

Rick's Lament
(After *Casablanca*)

I wish
Sam had come.
Louis is much
too smart
to look
into his heart
and mark
his feelings' birth.
He sees the Earth
as irrevocably bent
and rough justice
is sufficient
to sanctify
his intent.

Louis' gaze
is cold,
Sam looks within
and taps
some spring,
then music
fills the room.
He raised
my gloom
a hundred times
from terminal despair.
It helps to have
a conscience
that can sing.

I will
miss Sam.
Louis thinks
my time
misspent,
writing letters
never sent.
He sees me
as a lovelorn fool.
I need some tool
to open up
my brass-brazed soul.
A conscience
is worth more
than ten percent.

Finale

**You have the world to say.
I've nothing in reserve.
I turn away.**

**You raise the curtain on our play
and strike a fragile nerve.
You have the world to say.**

**Your smile a quirky ray,
your mouth a twisted curve.
I turn away.**

**I cannot curse or even pray.
My weary silence cannot serve.
You have the world to say.**

**I did not think to lose today
but have no energy or verve.
I turn away.**

**I never planned to cheat or stray.
I got what I deserve.
You have the world to say.
I turn away.**

Erosion

Erosion is a gentle thing.
The water flows and seeks its path.
Both rising tide and mountain spring
Exert their will bereft of wrath.

The mansion stood at water's edge
With pillars strong and windows bright
The borders wide with thickset hedge,
Its solid presence filled the night.

Yet water seeped with languid grace
Into the dwelling's guarded bones
And bore away the living space
Till naught was left but scattered stones.

Envy and resentment too mark all with liquid stain.
They seeped into our marriage and split the one in twain.

Reprise

Skim the honey from
a summer Sunday.
Bathe your heart
in a firefly's glow.
Steal the amber from
an autumn sunset.
Bid the faintest stars
to show.
Shape a moon-path
in frozen starlight.
Dance delighted
in warm spring rain.
Cleanse your eyes
in the dawn light.
You may find
your youth again.

My Opus

**The action is fevered, then
languid. My plot has
harmony with a melody that
evokes the dawn and azure
heights ... and fights. My hero
is eloquent and very cool
but slightly bent. I know I've
talent by the ton though
I have yet to write page one.**