THE BRIDGE BUILDER

An old man, going a lone highway,
Came, at the evening, cold and gray,
To a chasm, vast, and deep, and wide,
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.

The old man crossed in the twilight dim;
The sullen stream had no fear for him;
But he turned, when safe on the other side,
And built a bridge to span the tide.

“Old man,” said a fellow pilgrim, near,
“You are wasting strength with building here;
Your journey will end with the ending day;
You never again will pass this way;
You’ve crossed the chasm, deep and wide—
Why build you this bridge at the evening tide?”

The builder lifted his old gray head:
“Good friend, in the path I have come,” he said,
“There followeth after me today,
A youth, whose feet must pass this way.

This chasm, that has been naught to me,
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him.”

Will Allen Dromgoole