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Elegy

by A. E. Stallings

The finery of childhood—let them wear
It every day, in rain or shine. Don't lose
Your temper over patent leather shoes
Mud-puddle deep, or fret for Easter frocks,
Hand-smocked, that meet with chocolate or paint,
Let Sunday-best be mussed, new trousers tear,
Elbows of pure wool cardigans be rent,
Let silken ribbons stray, mismatch lace socks,
Let grape juice stain. For Someday comes to call
And finds the garment now too tight, too small,
Outmoded, out of season, itchy, quaint,
Stored up in lavender and mothballs. Let
Joy sport its raiment while still bright and loose,
Let what cannot be saved or spared be spent.
It's fitting: what is theirs is not your own,
The finery they did not spoil with use
That lies in drawers, unblemished and outgrown.

A. E. Stallings has lived in Athens since 1999. Her new translation of Hesiod's *Works and Days* is just out from Penguin Classics.

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