

A Psalm of Life

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882)

With a few wording updates by Lionel Goulet gco@QuietCounsel.org

Tell me not in mournful numbers,
"Life is but an empty dream!"
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are *so* not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
"Dust thou art and dust returnest,"
Was not spoken by the soul.

Not for joy and not for sorrow
Is our destined end and way;
But to *act*, that each to-morrow
Finds us further than to-day.

Art is long and time is fleeting
And though our hearts be stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums they're beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad fields of battle,
In the locker rooms of life,
Be not dumb and driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant.
Let the Past be passed and gone.
Act – *act now* in the living Present.
Hearts uplifted, full of song.

Lives of noble ones remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Stumbling through life's troubled plain,
Seeing that they have a brother,
Will take heart and try again.

Let us, then, be up and doing!
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn and labor, *to be great!*

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