
"THE ELITE"

BY BRIAN SHARPE (1965)

A useless task, a pointless quest, athleticism,
Why all the perspiration, Where's the gain?
For few, a worthless prize, for most, frustration,
I wonder are you people really sane?

Wasting your leisure time courting exhaustion
To reach a mark or maybe lift a rating.
Such taxing mind and muscle to their utmost
Leaves me distressed by merely contemplating.

It must go all for nought, your endless schedule
Of repetition jump and hurl and run
How can one comprehend such insane logic
That thrives on pain and strain, and calls it fun?

No, not for me your stoic concentration,
Your search for inner truth, a state sublime,
I'll take my recreation slow and easy,
I'll not wear out these works before their time.

So speak the sadly unenlightened,
Whose nerve-ends seldom feel a real sensation,
Where heart and lungs are never full distended,
And adrenals have long since reached stagnation.

That vast majority who only live a half-life,
Refuting Nature and her laws plainly implied,
That only pruning brings rejuvenation,
And what's not utilised is atrophied.

How can they grasp a higher plane of living
Who never asked of Nature better fare?
How can they know real physical elation?
Who can describe a place when never there?

It's more, much more than sport, this high endeavour
To cleanse from human frames decay and rust,
Forsaking fear to strive uncompromising
And cleave from human hearts and wills a crust.

He does not lose the man who beats the man
he was before,
They are not mad, who so love life, they
drain it of its all,
And as a special breed apart to athletes seems revealed,
That he who conquers self has conquered all.
