

I Don't Know Your Face

I don't know your face.

I know the shape of it. The curves, the lines, the beautiful contours.

I know the idea of it.

But I don't know your face.

It is hidden to me.

Not always.

Not forever.

Just today. Right now. In this moment of strife.

I said words that were beneath me. Words that made less of you. Painful words.

Words ill-fitting and ugly. Unworthy words.

I said them. I meant them. I hate them. I hate myself for saying them.

You are no angel.

Your imperfections are beautiful and heartbreaking.

You are mine. I am yours. We take turns hurting, biting, maiming.

That is not who you are. It is not who I am.

It is who we are together.

Not always.

Not forever.

Just today. Right now. In this moment of rancor.

You said injurious words. You raged and quaked and yelled.

Your words have broken my heart. They made me feel small.

Insignificant. Impotent.

You said them. You meant them. You hate them. You hate

yourself for saying them.

I love the all of you that I know.

Some parts are hidden. I have kept things hidden as well.

We share those hesitantly. With fear and trembling.

We hold back. It protects us from shame. From rejection. From loneliness.

Together, we reject that shame. We know this.

Always.

Forever.

Today. Right now. In this moment of healing.

We made promises before. Promises for then and forever.

We are one. Bodies, spirit, hearts. Knitted together by holy words. A holy vow.

We said them. We meant them. We love them. We love each other for saying them.

The Progression

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I.

I took my icy water in white cups

when we sipped the evening's streams
beside the round lava rocks
freezing our forest with dreams.

II.

I take tiny cups
with icy water from the evening's wells
when we dip them with deep
dips in dreaming wells

beside my tick tocking clock
on my mantle of bells.

III.

I dip them pell-mell,
the white cups
in the dipping well
of my deep dipping dreams

and

I think thoughts,
and thoughts and droughts,
beside the lithe, long legs of the thinking tree

when I dip my pen
in deep letters
that aren't the words I mean to say.

IV.

And at last we
forgive our human language,
you and me,

in deep wells beside the round, rocking tree

where I
dreamt of the deep deeps

and the deep,
rocking hum of the earth
dreamt and dreams.

V.

And there were round founts
where I froze my deeps with dreams
around round river mounts
in the light of day,

and there were uncovered founts
by the long legs of the tree

when we dipped our pens
in deep letters
that weren't the words we meant to say,
when nostalgia transpired,

and there was heaven
gesturing toward
its gates all along;

that is all
we really needed after all,
that is all.

He Lies Laying

The v-like manger-cradle
balanced the babe in a bed
so cold but comfortable
 He lay

in the midst of the struggle
the manger-cradle king
with star-found worship
 He lay

when they saw heaven on earth
in the clouds greater than the sun
between the branches of David's line
 He lay.

Our winter stars shine in adorned
worship when heaven on earth
 lies laying

grace in the midst of our struggle, the
v-like manger-cradle
balances the babe
 lies laying

love in our cold but comfortable
battle worn defense of the fire
 He lies laying

joy when He lay laying
the venom's lies left
when we left our sins

and truly

the babe lies laying still.

The Lines of Our Joy

Undoubtedly, no amount of writing
describes the unmeasured happy, leaping joy,
the loudly whooping folks and toys,

the happy days,
the mellow ways
the lays, the lines
streaming the tree of time,

doting time,
times of dreams
and dreams in dreams.

I'll watch them laugh
all splayed with wishes and
ways of yuletide joy

in the measured time,
doting time,
dreams in tracks of time,

the happy days,
doting ways,
dipped in lays and lines
streaming the tree with times,

And no word or measure
defines our happy times and toys
nor the whistling tracks of our timeless joys.

Approaching Autumn

REO proudly presents Ben Plunkett's newest poem – *Approaching Autumn*. We decided to present this one in a different format than usual, hoping that it would capture more people's attention. It deserves that. One suggestion, please watch it in Full Screen mode for best viewing. Otherwise, the text might be hard to read for those with less-than-perfect vision.

The Tick Tock

A little away
the clock tick tocks
the time where
we know He knows
it tick tocks
the clock rocks

away
when all was lost
He left the stars
where love is lush to
touch our hands,
our heads, our souls,
standing

in His thunder
underneath in
the nothingness
of our ticking,
in the sea of our tocking,
in the ticking, the tocking,

away
when life was lost
and deliverance
crossed into our
land where love is losing,
where He touches our hands, our heads, our souls,
where He views this sphere so

away
ticking, tocking,
our sides
plumped with bumps
and clumps and thorny lumps
far away
from His sigh
of mercy,
of death, His death,
of life, His life,
of the tick tock
the clock rocks
today.

They are the One

Life,
it loved,

our lacks it loved,
our lacks and lesions,
our lonely prose,
our din and dark, deflated cohesion,

and
pledges,
pledges of joy,
of sons, of daughters,
every girl, every boy;

expected, cradled,
so softly sailed,
cradled, sailed on an inner sea,
breathing, bending,
end to end, top to toe, nose to knee,
sails glowing, souls moving, thoughts growing.

life,
it loves,
sunny and stirring,
end to end, after and during;
they are the one, the one we love.

Say Lord

Son, said the Father, Son,
say it Son, say I am King,

say
I stand alone,
alone,
I stand alone on a glory-stoned throne,

say
I see,
see,
I see the magi searching for me,

say
I feel ire,
ire;
the shadows of death lurk
against the raging fire,

say
I love,
love,
love Mary and Joseph,
love all men, all women, all children,
love the world,
I love,

say
I know,
know
of Herods and Caesars
and evil and empires
and so, Son,
say
the night
of seraphs and shepherds,

say
the grace,
say the joy,
say John, say Paul, say Peter,
say it is accomplished.

And mankind shall say,
O mighty Kings of Kings, stand upon
the wind and bear the weight of power,

pouring command from lungs
quivering its huge stalactite.

He has summed it all and said it all
and we stand here
signing our names upon the branching
hands of the tree resting tip-to-tip
and we grow and grow
as clouds glow and assemble.

The Tree

Green tree, bright green tree,
dancing joy,
joyous seed,
resting on a lush, green sea.

The bells and bows,
the matchless lights,
shift like lightning,
sing like snow.

Tinsel twirls, bright green tree,
the dancing joy,
the joyous light,
twist and sing on the lush green sea.

Bright green tree,
we watch and wait,
watch and wow,
watch and bow,
waiting, watching the lush green sea.

The angel lauds,

glimmers,
shimmers,
simmers,
applauds and then

a pause.

Father Rakes Leaves

It is early afternoon and
Father rakes leaves beneath a heavy cloud.

He is unafraid of storms and brushes the foliage
beneath streaked branches.

The cloud, it is angry,
a billowing general angry and loud.

Father, he is alone,
but not lonely,
in the red-green-brown expanse.

The cloud, it is angry,
it beckons its brethren,
the looming battalions angry and proud.

Father, he muses in the company of a thoughtful understanding
and brushes the tree-lost foliage across the leaf-splayed
landing.

The clouds, they are an angry crowd,
descending their breeze-blown chariots,
and Father rakes leaves.