

Roses

When God first viewed the rose He'd made
He smiled, and thought it passing fair;
Upon the bloom His hands He laid,
And gently blessed each petal there.
He summoned in His artists then
And bade them paint, as ne'er before,
Each petal, so that earthly men
Might love the rose for evermore.

With Heavenly brushes they began
And one with red limned every leaf,
To signify the love of man;
The first rose, white, betokened grief;
'My rose shall deck the bride,' one said
And so in pink he dipped his brush,
'And it shall smile beside the dead
To typify the faded blush.'

And then they came unto His throne
And laid the roses at His feet,
The crimson bud, the bloom full blown,
Filling the air with fragrance sweet.
'Well done, well done!' the Master spake;
'Henceforth the rose shall bloom on earth:
One fairer blossom I will make,'
And then a little babe had birth.

On earth a loving mother lay
Within a rose-decked room and smiled,
But from the blossoms turned away
To gently kiss her little child,
And then she murmured soft and low,
'For beauty, here, a mother seeks.
None but the Master made, I know,
The roses in a baby's cheeks.'

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)