

This selection of unpublished poems were found among Mary's papers, some written under pseudonyms. The whole collection is Copyright © Executors of Mary Nicholson, 1996

## **Ode to a Rhinoceros** \_\_\_\_\_

by its faithful keeper

I rather like the rhino  
Because he does not make  
The slightest effort to return  
The interest I take.

The warthogs get affectionate  
If once you scratch their backs  
I know I'm rather liked by gnus  
And just adored by yaks.

The tiger and the elephant  
The bison and the bear  
Have many little loving ways -  
But rhinos never care.

How different from women;  
If ever you go near,  
They just drop what they're doing  
And say, "What is it, dear?"

A rhino never even  
Takes notice when you pass;  
He just makes mumbling noises  
With little tufts of grass.

But women have a thousand things  
They seem to want to know -  
What makes you eat so very fast  
And think so very slow ....

And whether you still love them,  
And why you never think  
Of buying them a present  
Or standing them a drink.

And in a certain sort of mood  
They even ask you why  
You haven't had your hair cut  
Or worn another tie.

A rhino's far more soothing  
(Although he looks so stern)  
He simply doesn't know a thing  
And doesn't want to learn.

## Narcissus Blues

---

I saw you passing and wanted you to stay  
But I didn't wave, for how could I say  
I'd loved you in my own way, honey, in my own way.

It might have been something, but we didn't achieve it  
Because I said, and couldn't retrieve it  
Take it or leave it, honey, take it or leave it.

I thought you could take it, and that was grand  
But when nothing turned out the way I'd planned  
You didn't understand, honey, you didn't understand.

I couldn't be different, why didn't you see  
That this was the way it had to be  
Because it was me, honey, because it was me.

Our heart's desire might have been granted  
We wouldn't have been ever haunted  
If you'd done what I wanted, honey, if you'd done what I wanted.

I'd have made you happy, if I'd been given  
A proper change - it would have been Heaven  
But I won't be driven, honey, I won't be driven.

I had a dream and the dream came true  
Just for a day but why did you  
Have a dream too, honey, have a dream too?

That's why I never write, although  
I love you still, and now you know  
So just let it go, honey, just let it go.

## The Heart Changes

---

### The Heart Changes

I

The heart changes slowly

the will  
grasps and hammers  
forcing  
things, till they  
become  
shapes

(metal becomes pokers  
and railway engines  
wood turns into chairs  
glass into window-panes  
these processes are not  
difficult

but the heart  
changes  
slowly)

The will, acting  
clumsily and from  
a distance  
presses on a  
vacuum, and aims  
direct  
blows, which  
glance into  
space and  
the heart, changing slowly  
its growth-movements invisible

is not  
touched  
the forces of the  
will, unchecked  
are wedged with violence  
locked  
in an extreme of action  
inoperative

the heart trembles and sheds  
its leaves, but the  
sap, rising (these tides  
being ancient  
beyond memory or knowledge  
and before legend) shapes it  
in former  
life-patterns

Now can these two  
be at peace, can the  
will acquire  
wisdom, and the heart lose  
its fear?

## Circles

## II

Out of these strains  
a circle

you, the baby  
lie in a circle  
of my arms  
where everything is now  
known, my face even  
at the edge, dimly

you, the man  
make outside us  
a circle  
of protection

we, the man and I  
allowed him into  
our life  
to occupy spaces  
not filled already  
by us

but he is a separate  
force, impossible to fit in  
geometrically, he strikes  
right in the middle of us  
(like a pebble in a pond)  
making us  
into circles

## White Sky

## III

This white sky, consciousness  
covers a forest of dream-shapes  
the upper surfaces of leaves flash like mirrors  
between them, these hairy triangles are giraffe's ears  
this ink-black bird wheels and turns azure and emerald  
underneath, the darkness is dense and spongy as the black  
moss  
there are no distinctions, no colours, but the thrust of vegetation  
smells, noises, the patter of small beasts  
the slither of a snake from a branch, the crack of dead wood  
The bright surface of the forest outdazzles the sky

## Come, They Said

## IV

Come, they said

you have been long enough  
watching  
you have gone your  
lonely journeys  
you have discovered  
secrets, you have tested  
your strength, your endurance  
you know more  
than many of us (it is reported  
that you have practised magic) ...

But when the plague  
came, you were over  
the river, when the war came  
you were beyond the mountains  
you said, there is a plague  
at my heart, there is war  
in my spirit

So  
the distance between us has become  
palpable, we can see  
air; it thickens, and distorts  
known objects, your face  
is frenzied (do we also seem  
monstrous?) our reflected gestures  
horrify us ...

There is one way only  
come, they said.

## Growth

## V

The dimension of growth is distinct from the dimension of being for this reason growth-movements expressed in consciousness (which is in the being-dimension) lose their solidity, they become lines, and flat spaces

Objects are simple in this dimension, but they are also rigid; there are only geometrical possibilities. Therefore deadlocks occur (certain shapes not fitting) and all problems are insoluble.

But life exists also in the growth-dimension in which shapes (having moved into it from consciousness) turn inside out and become reconciled even in consciousness.

## Ghosts

## VI

We, of this generation, have no ritual, and therefore no means of placating our unadmitted selves; these are restless spirits the stairs creak and a draught murmurs through the door-chinks: and we are not sceptics, we do not deny the supernatural, but we have no way of behaving: we do not wall up the haunted room, or hang charms above the door we do not sprinkle holy water.

But we are still afraid of the dark we flood the house with light, we cannot accustom ourselves to the darkness we draw curtains across the reflections of our own faces in black windows.

And because it is only the presence not the existence of darkness the manifestation and not the possibility of ghosts, which is dispelled by light we are still ill at ease, we cannot sit quiet at the hearth, we go about warily.

It is necessary to accept the nature of darkness and to create a relationship with ghosts the old exorcisms being now unavailing.

## **Puzzle**

**VII**

Certain gestures are followed by a lightening of the spirit. They are hard to discover. This is because they are so simple.

## **Vocation**

**VIII**

A vocation is a willingness in the deepest places, without which even pouring out a cup of tea is difficult.

## **A Seed Germinates**

**IX**

Growing requires in its first phases secrecy a womb, a shell a covering of close earth

Intelligence is wintry, it strips it reveals structure (branches are

black against  
sky. The grass-tangle  
splits into frost-edged  
blades) but it does not  
annihilate, there is  
in the creative rhythm a time  
for confronting essential  
shapes, even  
for suffering this  
sleety wind  
on the forehead, now a  
dome of pain, thin  
as an eggshell

But also  
there is a time for  
release, for letting be,  
for liberating locked  
energies ( ice drifts  
on the frost-bound rivers  
sap explodes in  
blossom) and so  
giving in this sunshiny  
place, softness to all  
contours, ease to movement  
freedom to unconsidered  
possibilities

Then through the obstinate  
struggles, the ardours of a  
winter season  
a seed, born  
of exuberance, now germinates  
in secret.

## Painting On Glass

---

Painting on glass  
the master conjuror  
Now God now troll draws in and out of air  
Fauns flowers and young girls  
Fluent as light on water

Behind beyond from some black deep  
His man-ape's eyes grief-stricken calculating  
Rule the emerging shapes  
Now as he vanishes they stand alone  
New-formed and living free  
In that indivisible moment  
Where all time sings

It's here  
It's gone  
Clocks tick  
What was it I saw?  
Here a glass wall bears the signed testament  
That images of nature and of love  
Have lived and died  
Don't break the glass  
There is another transformation coming  
The signature has a high market value.

## Proposal, With Flowers

---

With this bunch of columbine  
Dear, I offer you my heart.  
If, persuaded to be mine  
With this bunch of columbine,  
You tell me that we need not pine,  
As these doves would do, apart,  
With this bunch of columbine  
Dear, I offer you my heart.

## A Proposal, Without Flowers \_\_\_\_\_

My dear Miss Watson, I must mention  
That it was always my intention  
To live in strict celibacy  
Until the age of thirty-three,  
But, since our gossip on the Pier,  
I have reduced it by a year.  
I therefore send (enclosed) a ring,  
And offer marriage in the spring.

Pray do not trouble with pretence  
of coquetry or diffidence

My dear Miss Smith, no doubt you knew  
After our pleasant walk at Kew  
(When your dear parents lagged behind)  
That I had something in mind

My dear Miss Smith, last Wednesday week  
Your father gave me leave to speak,  
I therefore send (enclosed) this ring  
And offer marriage in the spring.

Pray do not trouble with pretence  
Of coquetry or diffidence,  
For I have given (as I ought)  
This matter long and careful thought.

## **The Sample is Small** \_\_\_\_\_

The Sample is Small  
But the Range is Terrific;  
The Standard is High  
But not very Specific.

## **The Conversation** \_\_\_\_\_

We made this bubble; our breath is in it,  
Our pictures are done in water-colour on its skin  
(no thinner than yours or mine for letting life out)  
Will you have it? will you put it in your conjuror's pocket  
with the apples, and the orange, and the safety-pin, and the  
crust?

Will you keep it for rolling down streets?  
for looking at the world through, when the unchanging habits  
of shape and light on your eyes, have blinded you?  
or for holding in your hands, feeling it, thinking it the universe,  
or suddenly breaking it to pieces, for power, and to be alone  
on the wide calm frontier of loneliness and non-existence?  
Will you have it? or shall I?

Not I,  
nor you either, It is broken.  
The breath we put in it has somehow escaped:  
we are mocked, and deceived, as God was by the fall of man.  
The spirit is gone, and the suddenly-contracted body  
hangs to your skirt like a white smear of cuckoo-spit  
when you have walked at evening through the dead-nettles

## Sunshine In March

---

The early January sunshine falls  
like cold and brittle threads of white spun glass,  
and splits for you to pass.

But this dusty yellow sunshine is full of stuff;  
it touches you like sea-weed under warm sea-water;  
it muffles colour and noises and the sharp edge of the world, in  
yellow down.

It is so material I could gather it up in baskets,  
store it in loose unwinnowed corn-bright heaps  
in locked barns.

I could tease it and weave it into thick rich golden curtains,  
for hanging against winter;  
whose heavy soft folds would never be shaken by the wind.  
Outside all fears would howl and prowl across the wilderness,  
in barren chase for me, pressing down the stars like daisies.  
But these would obliterate sounds and the cataclysmic tremors of  
the universe;

no gusts would swell them.  
And I would lie on the floor by my own fire  
Watching the intangible flame.

Let us not too metaphysically examine  
this unexampled minute  
Let us go as if mid-day  
with our shadows underneath our feet.

## Lazarus

---

The Son of God, rejoicing, went on his way

But Lazarus looked on the bright world, moody-hearted,  
and found it shrunken in his eyes; yet, as the near sun  
blots out the huge distant stars with light, this point  
of intense light hid the huge distant forms of heaven.

Martha gave him her care like kisses of love,  
Like kisses of Love, Mary gave him the understanding of her heart;  
but their love was pitiable to him, bound in its humanity,  
he was troubled by it, and hid himself in cloaks of shadow,  
in unweeping misery, and slow difficult sighs;  
the margin of his storm-tossed heart was black and smooth.  
Martha, comforting his re-created, not-natural body,  
and Mary, seeking the unhappy knowledge of his sorrow,  
were aliens on his celestial territory, bounded by stars.  
Their failing voices shrilled through hours and days,  
his time was marked by the creation and decay of worlds:  
he had walked among the noble company of angels.  
His heart hardened against them like a wall of rocks.  
Night and day he longed that the binding note of life  
should be taken from his angels' eyes; he longed, not sleeping.

Mary rose trembling; she sought out a solitude;  
there in supplication knelt to the unincarnate God;  
and prayed, washing all humanity from her heart with tears.

"Oh, God, you came to us in flesh with fleshly gifts,  
the gift of body and breath, and life on the little earth.  
Now I come to you in heaven, beyond the birds' flight,  
asking the hard gift of heaven, that Lazarus be taken from me,  
Lazarus, my brother, who knew death, and lives, remembering it."

God heard him in heaven; and Lazarus was stricken suddenly.  
Martha wept and wondered, not forgetting the miracle;  
Mary, glad at heart, closed up his eyes.

## Look we have come

---

Look we have come  
from dark salt bitter seas  
over the break of the wave.  
The tide's curved claws are baffled and blunted on the rocks.

There up on the long rock-hewn ledges we learnt we died,  
in numb annihilating paralysis.

Yet with the dawn life woke in warm desire  
and the sap of dangerous energy swelled in flood  
from white insentient finger-tips to white still feet  
and the old slow blood  
keen swift and fervent like sun-fire  
under our closed eye lids awaking beat.

Stretch stretch your hands to heaven and pluck the rays  
go without fear,  
cruel (O new-created heart) the ways,  
but look, we have come ...  
look we have come ...  
O where?  
the smooth noon holds me dumb.

Look, we are drowned still  
in a hushed limitless ocean of white air,  
we have left our rich dark misery  
and found this tenuous and brittle anguish;  
there is no way out, no shore,  
no rocks to rend us into life with groans,  
we are still-oborn and no hour comes to us of pain and ecstasy.

Only we look up with habitual hope  
fixing our unexpectant eyes on the hue sub-marine flowers,  
The sun a soft lowing sea-anemone  
the moon a white lily,  
drift inaccessible  
under the aimless infecund spawn of stars.

## **The Snake** \_\_\_\_\_

The snake, who sloughs his winter skin  
Can, in this gold transfiguration win  
A difficult spring glory. From the flame  
And while ask of his past, the Phoenix came  
New-winged, new-spirited, too soon again  
And did not weigh the glory with the panic.

## **Pause** \_\_\_\_\_

Wait Love, and feel this calm; this brown and cool  
peace, of hill-torrents cupped in a rock-pool,  
with no impatience for a final sea's  
long tidal rhythm's, like eternities;  
unrippled let this brief fine pleasure stay  
till the slow-mounting impulse force a way  
down headlong in the tall  
white urgent rapture of a water-fall .....

## **Sleep** \_\_\_\_\_

Against the ripe breast of evening I am held like a child  
curved in huge hollow hands  
on a huge slow pulse of earthy drowsiness

I am a still pool  
under the light and shadow of your talgreen brown and white in a  
glazed pattern

there are no eddies in my stream  
to tug and tear at the secret water-plants  
of tender weak desire

under the glossy surface deep the warm  
the soft-stemmed river-flowers gather and settle  
against the warm rich river-bottom mud.

## The adventurous boy

---

The adventurous boy  
whose hair was like white flames  
rode unafraid between the ancient trees  
fringing the habitable world

he had forgotten men  
and little friendly houses, and love, and pain,  
and the extreme difficult tenacities

there is no end to sorrow, and no end to joy  
each moment is intrinsically such  
one after the other giving mass only, and no form  
only this is ultimate

to be stripped clean  
bare and white and smooth  
like a hazel wand  
whittled.

## Victorian novelists

---

Victorian novelists, more wise than I  
Are prone to make their introductions formal  
"This is a man called X, who lives at Y  
His class is middle, his appearance normal,  
His income (High) provides an idle life  
For him, eleven children, and one wife."

Dear Reader, I must beg you to excuse me  
I am the victim of my own inventions -  
These wayward creatures who prefer to use me  
According to more skirmishing conventions.  
Great talkers, they consistently refuse me  
Plain statements of their feelings and intentions  
In look and gesture too they have a leaning  
Towards hints and clues which bear a double meaning.

To, to establish you in place and time,  
Before they seize the liberties of prose  
I now invoke the discipline of rhyme,  
And can with more economy disclose -  
Forstalling doubt, complain and random guesses -  
A list of names and ages and addresses.

First Gregory, born eighteen eighty-one,  
A man of business, but now retired  
And widowed. Vincent is his eldest son,  
And runs the firm. He in his youth desired  
One Charmian; and ultimately won  
Her hand in marriage. But her heart remained  
Distant, mysterious and self-contained

They live in comfort, affluence and style  
On Campden Hill. And though the house is small  
They love to entertain. They talk and smile

And with well-mannered courage taste the gall  
Of disappointment. But their twins meanwhile  
Christened in haste Perpetua and Paul  
Conclude that life's a dangerous affair  
And make it their ambition not to care.

The younger brother, Grig, who might have made  
A reputation of a rarer order  
Shrank from a lifetime in the building trade  
Published one novel; hovered on the border  
of Fleet Street; married someone from the Slade;  
And now, with th4ree young children, lives in order  
at Purley. He has settled down despite all  
Ambition, to a dreary job in Whitehall.

His sister Sybil, full of plans and zest  
(Which cannot altogether cure or smother  
Her self-distrust) still seeks some point of rest.  
She got on rather badly with her mother  
And, having lost the man she loved the best,  
Took years to pluck up courage for another,  
Now, when the case of Sykes v. Sykes is through  
She'll get a husband and a step-child too.

This is the family whose fortunes lie  
Within my present vision. Lovers, friends,  
Servants, acquaintances and passers-by  
Appear amongst them. So the prologue ends,  
I'll guide you to a flat in Trevor Square  
Bid you farewell, and hope to leave you there.

## One, Two Three

---

One, two three four five  
All the world has come alive  
Why must I let it go?  
Because I love my lady so

Six, five four three two  
The grass is green the sky is blue  
Why should I in sorrow go  
Because I love my lady so.

Three two one  
one two three  
Under this returning sun  
Who will come and set me free  
To love a lady who loves me?

## **Foreign Travel: to the Dordogne** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Jolly French Misters**

"no doubt," they said, "you have voyaged from far away  
To seek yourselves deux jolie messieurs francais"  
Sirs, we are not desperate; we only feel  
We would have liked you to stop when you saw us (with a broken  
jack)  
trying to change a wheel

### **Chemin Pittoresque**

Cher M. Michelin!  
We consult you with confidence about the food et le vin.  
Forgive us if we seem a little snooty  
About your personal taste in natural beauty.

### **To The Coiffeur (Who Lent Us Bicycles)**

Homage auz Velos !  
When one finds oneself boring oneself with the big routes (red or  
yellow)  
It's time to dare  
The beauty and terror of the Chemins Vicinals and often  
excessively Ordinaires

### **Local Feature**

The ladies around Brantome  
Hardly ever stay at home  
Even in the rain, they go on sitting  
With the cows, under umbrellas, knitting.

### **Mineral Love**

M. le Macon  
Loves us, after his facon.  
His way of expressing it is sweet -  
Il nous donne les stalactite.

## **Caves for the Cavemen**

Through the Fudirac caverns, week after week  
Contemporary hordes are circulated in a Sens Unique  
Until the place begins to look like a retro-  
Spectie attempt at a Cro-magnon Metrol.

## **As Connoisseurs**

---

As connoisseurs of shocking habits  
The penguins beat us; so do rabbits  
But for the vices of the mind  
The prize is taken by mankind

How sharper than a serpents tooth  
The lacerating thorn  
The lonely ecstasy of truth  
Happy the man who only knows  
The skindeep beauty of the rose

Women, as Aristotle said  
Are very much alike in bed  
What agonies we all go through  
Believing only one will do

## Young Thomas

---

Young Thomas heard his mother speak  
And not a word said he  
"Tomorrow you and your little sister  
Must sail across the sea".

Westward lies America  
Behind us lies our home  
The good ship tacks and on her tracks  
Bear down the crafty U-Boat packs  
Under the salt sea foam

Young Thomas said to his foster father  
When half a year was gone  
"My father lies on Dunkirk beach  
And my mother is all alone".

"Then I must be your father, Thomas,  
And say the same as he,  
You must with us, and your little sister  
And keep her company".

Young Thomas said to his foster mother  
"Oh, let me go," he cried,  
"My mother saw the city fired  
And in those flames she died."

"Oh, stay awhile with us, Thomas,  
Be patient if you can,  
What can you do for your country  
Until you are a man?"

When all his friends were gathered there  
Young Thomas stood between  
"I'll say goodbye to all of you  
For I am now eighteen".

Then up and spoke his foster brother

**Dick (Reciting)** \_\_\_\_\_

The species went out one by one  
A story ends, if it's once begun

The dodo and the dinosaur  
Have had their whack and are no more

The gentle deer, the quaint baboon  
Will get their chips, and get them soon

The dog and the cat, the hen and the horse  
Are due for the chopper, in due course

Tell me, my pretty maid, if you can  
What on earth will become of man?

## Dodo

---

A Dodo in St. James's Park  
Would certainly excite remark;  
Just here and now there is no place  
For members of an extinct race.

And yet within a quarter mile  
Men act, and think, in dodo style,  
And anyone will be rebuffed  
Who asks, "Is that alive, or stuffed?"

And When all oracles are dumb  
The dodo tells us what's to come

They take the path the fates present -  
That easy way the dodo went

The silly, conscientious bird  
With clumsy caution persevered,  
Too little always, and too late -  
And met his everlasting fate.

## But Mother

---

But, mother - " down the centuries it rings,  
impertinent and sullen, obstinate  
And anxious; motto of all growing things  
Who, wheeling up into the wind of fate,  
With greedy rapture welcome all it brings -  
Provided they are not required to wait;  
And in the mirror of their parents see  
The risk of losing opportunity.

So Tom, or Dick, or Harry - call him Dick -  
A charming boy, well-mannered, handsome, kind,  
Sufficiently intelligent to pick  
A favourable moment, is inclined  
To lose his poise and temper pretty quick,  
Finding his mother is not of his mind.  
It seems that in her view he cannot drive  
Half across Europe, and come back alive.

He started off, of course, extremely well  
(His school report gave him a useful text)  
"Rotten in French this term, I'll work like hell,  
And actually, I might do better next  
If - "From this angle he attempts to sell  
His project. When his mother looks perplexed,  
"Tom's got the car," he cries, "and bags of money,  
I can't imagine why you think it funny",

Too young, too ignorant, too indiscreet,  
(But choosing softer words) she lets him know  
Just what she thinks of him. Their glances meet.  
Has she the heart to say he must not go?  
He humps his shoulder, scowling at his feet,  
And unresponsive lets her phrases flow,  
And jerks his head when, rising, she would touch  
His rounded cheek - "you wanted it so much?"

She seeks his father. "I must do my hair,  
Come up and talk to me. What can we say.  
This mad idea of Richard's. Does he care  
For any of us? Only home today -  
ne afternoon is all that he can bear  
Before he thinks out how to get away.  
O, do say something. What would you suggest?  
Or talk to him yourself, I've done my best."

" Now Dick, you've made your mother quite upset  
(This rose needs cutting - let me have your knife)  
It sometimes seems to me that you forget  
She really has a rather lonely life".  
Dick answers (quite resolved he'll never let  
Himself repeat dictation from his wife)  
" Why are her real interest so few?  
She has the garden, and the hens - and you."

" It's awkward for a woman ". For a span  
of over thirty puzzled years he's known  
How awkward. It's clear that nothing can  
Sufficiently or finally atone  
For the displeasing fact that he's a man  
And very often likes to be alone.  
Of course love's wonderful, but what a crime  
To keep a person at it all the time.

Dick says, " I swear I won't be long away,  
Just two weeks out of eight is not a lot.  
I'm sorry that I brought it up today  
But then you see Tom's father says he's not  
To go alone. I ought to write and say - "  
The other sighs, and brushes off a spot  
Of whitewash from his sleeve, and says, "All right  
I'll speak to her, and do a cheque tonight".

The Dover road strikes out into the great  
World of adventure; but the urban section  
Is crowded, devious and intricate.  
A hazy notion of the right direction  
Leads our two friends astray, and makes them late,  
So that, afraid of missing their connection,  
Through the rich country of the final lap  
Tom only sees the road, and Dick the map.

The ferry boat swings gently on the tide;  
The car is grappled, hoisted and secured.  
"Two minutes margin," comments Tom with pride,  
"I'm certainly relieved to be on board".  
Dick feels a rumble starting up inside  
"Lets have some chocolate" then cries, "good Lord  
You ought to take a look across the bay  
The cliffs are just as white as people say."

## **A Proposal with Flowers** \_\_\_\_\_

With this bunch of columbine,  
Dear, I offer you my heart,  
If, persuaded to be mind  
With this bunch of columbine,  
You decree we need not pine  
As these doves would do, apart,  
With this bunch of columbine,  
Dear, I offer you my heart.

## **Suicide Note** \_\_\_\_\_

If all the world were paper  
And all the seas were ink  
A million words would not suffice  
To tell you all I think.

The world is green with summer  
The seas are silver blue  
And all the thoughts that throng my mind  
Are images of you.

When in the earth your beauty lies  
And turns to crumbled bone  
The seas shall shelter one who loved  
And died for you alone.

## **Requiem on an Unsuitable Attachment** \_\_\_\_\_

Alas, Unhappie Mee, by Love Possess't  
Condend to all Conditions of Unrest -  
Until, possessing Love, at last I make  
Some sacrifice of love, for Love's own Sake.

ANNE FINCH

**Song** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Strophe**

Let love alone, the game's not worth the candle,  
And ounce of sweet; an hundredweight of bitter.  
All woman - and all men - are hard to handle,  
Love is but guilt, and time rubs off the glitter.

All this forget  
Your heart is not  
Your own;  
Therefore,  
Let love alone.

### **Antistrophe**

Let love alone. If love invades your senses  
Follow your willing heart and not your reason;  
When it has overcome your last defences  
Then only can you taste its golden season.

If you resist  
You leave the best  
Unknown;  
Therefore,  
Let love alone.

Anne Finch

## **Note on a (Comparatively) Austere Relationship \_\_\_\_\_**

So, having never loved, we chose the way  
Of honest friendship; yet we knew to-day  
That love is honest too, and can outlast  
Rejection of its future, and its past.

## **Note on Keeping it Dark \_\_\_\_\_**

Having accepted suavely life's arrangements  
Their opportunist love knows the estrangements  
Of casual friendship; but, when fate consents,  
Roots in crevices between events.

## **Note on the Breakdown of a Beautiful Friendship \_\_\_\_\_**

His specious, his recondite charm  
Has done them both a lot of harm  
For years and years they've got away  
With Murder almost every day  
And naturally feel annoyed  
To find familiar tricks employed  
With expertise that drives them wild  
By yet another spoilt child.

Anne Finch

## Sampler

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In the dining-room there is a sort of sampler. It belongs to Robert, who says it is very old; but John says he made it himself when he had appendicitis. It has this poem on it, in cross-stitch, with a rosebud border.

My loving mother made me to it  
This needlework in eighteen two

She told me that it should have been  
Complete by eighteen seventeen

A wife and mother I must be  
At worst by eighteen twenty three

And I began to fret and pine  
Early in eighteen thirty nine

And all the red and half the green  
Was done by eighteen seventeen

Why did my interest decline  
Early in eighteen thirty nine?

And when she went (we hope) to Heaven  
On March the second, forty seven

I stuffed it in the kitchen drawer  
Till Christmas, eighteen fifty four

Then did an hour after tea  
Each day till eighteen sixty three

Jane Parseley

## To Practice Patience \_\_\_\_\_

To Practise Patience I Begun  
This Piece Of Work In 1801

And All the Red And 1/2 The Green  
Was Done By 1817

But When I Met My Love And Fate  
On Brighton Pier In 28

I Thought Of Other Things To Do  
And Put It By Till 32

But When My Mother Tried To Fix  
The Wedding Day In 46

He Left Me - And The Main Design  
Was Quite Complete By 59

Then When She Went (We Hope) To Heaven  
On March The 2nd 67

I Wept - And Left It In A Drawer  
Till February 74

And Now In 1883  
I Do An Hour After Tea

Pray God I May Be Still Alive  
To Finish It By 1905

Jane Parseley