

A. E. Houseman
from *A Shropshire Lad*

A. E. Houseman (1859-1936) was an English poet and classical scholar known today for the poems collected in *A Shropshire Lad* (1896). His poetry is clean, clear, and elegantly cadenced. Thematically, his poems feature characters and situations that are ironic and filled with regret.

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten, 5
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom 10
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

Eight O'Clock (1922)

He stood, and heard the steeple
 Sprinkle the quarters on the morning town.
One, two, three, four, to market-place and people
 It tossed them down.

Strapped, noosed, nighing his hour, 5
 He stood and counted them and cursed his luck;
And then the clock collected in the tower
 Its strength, and struck.