Loose Ends: A Tanka String*

Found** in *Minor Poems* by *John Milton* edited by A.P. Walker (1900)

slight or small
foolish or frivolous
perhaps
less by a semi-tone
or short of maturity

Hymn on the Nativity
with speeches fair
his inferior flame
at last surrounds their sight
with unexpressive notes

Comus
with low-thoughted care
this sin-worn mould –
here their tender age
set at nought the frivolous bolt

Lycidas
rural ditties were not mute
all their echoes mourn –
mediate the thankless Muse
the grim world with privy paw

Sonnets
Thy liquid notes that close
the eye of day
fill thy odorous lamp –
prompt the age to quite their clogs

Notes:

* a tanka string is a set of tanka poems that are "tied" to single subject.

** Found poetry is created by taking words and phrases from other sources and reframing them as a new poem, thus imparting new meaning. After using my own words in the introductory tanka, the four tanka that follow it each use lines found in the titled so-called "minor" poem by Milton.

A Villanelle to Gerard Manley Hopkins, Dead Now One Hundred and Thirty Years*

*All Life does end and each day dies with sleep.***

each day dies with sleep
pitched past pitch of grief
thus for him we weep

after us does creep
knave remorse, love's thief
each day dies with sleep

from the dark so deep
follows dawn's relief
thus for him we weep

kept his faith, a leap
we wake with belief
each day dies with sleep

on the mountain peak
dapple-dawn, gold-leaf
thus for him we weep

for his sake we seek
slant rhyme's hard won peace
each day lives with sleep
thus for him we weep
blow gently, blow gently, blow gently.

– Dr. Neal Whitman*

Notes:

* Hopkins died on 8 June 1889, a mostly unread poet whose work was posthumously recognized, but by the1930s accepted as one of the most original poets of the 20th century.

** from his poem, "No Worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief."

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