

The Gift Of Play

Some have the gift of song and some possess the gift of silver speech,
Some have the gift of leadership and some the ways of life can teach.
And fame and wealth reward their friends; in jewels are their splendors
told,
But in good time their favorites grow very faint and gray and old.
But there are men who laugh at time and hold the cruel years at bay;
They romp through life forever young because they have the gift of play.

They walk with children, hand in hand, through daisy fields and orchards
fair,
Nor all the dignity of age and power and pomp can follow there;
They've kept the magic charm of youth beneath the wrinkled robe of Time,
And there's no friendly apple tree that they have grown too old to climb.
They have not let their boyhood die; they can be children for the day;
They have not bartered for success and all its praise, the gift of play.

They think and talk in terms of youth; with love of life their eyes are
bright;
No rheumatism of the soul has robbed them of the world's delight;
They laugh and sing their way along and join in pleasures when they can,
And in their glad philosophy they hold that mirth becomes a man.
They spend no strength in growing old. What if their brows be crowned
with gray?
The spirits in their breasts are young. They still possess the gift of
play.

The richest men of life are not the ones who rise to wealth and fame-
Not the great sages, old and wise, and grave of face and bent of frame,
But the glad spirits, tall and straight, who 'spite of time and all its
care,
Have kept the power to laugh and sing and in youth's fellowship to share.
They that can walk with boys and be a boy among them, blithe and gay,
Defy the withering blasts of Age because they have the gift of play.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)