

GRADUATION POEMS

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ALMA MATERS NOURISH MORE THAN MIND

Alma maters nourish more than mind:
Light within illuminates the whole,
Making one of multitudes combined,
Allowing each the passion of its soul.

Maybe we'll forget much that we've learned
As we narrow to a single road.
The powers we were given we have earned,
Ever the way blessings are bestowed,
Riches not retained until returned.

EACH OF US MUST CLIMB OUR SEPARATE MOUNTAIN

Each of us must climb our separate mountain
To reach at last our own extended view.
We can be no more than what we are,
Yet that is quite enough for us to do.

The world is far too great for comprehension,
And so we only know what we can know.
But given the abilities we're given,
That's still a long and weary way to go.

Yet on the way, how beautiful the moments!
How good it feels to have some skill or art!
How wonderful to pause in awestruck wonder
At what must fill the unsuspecting heart!

And so we're proud of each of you today
For all you've learned, and all you've tried to learn.
Knowledge brings the deepest satisfaction,
Not least because it's something that you earn.

FRIENDS IN HIGH SCHOOL ARE FOREVER YOUNG

Friends in high school are forever young.
Unchanged, they're where you always will belong.
The crowd is never gone, the pleasure stays,
The music of the moment always plays,
The time remains a field of wistful grace
To which you may return from anyplace.
Of course, you may still know them later on
When you are someone else and years have run;
And you may love them dearly, and they you,
But time must make their friendship something new.
Meanwhile, flourishing within your heart
There is a whole, of which you were a part:
A group of friends, one in love and pain,
In whom your longing comes alive again.

GIVE ME JUST THIS MOMENT, PLEASE, FOREVER

Give me just this moment, please, forever.
Replicate it for me on demand.
As I flow unceasingly downriver,
Do not make me leave this day behind.
Understand my bittersweet confusion
As graduation crystallizes youth,
Tallying my treasures with precision,
Illuminating wistfully my wealth.
Out of all my moments pluck this one,
Nor let me lose its grace until I'm gone.

GRADUATES BECOME THE COVER STORY

Graduates become the cover story,
Representing all those still within;
As those who came before provide the glory
Determining how well one might begin.
Underneath the letters are the learners,
A class on whom the mantle now must fall,
Taken into custody as earners,
Each a new advertisement for all,
Serving as the institute writ small.

GRADUATION IS A TIME

Graduation is a time
For feeling very proud,
For thinking lots of lovely thoughts
And saying them out loud.

It's a time for feeling love
About to overflow,
And just before it leaps its banks,
To let the loved one know.

And so I'm very proud of you
For being who you are,
For making something of yourself,
For making it this far.

I'm proud because I am a part
Of everything you do.
This time's the time to say how much
In love I am with you.

GRADUATION IS A TIME (2)

Graduation is a time
When our thoughts turn naturally
To vandalism, sex, and crime,
Now that we at last are free.

Our teachers think we're well prepared
To make decisions on our own;
But now, perhaps, they're running scared
As they listen to this poem.

Don't worry, folks, we aren't crazy,
Though sometimes we look that way;
Just annoyed, bored, and lazy
As we make it through the day.

So just like birds out of a cage
Or slaves set free from toil and pain,
We aim to try to act our age
And be for now a bit insane.

For life too soon will close its doors,
And then as we grow old in years
We'll teach our own kids to be bores,
But hopefully they'll stuff their ears
And do as we dream, not as we do,
Facing life a tad askew.

GRADUATION ISN'T GRADUAL

Graduation isn't gradual.
In fact it's quite abrupt, a sudden shock.
It's more like rushing towards a waterfall:
One moment we're afloat, and then we're not.

Sure, we see it coming up ahead,
The water roaring into the abyss.
We make a joke and look away instead,
Unable to acknowledge what this is.

And then the moment's past, and we're the same.
Everyone is smiling, sunny bright.
Someone kisses us and calls our name,
And then we think, well, everything's all right.

But life is like that: things get smashed inside,
And we don't even know it. Foolishly,
We think we're in it only for the ride,
Yet mourn for all that can no longer be.

GRADUATION OUGHT NOT BE AN END

Graduation ought not be an end,
Replacing what within we might achieve.
After all, the good that we intend
Does much to serve the good that we receive.
Underneath the mask of a degree
A person must perform with just the skill,
The knowledge and the art that he or she
Internalized through pluck, hard work, and will.
On what we are will rest what we become,
Nor do we have much else to draw upon.

GRADUATION'S REASON TO REJOICE

Graduation's reason to rejoice,
Remembering what lies beyond our ends.
And so yours gives occasion to my voice,
Delighting in the gift of being friends.
Underneath your pleasure is my pride,
As yours remains the rock on which I stand.
The window through which I can see inside
Is hung upon the mirror in your hand.
One cannot be one without the other,
Nor can we be ourselves without another.

GRADUATIONS ARE LIKE STEPPING THROUGH

Graduations are like stepping through
A veil into another, larger room.
Behind, where we can never go again,
Are memories like a shipwreck full of gold.

Strange, the harmonies of pride and sadness,
The dawn and sunset of the new and old,
The bittersweet good-byes while looking forward
To things unseen beyond the ridge of time.

Numb with too much life we stagger through them,
Time passing in the ordinary way.
Relatives and friends all swarm around us,
Buzzing round the silence of the real.

And once the ceremonies and the parties
Are over, and the sweet days come and go,
All we've lost comes back to us as music
Of love departed, never to return.

GRADUATIONS CAN BE BITTERSWEET

Graduations can be bittersweet,
Reminding us of all that's come and gone:
All our battles, whether lost or won,
Days of bliss, and days we would delete.
Underneath our pride there is the sense,
Almost like a wound, of something past,
The beauty of a time that cannot last,
In which we shared the joys of innocence.
Open vistas lie before our eyes;
Now is the time for hopes and for goodbyes.

GRADUATIONS SOMETIMES CAN BE SAD

Graduations sometimes can be sad,
Removing from our world a world of friends,
An instant that, in golden garments clad,
Divides our early yearnings from our ends.
Underneath our confidence and pride
A sense of loss like music haunts the heart,
Telling us that what we are inside
Is presently a place we must depart.
Our years have yielded paradise and pain,
Nor will we ever taste their truth again.

HOW MANY TIMES YOU ALMOST LOST YOUR WAY

How many times you almost lost your way,
About to leave the maze in pure frustration,
Indignant at extrinsic motivation,
Learning not enough to want to stay . . .
The rat must sometimes hate the proffered cheese,
Open to the eye but not the tongue,
The prize that makes him learn which colored rung
Has the power his torturers to please.
Even so, so much that you have learned
(Granted not the whole, but some good part)
Resonates within the mind and heart,
A legacy that now you've fully earned.
Drab though some of life may yet still prove,
Unbind those restive dreams that you annoy.
All roads, no matter whither, lead to joy,
Though none will take you there unless you love.
Each maze leads through a garden when you love.

I DO NOT WISH TO TAKE YOUR MOTHER'S PLACE

I do not wish to take your mother's place,
And yet my pride and pleasure are no less.
You may not be the daughter of my flesh,
But you are still the daughter of my heart.

I know my very presence in your life
Can't help but to remind you of the pain
And anger of your parents' separation.
And yet my only purpose here is love.

Stepmothers and stepdaughters are a pair
Created both by joy and by disaster.
We did not choose each other, but were chosen
By love and by the anguish of love's end.

But we can choose to love each other well,
Accepting fortune's gift with unfeigned grace.
Know as you step forth this graduation:
You have my love as long as life permits.

I WANT TO MAKE IT TO MY GRADUATION

I want to make it to my graduation
Even though I haven't long to live.
I want that one last hard-earned celebration
To give me all the joy that it can give.
I want your pride around me like a song,
To walk within its passion and its beauty,
To feel its pleasure in me sweet and strong,
To be possessed of all of those who love me.
And then I want the lazy afterglow,
The long, slow chatter of the waning day,
The easy confidence of those who know
That something precious has been put away.
Death's a dawn in that its golden light
Reveals the loveliness long hid by night.

I WOULD BE PROUD OF YOU, COULD I ATTEND

I would be proud of you, could I attend,
Would I now know the things I'll never know,
Could I have watched you come to comprehend
The wonder of the world in which you grow.
Do not think I did not think of you,
Imagining the beauty of this day,
For I was at your graduation, too,
Though long ago, and in a different way.
Life can be full, no matter short or long,
As long as love can fill it with its grace.
And I have felt such pride, and love so strong,
That you will live your life in my embrace.
So of the pride today I claim my share:
Though I am not, I know that I am there.

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IS A TIME OF YEARNING

Junior high school is a time of yearning
For what's ahead and what is left behind:
Neither child nor adult, but burning
Unrestrained with love and fear combined.
Now that we must leave, we have the pleasure
Of moving one step nearer who we are,
Knowing that we lose the equal treasure,
Bit by bit, of leaving dreams ajar.
How lucky we have been this awkward moment,
Shifting from the shade into the sun,
To have this school as our communal parent,
Guiding us as well as you have done!
More than skills improved or knowledge gained
Are intellects inspired and gifts unchained.

JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW HOW PROUD WE ARE OF YOU

Just want you to know how proud we are of you,
How much your graduation means to us.
Most people finish high school now, it's true,
But sometimes we just like to make a fuss.
Years ago, when we fought every day,
When we were merely siblings, not yet friends,
Such talk might make us kick our heels and bray
Like donkeys as some silly love scene ends.
But now the love we've always felt has come
Into its own, and so we feel your pride
In all the things you've managed to get done
Without your loyal siblings at your side.
Enjoy the day and bask in its bright sun.
The honor's yours, but we'll all share the fun.

SOMETIMES A SACRIFICE OR TWO COMES EASY

Sometimes a sacrifice or two comes easy:
Love's a very generous reward.
Two people are in equal need quite rarely,
So one becomes the tune and one the chord.
Today I feel immeasurably lucky
To celebrate with you this milestone.
The music in my heart is very lovely.
I watch you from below, but not alone.
I'll always be exactly where you want me,
As I have faith that you will be for me.
No missing paradise will ever haunt me,
For you and I will share our melody.
I'm proud of what you've done and what you'll do.
No one could be more blessed than I with you.

TEACHERS FLOW LIKE MOUNTAIN STREAMS

Teachers flow like mountain streams
High up through ice and snow,
And bring their learning down to earth
Not far from what we know.
Knowledge you have pure and cold,
Yet one thing, naturally,
Of all you know I value most:
Understanding me.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LOVE THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

Thank you for your love throughout the years.
How else could I become what I've become?
All your plans and hopes and even fears
Now come together in what I have done.
Know that I am grateful for your love.
Your hard work is mirrored now in mine.
On you all my accomplishments must shine.
Underneath my pride, your spirits move.

THE HAPPINESS I FEEL AT YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

The happiness I feel at your achievements
Reflects the happiness you feel at mine.
Friends expand the pleasures of such moments,
As mine in yours, and yours in mine, combine.
The same when we look forward to our futures:
So much more unfolds when there are two!
Populating your proposed adventures
Gives me a joy that mine must give to you.
We've been through much, and will be through much
more,
But traveling together is more fun.
Whatever life and love may have in store,
Two is always preferable to one.
Your graduation thus becomes my pleasure:
Your happiness is mine, a double treasure.

THERE ARE NO WORDS TO MATCH MY GRATITUDE

There are no words to match my gratitude,
However much like Shakespeare I might write.
Above all else, you've shaped my attitude,
Nurturing me with discipline and light.
Knowledge is the least of what you taught,
Yet that least at least prepared my head.
Out of your heart I've learned the things I ought,
Underscored words you never said.

THERE IS NO FUTURE GOOD ENOUGH

There is no future good enough
For what we hope to be,
Nor world with windows wide enough
For what we hope to see.

Yet when we turn to compromise
The dreams with which we wake,
We'll glimpse behind a memory
Which we cannot forsake.

How beautiful this time of youth
That is so quickly gone!
We came to learn together, and
In moments we are done.

How long we will remember this
Brief time when life would wait
Upon the true perception that
Comes always far too late.

TO THE GRADUATE, NO MORE A CHILD

To the graduate, no more a child,
On whom these many years my love has shone:
Take pleasure in the pleasure of my pride,
However much you've managed on your own.
Even as you dance upon your stage,
Growing ever more endowed with grace,
Remember that my love will never change,
A place for you beyond all time and place.
Do what you will within your own wide world,
Understanding in your own wise way:
Always know you are my field of wonder,
The wild, star-strewn moor on which I wander,
Even as I honor you today.

TO THE GRADUATE WHO MAKES ME SMILE

To the graduate who makes me smile
Or melt away whenever he comes near,
The handsome one, with lovely eyes and hair,
Hearts leaning toward his sunlight all the while:
Even I, who am your friend, lean toward you,
Gripped with pride in all that you have done,
Relishing the compliments you've won,
Alight with all the ways I might reward you.
Draw your own sweet dreams. I wish you well
Upon your graduation and beyond.
And if I could, I'd wave my magic wand
That happiness for you I might compel,
Even as I think what time might tell.

