

VALENTINE'S
DAY
POEMS

Nicholas Gordon

Copyright © 2006 by Nicholas Gordon

The poems in this book may be used free for any personal or non-commercial purpose. For commercial use of these poems, please contact the author at webmaster@poemsforfree.com.

Published 2006

Printed by CafePress.com in the United States of America

A VALENTINE IS NOTHING LIKE

A Valentine is nothing like
A chocolate or a rose.
For in a week these shall be gone,
But Valentines remain.

If love were always sweet to tongue
Or fragrant to the nose,
Each day would be like Valentine's,
And we would go insane.

A Valentine just hangs around
Waiting to be kissed
Long after special days have passed
And every days are here.

So one is wise to choose one well
And chocolates to resist.
For in the midst of mania
It's nice to have one near.

BE MY VALENTINE:
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Be my Valentine: What does that mean?
Each of us must walk through life alone,
More deeply desolate than we have known,
Yearning for a truth we've never seen.
Valentines are from beyond that dream,
Are like a sunrise on a world of stone.
Little on this journey can we own
Except as miracles might intervene.
No way but through loving might we give
The freedom of our being to another.
In such a sacrifice we hope to live
No longer bound by dreams of flesh and bone,
Even as we bind our lives together.

BEFORE I KNEW YOU, I HAD ALWAYS LOVED YOU

Before I knew you, I had always loved you,
Even as I dreamed of whom I'd love.
My inner picture was a portrait of you
Years before your heart my heart would move.
Vistas of enchantment are but rarely
As we find them in reality.
Love with you is what I dreamed, but really,
Eden as no dream could ever be.
Nor is this the magic of the moment,
The proper costume for the holiday.
In words like these one finds the winnowed ferment,
Not of the desire, but of the way,
Else lost amid the longings of the day.

BEFORE LOVE, THAT JOLTING LILT

Before love, that jolting lilt
East of roses, in perturbed darkness,
Missing the eternal circumstance,
Yearning still, again, for that exploratory tilt ...
Vainly would I fly into your heart
Afire, burning, consumed, expended.
Love is not an ending; nor does it end
Easily: becomes pith, becomes seed, starts
Needing, kneading, mid-desperation,
The long climb out of loneliness, turning
In hope, in anguish, in foolish expectation.
No two are joined except in painful learning:
Each frightened lesion closed for restoration.

BLESSINGS ARE THE THINGS WE TAKE FOR GRANTED

Blessings are the things we take for granted.
Each holiday we notice what we see.
Most know the Earth is utterly enchanted
Yet walk through life and love mechanically.
Valuing one's gifts takes resolution
After days and nights of fantasy.
Love brings the sweet relief of absolution,
Enveloping our hesitance in need.
No touch inspires so swift a revolution,
Transforming all the hieroglyphs we read.
In your love is the charity of spring,
Nor self-obsessed nor blinded by some creed,
Embracing the grey dawns that blessings bring.

EACH DAY YOUR SMILE BECOMES MY MORNING STAR

Each day your smile becomes my morning star.
I look at you and then my feelings shine.
From you I learn far more than words or numbers:
You're the book that someday will be mine.

You're the one whose love my love of learning
Will one day trace in its ancestral line.
For all the ways you help me grow towards beauty,
I ask you please to be my Valentine.

HAPPINESS IS NOT A TENDED ROSE

Happiness is not a tended rose
Amid the prescient beauty of a garden:
Perhaps one senses soon some gate may close;
Perhaps one senses soon the earth will harden.
Years come and go like waves upon a shore,
Violent or peaceful with the wind.
After one has given up on more,
Love waits within the heart, its passion thinned.
Even in a passage void of light,
Nether windings black with rage and grief,
There are waters sweet with lost delight
In which one finds a strong, serene belief.
No happiness can overcome life's pain
Except one love, and love give life again.

HAPPY VALENTINE, MY LOVE

Happy Valentine, my love!
All my love is yours.
Praised be love that brings us home,
Pilgrims to these shores.
Yearnings here find harborage;
Vanities, sly smiles.
All that righteous anger rends,
Love here reconciles.
Even in the darkness where
No bitterness finds rest,
Thoughts of you are like a dawn
Intent on happiness.
Nor would I have so light a heart
Except that I am blessed!

HERE THERE ARE NOT TEARS ENOUGH TO TELL YOU

Here there are not tears enough to tell you
All the love I have within my heart,
Plainly to proclaim my love before you,
Put with simple grace and little art.
Yet I must try, for love ought not be hidden,
Veiled for fear of nakedness if known,
Afraid to enter silences unbidden
Lest it should have to cross the stage alone.
Even so, love needs the wings of words:
No truth is not transfigured by expression.
The heart of love, like those of captured birds,
Interred too long succumbs to its depression.
Nor are words enough, for love is more
Elusive than a verbal net can hold,
Singing like a sea across my shore,
Dancing back, white fold on endless fold.
All I am and have I give to you,
Yet love is more, and more I cannot do.

HOPE IS A BREEZE ACROSS AN OPEN FIELD

Hope is a breeze across an open field.
Anger comes from pounding on a door,
Positive one wants the door to yield.
Perhaps from this one senses something more.
Yearning is a song to wake the dead.
Very few can yearn for what is theirs.
Although love waits half-naked on the bed,
Life can seem a maze of doors and stairs.
Each soul pursues the prey of its desire,
Not knowing that to have must mean to kill.
There is no deed that documents love's fire;
In lovers' hearts, one comes and goes at will.
Need is a wind that strips the landscape bare;
Eventually one turns, and love is there.

HOW LITTLE IN ME IS NOT TOUCHED BY YOU

How little in me is not touched by you!
A friendship is a light that fills the heart,
Painting with its gold each darkened hue,
Providing warmth to each sequestered part.
You are the mirror of my better self,
Verifier of the best in me,
A bridge across the unsuspected gulf
Lodged between what can and ought to be.
Expectations can be wings, not bars,
Necessary to sustain our flight.
The faith of friends in us is wholly ours,
Incoming to uplift us to its height.
No soul can see itself, but must depend,
Each on each, upon a trusted friend.

HOW NECESSARY IS IT TO REMIND

How necessary is it to remind
A loving couple that they are in love?
Perhaps a well-placed word might pierce the rind,
Penetrating hearts that dormant prove.
Years accumulate like fallen snow,
Vast fields of understanding, thick and cold,
As time surrenders even those who know,
Leaving love a story long since told.
Each year, therefore, occasion must be made,
Name-day of love, that lovers all might speak,
Taking a risk that else they might evade,
In search of pleasure even angels seek.
Need comes slowly, like a warm spring rain.
Except one sing, the song must be in vain.

HOW SIMPLE TO BE HAPPY HERE IN HEAVEN

How simple to be happy here in heaven!
After all, one doesn't want for much.
Passion finds its willing partner, ever
Pleased to please with a deft and tender touch.
Yearning is like walking through a valley
Veiled in the loveliness of flowers.
All the beauty of the earth can only
Lead us to the edge of what is ours.
Etched into our love there is a message,
Not of now but of all time and place,
Telling of a truth beyond the passage
In which we move from mystery to grace.
Nor are there signs that such content can be
Except my love for you, and yours for me.

I MISS YOU TERRIBLY THIS DAY OF LOVE

I miss you terribly this day of love,
Miss you with a wound that stabs and aches.
I see the love around me, and it takes
So much strength simply just to move.
Soon, soon, my love, this waiting will be done.
You and I will have what we desire.
On days like this we'll sit beside the fire,
Undoing all the pain of days long gone.

I WISH YOU WERE MY VALENTINE

I wish you were my Valentine
Though I may not be yours,
And I may, in my ignorance,
Be speaking to closed doors.

I have no inkling of your heart,
No hint what you might say;
But when I think of you the sun
Will just not go away.

There is in you a loveliness
That makes my darkness shine,
And so I'll wait, if wait I must,
To be your Valentine.

LOVE COMES THROUGH THE EYES THAT SEE

Love comes through the eyes that see
And through the ears that hear,
For people are quite beautiful,
And words make feelings clear.

Love comes through the hands that touch
With unabashed affection,
For only skin-to-skin can love
Maintain its true direction.

Love comes through the tastes and smells
Of fresh and well-cooked food,
For in the gift of nourishment
Is much else that is good.

But though love comes through senses five,
Love comes from the heart,
For there resides the greater love
Of which ours is a part.

MY LOVE IS BOTH A HUNGER AND A GIVING

My love is both a hunger and a giving,
A need to have and also to bestow,
A lavish lust for flesh and yet a yearning
For beauty as austere as polished stone.

I want more than my life your happiness,
And yet my happiness depends on you.
Like a child I linger in your shadow
While like a parent I take you in my arms.

I want to be the sun to fill your sky
While like a rose I open to your smile.
I want to be the air you breathe, your music,
While like the sand I wait upon your sea.

So like and unlike, my love is doubly bonded,
The joys of giving and receiving joined.
This day of love it is my gift to you,
A heart you can consume yet keep forever.

NO LOVE SO STRONG IT NEEDS NO SIGN

No love so strong it needs no sign,
Nor feeling deep it needs no light:
So will you be my Valentine?

Love loves the days that loves define,
When words bring souls to silent sight.
No love so strong it needs no sign,

Nor can we our own souls divine
Without the music of delight:
So will you be my Valentine?

And will you let yourself be mine
As I am yours, of need and right?
No love so strong it needs no sign,

Nor is it wrong to draw a line
And need with hungry need requite:
So will you be my Valentine?

For love grows old like sun-drenched wine
That sweetness brings to evenings bright.
No love so strong it needs no sign:
So will you be my Valentine?

THE DAY OF LOVE REQUIRES A COMPANION

The day of love requires a companion,
But I find myself at this time all alone.
Words of sweet affection fill the morning
Like bells outside the windows of my room.

I don't know why I don't have someone with me.
I've loved and been loved through the restless years.
The mysteries of love I hold within me
Are a darkness unrelieved by moon and stars.

And yet I feel more love than I have ever
Felt within the circle of a kiss.
Love need not be a passion or a fever,
Nor does it need a hand for its caress.

Love does not require a companion.
It doesn't need an object or a home.
It flies above the ecstasy of morning
And fills the universe inside my room.

THERE'S RICHNESS IN
A LOVE FOR LIFE

There's richness in a love for life
Here among the valentines,
A king and queen as man and wife:
Not leaning towards what lust inclines;
Knowing well the needs of state
Yon regal grace alone attends,
On which the peace, both small and great,
Undone by doubt, alone depends.

THIS VALENTINE'S I WISH THAT YOU WERE WITH ME

This Valentine's I wish that you were with me.
It's lonelier than most days I'm alone,
Even though we'll manage on the phone
To touch with words the face we cannot see.
You away are far more dear to me
Than anyone who might remain at home.
My love is in the places that you roam,
Being with you where I cannot be.
We do not choose the objects of our passion,
But passively await the holy fire
That immolates our past and lights our fate,
Twisting through the alleys of desire.
So I am yours, and will contentedly wait,
Allowing love my life and will to fashion.

TO ASK YOU TO BE MY VALENTINE

To ask you to be my Valentine
I'd have to talk to you,
Something that in all this time
I've managed not to do.

I'd have to get past "Hi!" somehow
To show you that I care,
But the right time is never now,
Especially when you're there.

It's as if a wall of fear,
Transparent yet profound,
Came hurtling up as you come near,
Cutting off all sound.

I fear I won't know what to say
And strike you as a fool,
Or you'll be glad to get away,
Polite not to be cruel.

Easier to dream than act,
To hope than to find out,
So fearful of the force of fact
I wait in fear-filled doubt.

But now the day of love has come,
And I must cross its line,
And so I ask you through this poem
To be my Valentine.

TO MY VALENTINE,
WITH ALL MY LOVE

To my Valentine, with all my love,
Of whom I cannot say enough in praise:
May my love for you sufficient prove,
Yearning to redeem your caustic days.
Vortices within may drag you down.
Anchor, then, in my serenity.
Love saves some who otherwise might drown,
Embarked alone upon their Galilee.
Nor should you deem your own love not enough
To be the chapel to which I retreat
In search of a pavilion for my pain.
No love is love unless it be a seat
Enchanted, where a stone might weep again.

VALENTINE'S A DAY TO SAY, "I LOVE YOU"

Valentine's a day to say, "I love you,"
A ritual that stages something real,
Letting out the truth of what I feel
Even as I think it often of you.
Nor could I with such grace without this day
Tell you that I'm grateful that I have you,
Impress upon you just how much I need you,
Needing such a frame for what I say
Even as I would my heart reveal.

VALUE ME FOR WHAT I GIVE YOU

Value me for what I give you;
All the rest hold in your heart.
Life does not fulfill our wishes;
Even lifelong lovers part.
Now let yourself be lulled by kisses,
Take from the moment all that's due;
Inter within what your heart misses,
Nor let what's false destroy what's true.
Enjoying love requires art.

VEIL US IN ICY MIST

Veil us in icy mist
And hide us from the wind!
Love eludes the paradigm,
Eden yet within.
None will see our nakedness,
That outward sign of trust,
Intimate in joy and pain,
Need, tenderness, and lust;
Easily familiar,
'Twixt ecstasy and peace,
Safely in our solitude,
Delighted to repeat
A passion that returns, returns,
Yet renders us complete.

VERY LITTLE LOVE
IS LOST IN LIVING

Very little love is lost in living.
A star can fill a universe with light,
Lasting not one second less for giving
Each of us the gift of its delight.
Nor do we love ourselves the less for loving,
Taking others' pleasures for our own.
In love there is an ecstasy unmoving,
Neither more engaged nor less alone,
Eternal in its house of flesh and bone.

VEST IN ME YOUR LIFE,
AS I IN YOU

Vest in me your life, as I in you,
All we are and have, and ever will.
Love must make the choice, for good or ill,
Ever choosing blindly what we do.
Nor can we reason such a choice, or view
The consequence and total up the bill.
In all that matters most, we wait until
No choice remains but what we know is true.
Embrace me, then, on this day of love,
'Ere we turn again to restless days
Somnambulant, redundant, querulous,
Days that pass but never salient prove,
As now we can find joy beneath the maze,
Years rich with the refrain that we are us.

VESTIBULES ARE ALL ONE GETS TO SEE

Vestibules are all one gets to see
As even self must grope through darkened rooms.
Love allows less light than one assumes,
Ever too constrained for clarity.
Nor does one find much light in ecstasy,
Though years replenish what the heart consumes.
In new-found joy the old refrain resumes,
New wonder at the same old mystery.
Each love lights dimly what the heart well knows:
'Tis neither more nor less than what one is
Staring back at one with alien eyes.
Deep beneath a flame that comes and goes
A darkness waits that's neither hers nor his,
Yet is to share when both run out of lies.

WILL YOU BE MY VALENTINE?

Will you be my Valentine?
I know that I am yours.
You are like a tossing sea
And I am like your shores.

You are like an endless wave
And I your waiting sand.
And I will wait forever as
You come and smooth my hand.

I will wait forever, yet
You are a part of me.
I hold you in my arms, while you
Come to me endlessly.

Will you be my Valentine?
I know that I am yours.
I love you with a love that yearns
To be your golden shores.

WORDS CAN TELL WHAT HEARTS DIVINE

Words can tell what hearts divine
This most romantic time of year:
So will you be my Valentine?

I'll be yours if you'll be mine
Till golden moon meets midnight drear.
For words can tell what hearts divine

When air's perfume and water's wine,
And cupids hover at one's ear:
So will you be my Valentine?

And do we feelings dare define
In phrases adamant and clear?
For words can tell what hearts divine,

And souls can step across a line
On days when angels wait to cheer:
So will you be my Valentine?

Ah, love! Let love this one day shine
On fancies lush and passions sheer!
For words can tell what hearts divine:
So will you be my Valentine?

YOU ARE MY HEART, MY HOPE, MY HELP

You are my heart, my hope, my help,
The passion that is me,
The whole of which I am a part,
My peace, my ecstasy.

You are my future, present, past,
My ship, my sail, my ocean,
The wind that brings me home again,
The home for every motion.

You live within me, yet I am
Without you all alone.
With you I am full of light;
Without you I am stone.

Is this foolish? Yes, perhaps,
But also it is true.
I think of life as something I
Can spend with only you.

Ah, my love! Love longs for such
Sweet celebrants as this!
Love is a burden and a joy,
Slavery and bliss.

This day of love come love with me,
Come sing with me my song.
Come be my Valentine, and I
Will love you my life long, my love,
Will love you my life long.

