

“The Race”
by Author Unknown

“QUIT! GIVE UP! YOU’RE BEATEN!” They shout out and plead,
There’s just too much against you now, this time you can’t succeed.
And as I start to hang my head in front of failure’s face,
My downward fall is broken by the memory of a race.

And hope refills my weakened will as I recall that scene,
For just the thought of that short race rejuvenates my being.
A children’s race, young boys, young men; now 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.
And fathers watched from off the side, each cheering for his son.
And each boy hoped to show his dad that he would be the one.

The whistle blew and off they went, young hearts and hopes of fire,
To win, to be the hero there, was each young boy’s desire,
And one boy in particular, his dad was in the crowd,
Was running near the lead and thought, “My Dad will be so proud.”

But as he 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, his hands flew out to brace,
And mid the laughter of the crowd, he fell flat on his face.

So down he fell and with him hope, he couldn’t win it now.
Embarrassed, sad, he only wished to disappear somehow.
But as he fell, his dad stood up and showed his anxious face,
Which to the boy so clearly said, “Get up and win that race!”

He quickly rose, no damage done -- behind a bit, that’s all,
And ran with all his mind and might to make up for his 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 wished 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 that said again, “Get up and win the race.”

So, he jumped up to try again. Ten yards behind the last.
If I’m to gain those yards, he thought, I’ve got to run real fast.
Exceeding everything he had, he regained eight or ten,

But trying so 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, closer all the way.

I've lost, so what's the use, he thought, I'll live with my disgrace,
But then he thought about his dad, who soon he'd have to face,
"Get up," an 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 not more than this: to rise each time you fall."
So up he rose to win once more. And with a new commit,
He resolved that win or lose, at least he wouldn't quit.

So far behind the others now, the most he'd ever been.
Still he gave it all he had and ran 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 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 bowed low, unproud;
You would have thought he won the race, to listen to the crowd.
And to his Dad he sadly said, "I didn't do so well."
"To me you won," his father said, "You rose each time you fell."

And when things seem dark and hard and difficult to face,
The memory of that little boy -- helps me in my race.
For all of life is like that race, with ups and downs and all,
And all you have to do to win -- is rise each time you fall.
"QUIT! GIVE UP! YOU'RE BEATEN!" They still shout in my face,
But another voice within me says, "GET UP AND WIN THE RACE!"