

My wife of 25 years was delighted when she found out I had written some poems about us. I explained that they were realistic poems, which prompted a moment of reassessment.

“Oh,” she said.

Unrehearsed

We'd both been round the block before,
enjoyed most every lap.
It seemed that when the music stopped,
you *plopped* into my lap.

A little bit of fun,
was all we had in mind.
But days grew into months,
our songs got all entwined.

Began to piss each other off,
who knows why or what or which.
But looking back I think it was,
'cuz you were such a bitch.

Liquor made things seem ok,
and sex was one bright spot.
Considering how we got along,
thank god we drank a lot.

Somehow through our battles,
the Christmas lights got hung.
The children all excited,
gifts were wrapped and carols sung.

And when we faced the worst of it,
when we thought we'd lose our son,
our differences abated,
we learned to fight as one.

So *now* we got it figured out,
our mountains have been climbed.
Whoever would have thought,
we'd live a life that rhymed.

Ten Thousand Females

Twenty thousand students
when I went to NIU.
Ten thousand females,
they were everywhere.

Classes, parties, sitting on the quad,
sporting events and theatre,
(Okay, I never went to theatre,
But I'm sure they were there.)

Ten thousand young women,
the math was palpable;
each had the perceived value of
a disposable lighter.

It seemed you could walk around with eyes closed
and eventually bump into one
who liked your particular magic show;
the way you could juggle a baseball, a book, and a bottle of beer.

Four years in a china shop
that spanned a whole campus,
and no one put out the sign:
You buy what you break.

* * *

Now I visit my son at college,
young women everywhere.
I see them for what they always were:
the *holy grail*,
all the spices in the far east,
a Cubs World Series.

And if there were one hundred thousand,
not a one would pause a moment
to watch an old man juggle anything.

Ten Thousand Men

My wife read my poem.
She said she recalled
ten thousand men,
ten thousand assholes .

She promptly added,
that now more than ever,
she loved the whole lot of them.

“Oh,” she said with a grin,
“What I wouldn't give
to once again be
a disposable lighter.”

Turning 50

There was a party his wife conjured up.
Family, friends, music, beer.
She had blown up pictures of his past;
taped them around the house.

“Look at this,” said their teenage son.
The couple came and looked.
“These two pictures here,” said the boy,
“one old, one new.”

“You can see you’ve lost some hair.
You can see you’ve gained some weight.
But,
but,
you ‘re wearing ... the exact same shirt.”
They laughed.

“The same one ... you have on now.”
They laughed some more.
“Your father’s not one to quit on a garment
just because it’s got some age.”
“It still functions,” the man replied, “it’s quite comfortable in fact.”

* * *

When the night had ended
the wife stood before the bathroom mirror.
Her wrinkles were fairly new, she told herself.
She had been saying that for some time.
Young wrinkles she called them.

And she looked at the breasts that once she called perky.
Her muscles tightened fast, her blood pumped hard,
“I AM NOT AN OLD SHIRT!” she cried out.

After a time, her rage subsided,
gradually,
sadly.
“But I will be,” she sighed, “someday not far away.”

She ran to the bedroom.
Jumped in the bed.
And hugged the man who
doesn’t discard things that are worn but still comfy.