

“Oh lad, what is it, lad, that drips
Wet from your neck on mine?
What is it falling on my lips,
My lad, that tastes of brine?” 25

“Oh like enough ’tis blood, my dear,
For when the knife has slit
The throat across from ear to
ear ’Twill bleed because of it.” 30

Under the stars the air was light
But dark below the boughs,
The still air of the speechless night, 35
When lovers crown their vows.

1896

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