

[1] **Great Things (1925)**
Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

Sweet cyder is a great thing,
A great thing to me,
Spinning down to Weymouth town
By Ridgway thirstily,
And maid and mistress summoning
Who tend the hostelry:
O cyder is a great thing,
A great thing to me!

The dance it is a great thing,
A great thing to me,
With candles lit and partners fit
For night-long revelry.
And going home when day-dawning
Peeps pale upon the lea:
O dancing is a great thing,
A great thing to me!

Love is, yea, a great thing,
A great thing to me,
When, having drawn across the lawn
In darkness silently,
A figure flits like one a-wing
Out from the nearest tree:
O love is, yes, a great thing,
Aye, greatest thing to me!

Will these be always great things
Greatest things to me? . . .
Let it befall that one will call
"Soul, I have need of thee":
What then? Joy-jaunts, impassioned flings,
Love, and its ecstasy
Will always have been great things,
Greatest things to me!

THREE SONGS TO POEMS BY THOMAS HARDY (1925)

[2] **I. Summer schemes**

When friendly summer calls again,
Calls again
Her little fifers to these hills,
We'll go - we two - to that arched fane
Of leafage where they prime their bills
Before they start to flood the plain
With quavers, minims, shakes, and trills.
'- We'll go', I sing; but who shall say
What may not chance before that day!

And we shall see the waters spring,
Waters spring
From chinks the scrubby copses crown;

And we shall trace their oncreeping
To where the cascade tumbles down
And sends the bobbing growths aswing,
And ferns not quite but almost drown.
'- We shall', I say; but who may sing
Of what another moon will bring!

[3] II. Her song

I sang that song on Sunday,
To which an idle while,
I sang that song on Monday,
As fittest to beguile:
I sang it as the year outwore,
And the new slid in;
I thought not what might shape before
Another would begin.

I sang that song in summer,
All unforeknowingly,
To him as a new-comer
From regions strange to me:
I sang it when in afteryears
The shades stretched out,
And paths were faint; and flocking fears
Brought cup-eyed care and doubt.

Sings he that song on Sundays
In some dim land afar,
On Saturdays, or Mondays,
As when the evening star
Glimpsed in upon his bending face,
And my hanging hair,
And time untouched me with a trace
Of soul-smart or despair?

[4] III. Weathers

This is the weather the cuckoo likes,
And so do I;
When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,
And nestlings fly;
And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
And they sit outside at "The Traveller's Rest",
And maids come forth sprig-muslin drest,
And citizens dream of the south and west,
And so do I.

This is the weather the shepherd shuns,
And so do I;
When beeches drip in browns and duns,
And thresh and ply;
And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,
And meadow rivulets overflow,
And drops on gate bars hang in a row,
And rooks in families homeward go,
And so do I.

[10] **During Music (1928)**
Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882)

O cool unto the sense of pain
That last night's sleep could not destroy;
O warm unto the sense of joy,
That dreams its life within the brain.
What though I lean o'er thee to scan
The written music cramped and stiff;
'Tis dark to me, as hieroglyph
On those weird bulks Egyptian.

But as from those, dumb now and strange,
A glory wanders on the earth,
Even so thy tones can call a birth
From these, to shake my soul with change.

O swift, as in melodious haste
Float o'er the keys thy fingers small.
O soft, as is the rise and fall
Which stirs that shade within thy breast.

MARIGOLD (IMPRESSION FOR VOICE AND PIANO (1913))

[11] **I. Youth's Spring-Tribute**
Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882)

On this sweet bank your head thrice sweet and dear
I lay, and spread your hair on either side,
And see the newborn woodflowers bashful-eyed
Look through the golden tresses here and there.
On these debateable borders of the year
Spring's foot half falters; scarce she yet may know
The leafless blackthorn-blossom from the snow.
And through her bowers the wind's way still is clear.

But April's sun strikes down the glades to-day;
So shut your eyes upturned and feel my kiss
Creep, as the Spring now thrills through every spray,
Up your warm throat to your warm lips: for this
Is even the hour of Love's sworn suit-service,
With whom cold hearts are counted castaway.

[12] **II. Penumbra**
Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882)

I did not look upon her eyes,
(Though scarcely seen, with no surprise,
'Mid many eyes a single look),
Because they should not gaze rebuke
At night, from stars in sky and brook.

I did not take her by the hand
(Though little was to understand
From touch of hands all friends might take),

Because it should not prove a flake
Burnt in my palm to boil and ache.

I did not listen to her voice,
(Though none had noted, where at choice
All might rejoice in listening)
Because no such a thing should cling
In the wood's moan at evening.

They told me she was sad that day,
(Though wherefore tell what love's soothsay,
Sooner than they, did register?)
And my heart leapt and wept to her,
And yet I did not speak nor stir.

So shall the tongues of the sea's foam
(Though many voices therewith come
From drowned hope's home to cry to me),
Bewail one hour the more, when sea
And wind are one with memory.

[13] **III. Spleen**
Ernet Dowson (1867–1900)

Around were all the roses red
The ivy all around was black.

Dear, so thou only move thine head,
Shall all mine old despairs awake!

Too blue, too tender was the sky,
The air too soft, too green the sea.

Always I fear, I know not why,
Some lamentable flight from thee.

I am so tired of holly-sprays
And weary of the bright box-tree,

Of all the endless country ways;
Of everything alas! save thee.

[14] **I have Twelve Oxen (1918)**
Anon.

I have twelve oxen that be fair and brown,
And they go a-grazing down by the town.
With hey! with ho! with hey! with ho!
Sawest not you mine oxen, you little pretty boy?

I have twelve oxen, they be fair and white,
And they go a-grazing down by the dyke.
With hey! with how! with hey!
Sawest not you mine oxen, you little pretty boy?

I have twelve oxen, and they be fair and black,

And they go a-grazing down by the lake.
With hey! with how! with hey!
Sawest not you mine oxen, you little pretty boy?

I have twelve oxen, and they be fair and red,
And they go a-grazing down by the mead.
With hey! with how! with hey!
Sawest not you mine oxen, you little pretty boy?

WE'LL TO THE WOODS (1927)

A.E. Housman (1859–1936)

[15] I. We'll to the Woods

We'll to the Woods no more
The laurels all are cut,
The bowers are bare of bay
That once the Muses wore.
The year draws in the day
And soon will evening shut:
The laurels all are cut
We'll to the woods no more.
Oh, we'll no more, no more
To the leafy woods away,
To the high wild woods of laurel
And the bowers of bay no more.

[16] II. In Boyhood

When I would muse in boyhood
The wild green woods among,
And nurse resolves and fancies
Because the world was young,
It was not foes to conquer,
Nor sweethearts to be kind,
But it was friends to die for
That I would seek and find.

I sought them far and found them,
The sure, the straight, the brave,
The hearts I lost my own to,
The souls I could not save.
They braced their belts about them,
They crossed in ships the sea,
They sought and found
Six feet of ground,
And there they died for me.

[17] III. Spring Will Not Wait (Piano Solo)

FIVE POEMS BY THOMAS HARDY (1926)

[18] I. Beckon to me

Beckon to me to come
With handkerchief or hand,
Or finger mere or thumb;

Let forecasts be rough,
Parents more bleak than bland,
'Twill be enough,
Maid mine,
'Twill be enough!

Two fields, a wood, a tree,
Nothin now more malign
Lies between you and me;
But were they bysm, or bluff,
Or snarling sea,
One would be enough,
Maid mine,
Would be enough.

[19] II. In my sage moments

In my sage moments I can say,
Come not near,
But far in foreign regions stay,
So that here
A mind may grow again
Serene and clear.

But the thought withers.
Why should I
Have fear to earn me
Fame from your nearness, though there by
Old fires new burn me,
And lastly, maybe, tear and overturn me!

So I say,
Come: deign again shine,
Shine upon this place,
Even if unslackened smart be mine
From that sweet face,
And I faint to a phantom past all trace.

[20] III. It was what you bore with you,

It was what you bore with you, Woman,
Not inly were,
That throned you from all else human,
However fair!

It was that strange freshness you carried
Into a soul
Whereon no thought of yours tarried
Two moments at all.

And out from his spirit flew death,
And bale, and ban,
Like the corn-chaff under the breath
of the winnowing-fan.

[21] IV. The tragedy of that moment

The tragedy of that moment
Was deeper than the sea,
When I came in that moment
And heard you speak to me!

What I could not help seeing
Covered life as a blot;
Yes, that which I was seeing,
And knew that you were not!

[22] **V. Dear, think not**

Dear, think not that they will forget you:
If craftsmanly art should be mine
I will build up a temple,
And set you therein as its shrine.
They may say:
'Why a woman such honour?'
Be told,
'O how sweet was her fame,
That a man heaped this splendour upon her;
None now knows his name.'

[24] **When I am dead, my dearest (1924)**

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree:
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet;
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on, as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

[27] **If there were dreams to sell**

Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803–1849)

If there were dreams to sell,
What would you buy?
Some cost a passing bell;
Some a light sigh,
That shakes from Life's fresh crown
Only a rose-leaf down.
If there were dreams to sell,
Merry and sad to tell,
And the crier rang the bell,
What would you buy?

A cottage lone and still,
With bowers nigh,
Shadowy, my woes to still,
Until I die.
Such pearl from Life's fresh crown
Fain would I shake me down.
Were dreams to have at will,
This best would heal my ill,
This would I buy.

Note: Tracks 5 to 9 inclusive are without song texts due to the fact that the authors are still in copyright.