



Wessex Poems

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Thomas Hardy claimed that his first love had always been poetry, but it was not until the age of 58 that this first collection, written over a period of 30 years, was published. Wessex was the "partly-real, partly-dream" county that formed the backdrop for most of Hardy's writings—named after an Anglo-Saxon kingdom and modeled on the real counties of Berkshire, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset, and Wiltshire. The poems deal with classic Hardy themes of disappointment in love and life, and the struggle to live a meaningful life in an indifferent world. Although Hardy's poetry was not as well received as his fiction, he continued to publish collections until his death, and thanks in part to the influence of Philip Larkin, he is increasingly realized as a poet of great stature.

Wessex Poems Details

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Author : Thomas Hardy , Trevor Johnson (Editor)

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From Reader Review Wessex Poems for online ebook

GONZA says

"Channel Firing"

That night your great guns, unawares,
Shook all our coffins as we lay,
And broke the chancel window-squares,
We thought it was the Judgment-day

And sat upright. While drearishome
Arose the howl of wakened hounds:
The mouse let fall the altar-crumbs,
The worms drew back into the mounds,

The glebe¹ cow drooled. Till God called, "No;
It's gunnery practise out at sea
Just as before you went below;
The world is as it used to be:

"And all nations striving strong to make
Red war yet redder. Mad as hatters
They do no more for Christ's sake
Than you who are helpless in such matters.

"That this is not the judgement-hour
For some of them's a blessed thing,
For if it were they'd have to scour
Hell's floor for so much threatening. . . .

"Ha, ha. It will be warmer when
I blow the trumpet (if indeed
I ever do; for you are men,
And rest eternal sorely need)."

So down we lay again. "I wonder,
Will the world ever saner be,"
Said one, 'than when He sent us under
In our indifferent century!"

And many a skeleton shook his head.
"Instead of preaching forty year,"
My neighbour Parson Thirdly said,
"I wish I had stuck to pipes and beer."

Again the guns disturbed the hour,
Roaring their readiness to avenge,

As far inland as Stourton Tower,
And Camelot, and starlit Stonehenge.

Mii says

This book is a great read!

Lauren says

Very good collection of poetry - I enjoyed many poems in this collection but I did have four favourites these were: The Burghers, Her Death and After, The Casterbridge Captains and Thoughts of Phena. I would highly recommend this poetry collection.

Manik Sukoco says

Many reviewers were put off when Thomas Hardy published this, his first collection of poetry, late in 1898 and after swearing off fiction. If "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" and "Jude the Obscure" offended them, "Wessex Poems" confused them - its style and diction seemed clumsy, and its themes did nothing to reassure them. And yet it includes a handful of the poems now acknowledged as among Hardy's best - including "Hap," which begins "If but some vengeful god"-- and announced the beginning of what would turn out to be one of the greatest careers in poetry in the twentieth century. Powerful novelists are rarely powerful poets, but Hardy once again showed himself not to be limited by the constraints and considerations of "smaller" minds.
