

*Love Poems*

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*J. C. Choate Publications  
Route 2, Box 156  
Winona, MS 38967*

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*J. C. Choate Publications*  
**ISBN 0-9616352-0-7**

*Typesetting by Eloise Breazeale Nowell*

## Dedication



To Ronald and Nancy Reagan,  
our beloved President  
and his First Lady,  
in respect and admiration  
for the Love Poem  
of their life together.

## Author's Foreword

In a sense, *Love Poems* is the idealized love story repeated over and over again, throughout the world and throughout time. Too often, perhaps, we don't search for the "right" words to adequately express the love of one heart to another. And we get so busy that sometimes the little gestures of love that would help to compensate for the lack of words also fail to materialize. We don't take the time to cherish one another; yet the love, deep down, is there. This search for words to express my own love and the love I see in others has felt sweet in my heart, and the outpouring has brought a sense of completion. I hope that others will find it useful. Love is too monumental a thing for any of us to hold it as a mute prisoner inside our hearts.

*Love Poems*.....for those who are experiencing the sweetness of young love, for those who have cherished through the years the security of loving and of being loved, for those who have grown old with the wonder of that treasure still new in their hearts.....

September 23, 1985



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## The Gift

How many precious gifts  
God gave in love to man:  
Eyes to see  
And vision for the deeper sight,  
Ears to hear  
And, yes, the unseen ear  
To hear the spirit's sigh,  
The voice to speak  
And cries that make no sound,  
The touch of hands  
And touchings of the soul.

God gave them all:  
The outer gifts of man,  
The inner, deeper gifts;  
And then, at last,  
Along with breath and life  
He formed man's inner heart  
And gave the gift of loving....







## The Birth of Love

Looking back

I wonder how it could have been  
That normal skies stretched overhead  
And common sounds  
Of birds and voices  
Filled the air  
And earthy things  
Obeyed the unseen law  
As any other day.....

There was no sound of siren  
—Not even eerie stillness—

No warning bell of any kind  
To say the moment neared  
When

Out of ordinary life

I raised my eyes  
And saw you standing there;

One frozen instant  
Lifted out of time  
And made a crystal  
Of eternity,  
That moment

When the empty vacuum of my life  
Was filled  
And love for you was born.



## Alone

Oh, World,

...Go away...

Don't come to talk

Or sell..

Don't come intruding in my thoughts..

Bring me no ring of door

Or telephone...

No music---

Not any sound at all.

Let me have time

To close my eyes,

To close my ears,

To stop all outer sense of feel

And concentrate instead

On all these feelings in my heart:

This sweetness

And this dreaming,

This aching pain

That must be ecstasy---

Oh, let me sit here all alone

And hug this wonder to my soul:

I love! I love! I love!

## Precious Thoughts

Not always can I talk of you  
For others tire of love  
And would not hear  
Your virtues always praised.....  
Perhaps they're right,  
Perhaps such things as weather  
Or some distant war  
Deserve some thought as well;  
But, oh my love, I hear  
With inattentive ears  
And turn instead to inward thoughts,  
Precious thoughts,  
Of all you are  
And all you're meant to be  
And, deep within, where others never walk  
I share a world with you.





## Nothing

It's time for you  
To call  
or write  
or come.

I wait.  
My pulses quicken,  
Waiting,  
Believing,  
And I wait.

Nothing.

Nothing.

Nothing.

And I die inside again.





## Love's First Embrace

You said no words,  
And neither, Love, did I....  
You read it in my eyes  
And so  
With feet that touched no earth  
We crossed the space as in a dream  
And time stood still  
In love's embrace.

I felt the softness  
Of your cheek on mine,  
My open palms  
Against your back;  
You held me tightly in your arms  
And it seemed  
That melting into me  
Was all your body's warmth  
And strength.

I raised my head  
And looked into your eyes  
—great gulfs of love—  
And lightly  
Like a fragile gift  
Your fingers touched my cheek  
And the whisper of a kiss  
Caressed my lips.



How long we held each other so  
I cannot guess,  
But the imprint  
Of that feeling,  
    warm and sweet,  
Of your body  
Pressed against my racing heart  
Has formed a block of time  
—a memory, eternal—  
Of that first embrace.



## Two Halves Of A Whole

We shared an experience  
—-you and I—-  
Each of us contributing  
Smiles and words,  
Expressions, gestures, thoughts,  
Reacting and interacting  
With each other—-  
Two halves of a whole experience.

Distance and time have wedged a gulf  
—-impassibly wide—-  
Between us, and between now  
And the yesterday of our experience.

But I close my eyes  
And I see again your movements,  
Your smile, your soul in your eyes;  
Your words and your laughter  
Ring in my ears anew.  
And I carry  
—-here—-—

A living thing in my heart:  
The half that was you  
of all that we shared.

Does the half that was me  
live.....?



## 'I Love You'

"I love you."

You've said the words  
Not as a well-planned speech  
But all alone,  
A simple statement  
Of your heart,  
And I accept it so.

I understand....

We've shared so much,  
So many thoughts and dreams  
And tears,  
So much of growing  
In the passing years,  
So many gifts of self,  
So much of hope,  
And now you've crowned them  
With the gift of purest gold:  
—"I love you"—  
I need no more.

## What Does It Mean?

What does it mean,  
This being loved,  
This living in another's heart?  
It's all so new to me....

Does it mean  
That at last I'll feel secure,  
I'll have no more of doubts,  
No anxious tears,  
No empty waiting in my heart?

Does it mean  
My world's skies will be blue  
In spite of storms around,  
That birds will sing  
And we will laugh in happiness?

Does it mean  
No outside force will ever threaten you,  
Your place within my heart,  
Or mine in yours?

Does it mean  
That always in your arms  
My soul will be at rest?

Is this what loving means?



## At Last!

On paths beginning  
in the mists of long ago,  
We've come at last upon this day.

I feel in you  
The things you feel in me,  
the hesitancy, the measuring, the questioning,  
Swallowed up  
As though they'd never been,  
And our spirits see  
exultantly  
That nothing now remains  
of hidden walls  
or bolted doors:  
At last we're free!

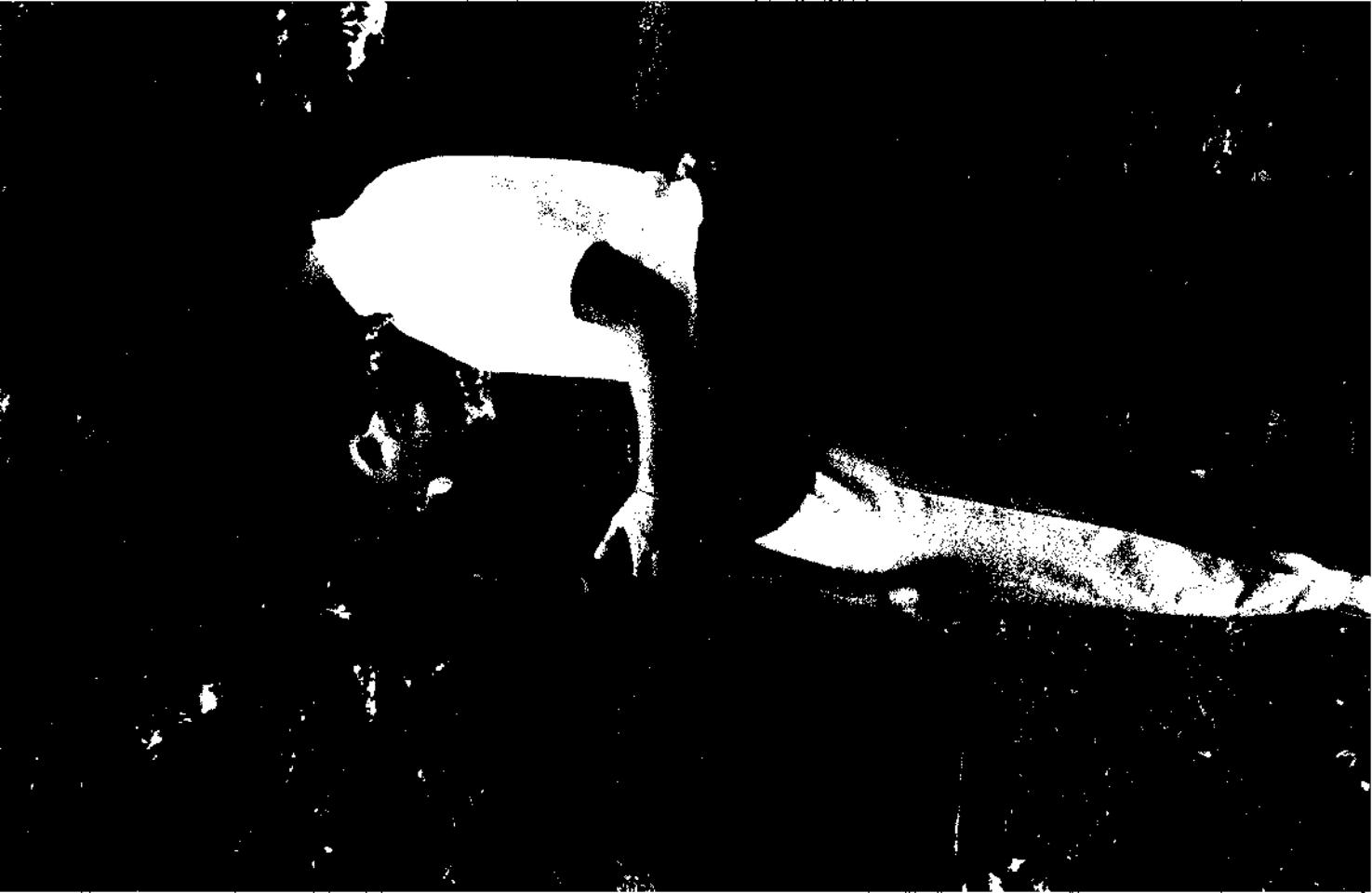
Was it both of us  
Who ran to close the space,  
to stand tight-clasped,  
crying over hurts  
and sorrows of the past  
and laughing  
in the triumph of today,  
the sweetness of our binding kiss  
commingled with the salt of tears?

At last our love is one!



## Without Reserve

Can one truly love  
 With walls around the heart?  
 I think it cannot be....  
 And so I come to you  
 Without reserve,  
 Without defense,  
 Exposed in openness  
 And in the tenderness of love,  
 Trusting in your love  
 To hold with gentle hands  
 The heart I give in faith to you.



## Photographs And Dreams

Oh, my love,  
In a moment caught in time  
Arm in arm  
We laugh into each other's eyes  
And ignore the world around.

Ah——I'd make that picture live  
And your other arm, half-raised,  
Would pull me close;  
Your smile would fade  
With slowly lowered head  
And a sweet, sweet kiss  
Would stir my soul.

Oh, my love, I'd make that picture live.



## Oneness

What is this cord

—unseen—

Between us

That reaches out and makes us one?

How is it

That I feel your feelings

In myself,

Your fears,

Your hurts,

Your triumphs,

As my own?

How is it that I feel your thoughts,

The longing in your heart?

How is it that I look into your eyes

And see my soul?



## Expressions Of Love

Please don't doubt my love  
For doubts would melt my heart and make me cry;  
Our love is not built on feeble thoughts,  
On weakness and on tears,  
But on faith,  
Unshakable and strong,  
Created by God,  
Protected by Him,  
Living through His love,  
As His hands  
—unseen by men—  
Reach down to us and shape our future years;  
Our love is not a line  
Drawn in futility on water or on sand:  
It is a strong cord  
Stretched between two souls;  
For you are innocent and truthful,  
A darling child of God  
And I think  
That not before in human history  
Has there been a love like ours:  
You  
And your love  
Are the most precious thing  
For me,  
The most valuable gift of God...  
I love you.



## Joy

I want to sit,  
Withdrawn from all around,  
And think of you,  
But I feel the world and people  
Crowding in  
And, so, begrudgingly, I turn to duty,  
Giving thought to other things  
And, sadly,  
Feeling drawn away from you.....

But realization, rich and sweet,  
Comes flooding through my mind:  
No outside thing can threaten you,  
You live within my heart  
Caught up in me,  
A part of me,  
A part of all I do and feel,  
As real as those around are real.  
I hear your words, your laughter in my ear,  
I see you move against the background of reality  
And, deep within our private world,  
I feel the joy of knowing  
That no measured time or measured space  
Define the love we share;  
Whatever I may do,  
Wherever I may be,  
I find you there.

## That I Can Pray

I search among my treasures....

I must find the choicest gift of all  
To bring to you today;  
What can it be?

Not something that will break  
Or crumble with the years,  
Not words  
Or even something that my hands  
Have made for you alone....

What can it be?

Ah, yes....  
With purest heart  
And purest love  
I'll go before our God,  
Before His great and awesome throne,  
And bowing there to worship  
At His feet  
I'll breathe your name  
And ask His care,  
His special care,  
For you throughout this day....

Sweet, sweet gift of love,  
That I can pray for you!





## 'Yes' To What?

Today we heard the question

"Do you take this one...?"

And we answered, "Yes..."

"Yes" to what?

To waiting ended,

"Yes" to feeling more acutely,

To dreaming

And to sharing dreams,

To picking up together

All the pieces

When the dreams come crashing down,

"Yes" to happiness enlarged

And grief diminished

Through their sharing;

"Yes" to working for each other,

Routine work

And sometimes boring

But part of life

And surely part of loving;

"Yes" to smiles with deeper meaning

And to hurts

When quarrels come;

"Yes" to secret jokes

And fears we'll share unspoken,

"Yes" to oneness in our thoughts

Our goals and our possessions,



In our bodies  
And the fruit our bodies bear:  
A growing, changing blending  
of us both.  
"Yes" to cherishing,  
Obeying,  
For better or for worse,  
Through good times  
And the bad;  
"Yes" to growing old together.

## *In Answer*

*Across the room  
I catch your eye  
And the sweetness of a smile  
Begins to form  
In answer to your own;  
But then without a word  
The smile is swallowed in intentness  
And a current  
Like a flashing message from your eyes  
Burning into mine  
Sparks a kindred fire.*



## Shared Tears

I came to you,  
Hurting,  
Needing strength  
And words that said  
You cared about my grief;  
You held me, though,  
In silence  
While the hurting  
Overflowed my soul  
And filled my eyes  
With salty tears....

But, oh, the words you never said  
I heard within my heart  
As gentle fingers cupped my chin  
And made me look into your eyes  
And there I saw my tears.



## If I Could...

If I could  
I'd shield you, Love,  
From every hurt,  
The danger in the way;  
I'd rather feel your pain myself  
And make your life  
One long enchanted road of joy,  
One thrilling song without an end—  
In the weakness of my love,  
I'd do this, if I could.

But God decrees that growth must come  
Through pain as well as joy  
And easy roads  
Would make you weak and spoiled;  
And, so,  
Because He loves you  
More, dear one, than I  
He marks the way that's best  
For you  
And helps you walk each day.

And, yes, I'm glad,  
Through smiles as well as tears  
I'm glad  
Because I want you strong  
Oh, Love, I want you strong



And good,  
The man of vision  
And the leader  
God would have you be,  
So, when the hurt must come  
To help you grow  
I ask but this one thing,  
That God will let me  
hurt  
and grow  
with you.

## I Feel Your Love

In crowded rooms  
With people all around,  
I feel your love:

Oh, no—I hear no words,

No open display

brings warm blushes to my cheeks,

But in the way you look at me

You say, "I care..."

And on my arm

Your gentle touch

Conveys this message to my heart:

"To me, this one is priceless,

My gift from God to cherish

and protect...

This one is mine."

In crowded rooms  
With people all around,  
I feel your love.



## Belonging

The night is cool.  
I hear a birdsong in the distance  
And beneath my ear  
The thudding of your heart;  
Your breathing stirs my hair  
And your lips.  
Quietly now and undemanding,  
Caress my eyes  
With gentle sounds of love;  
My heart responds with swelling joy  
That you are mine,  
That you are here,  
Next to me,  
Belonging,  
While the fading glow  
Like color in the sunset  
Fills our world with sweetness  
With stillness  
And with rest.

## The Walk

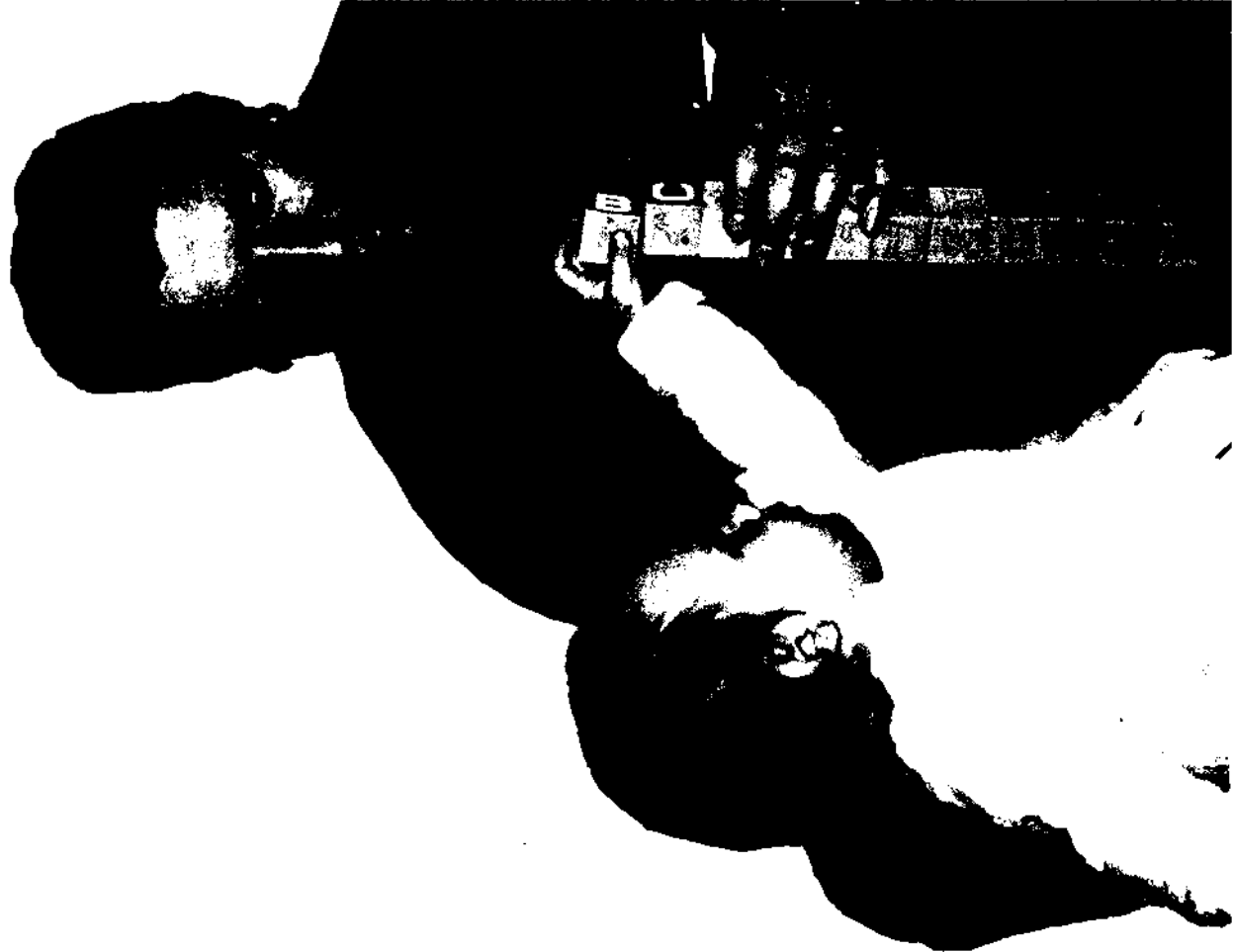
Today I walked in the quiet woods alone.  
The rustle of leaves under my feet made a lonely sound  
And the song of the birds was lonely too  
Until I came to the old tree  
With its spreading arms  
And you came, too, and sat beside me.  
I smiled in silent greeting  
And beckoned to show you the thousands  
Of tiny blue daisies looking up through the grass.  
We marvelled at the lush velvet of the moss  
Up close to the tree  
And you hushed my voice to hear  
The note of a distant bird's song.  
We followed the sound as excuse  
To walk under the shading arms of the old trees  
Where the world seemed at peace  
And quiet and still in its own thoughts.  
We felt at peace, too, as we walked along,  
Drinking in the solitude,  
Stopping to hear the murmur of a little stream  
And to watch the busy working  
Of a colony of ants that caught our eye.  
You stooped to let one crawl onto your finger  
Where we watched his frantic searching  
For companionship and security,  
And we talked of his likeness with humans  
Who sometimes spend a whole lifetime





Searching for something or someone to fill the void  
Without ever once being satisfied.  
Our steps turned back to the trail again  
Under the deep shade of the old trees  
And I walked beside you in silence,  
Thinking of you,  
Feeling a strong surge of happiness  
Well up inside with such sweetness it made me ache  
In thankfulness to God  
For you.  
I looked up to see your eyes on mine,  
Deep in the same thoughts,  
And you reached out to my outstretching hand  
To touch my fingers  
In a gentle communion of our souls;  
One moment of eternity, caught and held  
    in the timelessness of memory,  
To be relived in months and years to come.  
—One moment—then we turned and walked again  
Into the hurried world.







## Our Life Will Live On

In a world far removed from the rest of the world  
We talked of the time  
And we planned for the time  
When life would begin from our love.

"How sweet it will be,"  
We told ourselves,  
But we didn't know  
—How could we know?—  
How utterly sweet the sweet would be,  
How painfully deep every hurt would be,  
How magnified all of our feelings would be  
By the life that began  
From our love.

But now that we have our little son,  
This blending of you  
And of me  
Into one,  
We know:

Our happiness rests in these little hands,  
Our dreams in this little heart;  
Whatever he does or doesn't become,  
Whatever the race that his feet will run,  
For generations yet unborn through this son  
Our life will live on  
In this love.



## Love's Acceptance

In the name of love,  
Sometimes,  
Perfection is proclaimed  
And blinded hearts deceive themselves,  
But blindness is not love....

I love you  
But I see you as you are,  
Your faults, your weakness,  
The growth you need to make;  
I see the scars from broken dreams,  
The hurts, frustrations, fears....  
And I love you,  
Not because I will not see or cannot see,  
But because I see the whole:  
Your reaching up to better things,  
Your dreams,  
Your searching of your soul  
To know yourself  
And grow.  
I see your love for others  
And for God,  
Your selfless love for me;  
I see you as you are,  
Accept you as you are,  
Love you as you are  
And for all you long to be.

## Your Hurting Words

Oh—please, please— I love you—  
I have no shield  
Against these hurting words you say—

Oh—please—  
I'd lay my fingers  
On your lips  
To stop the words  
I cannot bear to hear;  
I'd hold you  
Tightly in my arms  
And close this distance  
You would make between our hearts  
—hold me—

The tears that fill my soul  
Are frozen by your coldness  
And cannot wash the stinging  
From my eyes.

Oh—unsay the words—  
unmake this gulf;  
I cannot bear this deadness  
I cannot live  
Without your love

Oh—please—turn the hours back  
and make my world all right again.



*'Oh Dear Mine.....Forgive Me'*

*The wound was deep  
Because the love was deep,  
And the empty silence  
Said you did not care;*

*The distance you had made  
Was much too great  
For me to span alone  
And so with aching arms  
And bleeding heart  
I turned away  
To hide the burning tears.....  
I could not make a beggar of my love.*

*And then I felt your nearness  
I felt your touch  
I even felt the sorrow in your heart:  
"Oh dear mine  
Forgive me---please forgive me."*

*.....Sweet, sweet words  
That made me whole.*

## In Your Absence

You've gone away  
And left my world a lonely, empty void....  
I walk through rooms we shared  
And everywhere I feel your presence,  
The echo of your voice,  
I touch the book you read,  
Listen to the song you liked so well;  
I hear again the things you said  
And feel your hand on mine,  
But, oh, you've gone  
And there's a deadness in these rooms—

I'd leave this emptiness behind—  
I walk deserted paths through trees and vines,  
—Fast, and faster still—  
Away from anything we shared,  
But though I run I can't escape  
This empty wrenching pain:  
It isn't in the rooms  
Or in these woods,  
I can't go far enough  
Or fast enough  
To leave the hurt behind:  
A loss I've never known before  
Is in my heart....  
You've gone  
And I'm alone.





## Coldness.....Loneliness

There's a dreariness outside my window today  
Like the dreariness in my heart.  
Last night's rain littered the ground  
With limbs and needles

—debris—

Like my tears that left a soggy heart  
Littered with broken laughter  
And the debris of happier days.

Winter has come  
And you have gone.

Coldness

And loneliness....

one, physical,

the other, emotional....

.....but born of the same parents

I think....



## Such Shallow Words

"I love you"

—oh, such shallow words—

They tell you nothing

Of this hurting depth of me,  
this pain that reaches up  
and clutches at my heart  
because you're gone.

They tell you nothing

Of the hope  
I've made into a shield  
against despair,  
against—perhaps—reality,  
against the picture  
forming in my mind  
of lonely years,  
empty years  
when you are gone  
eternally.

"I love you"

Oh, such shallow words....



## The Lonely Places

In the lonely places of my mind  
I walk with you,  
Down shadowed roads,  
Beside a quiet stream,  
Beneath the blackened skies  
Where stars have disappeared;  
I walk with you  
In lonely crowds  
And where the swirling snowflakes fall,  
Where haunting night sounds  
Fill the empty air  
And trees are bent  
Beneath the wind and rain;  
I walk with you  
And feel the peace  
Without, within;  
I feel your gentleness  
And hear the quiet cadence  
Of your voice  
In companionship,  
Precious, dear to me,  
Wording thoughts of beauty and of strength,  
Thoughts that lift my soul  
And fill the lonely places of my mind.



## *I Wish You Were Here*

*I wish you were here.*

*The wind is cool*

*And last year's dead leaves rustle on the trees;*

*Here and there a bird calls*

*But,*

*Mostly,*

*There is a stillness.*

*The whole atmosphere says,*

*"Spring! Spring!"*

*I want so much to share this time*

*With you*

*But how can*

*brightness*

*and sounds*

*and fragrances*

*and new softnesses of growth*

*be put into words*

*that will recreate spring*

*on the other side of the world?*

*I wish you were here.*

## Outwardly

Outwardly, I appear calm

And normal.

I'm working,

writing letters,

cleaning house—

No one would suspect that

inside

Every cell is aching with excitement

And with longing!

Your're coming home!

Your're coming home!





## Sharing

How much it means to me,

This time of walking in the stillness  
Before the dark,  
Trailing footsteps,  
Admiring flowers,  
Checking little trees  
To see their growth,  
Talking of improvements  
And the work we want to do,  
Smelling roses  
And exulting in new blooms,  
Ending up at last  
Here in the swing,  
Listening to the waterfall,  
Watching stars come out  
And dusky blueness sweep the heavens,  
Talking,  
Contented,  
Filled with happiness  
For all God's perfect gifts.

How much it means to me

To share these things with you.



## Time To Rest

I stand here  
In the circle of your arms,  
Unmoving,  
Wanting through my stillness  
To stop the world  
And time.

I feel your body,  
Solid,  
Warm,  
And I feel your heart,  
A steady echo of my own;  
I feel the softness of your cheek,  
Your breath against my hair;  
I needed this,

no hurried hug  
or brushing lips  
but this time to rest here,  
securely in your arms  
as in your heart,  
quietly,  
drawing strength  
for now  
and for tomorrows  
yet to come.

## In Your Eyes

He'd gone  
And I waited at the window  
Looking down and down the empty street,  
Empty now  
Except for ice and snow.

My body ached in fear for him  
And love.

Questioning, as I stood and cried:

Is that cord  
Between a mother and a son  
Never really cut?  
And the hurting that a mother feels,  
The tears that fall in lonely silence

—No—

A father wouldn't feel that kind of bond  
And pain.

I tried to hide it, though,  
The need to hold him close,  
The fear....

Waiting,  
Watching hours slowly pass,  
Waiting  
Until he calls  
Until he's there  
And fear can end.



And, oh, with thankful heart  
I run to you  
To tell you that he's safe—  
You look up....

And in your eyes  
I see my aching fear  
And my relief  
And thankfulness.

Your hand seeks mine  
As though our need for touching  
Can somehow reach to him,  
And I know my question's answer:

The oneness of our love  
That gave him life  
Is no less shared tonight  
In this cord, uncut and taunt,  
That reaches out to him.



## Love

Love?

It should begin like a seed  
Dropped on the earth to germinate  
And to spread roots slowly,  
Building a slender trunk and small branches,  
Growing at pace with itself,  
So that, like a great oak growing to maturity,  
Love will have grown  
From a small nothingness  
To the fulness of the heart's capacity  
As that capacity has grown.  
And, like the oak,  
Such love sways and bends with storms of adversity  
But weathers them all  
And lives on  
For a hundred years.

But your love?  
With no gentle sprouting and growth  
Did it come,  
But suddenly,  
As a full-grown tree,  
Thrusting trunk and branches  
Through the earth of my heart,  
Breaking and tearing its way  
To heaven's light,  
Forcing root space.



Unmindful of the upheaval;  
And where nothing had been,  
Suddenly the proud trunk  
And sweeping limbs  
Were there,  
Warmed in the smile of God's sunlight,  
Washed by the rain of His tears,  
And the earth and the sky  
Of my heart space  
Had to grow  
To make room for you.  
Yes, that was long ago.

The tears and the breaks  
—So painful at first—  
Mended with the years.  
Washing rains and sun  
Healed the earth of my heart  
And brought the grass  
And the flowers  
To grow at your feet.  
The pain has gone,  
The space has grown  
To fit you now,  
And I wonder if such love,  
So uniquely born,  
Will weather stormy winds  
And live eternally?

## What Will We Do?

What will we do?

The question hangs in the air,  
Ghost-like, between us,  
Demanding an answer that no one can give.

What will we do?

The last one is leaving tomorrow—  
School...

Then marriage...  
a life of her own...

And what will we do

With no little feet tripping around,  
No one to guide,  
No voice in the night calling out, "Mommy,"  
Needing assurance,

"Go to sleep, Honey—

Everything is all right."

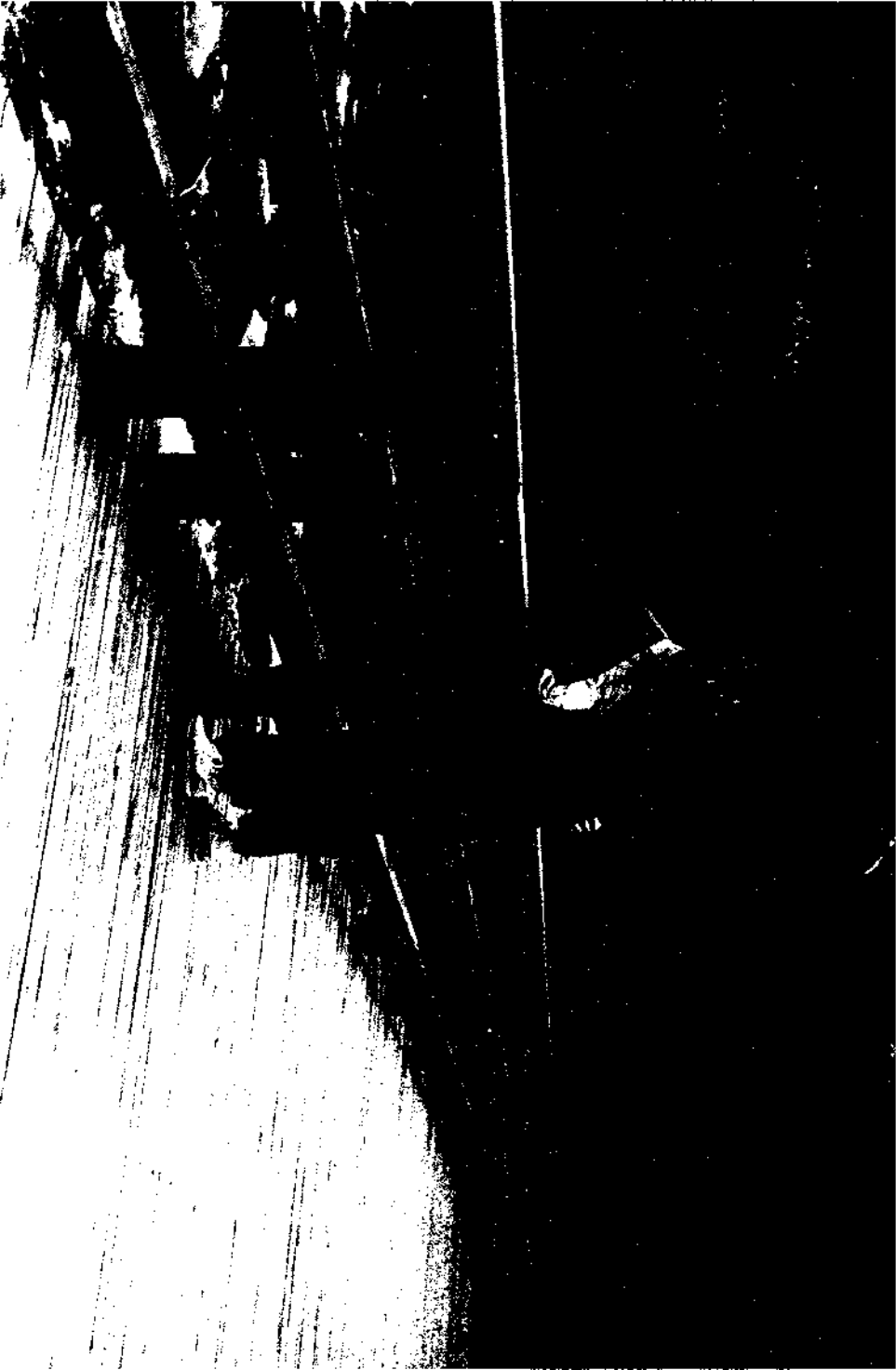
No one to wait for after a date,  
No heart-to-heart talks or sharing of tears?

How still it will seem

Here in the house  
And how still in our hearts  
When this last one has gone.

What will we do?





## How Good It's Been

Like a playful river,  
Running here and there  
Through shadowed forests,  
Over boulders,  
Out across the sandy wastes,  
And back again  
    to mountain valleys deep  
Our lives have wandered  
Through these checkered years.

We've seen so many things  
And struggled  
    in so many ways.  
We've felt a few defeats  
When doors were better closed,  
And we've laughed together  
With each goal  
God helped us to achieve.  
We've seen our children born  
And watched them grow  
Rejoicing in the goodness of their lives;  
And while they grew  
We've watched the changes in ourselves  
    from young and green  
    to old and gray,  
Changes that have brought us  
To today.



Are you thinking my thoughts, Love?  
How good it's been,  
The fun we've had  
    through "ups and downs"  
    and "thick and thin"  
And laughing through the tears  
Together?  
And won't it be exciting  
To live the coming years  
Together?

## Idle Thoughts

Sometimes, Love,  
In a mood of idle thought  
I look across a milling crowd  
Seeing, not the crowd  
But people, one by one,  
And I question:  
Suppose our paths  
Had never crossed?  
Suppose I'd married him  
Or him  
Instead?  
In this face I see a strength  
But maybe just a trace too much  
Of pride,  
That style of life would never do,  
His values are not mine,  
Another's dress is not so neat,  
His need for reassurance shows,  
And that one?—  
The picture of success  
And charm  
But I'd feel overpowered  
By his side.  
One by one I measure,  
Seeing fairly all the plusses  
And the points I wouldn't like,



But the total  
Somehow never seems just right  
For me  
Until I turn my eyes again  
To you.  
Yes, I know the imperfections  
And I know the strengths;  
I see where God has used them both,  
Blending yours with mine  
To make a whole,  
And out of all the forms and faces  
In the milling crowd,  
Out of all the people and the lives,  
I find that  
After all these years of growth and change,  
If I had the choice  
You'd be my choice again.



## We Couldn't Know

You couldn't know  
And I couldn't know  
All those long undeveloped years ago  
How right you would be for me.

We couldn't know  
How much I needed  
Your gentle prods,  
Your vision too big  
That has kept me  
Always running along in its wake;  
I needed your words, unclouded by doubt,  
"Of course you can do it..."  
That pushed me  
Out into worlds I'd never seen  
Doing the things I'd never dreamed  
And growing  
Whether I chose to be growing or not.

I've learned to be thankful  
For courage you had  
To step back and leave me  
When that was the best  
or to stand close beside me,  
willing to guide me,  
when tears choked my heart  
with begging for rest.



You couldn't know  
And I couldn't know  
All those long undeveloped years ago  
How right you would be for me  
but God knew

## Growing Old In Love

I come to find you sleeping quietly.

Dear, familiar form  
that I have known so long,

It seems unreal, somehow,

kneeling here beside your chair.

That such a snowy head is yours

And shoulders droop

From tiredness and from time;

The hand I hold

Is weak,

with fragile skin and spots of age....

Oh, my love,

Was it so many yesterdays ago

That youth and strength

Filled every cell

And not a hair was white?

I see within this sleeping form

The man of early years

With proud dark head

And flashing eyes,

Infectious smile,

Shoulders strong and broad

To carry all your load

And part of mine, sometimes.

And these dear hands

—I kiss the aging skin—





Were deft, yet gentle still  
In work and play and love.  
Your step  
—so feeble now—  
Was firm with purpose then.  
Oh, my love,  
How time has flown  
—these years we've lived as one—  
Yet in my heart  
All our goals,  
All our working,  
All we've struggled to achieve,  
—the yesterday and now—  
Are tightly bound together  
Just as the youth I knew  
Lives on  
Inside your resting form.





## So Much Of Me

Oh, my love,  
With trembling hand  
I touch your cheek.  
You lie so still and white,  
Unhearing  
All the words of love  
I want to say.

Oh, dear one,  
So much of me  
Lies sleeping in your stillness.  
I hold your hand  
And wait and pray.

God hears....  
I know He hears  
And feels  
This bleeding of my heart,  
This frantic urge  
To lift you up  
And hold you tightly to myself  
As though  
Somehow  
From me to you  
Could pass the health and strength  
Your body needs  
To make you well....



But—oh—  
There's nothing I can give of me to help  
Except this hurting love  
Seeking answer still  
Inside your heart,  
Except this will  
That says that you must live  
Because

—Oh, God—

You made us one  
And now too much of me  
Is bound up in his life  
To live alone.



## The World Without You

You live  
And so, dear one,  
My world has sun,  
Blue skies and rainbows,  
Laughter bubbling up through happy days,  
A song of gladness in my heart  
And peace within my soul  
Because you live.

But, oh dear one,  
If you were gone  
How would I mark  
The weary day to follow weary day  
That must be somehow passed  
In living death  
Before my soul could rest with yours?

How could I live  
If your heart in my breast  
Was still?



## Goodbye

Every parting of our ways through all these years  
Has had its own goodbye to ease the pain—

The big goodbyes

When we married and left home,  
When the kids spent summer weeks away,  
When college came, and later when they married  
And they turned with tears and waved again,  
Starting "on their own."

The little goodbyes, too,

Goodnights,  
A visit to a friend's,  
Going off to work each morning  
And to school...

Separations,

Each one with its own goodbye

To fill the need of coming emptiness.

That little moment of a prayer together,  
One last kiss,

Perhaps, "I'm sorry," restoring precious peace,

A hug, tighter for the parting.

"I love you,"

With a searching, telling look,

And all the words that somehow needed to be said

Before, "Goodbye."

Still, the loneliness was there:

I don't deny it—

But not so heavy, not so hopeless

Because the words,  
The lingering memory of the touch,  
Were there to give us strength.

Last week  
You went outside to do some work  
While I made a little lunch.  
I waited, thinking you would come,  
And wondering  
— Suddenly fearing  
With a coldness and a dread—  
I ran outside to find you fallen,  
Lying in a stillness  
That no frantic cry would move.

Oh, my love,  
I am bereft

empty

But perhaps  
Perhaps  
I wouldn't feel so wholly lost,  
So overwhelmed with grief  
If we had been allowed  
That little time,  
That last goodbye.



## Did You Know?

Time has passed, dear one,  
Since you left me in this world  
To walk the way alone.  
How many days or weeks?  
I cannot say unless I stop and count;  
I only know  
That there was life when you were here  
And lonely waiting  
Since you've gone.

Sometimes, still,  
I hear your step  
Coming down the hall  
Or, half asleep,  
I feel your hand  
Or hear your call.

And sometimes, Love,  
When it can seem  
You're only just away  
—as so many times you were—  
Then I can think to you  
And live to you  
And feel your living in response,  
And  
—with others close around—  
Almost, there is normalcy.

*But*

*.....it's like a part of me inside  
is waiting, always waiting  
with bated breath,  
and when you never come  
even though I've waited past endurance,  
that cutting blade of hurt  
is new inside again  
and wet with blood,  
or is it tears?*

*Oh my love,  
Did you know that day,  
As you were leaving me  
And all my world behind,  
How hard my way would be  
Alone?*



## Bright, Yellow Sunshine

There is sunshine today, Love,  
Bright, yellow sunshine,  
Warm with God's love  
Pouring into my heart  
And spilling over the edges  
With glorious radiance,  
Lighting eyes and smiles,  
Shining in the caring faces  
Of the ones I love,  
Filling even this,  
The vacuum in my soul  
That was dark with grief for you.

His love is good  
And sweet with healing,  
Saying that the gift of love we shared  
Must live  
And help me find anew  
The way to life.

