

ALSO RAN

They call me Also Ran, and I'm thrilled to be racing today.
A vain young stallion, I bucked a wild way,
Jersey-sired of stable parents I couldn't simply follow,
I fantasized to lead, craving the fame of Apollo.

But how discouraging contentious fortune blows!
I learned who history places and how potential shows,
that in life, each race has but one winner,
so its purpose is award mostly inner.

With pursuing contenders blurred in the heap,
who sees the hidden hurdles that now we leap,
spurred on to better our personal best,
those childhood fears we bravely conquest?

So what makes me run, causing distress?
My spirit's unbridled, will presses my chest,
it's the pleasure of exerting that gives me this grin,
a nerve to partake makes competitive discipline!

And though not awarded, I succeeded today,
on ritual grounds of highest société,
who granted me this stage, this chance to run,
a place in the pack that musters the gun.
Though note, rarely cheered for our actual pace,
without us, there would be no race.

Fans ogled our effort, our outstretched bodies,
making leaders look better, and ourselves just cloddies.
Media cameras focused on those making hay,
yet still we were thrilled to be racing today.

Now you know I'm no straggler, shamed by the lengths,
Yet for all I accomplish, for what peers can sense,
Crowds care about money—for ribbons they pay—
and only friends will trill I was racing today.

History will record the surprise winner, Big Brown,
Neigh! None will nicker I even came to this town,
All shed tears for collapsed hero, late filly Eight Belles,
But in memory still flush, me and my friends, we feel like gazelles!

And to be sure this lesson you not fail,
I give you the moral of the horse's tale:
Let us take heed of life's short span,
And celebrate together, we who also ran.