

## **What Makes An Artist?**

We got to talking art one day, discussing in a general way  
How some can match with brush and paint the glory of a tree,  
And some in stone can catch the things of which the dreamy poet sings,  
While others seem to have no way to tell the joys they see.

Old Blake had sat in silence there and let each one of us declare  
Our notions of what's known as art, until he'd heard us through;  
And then said he: 'It seems to me that any man, whoe'er he be,  
Becomes an artist by the good he daily tries to do.

'He need not write the books men read to be an artist. No, indeed!  
He need not work with paint and brush to show his love of art;  
Who does a kindly deed to-day and helps another on his way,  
Has painted beauty on a face and played the poet's part.

'Though some of us cannot express our inmost thoughts of loveliness,  
We prove we love the beautiful by how we act and live;  
The poet singing of a tree no greater poet is than he  
Who finds it in his heart some care unto a tree to give.

'Though he who works in marble stone the name of artist here may own,  
No less an artist is the man who guards his children well;  
'Tis art to love the fine and true; by what we are and what we do  
How much we love life's nobler things to all the world we tell.'

**Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)**