

A. E. Housman (1859-1936)

8 *Is My Team Ploughing?*
(A Shropshire Lad, 27)

“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)