

Sustainable Poems for ENC1102

God's Grandeur

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889)

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod; 5
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things; 10
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.
(1877)

Love Is Not All

Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892–1950)

Love is not all; it is not meat nor drink
Nor slumber nor a roof against the rain,
Nor yet a floating spar to men that sink,
And rise and sink, and rise and sink again;
Love cannot fill the thickened lung with breath, 5

Nor clean the blood, nor set the fractured bone;
Yet many a man is making friends with death
Even as I speak, for lack of love alone.
It well may be that in a difficult hour,
Pinned down by pain and moaning for release, 10

Or nagged by want, past resolution's power,
I might be driven to sell your love for peace,
Or trade the memory of this night for food.
It well may be. I do not think I would. 15
(1931)

THE FORCE THAT THROUGH THE GREEN FUSE DRIVES THE FLOWER

Dylan Thomas (1914-1953)

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees
Is my destroyer.
And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever. 5

The force that drives the water through the rocks
Drives my red blood; that dries the mouthing streams
Turns mine to wax.
And I am dumb to mouth unto my veins
How at the mountain spring the same mouth sucks. 10

The hand that whirls the water in the pool
Stirs the quicksand; that ropes the blowing wind
Hauls my shroud sail.
And I am dumb to tell the hanging man
How of my clay is made the hangman's lime. 15

The lips of time leech to the fountain head;
Love drips and gathers, but the fallen blood
Shall calm her sores.
And I am dumb to tell a weather's wind
How time has ticked a heaven round the stars. 20

And I am dumb to tell the lover's tomb
How at my sheet goes the same crooked worm.

(1934)

We Real Cool THE POOL PLAYERS. SEVEN AT THE GOLDEN SHOVEL.

Gwendolyn Brooks (1917-2000)

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We 5
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.

(1960)

The Force That Through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower: Introduction

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Dylan Thomas made a dramatic impact on the literary world when his first collection of poetry, with the unassuming title *18 Poems*, appeared in December of 1934, when he was only twenty years old. Although he had published a few poems in literary magazines during the previous year, Thomas was basically an unknown figure. From the beginning, he was a controversial poet. Not part of the conventional literary establishment, unconnected with any particular poetic movement, his work was difficult to categorize. Although Thomas's poems received critical acclaim for the force and vitality of their language and imagery, he was also criticized for obscurity. Because of this, he was often identified with the Surrealist movement, where images and language violated the rules of logic, frequently imitating the landscape of dreams, or even nightmares. On the surface, Thomas seems to have much in common with Surrealism; however, he vehemently denied the relationship, insisting that his poetry was carefully planned and controlled. Thomas fully intended his images to be understood. Unfortunately for the reader, the intensely personal nature of many of his metaphors makes this difficult.

"The Force That through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower," one of the most popular and least obscure of the poems in the collection, illustrates both the vivid language and the complex, powerful, but often confusing imagery. While it is easy to get caught up in the rhythm and drama of the language, it is far more difficult to unravel meaning. On its most basic level, however, the poem describes the cycle of life and death, noting that creation and destruction are part of the same process, both for man and for nature. Each stanza presents the flow of time moving to its inexorable conclusion.

The Force That Through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower Summary

Line 1: "The Force That through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower" is a complicated poem. On the first reading, it may seem almost too difficult for a beginning reader to understand. However, careful analysis will make much of the imagery clearer. As a survey of critics reveals, there is no one right explanation for the more complicated ideas in the poem. Even critics interpret lines in

different and often contradictory ways. Since the poem is about contrast, change, and paradox, this may prove part of the poem's meaning.

The first stanza in the poem is the easiest to understand. It is important to be aware of the pattern that Thomas develops in this stanza, in order to look for variations that appear later. The first three lines contrast the creative and destructive forces that surround man. Thomas's imagery emphasizes the explosive nature of this power. The green fuse is obviously the flower's stem, yet the word "fuse" gives the connotation of explosive growth, rather than gentle development. In this line, Thomas introduces the creative force in nature.

The rhyme scheme in this stanza is *ababa*.

Line 2: In the first four words of this line, the power that causes growth in nature is revealed as the same force that causes the speaker to grow. Like the flower, the speaker is still in the process of growing. Green age implies youth, since the word *green* has connotations of spring and renewal. Although green is often used in poetry to convey youth, this phrase also contains a sense of opposites; *green* conveys youth, while *age* often speaks of being old. Throughout the poem, Thomas will combine many seemingly opposite words.

After the caesura—the pause or break in the rhythm at the semicolon—the destructive power is unleashed. Grammatically, the phrase refers back to the force in the first line. However, now it is a destructive power, obliterating trees by their very roots. Thomas makes it clear that the fuse which blasted the flower into existence is also the blast which destroys it.

Line 3: Like nature, the speaker is also subject to the same fate. The change in length helps to emphasize the line's power. With three words, the speaker describes his ultimate fate.

Line 4: The fourth line in each stanza begins with the same four words indicating that the speaker is unable to convey his insight. *Dumb* has several meanings which could be applicable. While the speaker may be unable to "tell" for physical reasons, it is more likely for emotional ones, a sense of inadequacy to express the idea.

Once again, Thomas combines words with opposite connotations. The rose is a symbol of beauty, of the growth described in the first line; using the adjective *crooked* to describe it changes our impression of the flower. Like much of Thomas's imagery, this phrase is not precise. It relies on the reader's feeling or impressions. The entire stanza leaves the reader with the impression that the crooked rose is blighted.

Line 5: The speaker shares the same fate as the flower. The verb *bent* furthers the connection between the speaker and the rose, as the reader understands that the vigorous youth will become stooped and crooked with age, like the rose. In *wintry fever* Thomas includes still another paradox as the cold of winter is blended with a fever's heat. **Line 6:** The pattern in this stanza is the... » [Complete The Force That Through the Green Fuse Drives... Summary](#)