

Copyrighted material

# A SHROPSHIRE LAD



A.E. HOUSMAN

Photographs by Gareth B. Thomas

MERLIN UNWIN BOOKS

XL

Into my heart an air that kills  
From yon far country blows:  
What are those blue remembered hills,  
What spires, what farms are those?

That is the land of lost content,  
I see it shining plain,  
The happy highways where I went  
And cannot come again.







## XLV

If it chance your eye offend you,  
Pluck it out, lad, and be sound:  
'Twill hurt, but here are salves to friend you,  
And many a balsam grows on ground.

And if your hand or foot offend you,  
Cut it off, lad, and be whole;  
But play the man, stand up and end you,  
When your sickness is your soul.

XLVI

Bring, in this timeless grave to throw,  
No cypress, sombre on the snow;  
Snap not from the bitter yew  
His leaves that live December through;  
Break no rosemary, bright with rime  
And sparkling to the cruel clime;  
Nor plod the winter land to look  
For willows in the icy brook  
To cast them leafless round him: bring  
No spray that ever buds in spring.

But if the Christmas field has kept  
Awns the last gleaner overstept,  
Or shrivelled flax, whose flower is blue  
A single season, never two;  
Or if one haulm whose year is o'er  
Shivers on the upland frore,  
– Oh, bring from hill and stream and plain  
Whatever will not flower again,  
To give him comfort: he and those  
Shall bide eternal bedfellows  
Where low upon the couch he lies  
Whence he never shall arise.

