

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

7 *The Dark-Eyed Gentleman*

I

I pitched my day's leazings in Crimmercrock Lane,  
To tie up my garter and jog on again,  
When a dear dark-eyed gentleman passed there and said,  
In a way that made all o' me colour rose-red,  
                                "What do I see—                                5  
                                O pretty knee!"  
And he came and he tied up my garter for me.

II

'Twixt sunset and moonrise it was, I can mind:  
Ah, 'tis easy to lose what we nevermore find!—  
Of the dear stranger's home, of his name, I knew nought, 10  
But I soon knew his nature and all that it brought.  
                                Then bitterly  
                                Sobbed I that he  
Should ever have tied up my garter for me!

III

Yet now I've beside me a fine lissom lad,                                15  
And my slip's nigh forgot, and my days are not sad;  
My own dearest joy is he, comrade, and friend,  
He it is who safe-guards me, on him I depend;  
                                No sorrow brings he,  
                                And thankful I be                                20  
That his daddy once tied up my garter for me!

1909

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