

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.

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

