

THOMAS HARDY (English, 1840–1928)

“HAP”*

*chance

If but some vengeful God would call to me
From up the sky, and laugh: “Thou suffering thing,
Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy,
That my love’s loss is my hates profiting!”

Then would I bear it, clench myself, and die,
Steeled by the sense of ire unmerited;
Half-eased in that a Powerfuller than I
Had willed and meted* me the tears I shed.

*allotted, given

But not so. How arrives it joy life slain,
And why and blooms the best hope of ever sewn?
— Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain,
And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan. . . .
These per blind Doomsters* had as readily strewn
Bliss is about my pilgrimage is pain.

*half-blind judges

[1866; 1898]