

The Little Velvet Suit

Last night I got to thinkin' of the pleasant long ago,
When I still had on knee breeches, an' I wore a flowing bow,
An' my Sunday suit was velvet. Ma an' Pa thought it was fine,
But I know I didn't like it—either velvet or design;
It was far too girlish for me, for I wanted something rough
Like what other boys were wearing, but Ma wouldn't buy such stuff.

Ma answered all my protests in her sweet an' kindly way;
She said it didn't matter what I wore to run an' play,
But on Sundays when all people went to church an' wore their best,
Her boy must look as stylish an' as well kept as the rest.
So she dressed me up in velvet, an' she tied the flowing bow,
An' she straightened out my stockings, so that not a crease would show.

An' then I chuckled softly to myself while dreaming there
An' I saw her standing o'er me combing out my tangled hair.
I could feel again the tugging, an' I heard the yell I gave
When she struck a snarl, an' softly I could hear her say: 'Be brave.
'Twill be over in a minute, and a little man like you
Shouldn't whimper at a little bit of pain the way you do.'

Oh, I wouldn't mind the tugging at my scalp lock, and I know
That I'd gladly wear to please her that old flowing girlish bow;
And I think I'd even try to don once more that velvet suit,
And blush the same old blushes, as the women called me cute,
Could the dear old mother only take me by the hand again,
And be as proud of me right now as she was always then.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)