

A. E. Housman (1859-1936)

4 *The Culprit*

The night my father got me  
    His mind was not on me;  
He did not plague his fancy  
    To muse if I should be  
    The son you see. 5

The day my mother bore me  
    She was a fool and glad,  
For all the pain I cost her,  
    That she had borne the lad  
    That borne she had. 10

My mother and my father  
    Out of the light they lie;  
The warrant would not find them,  
    And here 'tis only I  
    Shall hang so high. 15

Oh let not man remember  
    The soul that God forgot,  
But fetch the county kerchief  
    And noose me in the knot,  
    And I will rot. 20

For so the game is ended  
    That should not have begun.  
My father and my mother  
    They had a likely son,  
    And I have none. 25

1922

(From *Last Poems*. London: The Richards Press, 1922)