Now if nature should intermit her course and leave altogether, though it were but for awhile, the observation of her own laws; if those principal and mother elements of the world, whereof all things in this lower world are made, should lose the qalities which now they have; if the frame of that heavenly arch erected over our heads should loosen and dissolve itself; if celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions, and by irregular volubility turn themselves any way as it might happen; if the prince of the lights of heaven which now as a giant doth run his unwearied course, should, as it were through a languishing faintness, begin to stand and to rest himself; if the moon should wander from her beaten way, the times and seasons of the year blend themselves by disordered and confused mixture, the winds breathe out their last gasp, the clouds yield no rain, the earth be defeated of heavenly influence, the fruits of the earth pine away as children at the withered breasts of their mother no longer able to yield them relief — what would become of man himself, whom these things now do all serve?

Knowing that millions of people around the world would be watching in person and on television and expecting great things from him — at least one more gold medal for America, if not another world record — during this, his fourth and surely his last appearance in the World Olympics, and realizing that his legs could no longer carry him down the runway with the same blazing speed and confidence in making a huge, eye-popping leap that they were capable of a few years ago when he set world records in the 100-meter dash and in the 400-meter relay and won a silver medal in the long jump, the renowned sprinter and track-and-field personality [Carl Lewis](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/run-on.htm" \l "xx), who had known pressure from fans and media before but never, even as a professional runner, *this* kind of pressure, [made](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/run-on.htm#xx) only a few appearances in races during the few months before the Summer Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia, partly because he was afraid of raising expectations even higher and he did not want to be distracted by interviews and adoring fans who would follow him into stores and restaurants demanding autographs and photo-opportunities, but mostly because he wanted to conserve his energies and concentrate, like a martial arts expert, on the job at hand: winning his favorite competition, the long jump, and bringing home another Gold Medal for the United States, the most fitting conclusion to his brilliant career in track and field.