

Housman never did forget Jackson and remained loyal to his love for the rest of his life. He kept his word to remain silent in life but not in his poetry.

Despite his failure to obtain a degree at Oxford, Housman continued with his classical studies independently and through enormous hard work and dedication, he achieved such a reputation in his field that he was offered the professorship of Latin at the University College in London and, finally, at Trinity College, Cambridge. He led an outwardly monotonous existence and devoted many years to translating a long, first century poem by Manilius concerning astrology and astrology which few people in their right minds would wish to read. A fellow Cambridge don described Housman as being *descended from a long line of maiden aunts*. He disliked anything which would risk disturbing the even tenor of his days and he refused the offer of becoming Poet Laureate. However, he did enjoy travelling by aeroplane from time to time which at that time was a rather risky business.

Housman only once spoke about poetry in public and that was in the Lesley Stephen Lecture three years before his death when he emphasized the importance of poetry appealing to the emotions, above the intellect. He said that he always knew a good line of poetry when he read it as the memory of it made his skin bristle when he was shaving. It is this ability to convey wisdom and beauty in such simple and memorable lines which has made Housman perhaps the most widely loved poet in English Literature. He is that rare poet: one who can appeal to readers from the age of nine to ninety.

He died in 1936 and his ashes were, appropriately, brought to Shropshire and buried near St. Laurence's church in Ludlow. In

the following sublime poem, he makes an imaginative return to the idealized landscape which he longed for, leaving not a trace of what he so often regarded as his burdensome life.

Tell me not here, it needs not saying

Tell me not here, it needs not saying,
What tune the enchantress plays
In aftermaths of soft September
Or under blanching mays,
For she and I were long acquainted
And I knew all her ways.

On russet floors, by waters idle,
The pine lets fall its cone;
The cuckoo shouts all day at nothing
In leafy dells alone;
And traveller's joy beguiles in autumn
Hearts that have lost their own.

On acres of the seeded grasses
The changing burnish heaves;
Or marshalled under moons of harvest
Stand still all night the sheaves;
Or beeches strip in storms for winter
And stain the wind with leaves.

Posses, as I possessed a season,
The countries I resign,
Where over elmy plains the highway
Would mount the hills and shine,
And full of shade the pillared forest
Would murmur and be mine.

For nature, heartless, witless nature,
Will neither care nor know
What stranger's feet may find the meadow
And trespass there and go,
Nor ask amid the dews of morning
If they are mine or no.

