

The Race

"Quit, give up, you're beaten"
They shout at you and plead
"There's just too much against you
This time you can't succeed".

And as I start to hang my head
In front of failures face
My downward fall is broken by
The memory of a race

And hope refills my weakened will
As I recall that scene
Or just the thought of that short race
Rejuvenates my being

Children's race, young boys
Young men, how I remember well
Excitement sure, but also fear
It wasn't hard to tell

They all lined up so full of hope
Each thought to win that race
Or tie for first, or if not that
At least take second place

The fathers watched from off the side
Each cheering for his son
And each boy hoped to show his dad
That he could be the one

The whistle blew and off they went
Young hearts and hopes afire
To win and be the hero there
Was each young boys desire

And one boy in particular
Whose dad was in the crowd
Was running near the lead and thought

"My dad will be so proud"

But as they speeded down the field
Across a shallow dip
The little boy who thought to win
Lost his step and slipped

Trying hard to catch himself
With hands flew out to brace
And amid the laughter of the crowd
He fell flat on his face

But as he fell his dad stood up
And showed his anxious face
Which to the boy so clearly said
"Get up and win the race"

He quickly rose, no damage done
Behind a bit that's all
And ran with all his might and mind
To make up for the fall

So anxious to restore himself
To catch up and to win
His mind went faster than his legs
He slipped and fell again

He wised then that he had quit before
With only one disgrace
"I'm hopeless as a runner now
I shouldn't try to race"

But in the laughing crowd he searched
And found his father's face
That steady look which said again
"Get up and win the race"

So up he jumped to try again
Ten yards behind the last
If I'm going to gain those yards he thought

I've got to move real fast

Exerting everything he had
He regained eight or ten
But trying hard to catch the lead
He slipped and fell again

Defeat, he lay there silently
A tear dropped from his eye
There's no sense running anymore
Three strikes, I'm out, why try?

The will to rise had disappeared
All hope had fled away
So far behind so error prone
A loser all the way

"I've lost, so what", he thought
I'll live with my disgrace
But then he thought about his dad
Whom soon he'd have to face

"Get up" the echo sounded low
"Get up" and take your place
You were not meant for failure here
"Get up", and win the race

With borrowed will "Get up" it said
"You haven't lost at all"
For winning is no more than this
To rise each time you fall

So up he rose to run once more
And with a new commit
He resolved, that win or lose
At least he shouldn't quit

So far behind the others now
The most he'd ever been
Still he'd give it all he had

And run as though to win

Three times he'd fallen, stumbling
Three times he'd rose again
Too far behind to hope to win
He still ran to the end

They cheered the winning runner
As he crossed the line first place
Head high and proud and happy
No falling, no disgrace

But when the fallen youngster
Crossed the line, last place
The crowd gave him the greater cheer
For finishing the race

And even though he came in last
With head bent low, unproud
You would have thought he'd won the race
To listen to the crowd

And to his dad he sadly said
"I didn't do too well"
"To me you won", his father said
"You rose each time you fell"

by D. H. Groberg