

The Road Builder

I do not care for garments fine,
I do not care for medals bright;
I have no wish to quench with wine
My thirst when I go home at night.
I'm satisfied with work to do,
And I'm content to bear my load
If only I can carve and hew
For those I love a better road.

I have no wish for luxury
If I must live it all alone;
Nor do I toil that I may be
By many strangers better known.
If I were here to toil for self
I'd have a very simple code,
And I'd need very little pelf—
But I'm the builder of a road.

I'm on this earth to pioneer
For those who follow after me,
According to my service here
Their chance for splendid life will be.
Into the future I must tread
Nor whimper at the present goad;
'Tis mine to blaze the path ahead,
I am the builder of a road.

I dare not shirk what task I find,
I dare not falsely step aside,
Nor leave the tangled brush behind.
My pathway must be clear and wide.
For they will tread the way I go,
They'll come to reap the seed I sowed
When I am sleeping 'neath the snow,
I am the builder of a road.

It is for them I face the front
And strive to keep my pathway straight,
It is for them I bear the brunt
Of selfishness and bitter hate.
That they may know a smoother way,
That they may bear a lighter load,
I, smiling, face the heat of day—
I am the builder of a road.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)