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Love Letters

Open a Window

Open a window; what's outside?
Sunlight blazing far and wide?
Branches dancing in the trees
and birdsong lilting on the breeze?
Is it an evening cold with storm,
with indigo cloud banks taking form
in a palisade of lightning, hail,
and whistling ghosts in a screaming gale?
So goes the weather, for a start;
how, now, with the windows of your heart?

Precarious Position

The heart knows what
The brain does not
That any torments
I have got
Or dangers felt
Or hazards seen
Or the abysses
In between
The sane and the
Incessant edge
Of madness only
Drive a wedge
Unnecessarily
To what thrills
Send messages
Frissons and chills
Of ecstasy
And rapture, bliss,
The blinding light
Of loveliness
Into my soul
Because I have
Temerity
Enough to love

Adjusting the Balance of Powers

I make no pretense of refinement,
Charm-school graces, savoir-faire—
I'm no more mannered than a monkey
Picking cooties from its hair—
In fact, I'd never boast of attri-
Butes that I'd most likely waste,
Having little use or need for
Proving further I've great taste
Than I did when I selected
You as partner, lover, mate;
All alone, that one maneuver
Proved my social skills are great,
Even if the sorry outcome
On your side is to undo
Any special social standing
That once appertained to you!

Defying Probabilities

The most improbable outcome
Of delirious, fanciful dreams
Is not the impossible can't-be
That perpetually it seems—
And I can prove this conundrum,
In my personal life, is true,
For it happens that though it's wildly unreal,
I'm actually loved by you.

Cynics All (Turnabout is Fair Play)

He knew the patter well; he said his lines
Like memorizing store-bought valentines
Meant to purloin a schoolgirl's stony heart,
But his intent was different from the start,
Because the walls he'd breach were harder stone
Than made by schoolgirl innocence alone,
Were built of granite mortared all with lies
Told earlier by men who'd fantasize
That such a flimsy imitation love
Could be the trinket she'd be greedy of
Accepting, that she'd bend to such poor jewels,
But she'd built fortresses against the fools—
So he, like all his predecessors, fell
Because she knew the patter all too well—
Until at last there came the honest man
Who spoke the truth;
She took *his* heart and ran.

Heart's Metronome I

Each breath I draw could cauterize my lungs,

The ice in it a straight geometry
Of arrows pointed, or a ladder's rungs,
Down to the inmost shrinking core of me—
I fear, I fall—I, frightened, inly veer
To shy away from such an icy blast,
And slipping on its planes, so disappear
From my entire future and my past—
And hang suspended in this present cage,
Unstuck from time and yet stuck in it too,
As cold as winter, death, despair or rage,
And all for fear I'll not be loved by you—
There is no deeper loneliness than this—
That I should feel unloved amidst your kiss.

Heart's Metronome II

One moment in an icy terror's grip,
And yet the next, I'm bathed in jeweled flame;
How can it be that I may swing and slip
Between two distant worlds whose blazoned name
Engraves in me with equal force and pow'r
Identical, yet attributes apart
Change me by seconds much as by the hour,
Into a whole or broken kind of heart—
Because unfounded did I find my dread
That when you kissed me, elsewhere was your love,
And when I feared it must be null or dead,
It was the spark that made our hearts both move—
So on the instant turn both life and death,
When love enlivens this one dazzling breath.

Appraisal

What's the current market value of a hug, caress or kiss?
Why would any self-respecting person get engrossed in this?
Isn't it a tad surprising we'd make such hullabaloo
Of this silly, unproductive, non-remunerative goo?
That's the miracle of romance and of loving: that we choose
To pursue ridiculous intangibles among the ooze
Of lace valentines and candies, in hand-holding, making eyes
Like moo-cows and fuzzy puppies at each other—but the prize
Found in all this crazy weirdness, wacky though our loving be,
Is the exponential return on this small investment that we see
When beloved turns to lover and responds in foolish kind:
That's the truth toward which we hover when two loves get so entwined.

What Light

What gleaming and pellucid light is this
That dances from the darkness into view,
As gently kind and tender as a kiss,

Drawing the violet warmth out of the blue—
What is this gracious, guiding, welcome light
That, numinous, its blessing shines on me
And bids me then, so warmed and kindled bright,
In turn to shine? 'Tis Hospitality.
What, then, the lantern lighted as we part
To guide and keep us as we wander on,
No longer cold and dark as at the start,
Though time find us all yet asunder, gone—
What is the lamp that makes each soul a sun
And lights the path to gather us anew
From ends of earth, that beckons everyone
Back home? It's Love that lights the whole way through.
There's comfort in the midst of darkest night
Where Love and Hospitality alight.

Heartfelt

The time that passes, like a heart,
ticks on, clicks on with pulsing beat,
and with the future in retreat,
returns our spirits to the start,
reborn; we open up our eyes
and see tomorrow and the past
entwined;
the shadows that we cast
today will fall on ancient skies
and too, on stars not named
as yet—
as distant as
new stars can get
from where the human world
was framed—
All this, because we know, we care
we love and hold deep in our souls
the faintest embers, banked like coals,
of sensing, taking all we share
in lineage, in land, in ties:
ancestry, marriage,
friendship, bonds—in every gene pool
and its ponds, in seas of learning,
truth and lies—
The last imagined second's hum,
in passing, will remind us all
that only love
makes evening fall
and makes another morning come . . .

First, Last & Always

Whose was the first friendly face I saw?
I can't remember anymore.
Whose was the second, third, the last?
I do not know—it's so long past.
Whose smile opened my old heart's doors?
I just know the sweetest one was yours.
All of my history's gone quite dim,
Quite faded away: was it Her or Him?
In the foggy fog and the misty mist,
I can't track time or tick off a list;
Whose love pervades my whole life through?
I know that one: it's you, it's you!

An afternoon with you

What splendid light comes blazing from the blue
No matter what the promise of the day
When one sweet presence chases drear away:
The prospect of an afternoon with you!
How do you change the climate to such ends
Effortlessly, it seems, with one small grace,
Bringing your cheering spirit to this place
And on its strength, inviting full amends
For every sting of sorrow or of pain,
For any old frustration or regret,
Making the clouds all part, and me forget,
I thought I'd never see such sun again?
All afternoons with you become blue skies
Simply because love shines out of your eyes!

Awakening

Whose is the voice that speaks my name, Aloud or silently, the same,
In gentle speech or radiant song, Unspoken care, forgiving wrong?
Whose is the loving, laughing voice That makes my waiting heart rejoice,
That wakes my hope and lights the sky With stars, to which my sole reply
Is humble gratitude, delight That such a voice breaks through the night
To search me out, my heart in two, And make it whole?
Your voice. Yes, *you*.

Naturally, I Thought of You

I stepped onto the broad parterre to make a painting *en plein air*,
but found, instead of gentle breeze, the air was cold enough to freeze;
instead of fresh and sunny scenes, a garden growing wilted greens;
I'd hoped to capture nature's glory—saw, instead, an allegory
teaching me: the garden pales, the skies grow dim, and nature fails
and seems all doomed to soon be dead—so I just painted *you* instead,
and in your portrait, found that kind of natural joy I'd hoped to find.

A Monumental Fool

I've seen a lot of beauty
In my time among the ruins,
Of pretty things and bas reliefs,
But like other buffoons,

I fall in love too easily,
And every time I do,
I look at all those pretty things,
And all I see is you.

I've known a lot of loveliness
While wandering the town,
So many magic artefacts
From rooflines looking down

Upon my silly wanderings,
Where, gazing from above,
They see me finding you again
And falling back in love.

I've had a lot of joyful times
Among the city streets
While on the hunt for one true heart,
The only one that beats

For me exclusively, and I
Look up and out in glee
At all the artful sights that aren't
The only treats for me;

I've felt a lot of hopeful hints
And seen such gorgeous art,
But nothing in it dwells as deep
As you do in my heart.

Love as We Know It

Though her love was courtly, deep, ideal
And magical, Isolde had for Tristan
No power greater, beauty no more real
And grace not like my love's, if you would listen
Whose magic in no way gives contradiction
To her true fineness besting that of fiction.

Look at Her

If she could give you nothing but
A wink, a wave, a flounce,
A sashay showing off her legs,
She would not stint an ounce,

For she desires, requires, aspires
To flirt with you anon
In hopes that with these wiles of hers
It's she on whom you'll fawn,
Because she has a crazy crush
That cow-eyes cannot cure
And wants no more in life or death
Than be your cynosure.

You and Your Old-World Charm

I sigh, I wrack my soul with darkest sorrows
for yesterday's delights, not for tomorrow's;
I'm dancing backwards all the time you're near
in fear that all my romance only borrows
–or steals, perhaps–from something far too shining
and too refined for wasting on repining,
those salad days we ought to hold so dear
instead of wasting happiness with whining . . .
I will stop whimpering like boobs and babies,
and let go of the wherefore-nots and maybes;
instead I'll let your elegance and charm
revive me from this case of "retro-rabies",
reminding me time's such a grand invention,
a Golden Age not lost to this dimension,
as long as boulevardiers remain,
like you, aptly distracting our attention
with courtly kisses and such furbelows
and petals hung on every breeze that blows,
bringing the romance back into the present:
yes, I can fall in love with all of those . . .

Larcenous Love

I do so love this life with you, my candy-dandy sweetie pie,
But can I trust you? I must ask, and no one needs to wonder why,
For after all, despite desire–in spite of all that mushy part–
First off, you set my soul on fire, and then, you thief, you stole my heart;
Numerous are those reasons why I know by now you can't be trusted,
Not the least of all is which my blood-sugar is maladjusted
By your sweet enchanting love, the excess yumminess of you–
Let's face it, robber-baron Babe, you take my ticker, still you do–
Just don't be cruel and stomp it flat or throw it back in my poor face,
A cruel conclusion to our trysts, and on the top of it, disgrace;
Feel free to keep the pilfered part, but stick here close–I'd miss it, sorta,
If you took off and left me here without you *or* my own aorta.

Park Pastoral

Among the poplars in the park,
a possum paused to peer,

and though it had grown very dark
–it was late in the year
as well as late at evening-time–
the possum saw a bright
white streak pass by under the lime
tree ‘cross the way; the sight
so startled her she had to take
a closer, clearer look,
and wandered over by the lake
right where it met the brook,
gazed left and right and up and down
and saw the streak once more,
at speedy pace, dashing toward town,
along the lake’s broad shore,
and hurried closer at a run
so nothing should be missed,
and at that speed, a snappy one,
caught up–and here’s the twist:
the streak was on a young skunk’s back,
the skunk lad struck with fear,
at Possum’s rush, into attack,
and so stuck up his rear
and flipped his tail, prepared to spray
(look out, folks! Hold your noses!),
aimed at Miss Possum straightaway,
and spritzed the scent of roses!
For, happily, our young skunk swain
had spied this possum lass
and so admired her, he was fain
to skip the poison-gas
and woo her while he had the chance
and serendipity,
and now they dance their wedding-dance,
his possum-love and he.

Heart’s Aflutter

Forgive me if I seem a nutter,
the way I mumble, moon, and mutter,
but I can’t help my palpitating
when my heart is all aflutter.
Pardon that I cling to what’re
rhymes as rife with fat as butter—
maybe even nauseating—
but my heart is all aflutter.
Please absolve me when I putter
aimlessly, and stammer, stutter,
stumble as I’m indicating
that my heart is all aflutter!

Highly Holy Hilarity

Those who learn to love with laughter
Will best live Happily Ever After.

Mutual Attractions

Wilma, with her dental plate
Encrusted with what she just ate,
Attracts both censure and some flies,
But also Isidore's blue eyes;
Now, lest you think him over-kind,
Know that he's old and wholly blind,
And since our Wilma's likewise cased,
She likes him for his lack of taste.

Ginger Bred

Once upon a ginger lock, I made a little wish
That every bird in yonder flock and every silvery fish
In yonder stream should stop to see how lovely and, alas,
Aloof from my sweet would-be love was yonder ginger lass,
For she was sweet as mead and mint and lilies in the glen,
And many were the lads who looked on her, as I did then,
With wishful hearts and hopeful souls, yet Queen of bees was she,
To sting our hopes, who wished and dreamt and loved her gingerly.

Goddesses Beware

My dearest darling, grand, almighty,
So surpasses Aphrodite
In each nuance womanhood
Considers lovely, fine and good—
And never mind what men prefer,
All being ten times more in her—
What panegyric can I make,
What genuflections, what grand hymns
Of obloquy, as evening dims,
Shall I sing for my niece's sake?
Is there a form of worship deep
Enough to compass the extent
Of family greatness, heaven-sent,
We mortals are so blessed to keep?

Absolutes

Marvel with me, if you will,
that water never flows uphill,
that whiners know no dulcet tone,
and ants leave nary a cake alone;
that day follows night and night the day,
that parrots always have something to say,

that money's scarce in holiday season,
and you love me still, despite all reason.

For a Lady of Great Beauty

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For the song, bouquets of roses
For the day, a joyful start
For the labor, peaceful evenings
For the care, I give my heart—
For the wisdom, inspiration
For desire, a glorious year
For the wish, the starry heavens
For delight, companions dear—
For the sorrows, deepest comfort
For the friendships, never part—
For the moment that I met you,
You resided in my heart.

***Written for Bea Garner
on Her Birthday, 2015***

Timeless I

Great friendship leads to kindling of a kind
Unknown to lovers who have never spent
Nights they devoted purely to content
Intimate intercourse strictly of mind—
Love is expansion, at its best, of souls'
Learned connectivity in friendship first,
And then the cultivating of the thirst,
Pursuing stronger wine, and then the coals—
Embers long banked as friendship had begun—
Light into fire new brilliance from a spark
Lifting great stars from the eternal dark,
Exquisite as a newly blazing sun—
Rich is the love that from such friendship springs,
Kisses of wine—and of more stellar things.

Timeless II

In morning light, the palest leafy shade
Of birches' green is cast upon the wall
Where portraits hang, ancestral friends who all
Keep silent watch on what the years have made
Of their descendants and their memories;
The secretary, small and staunch, remains,
And in its graceful curving shape contains
What documents can speak these histories;
Oft, in this room, the whisper of that sense
Of timeless care embracing present love
Reaches so gently from its great remove
That love fills up the room itself, immense.

When I am here, I know love so begun
Will flourish to the final setting sun.

***These two verses written for
Gunilla & her darling Pelle
2015***

My Sisters' Names

Three sisters, three have I, each one a star
to light the night or day with brilliance new,
a spark these shining few, though rare, bring to
the darkest, deepest places where they are—
Fair **Wisdom** bears a gleaming cup, as thirst
for knowledge waits in ev'ry darkened realm
to sip the learning springing from her helm,
sweet Wisdom bringing in this treasure first—
The next is gracious **Kindness**, in whose charms
of sympathy and care is safety found
when she with gentle strength wraps all around,
encompassing the world within her arms—
The third with equal radiance inclines
to lighten hearts as much as sun can do;
Laughter's her name, and like the other two,
her sparkling wit enhances how she shines—
All three, my sisters light the corners of
The universe: their other name is **Love**.

My Inukshuk

Should I leave my friends a signpost
Where, I wonder, will it lead?
What will mark my place of passage;
Will it serve them in their need
For direction or for comfort?
Will it offer strength or hope?
Should I leave my friends a signpost,
Can it guide them up a slope
To a vista rich with promise,
To an exponential view
Always growing and expanding
With delight, as it should do?
Should I leave my friends a signpost,
I would like to have it guide
Them to grand and gracious places,
To that glorious countryside
Made of sweetness and of pleasures
Great as travelers can see;
Should I leave my friends a signpost,
Love is what the sign should be

Her Champion

By the light of the window, pale and solemn, quiet, reticent,
She sat and gazed, the age-old tale of waiting, in this variant
Not for a lover or for change that was supposed to bring her hope—
No, but for something passing strange: a subtly altered isotope
Or subatomic shift of sorts that would reveal to her at last
That she was whole, and all reports that indicated in the past
She'd fallen, lost, or failed, or died were clearly false and incorrect;
That anything she chose or tried was incomplete in that respect—
What she awaited, delicate and silent in her ray of light,
Was just this news she ought to get: already she was fine, was bright,
Was loveable and brave and keen and capable as one could need
Or hope to be; by this I mean just that she was quite great indeed.
If you wait validation too, and sit in patience for the news
To be presented thus to you, get up! There's not a breath to lose,
For simply knowing that your soul already harbors strength and worth
Is proof enough that you are whole; no greater treasure lives on earth:
Rise from the ashes of your fears, wake up from timid, silent gaze,
And race like a runner, months and years stuffed into the space of weeks, of days
Because your courage speeds and grows—leap forward! No more waiting: run!
And as joyful living overflows, you'll find *you* were the awaited one.

Separations

If I could drink nothing but the breath
of your speech when you say you
love me, I would never thirst—
or never dine on anything but the elixir
of your fervent kiss, I'd never
hunger once again—yet as I sit
on a shore, be it ever so pretty indeed,
that lies too far from you, I fear
I will both starve and die, no food being
rich enough to stand in for your kiss
and not a single eau-de-vie of sufficient
strength and sweetness to quench
my soul-deep thirst for you

Only

In the interstices where
The calm exists, the stillest air,
A whisper falls as sweet as prayer—
A single word, as cool and kind
As falling snow, and intertwined
With light the stars have left behind—
A tender word that none can hear
But has it poured into his ear
By whom he loves most as his dear—
This modest word, spoken so low,

Both stops his heart and makes it go
Apace, swift as a river's flow—
Such a small sound to mortal men,
He thinks—until his dearest then
Calls him 'Beloved!' once again

Ecstatic

A quenchless love, dreaming of fire,
In sparkling rain, still heart's desire;
Still filled with stars and wind and joy
And graces formed without alloy—
A pretty hope, a shining night,
That place where blessings all alight—
Give breath and meaning to all things—
This is my love, and yes, it sings,
For in the center of it all
Into such ecstasy I fall
As cannot be divined or plumbed
When earthly spirits have benumbed
The finer senses made for this—
Stop here, and end it with a kiss!

The Perfect Fit

Smooth as butter
Smooth as silk
Smooth as double-chocolate milk
As philanderers and cads
Smoothly as a tiger pads
Through the satin-smooth long grass
Smooth as water
Smooth as glass
Like the cheeks of babies, smooth
As a lullaby to soothe
The infants into smooth sweet sleep
Smooth as velvet night is deep
Smooth as is the perfect crime
Or the fleeting race of time
Gleaming hair with a smooth, straight part—
So smoothly love
Lies on my heart