

A. E. HOUSMAN

When I Was One-and-Twenty

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard a wise man say, 1819
"Give crowns and pounds and guineas
But not your heart away;
Give pearls away and rubies 5
But keep your fancy free."
But I was one-and-twenty,
No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard him say again, 10
"The heart out of the bosom
Was never given in vain;
'Tis paid with sighs a plenty
And sold for endless rue."¹
And I am two-and-twenty, 15
And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.
1896