

# 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**

## **The Progression**

**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.