

The Alarm

Get off your downy cots of ease,
There's work that must be done.
Great danger's riding on the seas.
The storm is coming on.
Don't think that it will quickly pass.
Who smiles at distant fate,
And waits until it strikes, alas!
Has roused himself too late.

Who thinks the fight will end before
The need of him arrives,
Is lengthening this brutal war
And costing many lives.
For over us that storm shall break
Ere many weeks have fled,
And we shall pay for our mistake
In fields of mangled dead.

Be ready when the foe shall near,
Be there to strike him hard;
Let us, though he be miles from here,
Be standing now on guard.
To-morrow's victories won't be won
By pluck that we display
To-morrow when the foe comes on,
But by our work to-day.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)