



B. Tobin's

Ode(s) to Joy

All you need is love.

Lennon & McCartney

*Love is born in fire
It's planted like a seed
Love can't give you everything
It gives you what you need
Love comes when you are ready
Love comes when you're afraid
It'll be your greatest teacher
The best friend you have made
You must give yourself to love
If love is what you after
Open up your heart
To tears and laughter
Give yourself to love
Give yourself to love*

Kate Wolf

*There are three things that will endure
-- faith, hope and love --
and the greatest of these is love.*

St. Paul to the Corinthians

TO
Kathleen

who taught me that love is a verb, not a noun;

AND
Ken

who is helping her create new learning opportunities.

Valentine Thoughts

*to the Tobin Women of My Life
2/14/80*

*There's this guy whom you all know
Who's just no Ordinary Joe
Thinking of you today, as he does evermore
From this far and distant West Coast shore*

*On this day of days, he'd like to explain
Why he shipped this broken heart on the very next plane
To the girl(s) of his life whom he misses so much
Would you ever have guessed he was such a soft touch?*

*Well he's writing to say, before it's too late
How lucky he is to know women so great
And so pretty and kind and who know very well
That their brother loves them more than he ever could tell*

sent on a heart shape cut into two pieces

CREBITS:

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PAIRING

*I see your touch
And hear your smile and
Taste the ideas you share*

*My senses confused
When we are apart, but what
Comes through is how much we care*

*About a way of being
And a manner of conveying these
Values held dear, if we dare*

*To bring life and love
Wherever we go,
As if it were something we wear*

*And, yet, without secrets
No reason to hide
As if we were totally bare*

*In body and soul
And naked desire as well
For not: "who's right?" but "what's fair?"*

*To anyone, therefore all
This great gift has been given
As available to us as air*

*All that's required
Is the willingness to live
Not as one, but a pair*

DISCOVERY

*Your bright light shines
Into my darkness,
Bringing warmth into the cold.*

*And your smile
Engulfs the starkness
As life's mysteries unfold.*

*The inevitability of pain
And unavoidable loss
The frustrations of trial and error*

*Are ennobled by love
Its smoothness, like moss,
Softens life's darkest terror.*

*It's your gift to my world
And while I prefer it unwrapped
I accept it in any way presented*

*For it brings width and depth
And potentials untapped,
With new ways of feeling contented.*

*The joy in each moment --
Along with the rest -- we must
Seek before it is found.*

*It deserves the reception
An inn gives every guest
Offering return on each pence with a pound.*

APPRECIATING BEAUTY

*I discovered the most beautiful of flowers
Quite early on my path down The Road
It had beauty, strength and perception
And all the love you could hold.*

*This flower was so sweet and tender
The kind you could reach out and touch
Made me wish I could take it with me
Knowing I cared for it so much*

*But looking closer, I saw it still growing
Showing only the first of many a bloom
And I thought: "What this flower needs is not picking.
This flower deserves lots of room."*

*And I thought: "Since I don't know where I headed,
Could I be sure for its best would it live?"
And I thought "How important it remain and keep growing."
And to it only freedom I could give.*

*So despite all its charms and deep beauty
Noting its sharp wit and cute smile
I still remember that flower behind me
My toughest step the first of that next mile.*

*Please, if you see it, count its petals
And find out how much it has grown.
You'll recognize it as one very special,
For of its kind very few have been sown.*

UNCOMMON SENSE

*Opportunities missed
Is there such a thing?
Isn't our path already firmly entrenched?*

*Shrouded in mist
Could be a circular ring
Or desert walk with thirst permanently unquenched*

*Future uncertain
Past quite familiar,
Each with its own strong attractions.*

*Creating a curtain
That makes living seem a strain,
Which carries a whole new set of distractions.*

*Confusions conspire
Allowing ego to dictate,
Making common sense uncommonly so,*

*Flaming desires
Make it hard(er) to learn
The lessons that help us to grow*

*Presently focused
Is the only way through,
The one path to true understanding.*

*Like swarming locust
Our energies combine
To bring happiness in for a landing.*

THE ANSWER

*Waiting to see
But surely know
How you'll look in that pretty black dress*

*That shows unto others
What I already see
How great beauty in you does God bless*

*Willing to share
Wanting to find
Good that comes from not more but less*

*Looking ahead
But staying right here —
What comes next is anyone's guess*

*Sending a smile
With or without words
Is the recipe for reduction of stress*

*Any other way
And quite quickly we find
The makings of one helluva mess*

*The tingle of touch
The shiver of life
So much pleasure – do I need to confess?*

*Now off we go
Another adventure ahead
All just because you said: "yes!".*

AWAKENING

*Fleeting glimpses confirm
The reality of dreams
Deep yearnings emerge
Released from life's seams*

*As if just awakening
To a warm sunny day
With chirping birds sending
Happy messages our way*

*Bringing tomorrow out today
And smiles out from within
And the sunlight out of darkness
Two merging lives begin*

*The dance of discovery
The exploration of desire
The experience of the infinite
The heat of life's fire*

*A new world unveiling
Mysteries unknown
New chances for learning
Secrets previously unshown*

*Let the adventure unfold
And its blessings bestow
The full benefits of friendship
From which real love grows.*

HOUSE SITTING

*My breathing gets harder
My heart pounding fast
As I drive quickly the road
Taking me to you at last*

*Patience tested by stoplights
And each car in my way
An eternity each moment
You're not part of my day*

*Your door key in hand
Your welcome in mind
Don't want you kept waiting
Or wondering why I'm behind*

*Finally!! The last stoplight
Right turn and I'm there
Finally get to see you
Lots of new things to share*

*But no car in the driveway
No dog at the gate
No teenagers to jostle
No glistening eyes await*

*Just a cat that needs petting
- a sense I know well -
And plants that need watering
And quiet which does tell*

*That you're not here now
But soon so shall be
Till then, just these reminders
Of what you mean to me.*

ONCE AGAIN

*Watching you go off
Into the night
Not knowing if or when
You'll return*

*And letting you go
In my hopes and dreams
To discover what
Remains yet to learn*

*Both cases involve mystery
Accepting unknowns
Being sure, and yet
Also uncertain*

*Looking within, nowhere else
Clear, but in doubt
Not letting suffering
Come from the hurtin'*

*With every goodbye
Closer to one
When there will be
No subsequent greeting*

*Makes more important
Each interaction
For which one might
Be our last meeting?*

WAITING

*I am waiting
to see your smile
and how it makes your eyes glisten.*

*I am waiting
to hear your voice.
Say whatever you want, I will listen.*

*I am waiting
to be in your presence,
and experience each moment's gift.*

*I am waiting
to feel your enthusiasm
for life; it gives me a lift.*

*I am waiting
to hear your latest adventure,
knowing there are more on the way.*

*I am waiting
to hold each other closely;
the very idea lasts me all day.*

*I am waiting
to touch your kind heart,
from where comes the good you spread 'round.*

*I am waiting
to be with you in silence
and experience what makes life profound.*

SEEING and/or BELIEVING

*There are moments when the trauma and drama
Part like the threatening skies
Making clear our reason for living
A true vision that opens our eyes.*

*And when such moments are passing
The light has a particular hue
Sounds and smells arise more acutely
Sensations pulsate like a birth mother due.*

*Those times have a feeling of portent
The sense of possibilities exceedingly strong
It matters not the odds or the context
It just seems like the place you belong.*

*Time stands still for such moments
History stops briefly to gaze
Progress at that moment suspended
As if it had been ceased to amaze*

*These moments that make life worth living
We sometimes inadvertently avoid
By focusing on the known possibilities
While the other kinds all get destroyed.*

*By concentrating on the narrow or negative
We obscure the more positive choice
Blocking access to such moments
By stifling the sound of its voice.*

*Some say that seeing is believing
Others say that by believing we see
Perhaps its by expecting such moments
That gives each one its chance to be.*

REASONS

*It matters not how I met you
Nor if I get right your name
Or what is your waist or shoe size
(unless they are one and the same!)*

*It's not the style of your hair
Nor where it was you were born
Or the size of your bra
(or if it is being worn)*

*It's not the car that you drive
Or how far/fast it will go.
Rather it's more important things,
But that you already know...*

*The way you see the bright side
And remain consistently upbeat
How you can see others' perspectives
Without changing your seat*

*The way that you find your own path
Without ever losing your cool
As if you knew all along
Things they don't teach in school*

*The way you stay calm & clear
And remain here & now
And appreciate each blessing
From wherever or how*

*There's many reasons I love you
But only really need one:
Because we enlighten each other
Like our Earth by its Sun.*

JUST ONE MORE DAY

*Dreams float past
Days fly by
Our waiting soon to end*

*Looking and listening
Wishing and hoping
These thoughts I meanwhile send*

*To your mind
To your heart
And body too, they blend*

*Together as one
Dwelling in that place
Life's bruises go to mend*

*Where insights join with
Desires and fears,
And aspirations we intend*

*But no secrets though
- they're not allowed -
Lest possibilities get penned*

*So while I wait
Yet one more day
With longing do I fend*

*Off desires to see
And talk and feel
What we now give instead of lend*

THE GIFT

*They say if you don't got it
You can't give it away,
But if we only get back what we give*

*Then from where does love come
If neither here nor there
For without it – like air – we can't live.*

*It's like that other matter
- neither created nor destroyed -
Yet, wherever we look, it is there*

*Like things that matter most,
Which you can feel but not touch,
And receive only if we dare.*

*From where does love come?
And why does it go?
What propels its continuous motion?*

*Through better and worse
And rich, poor or poorer
Who waters such seeds of devotion?*

*It's not man-made
Or technology-based
But it certainly gives us a lift*

*It helps replenish our selves
And better know others'
Surely love is God's greatest gift.*

REFLECTIONS on a PLASTIC FLOWER

*When I see some thing that always is
I get a little sad
For change is always for the good
NOT to change the only bad.*

*When I look at the things that always are
I realize living things are not
It seems those holding on to what they have
Rarely appreciate what they've got.*

*The thought of a love that doesn't grow
Is like a world that doesn't turn;
Without the opportunities that change brings
One might live, but never learn.*

*To celebrate the miracle of life
Is a chance one never should miss,
Like the reasons we are together now
Best expressed in our next kiss.*

*That's how I'd always like it to be
But in truth one never quite knows,
So I'll try and remain my best for you
Like this beautiful, immutable rose.*

SPRING FORWARD

*Just as water falls ever forward
So bodies/mind/spirit more closely are drawn
Just as brightly the sun arises
So too hope lifts with every new dawn.*

*Just as flowers annually bloom
So we too blossom in each interaction
Just as trees and grass keep growing
So trust brings expansion, not contraction.*

*Just as birdsongs enliven each day
So smiles illuminate our path's direction
Just as light lengthens these days of the year
So our navigation requires no course correction.*

*Just as fawn and foal emerge from the womb
So possibilities unleash rather than narrow
Just like a hammock hung from the trees
So also interests stretch beyond their old barrel.*

*Just as each fish finds its original source
So we are called back to our reason for being
Just as each sunset is a one time artwork
So we are gifted with a brief chance for seeing*

*Just as warmth fills a room lit by sunshine
So cozy our lives when enlightened by another's
Just as love fills the air in this season
So our hearts spring forth like our Earth Mother's.*

CAUSE FOR PAUSE

*Country singer says
With fiddle and twang,
Things that simply ring true*

*Ideas for the head
Connect to the heart
Things we wish we already knew*

*"You don't chose love"
The song goes
"Instead love chooses you"*

*These simple messages
Provide cause for pause,
Changing what we see and do*

*Receiver rather than instigator
Now there's a new twist
Focusing on "how?" rather than "who?"*

*And upon powers unseen
Which help us to accept, and
Not fear whatever is new*

*Freeing us from the past
And its many attachments
For, after all, it is through.*

*Perhaps also, like love,
Life chooses us
Adding us to the Great Cauldron's brew*

*Making us part of it all
And thereby one, and at peace
Such new insights broaden our view.*

CATALOGUE

*The gleam of your eyes
The flush of your cheeks
The warm glow of your oh-so-sweet smile*

*The length of your vision
The depth of your soul
Your perseverance no matter how big the pile*

*The strength of your convictions
The clarity of your vision
A way of living, rather than a life style*

*The allure of your beauty
The power of your touch
The attraction(s) pulling close(r) all the while*

*The openness of interaction
The completeness of connection
Willingness to relate with no hint of guile*

*The fun and the freedom
The hope and the trust
Your lack of any efforts to rile*

*The passion in each moment
Whether up close or afar
Ready for whatever brings the next mile*

*All this and more than
I might hope, wish or pray
Or catalogue in this poetic file*

UNEXPECTED PLEASURES

*Dog crap on the carpet
What a way to start the day!
No place to go but upward from here
No chance for further decay.*

*It's a particularly poignant reminder
Of the peculiar ways of life
And about how, if we ignore them,
Unlearned lessons lead to strife.*

*Lessons, for instance, about life's surprises
Which come when we least expect.
It's when we try to avoid them
That life's richness we deflect.*

*And about, life's diversity --
How good and bad things coexist
In such interesting combinations
We get to choose but not resist.*

*About how change is the only constant
And movement comes from learning
Effort, not resentment, required
And perhaps a little bit of yearning.*

*And yes, life involves adversity --
Why does that still come as such a shock?
To keep out pain and inconvenience
There's no so big a lock*

*The reminders that life's messy;
That cleaning is required;
That we must step up to the plate no matter what's on it;
By such "opportunities" are we inspired.*