

Stuck

I'm up against it day by day,
My ignorance is distressing;
The things I don't know on the way
I'm busily confessing.
Time was I used to think I knew
Some useful bits of knowledge
And could be sure of one or two
Real facts I'd gleaned in college.
But I'm unfitted for the task
Of answering things my child can ask.

Now, who can answer queries queer
That four-year-olds can think up?
And tell in simple phrase and clear
Why fishes do not drink up
The water in the streams and lakes,
Or where the wind is going,
And tell exactly how God makes
The roses that are growing?
I'm sure I cannot satisfy
Each little when, and how, and why.

Had I the wisdom of a sage
Possessed of all the learning
That can be gleaned from printed page
From bookworm's closest turning,
That eager knowledge-seeking lad
That questions me so gayly
Could still go round and boast he had
With queries flooded me daily.
He'll stick, I'll bet, in less than five
Brief minutes any man alive.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)