

The Darkling Thrush

By Thomas Hardy 1840–1928

I leant upon a coppice gate
When Frost was spectre-grey,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul

Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings

Of such ecstatic sound

Was written on terrestrial things

Afar or nigh around,

That I could think there trembled through

His happy good-night air

Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew

And I was unaware.

The Ruined Maid

The Self-Unseeing

The Shadow on the Stone

The To-be-forgotten

The Voice

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Poem Categorization

SUBJECT Winter, Nature, Landscapes & Pastorals, Social Commentaries, Living, Arts & Sciences, Animals

POET'S REGION England

SCHOOL / PERIOD Victorian

Poetic Terms Rhymed Stanza, Common Measure, Alliteration, Elegy

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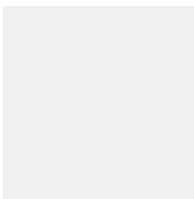
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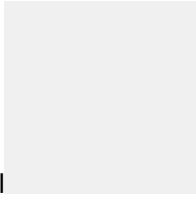
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