

Spoiling Them

'You're spoiling them!' the mother cries
When I give way to weepy eyes
And let them do the things they wish,
Like cleaning up the jelly dish,
Or finishing the chocolate cake,
Or maybe let the rascal take
My piece of huckleberry pie,
Because he wants it more than I.

'You're spoiling them!' the mother tells,
When I am heedless to their yells,
And let them race and romp about
And do not put their joy to rout.
I know I should be firm, and yet
I tried it once to my regret;
I will remember till I'm old
The day I started in to scold.

I stamped my foot and shouted: 'Stop!'
And Bud just let his drum sticks drop,
And looked at me and turned away;
That night there was no further play.
The girls were solemn-like and still,
Just as girls are when they are ill,
And when unto his cot I crept,
I found him sobbing as he slept.

That was my first attempt and last
To play the scold. I'm glad it passed
So quickly and has left no trace
Of memory on each little face;
But now when mother whispers low:
'You're spoiling them,' I answer, 'No!
But it is plain, as plain can be,
Those little tykes are spoiling me.'

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)