

The Race  
Mark Gorman-"Becoming a Leader"

"Quit, Give up, you're beaten" - They shout out loud 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.

Then 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 – How 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 afire,  
To win, to be the hero there was each young boy's desire.  
And one boy in particular, whose 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  
Amide 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 the 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 going to gain those yards,” he thought, “I’ve got to move real fast.”  
Exerting everything he had, he gained first eight, then 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?  
His will to rise had disappeared, All hope had fled away  
So far behind, so error-prone- A loser – 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 run once more and with a new commit-  
He resolved that whether win or lose - At least he’d never 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 in 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 run so well”  
“To me you won,” his Father said, “You rose each time you fell.”

Now when things in life 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!”

*Proverbs 24:16...For though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again...*