**7th Form National Poetry Recitation Contest:**

**Title of Poem**: Going and Staying  
**Poet**: Thomas Hardy  
**Link**: <https://www.bartleby.com/103/2.html>  
  


**About the Poet**:

Thomas Hardy (adapted from: biography.com)  
  
Thomas Hardy was born in Dorset, England in 1840. He spent many years living and working as an architectural apprentice in Dorset, which inspired him to write about rural settings and characters. As a novelist he is best known for his work set in the semi-fictionalized county of Wessex including, Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure. He was also an accomplished poet, publishing 8 volumes of poetry and more than 1000 poems overall. Hardy died in 1928. His ashes are in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey and his heart is buried in Stinsford with his first wife.

**Poem:**

Going and Staying

By Thomas Hardy

I

The moving sun-shapes on the spray,

The sparkles where the brook was flowing,

Pink faces, plightings, moonlit May,

These were the things we wished would stay;

        But they were going.

                         II

Seasons of blankness as of snow,

The silent bleed of a world decaying,

The moan of multitudes in woe,

These were the things we wished would go;

        But they were staying.

                         III

Then we looked closelier at Time,

And saw his ghostly arms revolving

To sweep off woeful things with prime,

Things sinister with things sublime

        Alike dissolving.

**Pre-Reading**:

“Going and Staying” is a short poem that describes some good, positive images that the speaker “wished would stay; / But they were going.” These good things, mostly bright images of nature, are contrasted with darker, more negative images like the “moan of multitudes in woe.” The good things are going, but the bad things are staying. The poem is about a period of change, but we do not know which kind of change. Maybe it is a period of change in the speaker's life, like growing up, or perhaps it is about bigger political or social changes taking place in the country or in the world.  
  
**Vocabulary:**

sun-shapes: shapes or shadows formed by the movement of the sun across the sky  
spray: moving sea-water near the shore  
brook: a small body of water, stream  
plightings: pledges or promises, for example promising to marry someone  
decaying: dying  
multitudes: many people, a crowd  
woe: pain, sadness  
  
**Post-Reading Questions:**  
Does this poem feel hopeful about the future or not?  
What are the things that are going? Why do you think they are “going?”  
What are good things you wish would stay in the world?  
What are some bad things you wish would go?