

# A Wasted Illness

By Thomas Hardy

Through vaults of pain,  
Enribbed and wrought with groins of ghaſtlineſs,  
I paſſed, and garish ſpectres moved my brain  
To dire diſtreſs.

And hammerings,  
And quakes, and ſhoots, and ſtifling hotneſs, blent  
With webby waxing things and waning things  
As on I went.

“Where lies the end  
To this foul way?” I aſked with weakening breath.  
Thereon ahead I ſaw a door extend—  
The door to death.

It loomed more clear:  
“At laſt!” I cried. “The all-delivering door!”  
And then, I knew not how, it grew leſs near  
Than theretofore.

And back ſlid  
Along the galleries by which I came,  
And tediouſly the day returned, and ſky,  
And life—the ſame.

And all was well:  
Old circumſtance reſumed its former ſhow,  
And on my head the dewſ of comfort fell  
As ere my woe,

I roam anew,  
Scarce conſcious of my late diſtreſs. . . . And yet  
Thoſe backward ſteps through pain I cannot view  
Without regret.

For that dire train  
Of waxing ſhapes and waning, paſſed before,  
And thoſe grim aiſles, muſt be traversed again  
To reach that door.