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TO AN ATHLETE DYING YOUNG

A.E.HOUSEMAN

The time you won your town the race
We chaired you through the market-place
Man and boy stood cheering by
And home we brought you shoulder-high

Today, the road all runners come
Shoulder-high we bring you home
And set you at your threshold down
Townsmen of a stiller town

Smart lad, to slip betimes away
From fields where glory does not stay
And early though the laurel grows
It withers quicker than the rose

Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut
And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears

Now you will not swell the rout
Of lads who wore their honours out
Runners whom renown outran
And the name died before the man

So set, before it's echoes fade
The fleet foot on the sill of shade
And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge cup

And round that early-laurelled head
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead\
And find unwithered on its curls
A garland briefer than a girl's.