

What is a Man?

One day as I was working all alone on some old thing in my shop
My son came running by, and all at once he came to a stop.
He watched me at work for awhile, and then he raised his hand.
And then he spoke to me, asking, Father, just what is a man?
I'm a small boy, I do not understand what it means or what I am
Tell me truly, will I grow up to be a man or must I always be small?
O, Father, I do not know, please can you tell me anything at all?

I was taken aback, for this was a question I hadn't expected
Not then, not for many years, and I had not all expected
This question from my son, and yet I knew I must say to him
Something he could hold and know, nothing said at a whim.
But what is a man? I had pondered that question myself often
And to little avail, for though I thought much, I still didn't know.
And I looked at my son, standing there, waiting to hear what's so.

My son, I'll tell you truly, I don't know if I know what is a man.
But sit you down here by me, and I'll tell you what little that I can.
Man is like the acorn from the mighty tree, at first little and looking
Not much like what he will become, but if he keeps on trying
And praying and doing good, righting wrongs, and helping others,
Then, as he grows and learns about the world, some way, some day
He'll know that, whatever else he may have been, he has become a man.

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