



A Shropshire Lad

A. E. Housman

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A Shropshire Lad is a cycle of sixty-three poems by the English poet Alfred Edward Housman (26 March 1859 – 30 April 1936). Some of the better-known poems in the book are “To an Athlete Dying Young”, “Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now” and “When I Was One-and-Twenty”.

The collection was published in 1896. Housman originally titled the book *The Poems of Terence Hearsay*, referring to a character there, but changed the title at the suggestion of his publisher.

The main theme of *A Shropshire Lad* is mortality and the need to seize the day, because death can strike at any time. For example, number IV, titled “Reveille”, urges an unnamed “lad” not to sleep away the sunlight, for “When the journey’s over/There’ll be time enough to sleep.”

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