

A. E. Housman (1859-1936)

12 *Oh See How Thick the Goldcup Flowers*

(*A Shropshire Lad*, 5)

Oh see how thick the goldcup flowers
Are lying in field and lane,
With dandelions to tell the hours
That never are told again.
Oh may I squire you round the meads 5
And pick you posies gay?
— 'Twill do no harm to take my arm.
“You may, young man, you may.”

Ah, spring was sent for lass and lad,
'Tis now the blood runs gold, 10
And man and maid had best be glad
Before the world is old.
What flowers to-day may flower to-morrow,
But never as good as new.
— Suppose I wound my arm right round — 15
“'Tis true, young man, 'tis true.”

Some lads there are, 'tis shame to say,
That only court to thieve,
And once they bear the bloom away
'Tis little enough they leave. 20
Then keep your heart for men like me
And safe from trustless chaps.
My love is true and all for you.
“Perhaps, young man, perhaps.”

Oh, look in my eyes, then, can you doubt? 25
— Why, 'tis a mile from town.
How green the grass is all about!

We might as well sit down.
— Ah, life, what is it but a flower?
Why must true lovers sigh? 30
Be kind, have pity, my own, my pretty, —
“Good-bye, young man, good-bye.”

1896

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