

# **YOUTH**

By Samuel Ullman(1840-1924)

Youth is not a time of life; it is a state of mind;  
it is not a matter of rosy cheeks, red lips and supple knees;  
it is a matter of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotions; it is the  
freshness of the deep springs of life.

Youth means a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity of the  
appetite, for adventure over the love of ease.

This often exists in a man of sixty more than a boy of twenty. Nobody grows old  
merely by a number of years. We grow old by deserting our ideals.

Years may wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, fear,  
self-distrust bows the heart and turns the spirit back to dust.

Whether sixty or sixteen, there is in every human being's heart the lure of wonder,  
the unfailing child-like appetite of what's next, and the joy of the game of living.

In the center of your heart and my heart there is a wireless station;  
so long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer, courage and power from  
men and from the infinite, so long are you young.

When the aerials are down, and your spirit is covered with snows of cynicism and  
the ice of pessimism, then you are grown old, the waves of optimism, there is hope  
you may die young at eighty.

(In my Yoshida's own words "at a hundred!")

## **(INTRODUCTION)**

For years, Samuel Ullman (1840-1924) and his prose poem "Youth" have been  
known and admired by the Japanese. However, both the man and his work are  
largely unknown in the United States, even in Birmingham where he spent the last  
forty years of his life in service to the community.

MacArthur who facilitated Ullman's popularity as a poet - he hung a framed copy  
of a version of Ullman's poem "Youth" on the wall of his office in Tokyo and often  
quoted from the poem in his speeches.

Through MacArthur's influence, the people of Japan discovered "Youth" and  
became curious about the poem's author.

It is appropriate that "Youth" is the element that brought Ullman's life into public  
scrutiny. The message of "Youth,"

its emphasis on optimism and its challenge to remain true to one's ideals, reflects  
the substance of Ullman's life.