A Series of Poems

by Sappho of Lesbos

Without warning
As a whirlwind
swoops on an oak
Love shakes my heart

If you will come
I shall put out
new pillows for you to rest on

Thank you, my dear
You came, and you did
well to come: I needed you. You have made
love blaze up in
my breast—bless you!
Bless you as often

as the hours have
been endless to me
while you were gone

I was so happy
Believe me, I
prayed that that
night might be
doubled for us

Now I know why Eros,
Of all the progeny of
Earth and Heaven, has
been most dearly loved

She was dressed well:
Her feet were hidden
under embroidered
sandal straps—fine
handwork from Asia

But you, monkey face
At this, I loved you
long ago while you
still seemed to me a
small ungracious child

I was proud of you, too
In skill I think
you need never
bow to any girl
not one who may
see the sunlight
in time to come

After all this
At this, you hate
even the thought
of me. You dart
off to Andromeda
With his venom
Irresistible
and bittersweet
that loosener
of limbs, Love
reptile-like
strikes me down

Day in, day out
I hunger and
I struggle

You will say
See, I have come
back to the soft
arms I turned from
in the old days

Tell me
Out of all
mankind, whom
do you love

Better than
you love me?

It’s no use
Mother dear, I
can’t finish my
weaving
You may
blame Aphrodite
soft as she is
she has almost
killed me with
love for that boy
NOVEL

I

No one's serious at seventeen.
—On beautiful nights when beer and lemonade
And loud, blinding cafés are the last thing you need
—You stroll beneath green linden on the promenade.

Lindens smell fine on fine June nights!
Sometimes the air is so sweet that you close your eyes;
The wind brings sounds—the town is near—
And carries scents of vineyards and beer...

II

—Over there, framed by a branch
You can see a little patch of dark blue
Stung by a sinister star that fades
With faint quiverings, so small and white...

June nights! Seventeen! —Drink it in.
Sap is champagne; it goes to your head...
The mind wanders; you feel a kiss
On your lips, quivering like a living thing...

III

The wild heart Crusoes through a thousand novels
—And when a young girl walks alluringly
Through a streetlamp's pale light, beneath the ominous shadow
Of her father's starched collar...

Because as she passes by, boot-heel tapping,
She turns on a dime, eyes wide,
Finding you too sweet to resist...
—And cavatina dies on your lips.

IV

You're in love. Off the market till August.
You're in love. —Your sonnets make Her laugh.
Your friends are gone, you're had news.
—Then, one night, your beloved, writes...

That night... you return to the blinding cafés;
You order beer or lemonade...
—No one's serious at seventeen
When lindens line the promenade.

29 September 1870
true lovers in each happening of their hearts
live longer than all which and every who;
despite what fear denics, what hope asserts,
what falsest both disprove by proving true
(all doubts, all certainties, as villains strive
and heroes through the mere mind's poor pretend
—grim comics of duration: only love
immortally occurs beyond the mind)
such a forever is love's any now
and her each here is such an everywhere,
even more true would truest lovers grow
if out of midnight dropped more suns than are
(yes, and if time should ask into his was
all shall, their eyes would never miss a yes)

yes is a pleasant country:
if's wintry
(my lovely)
let's open the year

both is the very weather
(not either)
my treasure,
when violets appear

love is a deeper season
than reason;
my sweet one
(and April's where we're)
L1V

if everything happens that can’t be done
(and anything’s righter
than books
could plan)
the stupidest teacher will almost guess
(with a run
skip
around we go yes)
there’s nothing as something as one

one hasn’t a why or because or although
(and buds know better
than books
don’t grow)
one’s anything old being everything new
(with a what
which
around we come who)
one’s everything so

so world is a leaf so tree is a bough
(and birds sing sweeter
than books
tell how)
so here is away and so your is a my
(with a down
up
around again fly)
forever was never till now

now i love you and you love me
(and books are shuter
than books
can be)
and deep in the high that does nothing but fall
(with a shout
each
around we go all)
there’s somebody calling who’s we

we’re anything brighter than even the sun
(we’re everything greater
than books
might mean)
we’re everything more than believe
(with a spin
leap
alive we’re alive)
we’re wonderful one times one
Wedding Day

by Seamus Heaney

I am afraid.
Sound has stopped in the day
And the images reel over
And over. Why all those tears,

The wild grief on his face
Outside the taxi? The sap
Of mourning rises
In our waving guests.

You sing behind the tall cake
Like a deserted bride
Who persists, demented,
And goes through the ritual.

When I went to the Gents
There was a skewered heart
And a legend of love. Let me
Sleep on your breast to the airport.

I Can’t Tell You How Much I Miss You
by Alexis Kienlen

I can’t tell you how much
I miss you

I tell you too much.
About how I miss your hands your breath
the warmth of your chest your hipbones when they poke me
in the side, sex in all forms, your head between my legs,
someone to hold me, fulfillment, conquest, skin, limbs from
all sides and the sound and scent of desire.

I can’t tell you how much I miss you any more.
I Don’t Love Anyone by Belle & Sebastian

I don't love anyone
You're not listening
You're playing with something
You're playing with yourself

I don't love anyone
You're not listening even now
You're playing with someone
You're playing with someone else

And if there's one thing that I learned when I was a child
It's to take a hiding

I don't love anything
Not even Christmas
Especially not that
I don't love anything

No, I don't love anyone
Maybe my sister
Maybe my baby brother too, yeah
I don't love anyone

But if there's one thing that I learned when I was still a child
It's to take a hiding
Yeah if there's one thing that I learned when I was still at school
It's to be alone

Out in the street today
The kids are playing, having fun
I pass them by I'm not a kid, no
I don't love anyone

I met a man today
He told me something pretty strange
There's always somebody saying something
He said, "The world is as soft as lace"

But I don't love anyone