

Word Dance  
Appreciations of Grace  
by  
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## Yes, There Is Something Wrong

### I.

I dreamed I saw you  
with Tall Dark And Handsome  
and I won't be  
puppydogging you  
anymore.

Old Ray cooked dinner  
for Carol and her children  
once a week for twenty years,  
carefully manicuring greens,  
until he was mid-sixty  
and she had turned fifty  
and the girls had long left home.  
She always referred to him  
as "Old Ray".

He had wonderful hands.  
He'd massage her neck.  
He never did get into her pants.

I won't run though I can't have my way.  
Determined not to behave  
like one of those little boys  
who sigh and hallow and hinder you,  
I mean to be big boy brave  
through windstorms of wishes-  
steadfast beside you.

### II.

This happens again and again  
and it makes it hard to be me.  
I know that it's best to be friends -  
so why do I feel so lonely?

Forgive my assumption  
but I think I know how you feel.  
I'm flattered though shattered my hope.  
My love will be even more real  
when I've swallowed this lump  
in my throat.

I just wanted to tell you  
that yes, there is something wrong...  
my relating to you needs adjustment-  
my heart needs a ride home.

August, 1989

## Clichés Come True

Rolling over...  
my empty hand  
on her empty bedside.

Her little girl gait,  
her hair sways.

Bad days made better.

Going away for the weekend,  
she's leaving work  
while I'm over Cleveland.

Children at the wedding  
dancing with the grownups-

and "How's life treating you?"

Long trucks on the highway.

On the plane returning,  
I chase the sunset west.

She asks me how she looks  
and I'm not objective-  
I'm not objective anymore.

Casts of stars in pictures,  
pictures of her-  
I want pictures of her  
in my past.

August, 1989

Anxious-  
and Yet Not To Know

Anxious-  
and yet not to know...  
has moment passed-  
will time arrive-  
is it late or early?

What catalyses union?  
What spark heats and melts,  
casts and tempers  
that iron bond?

Anxious-  
and yet not to know...  
doorways-  
closed or open?  
Keys under doormats?  
Bridges-  
built or broken?  
Boats moored at dockside?

Anxious-  
and yet not to know.

August, 1989

## Lady Luck

The lady makes me lucky-  
I'm glad to be around  
to enjoy anticipation-  
the chance of fortune found.

She gives me gambler's fever,  
to play my cards right—  
the winning worth the losing,  
the soaring foil the fright.

Ivory velvet kisses,  
sevens, jackpots shine-  
I taste her sudden blisses  
and risk my hope sublime.

Optimistic heartbeats,  
memories banked and bound-  
the lady makes me glad.  
I'm lucky to be around.

August, 1989

## Wordstream

We had a private joke.  
She said she wasn't communicating that night.  
No one understood her meanings  
and she missed half of what was said.  
I was saying things just to keep talking-  
just to stay in the game.

For me it was serious.  
I had not sung my special voice in years.  
I'd dip my cupped hands  
in subterranean streams  
and try to drink the trickling words.  
They dripped from my tongue-  
I swallowed word unspoken;  
yearning, fleeting, meeting...  
caring, sparing...  
baring, bearing...  
huddling, cuddling, muddling...  
winking... whispering...  
speculating...  
gesticulating...  
trust... secrets...  
bellowing.  
I blinked away sights of sense;  
the coy child stealing my look-  
the cat in the sun on the windowsill-  
early evening, mildly temperate-  
family photos-  
favorite places-  
ice cream Sundays-  
Mondays...

Words fail unworthy-  
of the precious connections,  
infrequent moments  
in inner circles  
of intertwining and knotting lives.  
Even the L-word never tells  
its full depth and measure-  
appreciation, respect,  
fostering, sharing,  
desiring, dreaming-  
the many words-  
each falls so short,  
falling through our fingers,  
dripping from our tongues-  
falling through our fingers,  
dripping from our tongues.

July, 1989

## Memories of Emily

Butterflies and bumblebees-  
glistening, winking tall greens rustling-  
still cotton clouds and far bird melodies,  
I hear Emily's warm name singing.

At the playground, she did cartwheels  
and she could swing so high-  
strong legs pumping, young pulse jumping,  
silhouette arched against the sky.

Bleached hair, sun browned, on her bicycle,  
summer stunned and shy-  
afternoons flew dreamily  
winging moments whistled by.

Time past is permanent,  
some things can never be,  
and I can but imagine  
memories of Emily.

Yet I do hear her name singing  
in butterflies and bumblebees,  
glistening, winking tall greens rustling,  
still cotton clouds and far bird melodies.

March, 1991

## Negative Space

The blank page, silence...darkness...  
the steely smell of rain impending.  
Dawn, water mirrored moonlight,  
potential, hope...train track ringing.

Doughnut holes, the space in bowls,  
boxes, bags, suitcases, pocketbooks.  
A light filled room.  
Closets, drawers, hangers, hooks.

Erasers, coloring books, days off,  
mystery, punch lines, where to begin.  
The other side, lightweight, paperweight.  
Doors, tunnels, quarries, canyons.

Meaning lies in what we don't express-  
defining it by what it's not,  
what transpires without what we expect,  
we gain, we find, what yet had not been lost.

Rare wine, raisins, pressed flowers,  
written music, epitaphs, original sin,  
fortune telling, gambling, time, the weather,  
philosophy, theology, serenity, wisdom.

Prodigy, phenomenon, instinct, intuition-  
our eyes see with our minds.  
Memory strives to capture savoring  
you bringing me what I've left behind.

March, 1991



Cinderella  
and The Prince of Friday Night

The Prince of Friday Night,  
I taste paradise in you,  
viewing brightest gems of blue  
set in marble, butter smooth.

Sheathed in silken finery,  
fantasy I dare not frame,  
you crown my humble head  
in the kingdom of your name.

Champagne, coaches, chandeliers,  
mahogany mantles, ancient art-  
my Cinderella bringing riches,  
I'm dethroned when you depart.

April, 1991

## In My Full Life

Kind of a postcard, wish you were here-  
the many experiences we'd have to share;  
spectator sport, window shop time spent,  
songs, words, paintings, eye catching silence,  
wilderness mornings, brightlit street nights,  
T-shirts, umbrellas, seasons, reasons for sighs...  
"Did I ever tell you about the time I..."  
told so many relished and laughing times,  
stories of far away and long beyond,  
glories of better days and yet to come.

It's been a long day thinking about you,  
since I awoke, since we met, thinking about you

in my full life.

April, 1991

## Drowning At Low Ebb

Drowning  
at low ebb-  
bottom  
of the cycle...  
six-thirty  
p.m.  
impending end-  
debacle.

I guess sometimes  
we all feel this way-  
maybe it's just chemistry-  
picking up stones in the sun  
and seeing the sad underside.

So many ills,  
so few cures  
and somehow  
we never change-  
we think that we  
could turn and run  
without crippling,  
guilt or blame.

I guess somehow  
it's better this way,  
bumpy and rough though it be-  
looking out the window,  
really riding the ride,  
sincerely eyeing to see.

But the smallest breeze  
can unbalance to roll  
over the edge and down the hill-  
little by little and more and more-  
till we wear snowballs  
the size of worlds...

wearing our worlds  
on our shoulders.

April, 1991

### The Ship Of Your Trust

The full moon hangs in the clearest of skies.  
I watch it flicker on the waves in your eyes.  
We rock suspended in a boat made of heartbeats,  
kissed by the lips of the lilting tide.

The breeze whispers sea tales of adventure and lore  
of explorers and pirates and castles ashore  
and the flags and sailing ships and islands parade  
as we await chapters of our story in store.

I'll be your captain if you'll be my queen-  
I'll bring you treasure as yet unforeseen-  
if you'll only invest me the ship of your trust  
and let me chart course cross your ocean of dreams.

April, 1991

Between Fear And Faith

Flattery gets nowhere-  
hearts not in it.

Under the weather-  
grin and bear it.

No candles, no handles,  
no home address,  
stuttering, stammering,  
safety pinned chest.

No right or reason, just  
precarious soon too late-  
not letting drums turn dust  
between fear and faith.

April, 1991

### I Wear Spelling Shoes

Stick figure legs,  
all thumbs and left feet,  
tongue tied and bashful,  
your doorbell I greet.

I wear spelling shoes,  
scrubbed behind ears,  
well rehearsed rhymes  
and a red boutonniere.

I devise daring ruse  
and gulp back my fears,  
remembering times  
I failed to share.

Disarmingly charming,  
aiming to please,  
fishing for compliments  
and stealing sighs,  
I'm quietly farming  
intimacies,  
proven commitments  
and views with bright skies.

April, 1991

Yes, You Know

You,

You and your latest  
in your succession,  
your collection  
of pretty little boys-

yes, you know.

You,

you and your layers  
of poetry and play,  
pain and unpredictation  
and whispered feathered ploys-

yes, you know.

Yes, you know

me.

Parallel, I steal softly,  
measuring muscled stride  
alone in the free wild,  
wonderful when, then again beside

you.

You and your brash embarrassed laugh  
and eyes drilling, chilling... thrilling  
when they fire, when they enfold...  
booklength eyes, laughter spilling-

yes, you know.

You,

you and your slipping sand-  
your tumbling, flashing time-  
grainy pictures of your way-back-when's,  
wrinkled memories also mine-

yes, you know.

April, 1991

Thunder Growing Louder,  
Bursting To Sight

Silent stalker,  
in my wooded lair,  
among sounds of the stillness,  
I become aware  
of ground shudder faint  
as birds rise to flight,  
thunder growing louder,  
bursting to sight-

you - blushing, arching  
chestnut mare  
dancing sundappled  
across my stunned stare.

Tremoring nostrils,  
Indian black eyes,  
vapor lipped teeth,  
sleek muscled strides,  
fleet as I register  
your bold beauty there,  
you flash from my vantage...  
your moment leaves me bare.

April, 1991



### The Wrong Lover

In my moment of melancholy,  
you are my only friend.  
With tender tips you hold me,  
encourage courage to begin again.

I look into your eyes  
deep with concern  
and try as I try,  
can't confide why I burn.

The root of my sadness,  
I have discovered,  
is that I am caressed  
by the wrong lover.

May, 1991

On the contrary,  
your jealousy flatters me-  
for I didn't know you cared.

May, 1991

You Smile Surprised

You're silent.  
I smell abuse  
on your breath -  
and you ask no interaction of me.

I'm nameless.  
You have rules.  
You absorb my loneliness,  
but you're but a towel thrown to the sea.

You smile surprised  
as if you can't believe  
you really want to smile.

For the moment,  
while the seduction lies  
you usually use to deceive  
have attained truth,  
you're beguiled and you blink the good life  
fleetingly.

May, 1991

You Welcome Me

I watch your eyes.  
Moment and year,  
expectation and fear...  
and the child inside-  
your blinking heart belies.

You welcome me  
blooming...like blooming.  
I call for you  
and you come in waves  
washed on the gentle tide.

You sustenance serve.  
Your only privacy-  
your priceless gift-  
fulfills the void  
of my lonely side.

May, 1991

### Silver In The Gray

Cold and lonely everyday,  
I look for silver in the gray.  
There must be God to have made you-  
you'll be someone's dream come true.

May, 1991

### Futile Fisher

Pulsing waves pound the shore  
while whistling wind stings his eyes.  
The dock foundation trembles old,  
wizened wood worn by tide.

Fingers, stiff - fail to enfold  
tangled heartstrung straining lines.  
He chokes on his wanted words,  
nourishment needed so dear denied.

Hard hurt hung on baithook held,  
he tugs tautly at his pole,  
leaning into weather wild,  
futile fisher in the cold.

May, 1991

### Art's Futility

When you I hold-  
art's futility-  
in my arms,  
this moment of bliss-  
universal though it be-  
is known only to you and me.

Words, music,  
movement or stone  
could not evoke,  
portray or resemble  
even the hollows  
of your back by hips.

The mountains  
rising from the plains  
of your stomach  
could not be formed in clay,  
would not radiate  
the sun warm tender pliability  
of the grain grown  
in your muscle and skin.

When you I hold-  
art's futility-  
in my arms.

May, 1991

## When I Grow Up

When I grow up  
I'll tie my own shoes  
and stay up late  
and look both ways  
before I cross the street.

When I grow up  
I'll read books without pictures  
and spell big words  
to say how I feel  
so people will understand me.

When I grow up  
I won't have bad dreams-  
I won't fall down  
or hurt myself  
or cry or be afraid.

I'll take care of myself-  
I won't need anyone else-  
I'll know everything  
there is to know.

When I grow up,  
I'll be a fireman.  
When I grow up  
next year...  
When I grow up next year.

August, 1989



## Fishing

Don't disturb the still balance  
of the leaves reflected  
in the surface of the stream.

With luck and patience-  
patience and luck-  
you may see  
flashing, knifing  
from the dull water,  
a glancing moment-  
the silver arch of experience.

With skill and stealth-  
stealth and skill-  
you might hook it,  
dance with it,  
capture it jumping alive  
and store it away in a cool sack of memories  
to consume from the fire  
of your aging evening.

May, 1991

## Hightailing

We used to go to the country  
to let the dog run.  
He would disappear  
over the horizon  
and I'd not be able to eat  
the big picnic lunch  
for worrying that  
he wouldn't return.

Then, just as my mother  
packed up the food and blanket,  
the big setter would appear,  
"hightailing",  
as if he'd just realized  
that we might leave without him.

May, 1990

Without Rippling The Water

You told me about a game  
you and your sister played-  
touching each other  
without rippling the water  
that you imagined covered you.

You learned it young.

You reached my heart -

like a leaf lands  
on the listening lake.

October 19, 1991

## My Secret Place

My secret place - my clean escape,  
refuge, on my island lies,  
canary light winking  
in sea blue, emerald eyes.

The storm lashed horizon  
shows a distant gray line  
while warm skinned silken sand bathes  
in wavelets' bubbling shine.

Tropic breath gently kisses  
rust red rustling leaves  
where charts promise chests sequestered  
of precious memories.

Just thus to abide here  
in the shelter of your touch,  
to taste your fruited moment  
will last my life enough.

My secret place - my clean escape,  
refuge, on my island lies,  
canary light winking  
in sea blue, emerald eyes.

November, 1991

Eve Echoes

You - almost too beautiful,  
when bright excited,  
I hold my hands  
from holding you.

How you throb and quiver.  
The sleek tropic winds,  
the molten lava,  
the volcanic sea -  
the very pulse of carbon life –

Eve echoes through you.

November, 1991

## Whispers In The Wind

Things don't ever, ever go  
just how you think they ought –  
there's only the passing of time.  
You remind yourself  
you've only today,  
and plan tomorrow the same.

"Dividing unites  
and hardship strengthens,"  
relatives and friends say to you,  
"we've all lived through pain  
we try to forget."  
It's easier to say than to do.

Mornings, evenings - new and free.  
Each beginning ends...  
Pages filled in memory -  
whispers in the wind.

Whispers in the wind...  
words we utter when  
words fail so unworthy...  
whispers in the wind.

Work...nights' sleep...hot food –  
changes do you good –  
nothing else to do.  
Complicated folk  
lead complicated lives.  
When love dies, love survives, lives through.

Mornings, evenings - new and free.  
Each beginning ends...  
Pages filled in memory -  
whispers in the wind.

Whispers in the wind...  
words we utter when  
words fail so unworthy...  
whispers in the wind.

November, 1991

## My Heart Heals

My heart heals.  
However hard  
the hurt feels –  
my heart heals.

You say to protect my heart –  
expose it not to wear and tear –  
but I collect my mends and scars  
and store my memories there.

You say to protect my heart –  
subject it not to overuse.  
But practice I, its every art  
so its facility, I'll not lose.

And where once ripped, unraveled seam  
is glued or sewn or patched or pinned,  
it, stronger then, than it had been,  
will armor, flag and quest again.

My heart heals.  
However hard  
the hurt feels,  
my heart heals.

November, 1991

## The Seed Of The Season

It's always a steep time of the year.  
We 're all in such a hurry  
and it seems we work harder than ever.  
Our merchant existence  
engenders our guilt and self doubt,  
expecting us to supply  
material proof of our love for each other.  
I'm even more broke in December.

Then, too, there's that inventory –  
the year-end assessment of life.  
The frozen ground, the naked trees –  
the rough stinging wind  
batters us back  
as we stumble, flinching  
on our way to some small shelter  
of accomplishment.

The window frosts over.  
Its crystal surface  
becomes its own picture  
and I can't see through.  
The icy plane becomes  
part of my wall  
And I'm alone  
in my room.

So you see, I know how you feel...  
we all bear the weight of winter.  
But this sows the seed  
of the season.  
A child is born...  
yet one more hope  
to join in our  
struggling parade.

I see my spring  
through your warm eyes,  
and hill streams  
tickle your laughter.  
Your welcoming arms'  
unconditional berth  
renew my delight  
in my future.

December 23, 1991



Devastatia

Aptly chosen so your name –  
devastated by encounter's flare,  
I planet your imploding sun –  
my world careens into your fire.

All my principles, rules and vows  
like drought parched tinder quick ignite.  
Wisdom, prudence, pride explode,  
galactic shards to infinite flight.

Unabashed so your attraction,  
you have stunned me upside down –  
my universe's starry sky  
dreams to dress your dancing ground.

January 2, 1992

## Her Mouth

When she smiled, she enjoyed her smile.  
Her gleaming eyes lazered diamond delight,  
drilling holes in me  
through which I soaked her searing tenderness.

Her lips, she played -  
her instrument of communication, taste and sex.  
Her lips implied  
all the warm layered edges of holes on earth  
and hers.

Red knot-holes in logs on fire,  
vortexes of bath water draining, tea cup swirls,  
quick water rapids folding around rocks,  
artichoke hearts, egg yolks, clams, bird nests –  
all were replicas of her mouth.

November, 1991

Even Leaving - For Your Embrace

Wishing wells, baking smells,  
yellow, blue, red and green,  
blank pages, all ages,  
the sound of flashing leaves in rain...

balloons, cakes, ribbons, rings,  
big boats, dump trucks, airplanes, trains,  
chimneys and gardens, kites and swings,  
stories, silence, dancing and games...

words and will, wonder and proof,  
teasing, pleasing, dreaming, truth,  
even leaving - for your embrace,

and yes, oh yes... I love you too.

July 1, 1992

## The Price Of Poetry

This cruel and selfish destruction  
undermines our memories,  
weeping desert - dirty tide  
the last hope gone, the darkest ride,  
down to the depth of certain pain.

How dare you invoke the word?  
"Love" you say, as you stab our dream,  
grab your hat and grind your heel,  
burning the brave surprise  
that maybe yet could have been true.

Leave me here with all your shells,  
your voice ringing, your touch, your smell.  
Again my toys, taken...  
again my joys forsaken...  
again the fools punish each other.  
We, like all the tyrants, warlords,  
killers, slavers, gangsters -  
we do devil's work.  
We give up, give in, cease to give.

What sense is there?  
People can know they're doing wrong,  
making eternal regret,  
sadness, and yet  
still go on repeating mistakes -  
never learning .

Now we all feel self destructive.

Pleading... arguing.. negotiating -  
ultimatums, recriminations, bargains...  
so tired, so useless, so disappointing.

I just want to surrender to that fearful urge.

We console the world and can't find consolation.

I'm dying.  
Please...  
if you leave, our future folds.

This is the price of poetry.

January 24, 1993

## Mariner's Moon

Rainbow ringed  
Mariner's Moon  
promises rain  
in indigo sky  
while I drift, marooned  
in the sea of your eyes.

October 28, 1993

## Picture Of Felicity

Pardon me, please,  
I've written you  
into my fantasies.

Stunningly seized,  
you've charged me with  
your electricities.

Music of blessings,  
the seasons, the rain ...  
I hear your footsteps  
in the best places I've been.

In candy store, schoolyard,  
library, museum,  
children and ancients  
whisper your name.

Even in late night,  
my dragging heart  
arrives grateful  
to my pillow, your thought.

Charmed life, warm life,  
full-over-flowing  
the stories tumble, tinkling  
through the closet door's opening.

I search through shoe boxes  
on the high shelf concealed,  
to find letters and photos  
of your scent revealed.

Finally encountered  
this missive remains,  
some words in November  
connecting our names.

Forgive my entreaty ...  
I've painted you,  
my picture of felicity.

November 15, 1993

What Can I Say?

In your whispered kiss,  
breathless in my ear,  
I hear your secret charm.

In tensile silence, while we wordless woo,  
I marvel at the way that wends me  
to the hearth of your warm arms.

Your night eyes glimmer  
with the dawn of my bright heart...  
but it's first thing in the morning  
and I don't know where to start.

December 19, 1993

## Your Toy

The new toy you can't put down,  
the shaggy mutt that followed you home,  
the lucky charm you put on your key ring,  
the sweatshirt you wear when you're alone...

that box full of treasures you can't throw away,  
the book you've read ten times, your favorite song,  
the trunk in the attic, the swing on the oak,  
your childhood drawings, your bike on the lawn...

Mother's Day, Father's Day, The Fourth of July,  
Christmas, New Years, Halloween,  
Valentine's Day... your (blessed) birthday,  
The First Day Of Spring...

I'm your bright, important boy –  
I'll compile your list of joy.

December 25, 1993



## Evidence

I would pour myself through you,  
the obvious end  
to my mysterious chase.

I would build of you,  
my steel future,  
a fortress of time.

I peer down the well  
and sink my fortune of coins,  
daring to hope...the Evidence  
... is you.

December 25, 1993

## Growing Gate

If you can open the gate,  
walk down the dark hallway  
and climb the steep staircase –  
you'll reach the sunny garden.

February 24, 1994

## All Good Things

The saying goes –  
"To those who wait,  
all good things come true."  
I invest patience gladly,  
to bring all good things ...  
to you.

February 24, 1994

Looking At Green

Springtime hillsides –  
the light through leaves -  
shady tree moss ...

tropic lagoon ...

bottle white wine,  
peppers, cucumbers, romaine –  
a sprig of mint on dessert ...

cat's eyes in the sunstream ...

turquoise, emerald, jade ...

the traffic light's turn ...

Looking at you  
is like  
looking at green.

February 24, 1994

Your Children Laugh

Modigliani Mary –  
When you forget yourself,  
your grace betrays your dreams.  
Little girl -  
your children laugh  
in your eyes.

August 1, 1995

### Quiet Sweet

You hold me  
like for dear life –  
like for dear dear life.

Silent speak  
your deep sea eyes –  
deep deep sea eyes.

I hear you through your touch.  
Your breath strums my ear.  
And, in the wealth of your embrace;  
lost cradles linger near,  
tomorrows sing their hope,  
and frets forget their fear.

Such potent magic  
is your quiet sweet –  
your quiet quiet sweet,

a moment of your interchange  
eternity completes -  
eternity completes.

August 28, 1995

Even Devout

Even devout  
in winter, I've been.  
Tingling bells herald my Queen –  
when silence without,  
she rings within  
wonder revealed in  
wind, whispers - green.

October 31, 1996

## Blue Rainbow

Blue rainbow,  
after our rain,  
glistens my heart.

Bright tomorrow's  
chrome horizon  
to return, must depart.

Golden threads glow –  
this fabric woven,  
royal mornings hark.

November 1, 1996



Faith -  
Through Rustling Lives

Green light gleams,  
gilding bright the carpet  
dappled in the leaves,  
cushioning my step.

Careful in the wood,  
testing each caress,  
finally, in your touch,  
I see my path undressed.

Faith -  
through rustling lives,  
leads me to your lake  
to dive into your eyes.

October 9, 1997

## Seeing Your Eyes

Seeing your eyes -  
your eyes seeing me...  
and our hands fit...  
perfectly.

October 9, 1997

