

A. E. Housman (1859-1936)

*1 Atys*

‘Lydians, lords of Hermus river,  
Sifters of the golden loam,  
See you yet the lances quiver  
And the hunt returning home?’

‘King, the star that shuts the even 5  
Calls the sheep from Tmolus down;  
Home return the doves from heaven,  
And the prince to Sardis town.’

From the hunting heavy laden 10  
Up the Mysian road they ride;  
And the star that mates the maiden  
Leads his son to Croesus’ side.

‘Lydians, under stream and fountain 15  
Finders of the golden vein,  
Riding from Olympus mountain,  
Lydians, see you Atys plain?’

‘King, I see the Phrygian stranger 20  
And the guards in hunter’s trim,  
Saviours of thy son from danger;  
Them I see. I see not him.’

‘Lydians, as the troop advances,  
— It is eve and I am old —  
Tell me why they trail their lances,  
Washers of the sands of gold.

‘I am old and day is ending 25  
And the wildering night comes on;  
Up the Mysian entry wending,  
Lydians, Lydians, what is yon?’

Hounds behind their master whining,  
Huntsmen pacing dumb beside,  
On his breast the boar-spear shining,  
Home they bear his father's pride.

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*1937*

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