



Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Very Private Life

Robert Bernard Martin

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'Will surely rank as one of the foremost literary biographies of our time.'
John Carey, Sunday Times

In his lifetime Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) published just a single poem - only a few close friends were aware he wrote. Much of his work was burnt by fellow Jesuits on his death. And yet Hopkins is today a huge figure in English literature. Homosexual but terribly repressed, he channeled his emotions toward nature and God, with profound results. Princeton emeritus professor Martin, the only biographer to have unrestricted use of Hopkins' private papers, tells this extraordinary story from Hopkins' early life and studies at Oxford, through his tortuous conversion from Anglicanism to Catholicism, to his struggle in later years to retain his very sanity.

'In Martin, the unhappy and tormented genius has found the most sympathetic and intelligent interpreter... [The book] goes to the heart of Hopkins, and plants him firmly before us as a Victorian, and a great one.'
Allan Massie, Sunday Telegraph

'Martin follows Hopkins through his toils with sympathy and a great unshowy command of the facts. In this magnificently solicitous biography he has re-established the contours of the story definitively and made the homosexual drama integral to the better-known drama of conversion and poetics.' Seamus Heaney,
Independent on Sunday

'The triumph of this learned, scrupulously detailed and persuasive biography is that it brings the reader as near as it is perhaps possible to come to living Hopkins' life, to sensing the mysterious crushing pressures that were for him intimately bound up with the richness and complexity of his writing.'

Hilary Spurling, Daily Telegraph



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