



Greek Influence Assignment 16

- **reading.** Read Thomas Hardy's *Mayor of Casterbridge*, chapters 1-11. Also read "Convergence of the Twain" and "The Darkling Thrush" below and be able to discuss them in class. Make sure, too, that you print them out. Be able specifically to relate the poems to the perspective of Greek tragedy.
- **pictures.** Above is a picture that I took in Dorchester when I was in England years ago. Hardy called Dorchester "Casterbridge" in the *Mayor of Casterbridge*. Many of the places described in the *Mayor of Casterbridge* are marked out in the town. One of the greatest pleasures of my trip was to see Thomas Hardy's picturesque cottage. Notice that even though the town is Dorchester, the post office is called "Casterbridge" after Hardy's fictional town. At the end of this assignment sheet are two pictures of the Coliseum ("The Ring of Casterbridge"), mentioned in Chapter 11 of *Mayor of Casterbridge*, as well as one picture of a placard indicating the building that Hardy used as his model for the Mayor's house, which is now Barclay's bank, and another picture of me standing in front of it.

Long-Range Assignments

- Your new narrative is due the third week in February.
- Your tragic plot will be due on **the second week in February.**
- We will have our Greek Odyssey project on the first Friday evening of February, 6:30–8:30.

The Convergence of the Twain
By Thomas Hardy

(Lines on the loss of the *Titanic*)

I
In a solitude of the sea
Deep from human vanity,
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she.

II
Steel chambers, late the pyres
Of her salamandrine fires,
Cold currents thrid, and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.

III
Over the mirrors meant
To glass the opulent
The sea-worm crawls—grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.

IV
Jewels in joy designed
To ravish the sensuous mind
Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and blind.

V
Dim moon-eyed fishes near
Gaze at the gilded gear
And query: “What does this vaingloriousness down here?” . . .

VI
Well: while was fashioning
This creature of cleaving wing,
The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

VII
Prepared a sinister mate
For her—so gaily great—
A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.

VIII
And as the smart ship grew
In stature, grace, and hue,
In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.

IX

Alien they seemed to be;
No mortal eye could see
The intimate welding of their later history,

X

Or sign that they were bent
By paths coincident
On being anon twin halves of one august event,

XI

Till the Spinner of the Years
Said "Now!" And each one hears,
And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

The Darkling Thrush

By Thomas Hardy

I leant upon a coppice gate
When Frost was spectre-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings from broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted night
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice outburst among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carollings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.



