

Life and Hereafter

Not over there do I await
Reward for patience here below,
Not over there at Heaven's gate
Is all the joy that I shall know;
Not for the joys to be am I
Seeking the better, truer way,
All pleasure's not beyond the sky,
For I have my reward each day.

I hope for Heaven and all it means,
And hope to hear the Master tell,
When I have quit these earthly scenes,
That I have truly toiled and well;
But not alone for that I strive
To keep my soul unspotted here,
Honor has joys for all alive
That are as infinitely dear.

What can the great hereafter give
More precious than my children's love,
When I, on earth, shall cease to live,
And go to join the realms above?
Were there no future, then I say
I still should strive to faithful be,
That they would run at close of day
With loving arms to welcome me.

A baby's kiss, a faithful wife,
And friends who trust, are not these all
Rewards that honor earns in life,
Although your hoard of gold be small?
And though there were no future, would
You still not journey on your way
Striving, as ever, to be good
Just for the joys you know today?

And so I say, not ' over there,'
Do I sit sighing, ' I shall know
The perfect bliss, with ne'er a care '—
The perfect bliss is here below.
Nor do I dream of joys to be,
And wail the cares that now are mine,
Earth's glories now appeal to me,
And this life is almost divine.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)