

The Fisherman

Along a stream that raced and ran
Through tangled trees and over stones,
That long had heard the pipes o' Pan
And shared the joys that nature owns,
I met a fellow fisherman,
Who greeted me in cheerful tones.

The lines of care were on his face.
I guessed that he had buried dead;
Had run for gold full many a race,
And kept great problems in his head,
But in that gentle resting place
No word of wealth or fame he said.

He showed me trout that he had caught
And praised the larger ones of mine;
Told me how that big beauty fought
And almost broke his silken line;
Spoke of the trees and sky, and thought
Them proof of life and power divine.

There man to man we talked of trees
And birds, as people talk of men;
Discussed the busy ways of bees
Wondered what lies beyond our ken;
Where is the land no mortal sees,
And shall we come this way again.

'Out here,' he told me, with a smile,
'Away from all the city's sham,
The strife for splendor and for style,
The ticker and the telegram
I come for just a little while
To be exactly as I am.'

Foes think the bad in him they've guessed
And prate about the wrong they scan;
Friends that have seen him at his best
Believe they know his every plan;
I know him better than the rest,
I know him as a fisherman.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)