

ANSWERING AGE

Age is calling to me, with his finger long and grim,
It is urging me to wander down the dreary lanes with him,
It has lined my cheeks with furrows, and has tinged my hair with gray,
And is ever whispering to me that I've grown too old to play;
But the heart of me keeps saying, 'Let us dance our way along,
Let us answer age with laughter, let us drive him off with song.'

Age comes to me saying: 'You are mine forever more,
It is vain for you to hunger for the joys you knew of yore.
Now the feet of you are weary, and the eyes of you are dim,
Come with me, my worn-out brother, come and share my dwelling grim.'
But the heart of me keeps saying: 'I will cling to youth for you,
I will keep you in the sunshine where the skies are always blue.

'Give to age your cheeks for furrows, let him silver, if he will.
The hair about your temples, but I'll keep you youthful still;
Let him dull your eyes, if need be, weight your feet with bygone years,
But I'll wake you with my singing, when the break of day appears,
I will fill your days with laughter, and with roses strew your way,
Say to age you do not fear him, while your heart is young and gay.'

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)