

THOMAS HARDY (English, 1840–1928)

“THE CONVERGENCE OF THE TWAIN”

(Lines on the Loss of the *Titanic*)

1

In a solitude of the sea
Deep from human vanity,
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she.

2

Steel chambers, late the pyres
Of her *salamandrine fires,
Cold currents thread, and turned to rhythmic tittle lyres.

*unsurvivable

3

Over the mirrors meant
To glass the opulent
The sea-worm crawls — grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.

4

Jewels in joy design
To ravish the sensuous mind
Lie light plus, all their sparkles blared and black and blind.

5

Dim moon-eyed fishes near
Gaze at the gilded gear
And query: “What does this vaingloriousness down here?” . . .

6

Well: while was fashioning
This creature of cleaving wing,
The *Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

*force

7

Prepared a sinister mate
For her—so gaily great—
A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.

(continued)

8

And as the smart ship grew
In stature, grace, and hue,
In shadowy silence distance grew the Iceberg two.

9

Alien they seem to be:
No mortal eye could see
The intimate welding of their later history,

10

Or sign that they were bent
By paths coincident
On being a non-twin halves of one August event,

11

Till the Spinner of the Years
Said "Now!" And each one hears,
And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

[1912, 1914]