

grace of language and structure which the poet inscribed in them. The poet's account of his love for handsome boys and youths rings far more true and sincere. The very intensity of his affection for boys precluded his deeply loving any woman; all the women that he portrays or addresses seem lifeless, and really unhappy love for a woman never troubled him. In spirit Horace was never young, never knew the intensity of youthful passion, and as he grew older, he became more and more a spectator of life and love, counseling his reader to observe the golden mean, even if he can be momentarily enthralled by the beauty of a youth. The poet regarded the phenomena of sexual life with a wonderful humor that gave him a magic touch over them all, but maturity had distanced him from the spontaneous ardor of the lover. His ideal was that of the wise man who remains unperturbed in the face of every event, from sheer happiness to unrelieved sorrow.

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Warren Johansson

HOUSMAN, A[LFRED] E[DWARD] (1859–1936)

English poet and classical scholar.

The son of a solicitor, he earned prizes for poetry at Bromsgrove School and won an open scholarship to St. John's College, Oxford, in 1877. He pursued his classical studies so single-mindedly that he neglected the rest of the Greats examination and failed his finals in 1881, but received a pass degree the following year. For some nine years he worked as a civil servant in the Patent Office in London, while publishing a series of papers in learned journals on such authors as Horace, Propertius, Ovid, Aeschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles. By 1892 his reputation was such that he could enlist seventeen top scholars in support of his application for the vacant Chair of Latin at University

College, London. He held this post until 1911, when he was appointed Professor of Latin at Trinity College, Cambridge. As a Latinist Housman devoted himself to the arduous and painstaking editing of the *Astronomicon* of the poet Manilius (1903–1930), an austere subject that could interest only the specialist, not the general reader.

Housman's poetic output in his lifetime was limited to *A Shropshire Lad* (1896) and *Last Poems* (1922). *More Poems* appeared after his death in 1936. The Shropshire of the poems is a contrived pastoral setting which if idealized is scarcely Arcadian in that its youthful inhabitants are burdened by life's frustrations and disappointments. Time and happiness vanish; the young and beautiful die; the army and even the gallows take their toll. Housman's verse forms are simple, yet fashioned with classical precision and a fine balance of contrast and paradox. The underlying emotion of the poems is often homoerotic, though the implicit tensions, when present, are too subtle for the average reader to appreciate fully. The unforgettable phrases of the poems betray a melancholy over male love and male beauty forever lost, but still alive in dreams.

The personality of the scholar and poet was opaque to his contemporaries, whom he kept at a discrete distance by mannerisms that gave him the reputation of being frigid and unapproachable. Those who knew him suspected a deeply wounded and repressed personality, but in his lifetime the subject of his sexual orientation had to be whispered; it could not be discussed in print. While an undergraduate at Oxford he had been passionately in love with a tall, handsome young man, Moses Jackson, whom he lost to the latter's bride—a source of profound bitterness and emotional deprivation for him. Rejected by the man whom he loved, Housman had to accept the fact that not only was he homosexual, but that he loved someone who could never return his affection. The further burden that the Church condemned

homosexual expression as sinful drove him into an absolute and rigorously maintained atheism. Housman's ambivalence about his homosexuality certainly shaped his inner, emotional life; he felt guilty because of his homosexual desires, yet believed them not utterly wrong. In one of his poems he described himself as "a stranger and afraid/In a world I never made" obliged to keep "These foreign laws of God and man."

Once he had crossed the English Channel and found himself in a country where "the laws of man" did not penalize homosexuality, he at once set about gratifying his forbidden cravings with male prostitutes, including sailors, ballet dancers and other inhabitants of the Parisian demimonde. He also frequented the Turkish baths of Paris, and gratified his fondness for haute cuisine which had been raised to its absolute peak by such master chefs as Ritz and Escoffier. Here, too, he could acquire pornographic writings in English, among them works on flagellation, as well as the French and German classics of sexual science. So his double life did afford him some relief from the frustrations of the façade that he carefully maintained while in London and Cambridge—a pattern not uncommon among homosexuals who cannot afford to compromise themselves in the community where they live, but at an appropriate distance lose most if not all of their inhibitions. On a visit to Constantinople Housman admired the features and complexions of the male Greeks and even more of the Turks, in whom he discerned traits of the British aristocracy.

In his lifetime Housman had an ambiance of repressed pederasty, simply because the society to which he belonged would not allow him to be open about his sexual feelings. Only some four decades after his death was the truth about his sexual orientation finally revealed to the world. It does not diminish his stature as a scholar or a poet, but reminds the reader of

his work of the tragedy inherent in the inability of human beings to express their inner feelings or to communicate with one another.

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Warren Johansson

HUDSON, ROCK (ROY SCHERER FITZGERALD; 1925–1985)

American film actor. Becoming a major star with the release of *Magnificent Obsession* in 1954, Rock Hudson came to personify unproblematic heterosexual masculinity for millions of women. Ironically, for most of his life he was predominantly homosexual. His image was carefully nourished and protected by his agent Henry Willson, who gave him his screen name and identity. Hudson's lack of acting training and flair seemed to help in establishing an air of authenticity that history has revealed to be spurious. When the rumor mills began to grind, and it was feared that the truth about the actor's sexuality would surface in one of the popular Hollywood gossip magazines, Willson arranged for Hudson to court and marry his secretary Phyllis Gates in 1955. They were divorced three years later, and Hudson settled into a series of male affairs, the last of which was with Marc Christian, who went public in a dispute about the star's inheritance. Having been diagnosed with AIDS on June 5, 1984, Hudson first tried to keep the matter secret—to the subsequent distress of his unwitting co-stars and sex partners. As his condition grew worse, however, concealment became impossible, and before his death on October 2, 1985, Rock Hudson's condition and his homosexuality had exhaustively aired in the media.

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