

The Deeds of Anger

I used to lose my temper an' git mad an' tear around
An' raise my voice so wimmin folks would tremble at the sound;
I'd do things I was ashamed of when the fit of rage had passed,
An' wish I hadn't done 'em, an' regret 'em to the last;
But I've learned from sad experience how useless is regret,
For the mean things done in anger are the things you can't forget.

'Tain't no use to kiss the youngster once your hand has made him cry;
You'll recall the time you struck him till the very day you die;
He'll forget it an' forgive you an' to-morrow seem the same,
But you'll keep the hateful picture of your sorrow an' your shame,
An' it's bound to rise to taunt you, though you long have squared the debt,
For the things you've done in meanness are the things you can't forget.

Lord, I sometimes sit an' shudder when some scene comes back to me,
Which shows me big an' brutal in some act o' tyranny,
When some triflin' thing upset me an' I let my temper fly,
An' was sorry for it after- but it's vain to sit an' sigh.
So I'd be a whole sight happier now my sun begins to set,
If it wasn't for the meanness which I've done an' can't forget.

Now I think I've learned my lesson an' I'm treadin' gentler ways,
An' I try to build my mornings into happy yesterdays;
I don't let my temper spoil 'em in the way I used to do
An' let some splash of anger smear the record when it's through;
I want my memories pleasant, free from shame or vain regret,
Without any deeds of anger which I never can forget.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)