The Walk

You did not walk with me
Of late to the hill-top tree
    By the gated ways,
    As in earlier days;
You were weak and lame,
    So you never came,
And I went alone, and I did not mind,
    Not thinking of you as left behind.

I walked up there to-day
    Just in the former way:
    Surveyed around
    The familiar ground
    By myself again:
    What difference, then?
    Only that underlying sense
    Of the look of a room on returning thence.

The Walk:

This is a simple piece in which Hardy uses a device which marks many of these poems: contrasting events before Emma's death with the present. Before Emma died Hardy would take his accustomed walks alone, not perturbed by (because not really thinking of) the fact that Emma was left at home.

Returning to the same spot "just in the former way" i.e. alone again, Hardy tries to identify a difference, and realises it lies not in what he sees around him, but in his sense of the emptiness of Emma's room in the house to which he will return.