

A Brief Overview

- Born in 1840, Thomas Hardy became known as a prominent novelist and poet in British and American literature.
- He published 8 volumes of poetry, one being published posthumously.
- Hardy's poetry is commonly referred to as pessimistic and was not received well during his lifetime.
- One of the most common elements seen throughout Hardy's poetry is his use of autobiographical information within the poems





Thomas Hardy was born on June 2, 1840 in Higher Bockhampton in this cottage. Throughout his life, he would fondly remember this house and frequently visit it.

Hardy spent his early life singing in the church choir with his father.



- He was a sickly child and was not able to attend school at a young age.
- At the age of 22, Hardy moved to London to become an architect.



Hardy first met his future wife, Emma Gifford, at St. Juliot's rectory in 1872. They married in 1874. This chance meeting would shape the next 40 years of Hardy's life.



Emma Gifford was a woman of high social status. She had a very interesting personality and was always remember by visitors to the Hardy household. She died in 1912.

Thomas and Emma Hardy resided at Max Gate from 1884 onward.





Hardy's first volume of poetry, *Wessex Poems*, was published in 1898.



Hardy met Florence Dugdale in 1907. After Emma's death in 1912, Florence and Hardy married and continued to live at Max Gate



Hardy died on January 11, 1928.



Hardy's Poetic Themes

Disillusioned Love

"Neutral Tones"

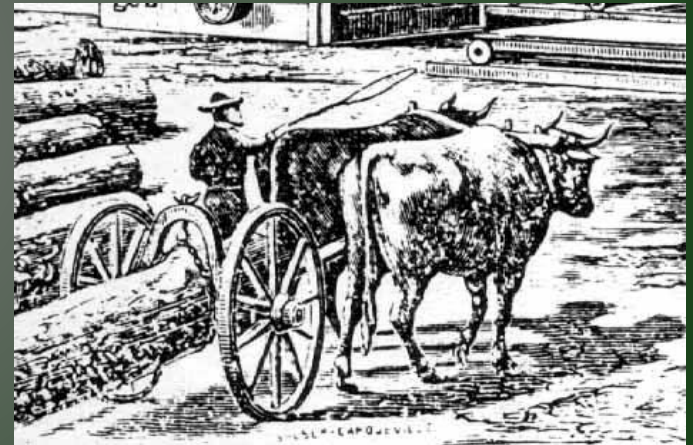


In Hardy's earlier works, this was a favored theme. Love was never reciprocated or happy, but tedious and marked with infidelity. The poems of 1912-1913 written after Emma's death are also considered love poems.

Religion/Loss of Faith

"The Oxen"

Hardy was a pronounced agnostic during his later life. His poetry is marked with his disbelief in God and a belief in some other ruling force within the universe. In some ways, Hardy needs the basis of belief to show disbelief in his poetry.



Chance and Coincidence



“Hap”



Hardy's most discussed and most widely used theme is that of chance and coincidence. One entire volume of poetry is devoted to the "Satires of Circumstance." For Hardy, there was no omniscient ruling power of the universe. The experiences in one's life were a result of Chance and Coincidence.

