

## **A Father's Wish**

What do I want my boy to be?  
Oft is the question asked of me,  
And oft I ask it of myself-  
What corner, niche or post or shelf  
In the great hall of life would I  
Select for him to occupy?  
Statesman or writer, poet, sage  
Or toiler for a weekly wage,  
Artist or artisan? Oh, what  
Is to become his future lot?  
For him I do not dare to plan;  
I only hope he'll be a man.

I leave it free for him to choose  
The tools of life which he shall use,  
Brush, pen or chisel, lathe or wrench,  
The desk of commerce or the bench,  
And pray that when he makes his choice  
In each day's task he shall rejoice.  
I know somewhere there is a need  
For him to labor and succeed;  
Somewhere, if he be clean and true,  
Loyal and honest through and through,  
He shall be fit for any clan,  
And so I hope he'll be a man.

I would not build my hope or ask  
That he shall do some certain task,  
Or bend his will to suit my own;  
He shall select his post alone.  
Life needs a thousand kinds of men,  
Toilers and masters of the pen,  
Doctors, mechanics, sturdy hands  
To do the work which it commands,  
And wheresoe'er he's pleased to go,  
Honor and triumph he may know.  
Therefore I must do all I can  
To teach my boy to be a man.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)