

SATIS EST

I write no poem men's heart to thrill,
 No song I sing to lift men's souls,
 To battle's front no soldiers lead,
 In halls of state I boast no skill,
 I just teach school.

I just teach school, but poet's thrill,
 And singer's joy and soldier's fire
 And statesman's power, all, all are mine.
 For in this little group where still
 I just teach school,

Are Poets, Soldiers, Statesmen, all,
 I see them in the speaking eye,
 In face aglow with purpose strong,
 In straightened bodies, tense and tall,
 While I teach school.

And they uplifted gaze intent
 On cherished heights they soon shall reach,
 And mine the hand that led them on!
 And I inspired! Therefore, content,
 I still teach school.

-Franklin L. Gilson

Frank Gilson, a professor of theater at the Kansas State Normal School (Emporia State University), wrote this poem in 1919 for the *Bulletin of the Kansas Association of Teachers of English*. This work, often retitled by others as "Just a Teacher" or "I Just Teach School," was soon copied by other educational journals and newspapers (the *New York Times* carried it twice) and attributed to "Anonymous" or "Unknown." His former students sent clippings of the poem to him from around the country, although he rarely received credit as the author. Here is the work sometimes praised as the finest poem ever written in honor of teachers.

-SED