

Improvement (Part One)

The joy of life is living it, or so it seems to me;
In finding shackles on your wrists, then struggling till you're free;
In seeing wrongs and righting them, in dreaming splendid dreams,
Then toiling till the vision is as real as moving streams.
The happiest mortal on the earth is he who ends his day
By leaving better than he found to bloom along the way.

Were all things perfect here there would be naught for man to do;
If what is old were good enough we'd never need the new.
The only happy time of rest is that which follows strife,
And sees some contribution made unto the joy of life.
And he who has oppression felt and conquered it is he
Who really knows the happiness and peace of being free.

By Edgar Allen Guest (1881-1959)