

What I Call Living

The miser thinks he's living when he's hoarding up his gold;
The soldier calls it living when he's doing something bold;
The sailor thinks it living to be tossed upon the sea,
And upon this vital subject no two of us agree.
But I hold to the opinion, as I walk my way along,
That living's made of laughter and good-fellowship and song.

I wouldn't call it living always to be seeking gold,
To bank all the present gladness for the days when I'll be old.
I wouldn't call it living to spend all my strength for fame,
And forego the many pleasures which to-day are mine to claim.
I wouldn't for the splendor of the world set out to roam,
And forsake my laughing children and the peace I know at home.
Oh, the thing that I call living isn't gold or fame at all!

It's good-fellowship and sunshine, and it's roses by the wall;
It's evenings glad with music and a hearth fire that's ablaze,
And the joys which come to mortals in a thousand different ways.
It is laughter and contentment and the struggle for a goal;
It is everything that's needful in the shaping of a soul.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)