

Love's Illusions

~ Poetry from the edge of life ~

~ KINDLING ~

When daybreak slams
 into my room
and I realize you're gone,
the deceit that lay between us, like kindling,
 ignites carefully hidden fears
 become reality
 that burn uncontrolled,
 leaving charred and blackened images
 of strawberry days
 and silver-tongued promises
in the fibers of a growing desperation
that once was love.

~ BEWITCHED ~

I've never seen an earthly thing
as glorious as your smile,
seductive as
your nighttime eyes –
felt so loved
as when I'm in your arms
or desperate
when I'm not.

Needing you
as I need the very air I breathe,
I pray I had the strength
to turn and go.

But there's no terrestrial magic
strong enough
to erase you from my mind,
squelch the fire roused
between my legs
and in my soul
so I remain, victim of your bidding.

~ CINDERELLA, IN RETROSPECT ~

Why is life

always so complicated?

Fairy tales belong to childhood –

no one needs to tell me

Snow Whites and Cinderellas

and their handsome princes

don't really live

happily ever after.

Not in so many words, at least,

and the golden girl

who had her pick now sits alone,

filled with doubts

and fears

and grieving

for someone who has gone

or's going,

happy moments lost

in veils of tears,

remembering.

~ SUNDAY COMING DOWN ~

I never have been ready
to be alone,
yet can't recall
a time of being
more than just a part
of a sadly star-crossed "we."

Swirling inside
angst,
uncertainty,
tears on the brink of falling
when long-harbored fears
become fact
and doubts are cruelly realized.

Even in the happy moments
I am sad,
knowing well that good things
never last
and I will be alone again
too soon.

~ THE DRAGON SLAYER ~

You've left me nothing
more to fear
than fear itself
or, worse,
that I'll awake to find
we were nothing
but a dream.

~ FROM MAY TO ETERNITY ~

I've nothing more to give you
 than myself,
 and how inadequate
 that seems
to give the one
 who made the doubter see
 there really is a thing
called love.

~ REVELATIONS ~

Clouds, like love,
are eternally evasive –
floating freely here and there,
changing shapes and faces
at will
and sometimes hiding the sun.

If I've learned but
one thing
in these thirty reckless years
it's that love alone
is not enough
and stretching my arms
towards the sky
won't help me capture clouds.

If you hold me, though,
I might be able
to touch them.

~ TRANSITIONS ~

The swans have left the marina now,
driven south to warmer shores.

Most of the boats have been put
to cradle.

I don't chase clouds any more
and shrieking seagulls bore me.

Autumn finds me ambivalent
when summer saw me singing
as I scrambled along the docks,
never more than a step
behind you.

I wonder what I'll be
when trekking to the ski slopes
come December?

I hate this in-between time,
this time of no feeling.
Drifting somewhere between happy and sad
but being neither,
I feel no more than a fraud or clone,
walking and laughing
with the living,

pretending to be

alive.

~ FOR MARCIA ~

Sometimes the need
to get inside one's head
is great –
to let the pain and sorrow
pummel the soul
in tidal waves
of fear and anger
and asking questions
that have no answers.

We've been through so much,
we two.

I love you
as I love myself
and could I give
but one last gift
I'd give you
half my life.

~ COME WE, SOFTLY ~

Each day is an adventure
we stumble through together
on our way to new tomorrows.

So when summer's balmy days
slip slowly into autumn,
swirling leaves
beneath our feet
and winter blankets all the world
in snowy white,
I shall be
your guide and guru.

But if I lose you
somewhere on the way
call out,
I'll stop and wait.

I've always walked
too fast.

~ SEASONS OF DOUBT ~

Spring came in February –

we found ourselves running barefoot

through the park –

yet it snowed in April.

As the purple crocuses

peeped through forests

of daffodils

and forsythia spun its

golden webs in front of houses

and on bushes by the white wood fences

they seemed misplaced, forgotten, sadly amusing –

just as I must have looked

as I peered through my forest of dreams

while you went home

and called her (as did I).

But I got busy signals at both ends,

though I didn't (then)

put two and two together.

~ THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LOOKING GLASS ~

Standing here

and looking sadly misplaced,
so long we've been together
you've become my own reflection
staring back at me
from the looking glass,
struggling to break free
to the other side.

We waste so much time searching,

waiting for the right opportunity
that, not unlike Dorothy in Oz,
we often lose track
of the road back home.

The restless hours

have carried us now
from August to November.

My smile may not always suffice,

but if you offer me your arms
we might find the journey through December
a little warmer.

~ FOR BILLY, WHEREVER HE MAY BE ~

Where are you, Billy?

Clad only in cut-offs

and drenched by the sun

you strode across the sand

with the beauty of a fleeting deer,

muscles flexing like a fine-tuned engine

as you gathered me in your arms

and carried me into the thundering sea

screaming – fearful yet fearless,

knowing you were there

to rescue me.

It's autumn now.

The winds chill me to the bone

and I shiver, still afraid,

still the child you took from home

and left at the threshold of adulthood

bewildered and alone,

longing for sun, sea, familiarity.

I am still at the corner of Beacon and Berkeley,
waiting for you to gather me
in your arms again –
to rescue me from the thundering sea
of humanity.

~ MORNING SOUNDS ~

I hear you moving softly
through the darkness,
trying not to wake me,
though each muffled sound
sends my many insecurities shooting
through every fiber of my being.

You can't leave.
Not yet.
Not while I'm still drowning
in the thoughts and words and feelings
of the night – need only
you to stay a little longer
to calm me, assure me you'll return,
so that, later,
I'll have the courage to
meet the day alone.

But you didn't even say goodbye
or kiss me on the cheek,
and I read the note you left behind
half a dozen times
before the echo of your footsteps

down the staircase

had even faded.

Morning's such a vulnerable time

to be left alone.

I used to fear the dark –

hide from its demons

beneath my blanket.

But it is now my friend,

solace, sanctuary.

It hides the tears so well.

~ FREE-FALL ~

I wanted to fly.
Your cock had wings
and took me to places
I had always longed to go –
 away, above the clouds,
 beyond the sun
 and moon
 and morning star,
to far-away lands and fairy tales
and dancing on the notes of songs.

I wonder if I'd have been wiser
to fly off on my dreams,
instead. They're longer lasting
 than a cock,
 and not as jolting
when you fall to earth.

~ BEHIND YOUR EYES ~

Nearly four years now
with loving tongue and fingers
I've explored every inch
of your body –
so familiar now
and precious
I guard it as I would
my own.

Yet your mind remains
a mystery –
a vast, uncharted region full of
love? Deceit?
Happiness? Regret?
Bitterness? Fear?
Hopes and dreams that do (or don't)
include me?

I'd give most anything
to be you, if only for a day –
to hover behind your eyes
and see me as you do;
sit on the tip of your tongue –

hear the words you want to say
but don't;
lie in the core of your memory,
know how you feel
in the part deep inside
you carefully hide from those
who might find weakness,
or a shell as empty
as your come-on smiles.

~ VIEW FROM A THIRD-FLOOR WINDOW ~

It rained this morning,

(and prob'ly through the night, as well).

How glad I was

not to have to face the sun alone.

It's always like that when you're gone
or going.

I wonder what you thought about –

perhaps that you forgot

to say goodbye? –

as you walked into

the early morning drizzle,

a solitary figure

fading into the mist. But someday –

if it ever comes to suit you –

thrust yourself

into the center of my universe

and listen to its symphony.

Perhaps, then, you might lay down defenses

and allow us to face the sun

together.

~ MARKSMEN ~

The telephone
(thank you, Alexander Graham Bell!)
is our chosen weapon.

Through its wires
words are skillfully aimed
at each other's hearts,
much like those poisonous
silver-tipped arrows.

You cannot see me,
I cannot see you.
Yet we do not need to –
our aims are deadly accurate.

We incite, feeding like vultures
on the bones
of our inability
to let each other go.

We should bury them, instead,
when the moon is full.
But we can't, or won't –
ravaging them to get to the very marrow,
the essence of each other's being.

You tell me I have thirty seconds

to say my piece.

I say I'm taking you to court.

I really called to say

"Come back, I love you."

~ AFTERMATH ~

Sometimes you'd go away -
but never very far -
and always returned,
cock wagging between your legs
like a grateful puppy's tail,
knowing I would be there
for you
no matter where you strayed.

What's left of all those moments now?
the days and weeks,
months and years
we've been together?

After staying together
out of love
or lust
or maybe even like –
out of convenience
or comfort
or indifference –
after bleeding dry
each other's souls –

we sling the skeletons
of past indiscretions
at each other's psyches,
toss the dirty laundry
of deceit and betrayal
out our separate windows,
drag the carcass of our love –
bloated now in death –
through the gutters
like a cross
or flag
for all to bear witness...
pity...admire...
bleed on...

Or for.

~ SUMMER SOLSTICE ~

Looking up, you stood before me –
the face in the crowd
that stops a heartbeat
mid-sentence.

I didn't want to come to you,
open myself
to some new torment –
a new "hello"
on its way to becoming
another "goodbye."

But there you stood –
how could I resist? –
all big blue eyes
and naked vulnerability
and I before you -
naked, too, and needy,
welcoming the sun - your smile -
after a deep and frigid winter.

~ MOTHS ~

I thought I heard you calling me

from 'cross the crowded

thoroughfare,

or was it just your eyes

meeting mine -

the look of longing

I have come to know

in darkness and in light –

that haunted look of knowing

loves lost

and found

in port towns with cobblestone streets

everywhere?

Lonely or alone? you ask.

Well, probably more alone

but sometimes – yeah –

a bit of both,

though the need

to communicate –

get into heads

instead of just bodies –

is often negated by the need
for flesh and warmth.

I know I've been preoccupied
with looking for meaning
in the eyes
and words of strangers,
but what seeker of truth,
believer of love and dreams,
does not?

Like moths to the beacon's flame
we are drawn together
sharing, for a moment,
an intimacy of souls -
a reaffirmation,
faith in love and truth
and the possibility
of dreams come true -
held secret from a world
of strangers
with blank eyes
and empty hearts.

~ TRUST ~

Just as mathematics
has always been a riddle
I've pondered endlessly
 (with the questions
 still unanswered)
so too I have pondered trust -
when to,
 when not to.

One step forward,
two back
 for every misjudgment.
I must be back
to Square One by now,
 at least.

Are you afraid?
I am.
But if you'll take another chance,
 so too will I –
it's a small price to pay
 for the hope that is love.

~ FAIR WEATHER FLYING ~

I started believing in you
when you took me gently
in your arms
and told me not to worry,
everything would be all right.

But that was yesterday –
so long ago –
and now you're talking
about Djakarta.

What happened to our castle
in Bavaria?

~ #2 IN THE DRAFT, #1 IN YOUR HEART ~

Forgive me if I crowd you –

I mean well.

It's just so hard to believe

you're here beside me –

are not but a dream

that will vanish with the dawn –

so I seek proof through physical proximity.

Just as I cannot grasp the wave

that rolls to shore

nor put a sunbeam in a jar

to shine for me on dreary days

remind me, gently,

that you as well as they

can be borrowed but not possessed.

But be gentle with me, my new love –

I bruise easily.

Take time to care enough,

holding not too tightly

yet not so loosely

that we lose each other

even a second before Fate wills it.

~ ON THORNAPPLE STREET, AT MIDNIGHT ~

You stand apart from me, aloof,
not needing to tell me
I've hurt you.
I see it in your eyes,
hear it in your voice,
feel it in the uncomfortable distance
you're trying to keep.

I hurt you on purpose,
but please don't ask why.
I couldn't tell you. Perhaps
I wanted to prove I could,
or to make you show the vulnerability
you hide so well.

I don't know why I try so hard
to fight with you.
Perhaps I am afraid to learn
your self-gifts are nothing more
than you would give to anyone else
and try to goad you
into proving me wrong.

~ JOURNEY'S END ~

You asked, in your unassuming way,
if I love you.

Don't you know by now
I've loved you half my life,
at least?

Perhaps I never told you
that my journey toward you
found me wandering two continents
and left me ten years older.

And yes, I'd have recognized you anywhere,
for I've known your eyes in at least
a thousand dreams – searched for them
in every passing face.

Now I know how to answer those
embarrassing queries
about what I've been doing with my life.

I've been waiting for you.

~ TO A WANDERING JOURNALIST, STATESIDE ~

I await impatiently
the end of long December nights
when you are at my side –
returned from some far-away city –
so I can, again,
wrap myself within your warmth –
safe,
like a child inside
its mother's womb.