

## Opportunity at Hand

Berton Braley (1882 – 1966) was an American poet. Born in Madison, Wis., Braley was the son of a judge who died when Berton was only seven years old. At 16, he quit high school and got a job working as a factory hand at a plow plant. After a few years, Braley went back to school and received his high school diploma. Shortly thereafter, he discovered Tom Hood's poetry instructional book, *The Rhymester*.



Braley was first published at the age of 11 when a small publication printed a fairy tale he wrote. A prolific writer, he had verses in many magazines, including *Nation's Business*, *Forbes Magazine*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Atlantic Monthly* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. He published 20 books, with half of them being poetry collections. Here is a Braley poem that is a favorite of mine:

*With doubt and dismay you are smitten,  
You think there's no chance for you, son?  
Why, the best books haven't been written,  
The best race hasn't been run,  
The best score hasn't been made yet,  
The best song hasn't been sung,  
The best tune hasn't been played yet;  
Cheer up, for the world is young!*

*No chance? Why, the world is just eager  
For things that you ought to create.  
Its store of true wealth is still meager,  
Its needs are incessant and great;  
Don't worry and fret, faint-hearted,  
The chances have just begun.  
For the best jobs haven't been started,  
The best work hasn't been done.*

What new or greater contribution to your job, your profession, your community or to society at large is lurking within your mind or heart?

Opportunity is following you around.

– Beecher Hunter