

A Pat On The Back

A pat on the back is a wonderful thing,
It gives a man courage to whistle and sing;
When hope is departing, the outlook is grim,
A pat on the back then says volumes to him.
It whispers: 'Keep at it! You're doing all right,
Just dig in your toes and get busy and fight,
There's one man behind you, go to it, old man,
One pal who is sure that you can, that you can.'

A pat on the back from a stranger or friend
When your jaw starts to sag and your knees start to bend
Will bring you right up with new courage and grit
And you'll keep in the fight when you were going to quit,
You'll feel it, you'll hear it—yes, actually hear it—
For hours saying 'dig in, old fellow. Don't fear it,
That isn't as hard as it looks. Be a man,
There's a fellow back there who believes that you can.'

Just a pat on the back. And for days and for days,
No matter how far you may roam, it still stays
By your side, and no matter how hard be your fight
It's whispering always: 'You'll come out all right.
There's a fellow back there who's believing in you,
Expecting each minute to see you come through
With your colors still flying and leading your clan!
And the first thing you know you are saying: 'I can.'

Oh, a pat on the back is a wonderful thing,
The touch of it's magic; I've known it to bring
Back hopes that were fleeting, and strength that seemed gone
And smiles that had vanished and urge a man on
When it seemed that he couldn't one step advance more
Till he conquered. And that's what I'm singing this for;
If you see a poor brother whose nerve's out of whack,
Just step up and give him a pat on the back.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)