

The Comedian

Whatever the task and whatever the risk, wherever
the flag's in air,
The funny man with his sunny ways is sure to
be laughing there.
There are men who fret, there are men who
dream, men making the best of it,
But whether it's hunger or death they face,
Or burning thirst in a desert place,
There is always one, by the good Lord's grace,
Who is making a jest of it.

He travels wherever his brothers go and he leaves
his home behind him,
The need for smiles he seems to know; in the
ranks of death you'll find him.
When some are weary and sick and faint, and
all with the dust are choking,
He dances there with a spirit gay,
And tints with gold what is drab and gray,
And into the gloom of the night and day
He scatters his mirthful joking.

He wins to courage the soul-tried men; he lightens
their hours of sorrow;
He turns their thoughts from the grief that is to
the joy that may come to-morrow.
He mocks at death and he jests at toil, as one
that is never weary;
He japes at danger and discipline,
Or the muddy trench that he's standing in;
There's nothing can banish his merry grin,
Or dampen his spirits cheery.

The honors of war to its heroes go; for them are
the pomp and glory,
But seldom it is that the types relate a victory's
inside story.
And few shall know when the strife is done and
the history's made hereafter,
How much depended on him who stirred
The souls of men with a cheerful word,
And kept them brave by a jest absurd,
And brightened their days with laughter.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)