



The laws of God, the laws of man,
He may keep that will and can;
Not I: let God and man decree
Laws for themselves and not for me;
And if my ways are not as theirs
Let them mind their own affairs.
Their deeds I judge and much condemn,
Yet where did I make the laws for them?
Please yourselves, say I, and they
Need only look the other way.
But no, they will not; they must still
Wroth their neighbors to their will,
And make me dance as they desire
With jail and gallows and hell-fire.
And how am I to face the odds
Of man's bedevilment and God's?
I, a stranger, and afraid
In a world I never made.
They will be master, right or wrong;
Though both are foolish, both are strong.
And since my soul we cannot fly
To Saturn nor to Mercury,
Keep we must, if keep we can,
These foreign laws of God and man.

A. E. Houseman