

LOVE
POEMS
2nd Edition

Nicholas Gordon

Copyright © 2006 by Nicholas Gordon

The poems in this book may be used free for any personal or non-commercial purpose. For commercial use of these poems, please contact the author at webmaster@poemsforfree.com.

Published 2006

Printed by CafePress.com in the United States of America

AFTER LOVE AND FEAR, THERE'S PRIDE

After love and fear, there's pride;
After tears, the night;
After all the words are gone,
A chair with just one light.

After memories, the dream
That you will come home safe;
After sleep, another day
Of waiting for my life.

After hope, the happiness
Of thinking of your love;
After moments of despair
A stone no thought can move.

After all the sacrifice,
The hunger and the pain,
The passions and the promises,
The losses and the gains,

There's nothing but my love for you,
Which waits upon the wind
To bring you from the barricades
That now you must defend.

AFTER YOU LEAVE, I WILL BECOME A TREE

After you leave, I will become a tree
Alone on a hillside, loving wind and sun,
Waiting for you to return home to me
Though centuries of lonely stars may run.

I'll grow tall and give lots of shade,
Sheltering birds and other bright-eyed things.
Pleased with all the progress that I've made,
I'll spread my leafy branches out like wings.

But oh! Every moment of every day
I'll miss you with the passion of the wind,
Gazing endlessly upon the way
That without you must empty, empty wind.

DO NOT LOVE ME YET

Do not love me yet, for I
Am still a slender moon,
A scimitar about the heart
Too sharp to touch too soon.

Before I'm touched I need to grow
More full in golden light;
I need to smile upon my earth
And rule some patch of night.

I need to know what roads and fields
Lie in my domain
And dull my brand new ecstasies
With sophomoric pain.

I need the love of some blank boy
As cold and dark as me,
That we might grope in ignorance
And fear of what might be.

And then, when I'm a silver bowl
And know what I can hold,
Then, then, perhaps, we could try love
If you are not too old.

DO YOU WANT ME? WHAT'S THE MATTER?

Do you want me? What's the matter?
You're afraid some door will close?
You want the scent without the rose?
The moans of love without the chatter?

You think our love might be a tomb,
The only exit through my pain?
You'd rather put things off again
To give your fantasies some room?

You think: she's great, but in a while
I might get bored? Or something better,
Filling out a tighter sweater,
Might flash me a quick come-on smile?

You don't want to be tied just yet
To just one future, just one kiss?
You think about all you might miss
And hold out for a better bet?

Well, fine! But then why do you haunt
Me like a jackal night and day?
Why, when my interest seems to stray,
Are you so sure of what you want?

Why, when I dare so much as laugh
At some guy's jokes, you go ballistic,
Nasty, borderline sadistic,
As if somebody touched your stuff?

And yet when I hook on to you,
You will not let yourself be mine,
Take out your fears and draw a line
Between what you and I can do?

But freedom must be mutual,
And it takes two for one embrace.
You can't both love and freedom chase,
Unless you would adore a fool.

DREAMS DO COME TRUE

Dreams do come true, but only when
They make it through despair,
Limping into everyday
Transformed beyond repair.

No dream would be a dream if it
Could pass for something real,
Nor would we sail for paradise
Would it its shoals conceal.

So it is with love: the dream
Long longed for, now possessed,
Must be a dream no longer, but
An emperor undressed.

Stark naked it must come to us
In unaccustomed shame,
And we must take it in our arms
And love it all the same.

And we must love love as it is
That dreams might still come true,
Mangled into miracles
To make our lives anew.

EACH TRUTH IS JUST A SCRIM ACROSS THE DARKNESS

Each truth is just a scrim across the darkness.
We cannot see what most we'd like to know.
We drive among sheer cliffs in pale moonlight
Unsure of where we are or where to go.

When we allow our heads to make our choices,
We lose because of what we cannot see.
When we give way and let desire take us,
We lose because we want what cannot be.

We inch along the dream-lit rocky ridges
Knowing always, always we must lose.
The end for all is darkness everlasting,
And so it matters less which road we choose.

What matters is the beauty of sheer being;
The gifts we have and those we will become;
The ecstasy of loving so completely
That we ourselves are more than minds can plumb.

Love well and know that love must end in pain.
Be a fool and pay the unmarked price.
Be generous of self, and passion gain:
One who never loses, loses twice.

EVEN THOUGH WE FIGHT A LOT, I LOVE YOU

Even though we fight a lot, I love you.
We fight, I think, because the stakes are high.
I sometimes get so mad I cannot stand you,
But underneath my anger I could cry.
I have an uncontrolled need to control you,
To be your only destiny and guide.
I know it isn't fair to try to mold you,
But my poor love's entangled in my pride.
Ah, love! Please love me even in my fury,
Which rises like a tide beneath the moon.
I plead before my only judge and jury:
I want to change, but know change won't come soon.
Love finds it hard to let the loved one be
The person who is loved so passionately.

EVERYTHING I'VE DONE, I'VE DONE

Everything I've done, I've done
Only for your love.
Everything I am, I am
In hopes your heart will move.

I know that you love someone else,
But while you're away,
I'll love you just as though our love
Would last till you are grey.

Till you and I are grey, my love,
And all our days are done,
I'll love you just as I do now;
Your heart's my only home.

FATE IS OFT THE FILAMENT OF PASSION

Fate is oft the filament of passion,
Illumined by the force of its fierce flow.
For love, far more than chance, may fortunes fashion,
The unwilled will that wills the world we know.
Years break, yet love maintains the tides below.

Of love, fate is the most precise expression,
Nor could one find a more complete confession,
Even as good tidings come and go.

GIFTS ARE NOT ALWAYS FREE

Gifts are not always free.
A giver wants to know: Are you enjoying my gift?
Burdens can be sources of intense pleasure.
Recently, unable to distinguish between burdens and
 gifts,
Indian elephants dragged seventeen tons of teak logs
 over the Himalayas.
Each of us has made his or her own version of this
 mistake.
Love is a gift.

Burdens betray themselves by the rattle of their needs.
Each of us wants to know: Am I a burden or a gift?
Very few understand that to be a gift one must receive
 more than one gives,
Even while burdens come decked out in ribbons and
 bows.
Refusing a gift brings regret, not guilt.
Lingering doubts may be referred to a mirror.
Yesterday the elephants returned: happy, sweaty, and a
 good deal wiser.

HE CARES ONLY THAT I'M HAPPY

He cares only that I'm happy,
Even were I not with him.
If some seek on the wind love's traces,
Some seek out the love within.
All my pleasures are his treasures,
Nor does he crave joy alone.
All have claim on his compassion;
No dark soul is on its own.
Giving thus, so naturally,
Each day he lights the love in me,
Like candles on a sunlit stone.

HOLD ME TO YOUR WILLING HEART

Hold me to your willing heart
And let me—help me—weep
That I of need might fall apart
And then at last might sleep.

Let the truth slice into me
That I might finally bleed
And purge myself of agony
I cannot now concede.

For I have bound myself in light
That I might live in joy,
And cannot—will not—let the night
My bonds of love destroy.

And yet I know if I would gain
The peace for which I pray,
I must allow the floods of pain
To wash my love away.

HOW CAN I HAVE A FIGHT WITH MY BEST FRIEND

How can I have a fight with my best friend?
The mountain blows, the landscape is destroyed.
A desert where there once were fields and gardens.
Black lava where flowers once brought joy.

And then shoots of grass come through the blackness;
Slowly love asserts itself again.
He calls, I cry, we go through days of whispers,
And fields once more grow lush in sun and rain.

Ah! But now I'm fearful of the mountain:
I walk by trembling, set for it to blow.
Life's beautiful, but also very painful;
I have the strength to love, now that I know.

HOW CAN I KNOW SO SURELY THAT I'LL LOVE YOU

How can I know so surely that I'll love you
No matter what the future has in store?
Time is like a cave in which our torches
Show only the circumference of our minds.

But love is will far more than it is passion,
Though passion may at first sustain the will.
One chooses love the way one chooses faith
Because that is the way that heaven lies.

My love for you is vaster than the ocean,
More rich in loveliness than coral seas.
I would no more relinquish it than let go
Willingly the precious gift of life.

HOW DID I LOSE YOUR BABY BLUE EYES

How did I lose your baby blue eyes
And the smile that lit up my sky?
What did I say that sent you away?
Can somebody tell me why?

Sometimes we move away from the flow
And find ourselves lost and alone.
What turn did I miss after some kiss
That told me what I should have known?

How did you get so far from my heart
Without my becoming aware?
What did you see deep inside me
That I never knew was there?

We drive in the darkness down strange empty roads
Into sudden and unforeseen pain.
We think that we choose, but after we lose,
We see that we've done it again.

HOW OFTEN ARE THINGS SIMPLY CLEAR AND RIGHT

How often are things simply clear and right?
Each day we come to moments of despair.
Love is something wonderfully there,
Even in the blackest hours of night.
No one can tell why one of all the rest
Makes our flower open to the sun.
In truth we could love almost anyone.
Choosing, though, does not involve a test.
How often does an angel touch our skin,
Altering forever who we are?
Every passion fades, but love's a star
Lit by holy fires deep within.

I AM AFRAID TO LOVE, AND YET I LOVE YOU

I am afraid to love, and yet I love you.
My fear is like a wall I walk right through.
The wall is there, and yet it doesn't stop me.
I need it still, and yet I still need you.

I know someday we will be in a field
Surrounded by the blessing of the sky.
I'll dance with all the freedom of pure joy,
Needing you without a reason why.

But now I'm still afraid that I might lose you,
That you might not accept my desperate need.
You make me laugh and cry and be completely.
You are the flower, I the slender reed.

I AM OF THE DESERT, YOU OF CULTIVATION

I am of the desert, you of cultivation:
Simplicity to me, to you is desolation;
Heat, thirst, and agony I seek out on vacation,
While you look for elegance and quiet restoration.
I am of the ocean, you are of the shore:
You want fewer waves, I manufacture more;
You like tranquil bays, I love the rollers' roar;
In me, a wild emptiness; in you, a quiet core.
While I am like a stream, you are like a lake:
I babble over boulders, you reflections make;
I rush forward heedlessly, as bones and branches break;
You part before the piercing bow and then absorb the
 wake.
That such extremes should not be mingled might seem
 elementary;
But love can make the wildest contradictions
 complementary.

I DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO SAY I LOVE YOU

I didn't get a chance to say I love you.
You were gone before we got that far.
All I know is now I really need you,
Yet when I look for you, you aren't there.

You said once that you never would forget me,
Yet how am I to know without you here?
Such emptiness! Like what I feel within me:
Neither flesh nor tears, just cold thin air.

Sometimes, alone, I feel your arms around me,
And all my need for you spills out in pain.
Jagged memories of you surround me.
I cannot think I won't see you again.

I DON'T KNOW HOW WE GET INTO THESE FIGHTS

I don't know how we get into these fights.
After them I look back at the ashes
More shocked than hurt, as when a light plane crashes,
Slanting numb through strange, unearthly lights.
Oh, how I wish I could get off that plane
Rushing to its rendezvous with tears!
Rage is but a mask for my shy fears.
Yet I would die before I caused you pain.

I FEEL AS THOUGH MY HEART LAY BLEEDING

I feel as though my heart lay bleeding
On a countertop.
The pain is like a flooded scream
That cannot, will not stop.

I cannot live, I cannot breathe;
Pain is all I do.
I cannot think how I can be
Long living without you.

Ah, God! I want you back so bad
That I would gladly die
To hold you in my arms again
And not care how or why;

To hold you in my arms again
And tell you of my love,
And then go gladly back to dust
Should I your heart not move.

I FIND MY HAPPINESS IN LOVING YOU

I find my happiness in loving you.
Though my love is not returned, I don't mind waiting.
The woods are a cathedral where I pray
For the beauty and grace that lie within my heart.

You hold me and we kiss, and yet not yet
Is there the unity that love must crave.
You want me, but not as I want you;
This truth is like a wreckage on my sea.

There's no one else I hunger for, nor touch
That makes me feel I must take off my skin;
And so I'll wait as years pile up like leaves,
And long with the lonely patience of the moon.

I HAVE A MONSTER CRUSH ON YOU

I have a monster crush on you,
A super-dinosaur!
It sits upon my chest and throat
And yet I beg for more.

When you're away I miss you so
My heart is full of sand.
Yet when you're here my stupid fear
Won't let me touch your hand.

I cannot sleep, I cannot eat,
I'm so wrapped up in you.
My thoughts drift up, away from words,
And fade into the blue.

I know this crush is not your fault;
The dinosaur is mine.
Yet if you could, please rescue me,
And put your arms around me, and hold me, and say
 you love me, and Oh! God! Would that be
 good!

I KNOW I MUST HAVE HURT YOU, CAUSED YOU PAIN

I know I must have hurt you, caused you pain.
More, I know that I have lost your trust.
I wish I had that moment back again
To pulverize my carelessness and lust.
Sometimes we have to lose what we most cherish
To understand how much we are in need.
We play with life until we nearly perish
To dare the darkness, though within we bleed.
I need you as the sun must have a rose
To turn its empty radiance to glory,
Or as a nation needs someone who knows
The secrets of its long-forgotten story.
I know my need of you more than before;
Thus for my trespass you may trust me more.

I LOOK AT YOU AND THINK:
I CANNOT LIVE

I look at you and think: I cannot live
Without you; you're the person of my dreams.
Of course I know I can, but I must give
My heart room to tell it as it seems.
Romance must have a language fit for feeling
More than fits between the earth and sky.
For love there cannot be a floor or ceiling:
My love goes down too deep and flies too high.
So when I say I cannot live without you,
Know I can't imagine so much pain;
And when I claim to always dream about you,
Well, know the moon is happy once again.
The sun reveals cold truths for all to see,
But I must light my love with poetry.

I LOVE YOU AS A VALLEY LOVES

I love you as a valley loves
The river through its fields,
Or as a note upon a page
The music that it yields.

I need you as the moon requires
The sun to make it shine,
Or as a soul in search of faith
Is rescued by some sign.

You are as much a part of me
As meadows are of Earth,
Or as a song is of a heart,
Replenishing its worth.

I love you as a hawk loves air,
Or a sailor loves the sea,
Or as a strong wave seeks the sand,
But ah! do you love me?

I LOVE YOU EVEN THOUGH I KNOW

I love you even though I know
You show no love for me.
Your eyes are icy springs that feed
My hidden ecstasy.

All night I hold you in my arms
And sleep in your embrace.
All day I turn away from life
To gaze upon your face.

Alone I find within my heart
A black and raging sea,
For only you, beloved one,
Can calm my Galilee.

I LOVE YOU WITH ALL I AM

I love you with all I am
And all I'll ever be.
You are my moon, my sun and stars,
My earth, my sky, my sea.

My love for you goes down and down
Beneath both life and death,
So deep it must remain when I
Have drawn my last faint breath.

Holding you for months and years
Will make Time disappear,
Will make your lips my lips, your face
My face, your tear my tear;

Will make us one strange personage
All intertwined with bliss,
Not man or woman, live or dead—
Just nothing—but a kiss!

I MUST ACCEPT BUT CAN'T WHAT CANNOT BE

I must accept but can't what cannot be.
I see you and my heart dissolves in pain.
You are not dead, but you are dead to me.

What happened to our love's a mystery.
I rummage through our empty past in vain.
I must accept but can't what cannot be:

That someone else now shares your off-hand "we,"
Now feels your tender tongue all feeling drain . . .
You are not dead, but you are dead to me.

I cannot lay aside my agony:
Again, again, I play the same refrain.
I must accept but can't what cannot be.

And yet I know this tortured ecstasy
Is just my way of holding you again.
You are not dead, but you are dead to me,

And still I cannot bear to set you free,
That of our love some remnant might remain.
I must accept but can't what cannot be.
You are not dead, but you are dead to me.

I USED TO BE COMPLETELY CRUEL AND HEARTLESS

I used to be completely cruel and heartless,
Using girls, then tossing them aside.
I used to feel an angry, bitter hunger,
Not knowing why, nor looking much inside.

I used to think the goal of life was pleasure:
My own, of course, whatever that might take.
A woman's feelings had to be her problem.
Self-sacrifice was always a mistake.

And so, with just the slightest twinge of conscience,
I hunted for my lonely ecstasy;
And even when I wanted a companion,
The only one I cared about was me.

We make our worlds, like God, in our own image:
Mine was a metropolis of stone
In which all souls were either fools or cynics,
Doomed to take their pleasure on their own.

And then I fell in love with you, and somehow
Your happiness meant more to me than mine.
The desert became green and lush with flowers,
And like a sun my heart began to shine.

And like a wind I swept across the ocean,
And like a star exploded into night,
And like a song I held love in my hands,
And like an angel knew that this was right.

All that I had thought was proven wrong,
All the lies to justify my greed.
To love was to embrace the pith of life,
To feel a joy far stronger than a need.

And if I could so love, I could be loved,
Could think someone might want me and believe it,
Could let another know me without shame,
Could give my self and know I could retrieve it.

All this I tell you that I might be known,
That all of me no longer be alone;
And if you do not love the one I am,
So be it. I will weep, but understand.

I WANT TO MAKE YOU SMILE AS YOU MAKE ME

I want to make you smile as you make me.
I wish you saw my thoughts right through my eyes.
You ask me what I'm thinking. I can't tell you.
You are the stars, and I the empty skies.

In me there is a yearning ever flowing
That needs to reach an end that never comes.
I cannot be myself without you with me.
This is a truth no wisdom ever plumbs.

You laugh, and say that I'm your personal angel,
And this is what I want so much to be.
The beauty of my life is like a passion
That blows right through the person that you see.

I WANT TO MAKE YOUR HEART BEAT JUST FOR ME

I want to make your heart beat just for me.
I want a true love in my lonely life.
I've looked a long time, dated many men,
But none I walked with walked in step with me.

We walk together well, the best of friends.
Somehow we just fit, as if clean cut
To go together, zigzags complementary.
But now I would be something more than friends.

I know I take a chance to mention love.
I've no idea what feeling's in your heart.
But if you'd catch a burning, plunging star,
I know I'd make you happy for your love.

I WISH THAT I COULD BE WITH YOU

I wish that I could be with you
And hold you in my arms,
Whisper all my love to you
And kiss away your tears.

I wish that I could take your cares
And put them all away,
Neatly folded into drawers
While pleasure lights your smile.

I wish that joy could step inside
Your heart and stay awhile,
And all the rain could turn into
A rainbow in the sun.

And all our loneliness like mist
Could fade into the blue,
A memory of sad, hard times
That happened long ago.

But I cannot come home right now,
And you cannot come here;
And so our dreams must be the fields
On which we laugh and play.

If life cannot be what we want,
It will, it will be so;
For love can turn the harshest light
To gold through sheer affection.

I WISH THIS POEM WERE PIXIE DUST

I wish this poem were pixie dust
To throw into your eyes
And make you see the loveliness
Beneath my sad disguise.

And I would take you in my arms
A weave a magic spell
That I could utter anytime
To make you love me well.

But alas my simple words
Are like summer rain
That drums on hills and fields and hearts,
Then vanishes again.

And though my love might make you bloom,
You turn with fragile grace
To gaze in aching loneliness
At someone else's face.

We lust for what we cannot have,
A long, unbroken chain
Of lovers who remain unloved
And loved who love in vain.

While I'm near mad with wanting you
As trees must have the sun,
You cannot help but find a love
Who loves another one.

I'M SORRY FOR THE WAY I SAY I LOVE YOU

I'm sorry for the way I say I love you.
I know this kind of talk is far too soon.
I cannot stop myself; I just adore you.
And so this truth pronounces its own doom.
But when a truth betrays itself, I wonder:
Could it be that such a truth be true?
Or could the sweet compulsion that I'm under
Be caused in part by ignorance of you?
I know only the truth of what I feel,
Which lies beneath all sanity or rule.
My love for you is deep and rich and real,
Though it may be I simply am a fool.
Time will tell the truth, for if you do
Not want my love, I cannot long love you.

IN DAYLIGHT YOU'RE A HAUNTING MELODY

In daylight you're a haunting melody,
More lovely than the world before my eyes.
In darkness you become my symphony,
So much of me I know no other ties.
So are you nestled with me night and day,
Your missing self transmuted into song,
Or walking close beside me on my way,
Unleashing all the love for which I long.

IN MOURNING, SEAFOG

In mourning, seafog
Makes small things visible.
Pearls cling to petals.
Pine needles are fringed with glass.
The sea breaks against rocks.
Heaving back, it breaks again.
What does the wild rose know of its beauty?
Have you any idea what you've given me?

IT SOMETIMES SEEMS SO FOOLISH TO PERSIST

It sometimes seems so foolish to persist
When years and miles separate our lips.
Despair's a midnight lover, hard to resist
In a darkness that crushes, an emptiness that grips . . .
But the thought of giving up is just like death:
The same wild pain, the alleys of hollow years,
The python twisted hard around my breath,
My eyes cracking under the weight of tears.
Ah, my darling! If now we are in pain,
It's for a love that floods our hearts with light.
We know that we will share that joy again
If dreams can take us through this anguished night.
Soaring 'cross the sea, we dip and glide:
Our lips apart, our thoughts are side by side.

IT'S AMAZING HOW I FEEL WHEN I'M AROUND YOU

It's amazing how I feel when I'm around you,
How my heart pounds when you come into a room.
I look at you and think: My God! How lovely!
And everything I am bursts into bloom.

I feel as though you must, you must be mine,
Not as a possession but a goal,
Something almost unimaginable:
The free devotion of another soul.

As though I were about to enter heaven
Or just within the hour condemned to die,
My mind with one fierce thought keeps running over,
With you, and only you, the reason why.

JUST AS THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD HAS BEEN CONNECTED

Just as the whole wide world has been connected,
Opening our lives to one and all,
So our inner worlds have intersected:
Now love halfway around the world can call.
Our keyboard conversations have run deep,
Reaching to the source of joy and pain.
In time, though now one writes while one's asleep,
No barriers to passion will remain
As lovers meet beneath the sun and rain.

LET ME LOVE YOU WELL,
IF NOT TOO LONG

Let me love you well, if not too long,
For passion is a lover of fresh air,
Relishing the landscape that is there,
Belonging to what must to all belong.
Let me make you part of my sweet song,
As I will be of yours, that both more fair
May part, enriched by what we share,
More seized by life, more gentle, and more strong.
For passion is a gift one should not squander:
For fear of loss, losing life's best joy,
The ecstasy that we were meant to feel.
And if it comes and goes, then we must wander,
Enjoying what we're given to enjoy,
Reveling in what our loves reveal.

LOSE YOURSELF IN LUST, MY LOVE

Lose yourself in lust, my love;
Enjoy me as a thing.
Make my flesh your fantasy;
My soul, your sycophant.

I would you would with me, my love,
Let all your voices sing,
Losing not one ecstasy
That some sweet sin might grant.

For love loves not that secret space
Where dreams turn into wounds,
Festering for lack of care,
Untended but by stealth.

Love enjoys a secret grace,
Calliope of tunes
Inexhaustible, for there,
In trust, lies love's true wealth.

LOVE COMES TO THOSE WHO LOVE

Love comes to those who love, who find their joy
In others' joy, their tears in others' tears.
Those in need receive the gifts that buoy
Them through the misspent yearnings of their years.
Weakness is a strength, and power none,
For none has power to compel affection.
Passion to the self-consumed may come,
But love looks for the grace of its reflection.
Love is like a tide that comes and goes,
And comes and goes according to the moon,
Giving and receiving as it flows
Between high headlands weathered and rough-hewn.
For love becomes itself the cause of love,
A double-knot not easy to remove.

LOVE HAS OBSTACLES ENOUGH, THEY SAY

Love has obstacles enough, they say:
Why add to them the obstacle of race?
Two backgrounds so diverse can't share one space.
Love can't keep the world's harsh truths at bay.
Ah, love! Let such trite wisdom go its way!
All life is difficult yet full of grace.
All men and women share the same small place.
Nor should we out of fear our love betray.
Love is to daily life a vein of gold
Running through the rock like liquid fire,
Making ordinary moments glow.
May we treasure it as we grow old:
The breath that does our dreary clay inspire,
The touch that transforms everything we know.

LOVE IS LIKE A LARGE WHITE CAT

Love is like a large white cat
Sitting on its paws.
You may pet it all you like;
It lives by its own laws.

It comes and goes as it decides
No matter what you say.
It seems the more you want it near,
The more it goes away.

And then when you are quite content
To sit out in the sun
Alone with just your thoughts and dreams,
Not needing anyone,

Out it comes, as if in fear
That somehow you'll forget,
And jumps up purring in your lap,
Demanding to be pet.

LOVE IS NEVER EASY

Love is never easy, but
It turns life into song.
There is no bit of circumstance
That love cannot transform.

There is no weary moment
Of anger or despair
That love cannot convert to grace
And render whole and fair.

How passionate the paradise
That comes from knowing well
That someone in your happiness
Finds pleasure for himself.

How sweet the gift of giving to
Someone who gives to you,
A selflessness that gives to self
More self than self is due.

With all the searing madness of
The world from day to day,
And all the dreary sadness that
No joy can take away,

There is one truth more beautiful
Than anyone can bear:
That two can trust that when they turn
They'll find the other there.

LOVE LINGERS IN THE ALLEYWAYS

Love lingers in the alleyways
And wafts across the streets,
And knocks upon my double doors
But never does come in.

Love finds a home in entranceways
And rattles round retreats,
And scurries past the faint applause
Just two doors down from sin.

Ah! Would I love would I but know
What love might have in store!
For I have fears of heavy chains
That jangle in my joy.

And I have fears of floods that flow
From asking life for more.
Silent, I prefer the gains
Such tempests would destroy.

LOVE ME IN THE CIRCLE OF YOUR EVENING

Love me in the circle of your evening,
And in the morning quiet of your dreams.
Love me underneath ambitious schemes,
And when they slow and time can use some seasoning.

I do not need your highways and your streets
As long as I can be there when you're home.
We both have miles of paradise to roam:
Let me be where your brave heart retreats.

And I will love you in the times of tears,
Of hope and laughter, pain and ecstasy,
And all the days of haunted thoughts, when we
Can share the undertow of vanished years.

LOVE REDEEMS THE PASSIONS OF THE MOMENT

Love redeems the passions of the moment
Underneath the qualms that quell the sea.
All the queries that have room to comment
Know quite well how good it is to be!
Love allows the rivers to run freely,
The tides to turn without the least regret,
The mountains to give way to time, sincerely
Pleased with what the eons will forget.
Love turns every moment to forever,
And every thing to unintended song,
And makes a worship out of all endeavor,
And through its suffering, undoes all wrong.
Bear witness, then, in love, that you might bear
To be, with neither purpose nor despair.

LOVE WAS NOT ENOUGH FOR US

Love was not enough for us,
Though we were much in love.
We started down the well-worn path,
But it was not to be.

Delight was not enough for us,
Nor tenderness that moved
Through years of angry dissonance
Towards some dark, bitter sea.

Our differences were far too great,
Our lives too far apart.
We didn't like each other much,
But put that truth aside

Until one day it was too late
To reignite the heart.
One told the other, who agreed
At last that it had died.

But then, ah, then! we felt our loss
As unremitting pain,
As deep and inconsolable,
Unbearable regret.

And all alone we had to cross
That desert once again
That we might know that we had loved
Too much to soon forget.

LOVERS AREN'T ALWAYS BEST OF FRIENDS

Lovers aren't always best of friends:
Too much, sometimes, lies between their sheets.
In fact they need a friend to share the sweets
And sorrows of a love that always ends.

Love that lasts is love that's more than passion:
A wedding of true friendship and desire.
Some might fear a certain loss of fire,
But pleasure is ignited by compassion.

You're the one in whom I most confide,
The inner ear I talk to through the day,
The flesh I need when I must have my way,
The world where I am home when I'm inside.

And even more, I find my pleasure, too,
From seeing the delight you take in me,
The comfort, quiet joy, and ecstasy
That it is my gift to give to you.

LOVING YOU IS SOMETHING THAT COMES EASY

Loving you is something that comes easy,
Like walking in the sunshine to a song,
Like being in a place where you belong,
Like finding reasons when you know you're ready.
Nor do I care that working days are dreary,
The pay's a pittance and the hours are long.
Knowing that you love me keeps me strong,
The light within that lets me see life clearly.
Why is love the music of our meaning,
The lilt that makes our labor worth our living,
The loveliness no platitude can bear?
In you I have a harvest past all gleaning,
A gift arrested in the act of giving,
A moment of delight that's always there.

MORE LOVE IS IN MY HEART THAN ANY HEAVEN

More love is in my heart than any heaven—
Angels, God, and saints—can ever hold.
Though we're apart, I have you in my garden,
Touching you as Time turns into gold.
How could our love long last, to darkness driven,
Except we conjure up our own dear Eden,
With pleasures far more fierce than dreams foretold.

MY LOVE IS SOMETHING SEPARATE

My love is something separate
From what we say or do.
Though we might have it out with words,
I'm still in love with you.

Just as waves ignore the rocks
On their way to shore,
And keep on coming even if
They see what lies in store,

So I will come, no matter what,
And break, and come again,
And break against your wilderness
Beyond all joy and pain.

NIGHT COMES TO ME THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Night comes to me throughout the day
And closes my external door.
I know that I am in for more
Unhappiness, and yet I stay.

The pain of missing you is less
Than that of missing thoughts of you.
And so I'd rather suffer through
This torture than face emptiness.

I want you with me, even though
You're not with me. You are the light
That gets me through this awful night
Yet brings the darkness where I go.

NO MATTER WHAT OUR TROUBLES, I STILL LOVE YOU

No matter what our troubles, I still love you,
As though a part of me were also you.
Life isn't easy, but I know without you
There will be bitterness in all I do.
I feel the broken heaven in my heart,
The blight that will outlast the years of healing,
The darkness underneath all time and art,
The pain that from within there's no concealing.
We were so much in love when we first met,
A river that would reach, in time, the sea.
We ought not let despair turn to regret,
But be through choice what love chose us to be.
No love can last except it be through will.
Were wastelands in our path, I'd love you still.

OUR LOVE IS TORN BY MILES, NOT BY CHOICE

Our love is torn by miles, not by choice.
Soon, soon, my darling, I'll be coming home.
At night I play your body and your voice,
But soon the hands and cries will be your own.
I want to love you all the hours we've missed,
And do the things I've fantasized for you:
Kiss you all the places my mind's kissed,
And put you everywhere I've wanted to.
My only fear's desiring you so much
That dream will overwhelm reality;
Time, for both of us, must temper touch
So love can once again be slow and free.
My mind's already half insane with pleasure;
Soon, soon my body will consume its treasure.

OUR LOVE'S A PLACE
WHERE I NO LONGER LIVE

Our love's a place where I no longer live;
That was a home, and now is just a house.
I went back in my heart the other day,
But nothing in there struck me as my own.

Strange how life moves on, and what we cherish
Turns to something alien in our hands.
And later, when we try to comprehend it,
It fades into the twilight of our tears.

I woke again upon a sunny morning,
Alive to what I hoped would be a song.
You were yesterday, which I remembered
As though it were a year or two ago.

PASSION MAY REMAIN A GIFT

Passion may remain a gift,
But love is not for free.
To love and be loved two must give,
Or love is not to be.

Love is a decision made
Not once, but every day.
Two must move to set aside
The mountains in the way.

Two must act to take apart
The walls of me and you,
Just as in the act of love
One's joy brings joy to two.

Just as love's pure ecstasy
Makes others' joys our own,
Just so will love in daily life
Make sweet green fields of stone.

PERHAPS IT'S FAR
TOO EARLY TO REVEAL

Perhaps it's far too early to reveal
A feeling not yet ready to be love.
The light of dawn, though hesitant, is real;
Real as well the hopes that time will prove.
I dance across the meadows of my heart
Carrying doubts that mingle joy and fear.
I know I'm half myself when we're apart;
All I want is with me when you're near.

PLEASE DON'T MIND IF
I MAKE LOVE TO YOU

Please don't mind if I make love to you
Imagining another in my arms.
No one special—anyone will do
Whose claims have not yet sanitized her charms.
Lust loves not love, but finds its joy in power:
To stir someone to sunlit ecstasy;
To purchase someone's person by the hour;
To force the flesh to yield the fantasy.
Love loves not lust, but finds its joy in giving:
Pleasure, yes, but passion slowly fades.
Affection, yes, but one needs more from living:
The knife-sharp edge of lust that love betrays.
Give then, my love, the flesh that spurs the dream,
As I for you, that lust might love redeem.

PRECISELY THE POLARITIES

Precisely the polarities
Parenthesizing pleasure
Persuade us to anesthetize
The love we fear to feel.

A train of trivialities,
Buried, becomes treasure,
As we sentimentalize
A boredom that was real.

How might we find a fantasy
That strides into the heart,
Awakening the winter wind
Bearing death and pain?

How might we live an ecstasy
That picks our joys apart,
Leaving what we love behind
On wings, on winds, in chains?

PRETEND THIS POEM IS ME, AND I AM WITH YOU

Pretend this poem is me, and I am with you;
I hold you in the circle of my fire.
Come into me, and time and space will vanish,
You and I alone, joined at the root.

There is a special room where I am with you;
I close the door and you are in my arms.
You become my skin, my self, my world,
Till I go back to sleep in lonely darkness.

So we defeat the miles and months between us;
We make love in our hearts if not in touch.
You are more to me in hope and passion
Than any man who brushes by my day.

PROVERBS OF LOVE

-One can be unhappy by oneself, but to be truly tormented, one must love.

-Love is harder to accept than to give.

-To love is to embrace life. To love fully is to embrace both death and life.

-The secret of happiness is simple: Be loving, giving, caring.

Why, then, are so many unhappy?
Because they are afraid.

-Love only yourself, and you are alone.

Love only one other, and the two of you are alone.

Love only your family, and your family is alone.

Love only your nation, and your nation is alone.

There can be no communion, not even with yourself,
except through love of God.

SO WHO SAID IT WAS EASY

So who said it was easy to keep old flames burning?
Even experts could use a little divine help now and
then.

The easy part is to go out and be brilliant as
Shakespeare.

Harder—much harder—to be the light dancing in
someone else's eyes.

Lights such as love require more faith than fuel.
Of all leaps, the most dangerous is into the mind of
your lover.

Regarding miracles: What is less explicable than
Remaining in love through the long icy anguish of
anger?

All lovers long for freedom only slightly less than they
fear it.

In the end, love burns not desire but fear.

Not one of us would be capable of keeping the fire
burning

Except for the knowledge that it is the sweetest, best,
and most beautiful thing in our lives.

TAKE IT AS A GIVEN
THAT I LOVE YOU

Take it as a given that I love you,
And let the conversation go from there.
There isn't much I wouldn't do to please you,
So tell me what to do to make you care.
Tell me what it is that turns you from me,
And why you cannot cherish who I am,
And why you must insist that you still love me
When so much that I do you cannot stand.
The truth is not at all what we imagine,
Reaching regions deeper than our thoughts.
Needs are rarely troubled by opinions,
And love gives no advice unless it's sought.
So plunge into yourself as in a sea,
Then tell me truly what you want of me.

TELL ME MORE, MY LOVE,
HOW MUCH YOU LOVE ME

Tell me more, my love, how much you love me;
When I am hungry, chill me with a kiss.
Endlessly proclaim your admiration,
Never try to hide your fascination,
Though at times I may do aught amiss.
You, of course, may ask the same of me.

That you put nothing in your life above me
Will aid in me a similar dedication.
Only thus do lovers spin their bliss.

THANK YOU FOR STAYING IN MY LIFE

Thank you for staying in my life.
How could I have ushered you away?
Another person might have made me pay,
Needing the sweet vengeance of my grief.
Kindness is in everything you do.
You must love me very much to stay.
Often now, some moment of each day,
Unbidden, I am grateful I have you.

THE CHANCE OF HAPPINESS EQUALS THE RISK OF PAIN

The chance of happiness equals the risk of pain.
Whenever you love, it's too good to be true.
Even so, it's truer than you believe,
Nor will you know till it vanishes again.
Time is a sea which opens where you cleave
Yet roils over what you leave behind.

For now, my love sings in the stars,
Or hisses against rocks like the sea,
Unraveling your life when you pause to grieve,
Returning with the sunlight, with the rain.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LOVE AND LUST

The difference between love and lust is:

Love is about you.

Lust is about me.

THE FIRST TRUE SIGN OF LOVE IS ANGER

The first true sign of love is anger:
What we need, we're likely to resent.
Each needing, needed, leaned on, leaning,
No longer free standing stone and white.
The wistful, tender fear of finity
Yields a darker shimmer of sublimity.

Now indeed some sunny, delicate blight
Inaugurates a subterranean keening.
None can turn away and not be bent,
Each in each part self, part untouched stranger.

THERE ARE NO BARS TO OUR EMBRACE

There are no bars to our embrace,
No presence more than in the heart.
We live our lives with love and grace,
Together still, though still apart.

No presence more than in the heart,
No touch more salient than a dream.
Together still, though still apart,
We are more lucky than we seem.

No touch more salient than a dream,
Though dreams alone must sometimes be.
We are more lucky than we seem
If I trust you, and you trust me.

Though dreams alone must sometimes be,
We live our lives with love and grace.
If I trust you, and you trust me,
There are no bars to our embrace.

THERE ARE SOME PLEASURES I WOULD TRY WITH YOU

There are some pleasures I would try with you
So sweet I cannot tell you what they are.
For love, the dark provides a better view
Of things that words or light may often mar.
So close your eyes and let go of your will;
Let me guide you blind to ecstasy.
Open doors and let desire fill
Each orifice my tongue might let me see.
Beauty's not the slave of just one sense,
But master of them all. The inner eye,
Awake to an aesthetic far more dense
Than sight alone can know, awaits your cry.
So join me in the splendors of the night
Where touch becomes our eyes, and love our light.

THERE IS NO LIFE WITHOUT ITS SHARE OF PAIN

There is no life without its share of pain,
Nor can you love and not feel agony,
A need whose hunger drives you near insane,
A state in which you must, but cannot be.

There is no cure, nor anything to say,
Nor any aspirin for unhappiness.
Other friends and loves will come your way
And then pass on through death or faithlessness.

And so if you would ever dwell in joy,
You must embrace the agony of sorrow.
Time will all you love and need destroy,
But you will heal to love again tomorrow.

TRUTH IS RARELY AN EXPRESSION OF LOVE

Truth is rarely an expression of love:
Honesty most often precedes pain.
In hope there is the fragrance of illusion;
Romance requires the charm of light confusion;
The best lovers are criminally insane.
Yet lies, eventually, will suck out passion.

One must be truthful if one hopes to love:
Not cruelly, but enough to ease delusion.
Each love must be broken, then built back again.

WE MET AS MERELY WORDS UPON A SCREEN

We met as merely words upon a screen,
Disembodied souls who found a mate
Through mind alone, and unsuspected yearning.

We fell in love the best way, sight unseen,
Pure hunger than nor feast nor flesh could sate,
Two hidden flames fair fed by phrases burning.

Most find their way by sight into the heart,
Loving first what must most quickly change
And only then what will the years endure.

We did the opposite, though not by art,
Taking steps that we did not arrange
Along a path both passionate and sure.

WE MET UPON THE INTERNET

We met upon the Internet,
A friendship electronic,
Expressed alone in words and thoughts,
Inevitably platonic.

We live too far apart for us
To mingle in the flesh,
But much more close than family,
Our hearts and feelings mesh.

Your dear, dear self reveals itself
Without a voice or face.
We have our own sweet home within
Our precious cyberspace.

WE STARTED OUT AS FRIENDS AND NOW IT'S LOVE

We started out as friends and now it's love.
How beautiful to move so easily
From comradeship to passionate intimacy,
Pure gain, with no rough edges to remove.
This turn was nothing I'd been thinking of,
No maybes or perhapses, consciously.
I knew desire, but love was not for me
Until I felt my heart from friendship move.
I never felt so happily at home
As I do now, so rich in what life brings.
Your pleasure is now mine, as mine is yours.
I never realized that my life alone
Flitted like a ghost among dead things,
Glancing in through other people's doors.

WHAT MAKES STARS ROMANTIC

What makes stars romantic? Is it the beauty
Of a night sky dark lit with diamonds?
Or the wilderness of blue-white witnesses
Staring wordless back across the abyss?
Or the fascination of forever? (For love
Is a fragment of forever lodged in the heart.)

Is it the need for two when one seems so small?
The desire to touch in the temple? The vast, lonely
Field of life in which love, too, is a light
Amidst darkness? (So many lovers scattered across
The black canopy like burning dust.)

Or is it the passion at a star's heart?
The heat of love lighting the emptiness,
Hurling its ardor across light years of sorrow
To tell us something about what yearns within?

WHEN AT THE SAME TIME ONE FEELS JOY AND SORROW

When at the same time one feels joy and sorrow,
Sunlit sadness weeping golden tears,
Glad of today, but wary of tomorrow,
Half-consumed by pride and half by tears;
When one possesses what one most desires
Yet knows that one must soon that fortune lose,
Rich in all that happiness requires,
Yet poor, for what one knows one would not choose;
When the day, rolling in its glory,
Must meet its gaudy end in unsought night,
Then one must find the beauty in one's story,
And, like the sun unceasing, pour forth light.
So will I, till you come home again,
Still feel this joy resplendent through my pain.

WHEN WE BROKE UP, YOU SAID YOU'D ALWAYS LOVE ME

When we broke up, you said you'd always love me.
Always, you said, always we'd be friends.
But soon I saw you wanted nothing of me,
And then I understood that's how it ends.
You said, "Well, it's much harder than I thought."
I guess it's always easier to lie.
You said, "Well, ask me anything you want."
But I was much too frightened to ask why.
I guess it doesn't matter why we failed,
Or why I love you after all you've done,
Or why the harshest truths must be unveiled
After the last train has come and gone.
I miss you and I love you, even though
What happened lies too deep for me to know.

YOU ARE EVERYTHING I EVER WANTED

You are everything I ever wanted.
On you my future happiness depends.
Unless I'm with you all my thoughts are haunted.
After seeing you, my unease ends.
Reason warns me that I am in danger:
Eventually, everything must fade.
My love, like yours, is flammable in anger.
Yet my trust is such, I'm not afraid.
Something in our love's more than emotion,
Underneath each thought and each desire;
Not even all the water in the ocean
Seems up to putting out this one small fire.
How could this be? Within our love is something
Immeasurable, infinite, and good.
Nothing in all life can match this one thing
Each other passion would be, if it could.

YOU DON'T LOVE ME,
BUT AH! DO I LOVE YOU!

You don't love me, but ah! do I love you!
It kills me that right now you have another!
Each day I watch the antics of you two
Happy hopping birds and say, why bother?
But I am chained to you as fish to sea,
Or as the moon to Earth or Earth to sun.
The thought of letting go so tortures me
That I would rather let my anguish run.
I know that if I wait you will be mine.
Such love as this must sweep all walls away!
I am your natural light, and I will shine
Till due rotation turns your night to day.
Until then, this sorrow will remain:
My hope of joy must be my source of pain.

YOU HAD ME FOR A NIGHT,
THEN TURNED AWAY

You had me for a night, then turned away,
Inspiring a love you didn't want.
I was a fairy you might unenchant
To show yourself that you could have your way.

And now I'm left with all the shame of love
That unashamed took pleasure in your joy.
You used me as a fake, erotic toy,
Not caring much what I was thinking of.

The worst is that I long for your caress.
I know you're just annoyed, which drives me mad!
But knowing how completely I've been had
Does not, alas, make me want you less.

YOU HAVE AN ANGEL'S FACE,
A LOVING HEART

You have an angel's face, a loving heart,
A peaceful, sunlit smile that lasts forever.
You are the whole, of which I am a part,
Not fully me unless we are together.

I know there is a world beyond our love
In which such thoughts are merely poetry.
But thinking of you now, I can't remove
The glow that shines on you from inside me.

How happy, happy life is when some tender
Feeling like a candle lights one's eyes.
For all my life you'll be my heart's true center,
Striding like a sun across my skies.

YOU LEFT ME, BUT YOU CANNOT LEAVE MY HEART

You left me, but you cannot leave my heart.
I hold you there, with or without your will.
No matter where you go, you will be part
Of me, my dearest friend and lover still.
I'll tell you of the pain I feel, and all
The things you've done that hurt and make me bleed.
And then your icy words you will recall,
And comfort me, and give me what I need.
This I can do alone, and yet the real
You lives and lies far beyond my touch.
But since my true intention is to steal
The you I loved, the real you isn't much.
Don't worry—I'll treat you tenderly:
The lovely you, you left behind with me.

YOU WROTE YOUR NAME UPON HER THIGH

You wrote your name upon her thigh
And looked at me. I wondered why
You hurt me so. What demon drew
You on to be so not like you?

Sometimes it seems you want to cause
Me grief, as if to test the loss
Of me, to see how much sweet pain
You need to feel alive again.

I love you, yet I fear a love
In which my function is to prove
Repeatedly you cannot lose
The thing you want but cannot choose.

I stay in hopes that you will see
Someday you cannot hope to be
Both fully loved and fully free,
For love comes only mutually.

YOU'RE LIKE MUSIC PLAYING IN MY HEAD

You're like music playing in my head
Everywhere I go from day to day.
I try a door and think of you instead,
Not knowing where I am or what I'll say.
I live in a perpetual embrace,
Hugging the sweet thought that you are mine.
Walking through a park I touch your face,
Not caring if there's rain or bright sunshine.
The cause must be, of course, our love is new;
It can't go on like this for years and years.
I must take note of other things than you
And clear my head of smiles and grateful tears.
Yet such talk seems fantasy to me:
The world's the dream, and you reality.

YOUR FEAR IS NOT SURPRISING

Your fear is not surprising.
It's always ended badly:
Fury, betrayals, recriminations.
Then, for days and weeks and months
An agony worse than grief
Because you also feel like such a fool.

Love is like diving or rock climbing:
Spectacular, but your heart sticks in your mouth
Every moment you're there.
There's an ease in not caring,
A looseness in the belly.
Then, as love approaches, a knot tightens like a snake.

Being alone and free is like looking in from the
outside:
People give and get affection,
Are seized by extraordinary happiness and pain,
Live in prison and in heaven,
Deal with the necessity of working on what must be
worked out,
While you watch them as if they were on TV.

Life is full of love and difficulty.
Its riches cannot be gotten at except through choice.
You must enter it by loving this person or that person,
And people inevitably fall short of your hopes.
But to live and not love, and not be loved,
Is like spending your entire life alone in your room.

YOUR HEART BROKE WHEN I SAID I HAD TO LEAVE YOU

Your heart broke when I said I had to leave you
To serve our country somewhere far away.
But every day tells me how much I love you,
And how I'll mend it once I'm home to stay.

For life is but a dream, and we the dreamers,
Making what we will of what we are.
When gates clang shut, we are our own redeemers,
As love leaves for us a door ajar.

So dream with me these empty months of sorrow
As we find ways to be together still.
No longing can be brighter than tomorrow,
Nor dream less certain than our strength of will.

