

A. E. Housman (1859-1936)

8 *Is My Team Ploughing?*

“Is my team ploughing,  
That I was used to drive  
And hear the harness jingle  
When I was man alive?”

Ay, the horses trample, 5  
The harness jingles now;  
No change though you lie under  
The land you used to plough.

“Is football playing 10  
Along the river shore,  
With lads to chase the leather,  
Now I stand up no more?”

Ay, the ball is flying,  
The lads play heart and soul;  
The goal stands up, the keeper 15  
Stands up to keep the goal.

“Is my girl happy,  
That I thought hard to leave,  
And has she tired of weeping  
As she lies down at eve?” 20

Ay, she lies down lightly,  
She lies not down to weep:  
Your girl is well contented.  
Be still, my lad, and sleep.

“Is my friend hearty, 25

Now I am thin and pine,  
And has he found to sleep in  
A better bed than mine?"

Yes, lad, I lie easy,  
I lie as lads would choose;  
I cheer a dead man's sweetheart,  
Never ask me whose.

30

*1896*

(From *A Shropshire Lad*. London: E. Grant Richards, 1907)