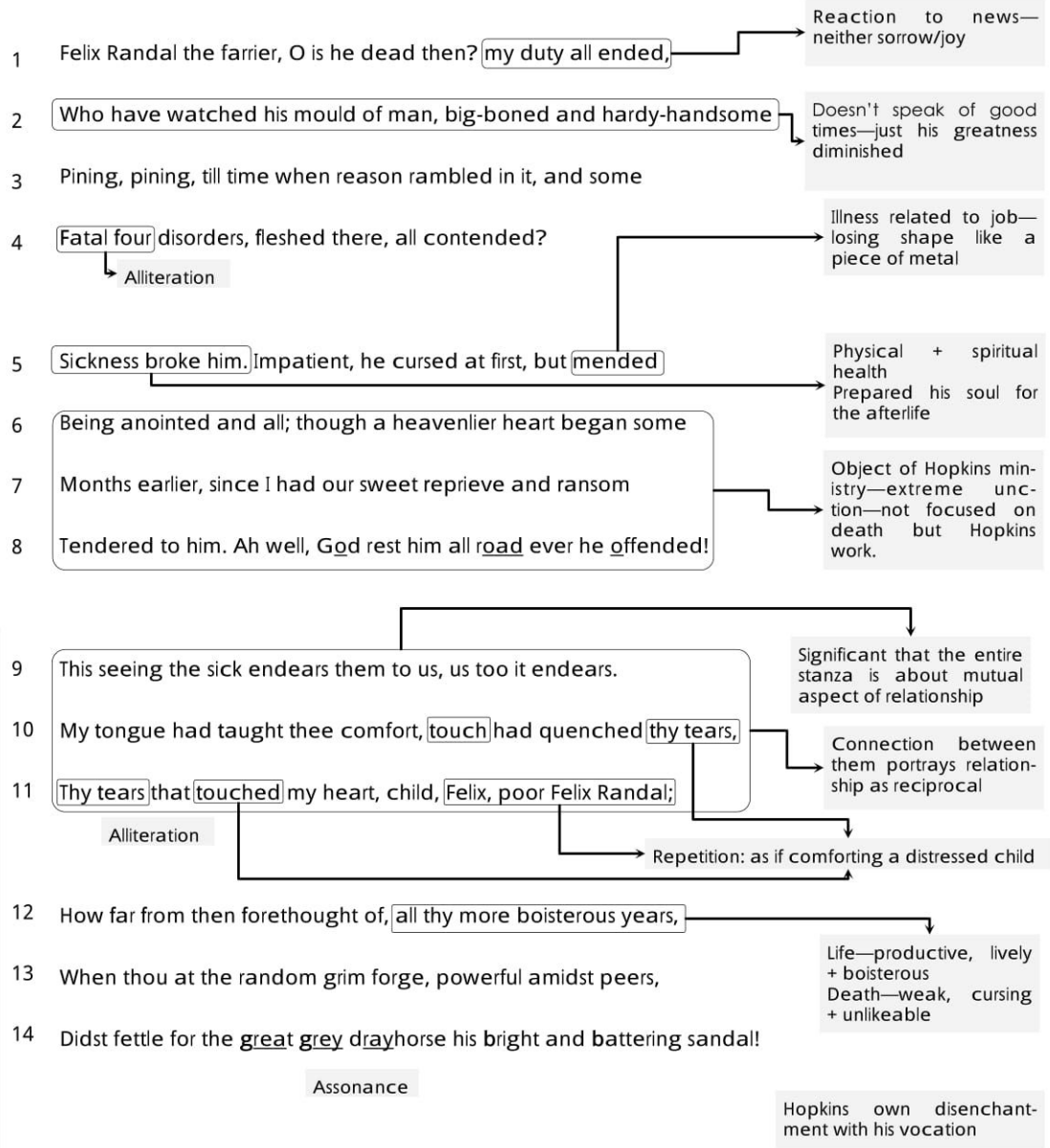
**Theme:**  
Religion & Nature

**Form:**  
Petrarchan/Italian Sonnet  
This sonnet consists of two a-b-b-a rhymed quatrains (the octave) followed by two rhymed c-c-d stanzas making up the sestet.  
ABBA / ABBA / CDC / CDC  
Each section has a particular function, allowing Hopkins to develop his theme.

**Four fatal ailments:**  
→ Melancholy  
→ Phlegm  
→ Blood  
→ Bile

The octave states the situation and establishes the background leading up to Randall's death.

The sestet allows the speaker's emotional state to find voice as he addresses the dead man directly, and expresses his regard for him. His own sense of loss and sorrow is made explicit in this section of the poem.



## Sound Devices:

Poem demands to be read aloud. The rhythm of pauses and flow is made clear by the punctuation and word order.

In the first line, three points are made, separated by the commas and the question mark. The use of alliteration in 'hardy- handsome' (line 2), 'reason rambled' (line 3) and 'Fatal four' (line 4) not only increases the impact of the words due to their sound, but also due to the linking of these words.

The final two lines of the poem create a strong rhythm as the short phrases 'random grim forge', 'powerful amidst peers' (line 13), 'great grey drayhorse' and 'bright and battering sandal' (line 14) balance each other and cumulatively build the image of strength.

## Poetic Devices:

A notable feature of this sonnet is the shift in tone. The opening line comes across as matter-of-fact, whereas the sestet provides a stark contrast as the raw feelings of the speaker become clear. The tone changes to one of loss and grief.

Hopkins uses his structure to establish some distinct contrasts. He shows us the strapping healthy Randal who once was 'powerful amidst peers' (line 13) and we can then draw the contrast with the 'pining, pining' (line 3) man who was broken by 'some/Fatal four disorders' (lines 3-4).

A contrast is also provided by describing the spiritual state of Randal who acquires a 'heavenlier heart' (line 6) after time spent with the speaker. This time spent together also causes the development of their relationship from perhaps one of mutual tolerance to a close one where each genuinely cared for the other.

Hopkins' use of compound adjectives like 'hardy-handsome' (line 2) gives his poem a liveliness and freshness. The diction of the last stanza lends power to the content, as the reader can visualise Felix Randal 'at the random grim forge' (line 13) performing impressive physical feats.