

FRIENDSHIP POEMS

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FAREWELL, MY FRIEND AND CONFIDANTE

Farewell, my friend and confidante!

As you go, so must I

Return upon the well-worn path

Each soul must travel by.

Wend where you will, my wanderer,

Even as you stay

Long-treasured in my lonely heart,

Loved well, though far away.

FOR MOST OF US LIFE PASSES LIKE A DREAM

For most of us life passes like a dream,
Revealing only what is on our minds.
Inside the prison of the self we see
Each object as a shadow on our wall.
Nothingness awaits, as sure as night.
Did I not have you, dear friend, I might,
Shadow on a shade, not be at all.
How much we need a word beyond our sea:
In love and laughter, thoughts of different kinds,
Perhaps, with luck, unraveling a seam.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED TO US

I don't understand what happened to us
Or why you have turned away.
Of course you are free to do as you like,
But first I have something to say.

To me it had seemed we could go on forever,
So close were our hearts, and at ease,
So much did we share, yet the words never faltered,
So I thought as time did as it pleased.

Whatever I did that has made you unhappy,
Or am that is not to your taste,
Or would be were I to return to your graces,
Or won't be if I am replaced:

I want you to know that your friendship is something
I treasure, and would not now end.
If you would be willing to turn to embrace me,
You'd find in me still a good friend.

I KNOW IT'S ONLY HALF A YEAR

I know it's only half a year
That you will be away,
But it will feel far more than that
Each long and lonely day.

A day without a friend is like
A meadow turned to sand,
A garden turned to weeds and dust,
An ocean far from land.

Time enters a slow-motion zone,
Repeating endlessly
The tearful grimace of the heart
Till you return to me.

I LOVE YOU AS MY CLOSEST, DEAREST FRIEND

I love you as my closest, dearest friend.
Boys and girls can be just closest friends.
There is no passion greater than the one
That touches not the body but the heart.

You mean much more to me than someone who
I date and undate, want and then don't want.
They're the waves, and you are like a shore
Where I can sit and watch them kiss the sand.

I'm sorry I can't be with you today,
When you should rule by virtue of your birth.
Please accept this tribute of mere words,
Poor substitute for all I am and have.

I SOMETIMES THINK THAT I COULD BE ALONE

I sometimes think that I could be alone:
Really alone, with neither God nor friends.
The people near me then might well be stone:
Just faces on a frieze that never ends.
And I would travel in my mind towards death,
A world within a world sealed like a tomb.
My thoughts would be as silent as my breath,
And, like my breath, expire at my doom.
Such thoughts would make me shudder, were not you
A world where I may enter and find rest.
A rock gives way within, and I walk through
To be in laughing eyes a welcome guest.
Thank God I have you, friend, that I might stay
And be as I could be no other way.

I WOULD NOT ASK YOU TO FORGET

I would not ask you to forget
How I've betrayed your trust.
I'm asking, though, that you forgive
Because I feel I must.

I can't just let our friendship go
Nor let this silence last.
I know I can't undo what's done,
But, please, let past be past.

Let my mistake be memory
Where you may keep your pain,
While I annihilate this thing
I'll never do again.

And let us once again renew
A friendship that is real:
Limping, yes, but still alive,
With wounds that time can heal.

IT'S BEEN SO GOOD TO HAVE YOU AS A FRIEND

It's been so good to have you as a friend:
As sweet and rich as honey-colored sun
Slanting steep across a summer lawn,
Gilding life with all that love can lend.
And now that you yourself have griefs to tend,
I want to be the strong and caring one
To count to you the lovely things you've done
Until these troubles pass and sorrows end.
You are so beautiful in form and soul
That you bring happiness to all you're near:
Just as a sea rose, flowering in mist,
Makes a paradise of some bleak shoal,
Turning truth to something far more clear,
No pain unsoothed or rain-swept cheek unkissed.

JULIAN

Julian is a true and loving friend.
Underneath the words there is the heart.
Life is not a table set for one.
If one would eat, one cannot eat alone.
All we have we borrow and we lend.
Nor do I breathe without your taking part.

JUST AS A WAVE IS LIFTED BY THE SHORE

Just as a wave is lifted by the shore,
Then breaks across the slowly rising sand,
So as I watch you weep my feelings pour
Across the wash of what I understand.
I wish I could just take you in my arms
And all your pain could melt into my chest,
And all the violence of passing storms
Could pass through me and finally come to rest.
No words can set things right or presence lend
A miracle to light your darkened way,
But there is solace in a loving friend
And comfort in what I don't have to say.
Whatever circumstance you cannot bear,
Just turn to me, and you will find me there.

MAY OUR FRIENDSHIP LAST FOREVER

May our friendship last forever;
May I sail upon your sea.
May we go through life together;
May there always be a "we."

May I be your endless sky;
May you breathe my gentle air.
May you never wonder why
Each time you look for me, I'm there.

May we be for each a smile
Like the warm, life-giving sun;
Yet when we're in pain awhile,
May our suffering be one.

May we share our special days,
The happiness of one for two;
And if we must go separate ways,
Let my love remain with you.

MY TEARS ARE NOT OF LOSS

My tears are not of loss
But of time too quickly gone.
I miss our days together
Even while they're going on.

I savor odd, sweet moments
When you laugh or when you smile,
Nostalgic for your presence
Though you're with me all the while.

Strange how fantasy
Can wander in and out at will,
Looking back from somewhere
That is just beyond a hill.

And so when once you leave
You will not leave me alone,
For I will have you with me
Long, long after you are home.

OF YOU I KNOW SO MUCH

Of you I know so much, and yet
Nothing that I know
Encompasses just who you are
Or explicates your glow.
For you I would do anything,
As you would do for me.
Knowing this is breathing life:
Intense, serene, and free.
No one else so touched my soul
Deep in, with charity.

OLD AND GOOD FRIENDS SHARE A PIECE

Old and good friends share a piece
Of passion, pain, and pleasure
That no one else, no family can
Begin to know or treasure.

It's as if a secret room
Held their private store,
And every time they met, they could
Go through some special door.

It doesn't matter if they see
Each other every day,
Or years and years go by before
They come and go away:

The moment that they meet it all
Is there—the memories of
Fierce loyalty and times of need
And gratitude and love.

OUR FRIENDSHIP IS AS CLOSE AS CLOSEST SISTERS

Our friendship is as close as closest sisters,
Two flutes with a single melody,
Interchanging runs through changing vistas,
Notes like birds alighting on a tree.
To some, friends are like books upon a shelf;
Yet you to me are like another self.
This music will not stop for other misters,
Nor will it pause for princes, real or elf.
However life may wend, we will be we.

THANK YOU FOR YOU:
FOR WHO YOU ARE

Thank you for you: for who you are,
However far away;
And for the words you send to me,
Near mad for what you say.
Knowing simply that you're there,
Yet thinking much of me,
Opens up my happiness,
Undone for all to see.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FRIENDSHIP AND YOUR LOVE

Thank you for your friendship and your love.
However life may turn, this gift will be
A mountain that has made my river bend,
Nor will it flow the same way to the sea.
Knowing you is something I'm made of.

Years will not this part of me remove.
One lives for just a brief eternity,
Understanding truths that never end.

THANKSGIVING IS A MOMENT TO REMEMBER

Thanksgiving is a moment to remember
How little we can do to move the stars.
All we are and have we must surrender,
Nor is Earth less inscrutable than Mars.
Knowing this, we know the need for friends
Sharing both our pleasures and our pain,
Giving, though it may not serve their ends,
In joy the love that will our love sustain.
Very much like water in a lake,
In sum we serve as mirrors to the sky.
No one alone can heaven's picture take.
Given friends, we know the reason why.

TO SAY GOODBYE'S IMPOSSIBLE FOREVER

To say goodbye's impossible forever,
And yet we must too soon exchange goodbyes.
No magnitude of love when someone dies
Can manage the immensity of never.
Yet even death cannot our friendship sever
Though you may rest somewhere beyond our sighs
And all the talk of afterlife be lies.
Eternity is our brief glimpse of ever.
Even as each breeze must alter time
And each unruly rock reshape the sea,
So love lasts beyond our consciousness.
Each pulse of life's a piece of the sublime,
A breath so full of grace it cannot be,
A wave that ripples endlessly through darkness.

WE MET FOUR YEARS AGO WHILE HUNTING DEER

We met four years ago while hunting deer,
And ever since that time we've been close friends.
I'm the killer, he's become the bear:
I love the layered message that this sends.
He drives two Chevy GMC's—one black,
And a red one that he calls the General.
Four-wheeling down some bumpy backwoods track
Is what makes him and me most comfortable.
We're buddies, even though a boy and girl,
And through the years our friendship's only grown.
Life gets to you sometimes as troubles swirl,
But he's the best ear I have ever known.
We have, of course, compatibility;
But, deeper, love and rough equality.

WE'RE NEVER COMPLETELY IN ONE PLACE

We're never completely in one place. Some part
Of us hangs out on streets we barely remember,
Or converses with faces no longer familiar. Or we start
Lunch in June, and sneak off into December.
Every encounter has a beginning, but never
An ending. Like an exquisite ecosphere,
The mind turns each raindrop into forever,
Nor does it allow one word to disappear.
Some evening, years from now, we'll be driving home,
Talking, I in your car, or you
In mine, driving through rich Iowa loam,
Or flowering Jersey suburbs, or Kalamazoo.
It will not matter, as we speak, whether
Our lives are bitter or sweet. We'll be together.

WHY DID YOU CHANGE

Why did you change? What did I do?
We were like brothers, and now
Your face is a wall without windows, while you
Abrogate what small claims you allow.

I don't understand what undid the sweet bond
That for years yielded nothing but joy.
I am who I was, and yet you respond
As though it were my aim to annoy.

Perhaps there's no why when some untoward wind
Whips away what we hold to our hearts.
Though bitter it be to leave loved ones behind,
It remains the most precious of arts.

YOU ARE TO ME A VERY SPECIAL SUN

You are to me a very special sun
That shines upon a world few ever see,
A world I'm shy to show to everyone,
That hides its urgent truth from even me.
Without your light it is a world of darkness;
Its heaven and its hell lie fast asleep.
With you as sole and sympathetic witness,
The words come forth from out my vasty deep.
And so I cannot be myself without you;
No one is whole without some loving friend.
There is a quiet joy in me about you
That lets me say what I need not defend.
Long may we serve each other to give light
To all the loveliness that haunts the night.

YOU HAVE A SMILE THAT LIGHTS THE WORLD

You have a smile that lights the world,
Shining from within,
Breaking out between the clouds
That form the skin of self.

Lucky we, to live nearby
That unpretentious sun,
To share its fire, to feel its love,
To know its warmth so well.

Just as the sun's sweet liquid joy
Is captured in the wine,
So with us your happiness
Is captured in our lives.

YOUR FRIENDSHIP IS THE SKY ABOVE MY HOME

Your friendship is the sky above my home,
The crystal air I breathe, through which I see.
I can't believe how much you mean to me.
Without you with me, time would turn to stone.

I don't know why I need you so, or how
I know so absolutely I'll be there
In times your wounded heart can hardly bear.
I only know this truth is with me now.

Why is it in our lives that we need friends
To be awake and fully what we are?
Alone we dream but never cross the bar;
With you I share a grace that never ends.

YOUR LAUGH IS LIKE A SILVER BELL

Your laugh is like a silver bell:
Clean and light and free;
Just like the hours of happiness
Your friendship brings to me.

You're like a room of sweet wind chimes
Enlightened by a breeze,
Or like an open, grassy field
Dotted with old trees.

I'm grateful for the things you do,
But more for what you are:
A breath of clear, bright open sea,
Of life beyond the bar.

