

Of the Rose

These are the years of lost content
where the money is only so much,
and the rent is so much,
and the car is so much,
and the doctor is way too much,
and the groceries are much too much,
and the water bill is hard to swallow.

And let's not talk of teeth:
they always need filling,
and we get X-rayed every six months,
and the girls need braces,
and life's not coming up aces.
Wifey, have we lost our senses?
We're still paying off their birth bills
while saving for college expenses.

Just the other day, I felt a pang of guilt
over the purchase of a sudden rose.
The scent was heavy and extravagant;
yet somehow it declared all you've meant,
and of the rose I will not repent;
no, of the rose I will not repent.

Not Flowers

For my dear love's sake
I will not give her flowers;
for she, of all women,
is not seduced by scented powers,
nor will she lie about in idle bowers.

But what standard then to state my love?
I can't use candy nor even limericks randy,
and kisses don't do the wash nor rinse the dishes.
There they are: her domestic wishes
for which I dump my flowers and my candy.

Continuation

Love has sounds.
It used to be sweet murmurs, silly talk,
snuggle noises, low sighs, exclusivity:
the mad promises of endless passion.

Then it grew
into baby gurgles and wails.
Something that was not us
but was us. So we closed the door
on our passionate promises
to walk up and down
in quiet rooms.

One is “with child” for more
than nine months, we said;
mad promises fled.

Later on
came the routine of love:
the clatter of chipped dishes,
the smell of frying bacon,
a morning paper’s rustle,
the kissed good-bye
and the hugged hello.

And now it is plateau:
the even keel of successive days—
not great, not bad—
the life of mom and dad.
Continuation,
and all previous sounds together,
the same love with less tether
in all sorts of circumstantial weather.

On Finding Anything

Well, what have you done with them?
This always happens when you wash the clothes,
and you are always washing the clothes!
Retriever of my socks and shorts and shoes,
where was I without you?
And don't say, "Naked, I suppose!"

Nothing I have brought or bring,
or that comes from my remembering,
brings to you *your* shorts and shoes and hose.
In these mundane things that make me whole
do you also tidy up my soul?

Truly, I bear this well, these thoughts I think,
and duly note that you are kind
to forgive the imprecisions of my mind.

Yes, I Ate the Last Cookie

Yes, I ate the last cookie
whose crumbs now lie on the floor;
and, yes, I wanted several more.

You see me stricken in mortal grief.
Oh, sainted wife, forgive this loutish bore,
this chocolate-scented cookie thief.