

Motherhood

I wonder if he'll stop to think,
When the long years have traveled by,
Who heard his plea: 'I want a drink!'
Who was the first to hear him cry?
I wonder if he will recall
The patience of her and the smile,
The kisses after every fall,
The love that lasted all the while?
I wonder, as I watch them there,
If he'll remember, when he's grown,
How came the silver in her hair
And why her loveliness has flown?
Yet thus my mother did for me,
Night after night and day by day,
For such a care I used to be,
As such a boy I used to play.
I know that I was always sure
Of tenderness at mother's knee,
That every hurt of mine she'd cure,
And every fault she'd fail to see.
But who recalls the tears she shed,
And all the wishes gratified,
The eager journeys to his bed,
I took for granted, just as he,
The boundless love that mother gives,
But watching them I've come to see
Time teaches every man who lives
How much of him is not his own;
And now I know the countless ways
By which her love for me was shown,
And I recall forgotten days.
Perhaps someday a little chap
As like him as he's now like me,
Shall climb into his mother's lap,
For comfort and for sympathy,
And he shall know what now I know,
And see through eyes a trifle dim,
The mother of the long ago
Who daily spent her strength for him.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)