

General Sherman

I once was asked what I'd do if
Tomorrow was my final day
Whose spirits I'd go home to life
And when they answered, what I'd say.
But one sun up and one sun down
Is not enough to get around
To all the sorrys, thanks and love—
One single day is not enough.
So I think that I might go see
The oldest of Sequoia Trees,
Whose trunk now stands so far above,
He too began as just a seed.

But now that it's my final day
I envy you, Sequoia Tree!
Almost resent your thousand rings
For all those days were robbed from me!
And yet a thousand nights in bed,
I laid awake, wished I was dead.
I guess with this, it can't be said
I envy your two thousand rings.

I ask of you, Sequoia Tree,
Don't cry when you look down on me.
Don't give me pity, nor your tears.
I wouldn't want one of your years.
For in one year I could not say
Those things that must be said today
As I approach the next frontier:

When life is gone, then so is fear.

But one day, Great Sequoia Tree,
Your time will come just like for me.
Although I know that you are wise,
I think that even you'll realize
That in your twenty centuries,
You couldn't show your gratitude
To Sun who gathers all your food,
To Dirt who nurtures all your roots,
To trees whose leaves protect your own,
These things that make this mountain home.
Although I know you are so wise,
I think you'll even be surprised—
Two thousand rings, two thousand years
Two thousand things you couldn't say
Until the dawn of your last day.

One day, you too will leave us here.
That time so far and yet so near.
One day you too will leave this sphere.
When life is gone, then so is fear.
When life is gone, then so is fear.
A thousand years is like a day,
A day is like a thousand years.

For My Fellow Hobo

How often do those whom we love
Know how missed they'd be if they died?

For eulogies are lovely, but they're only read by living eyes.

I wonder how our lives would change

If we could hear our eulogies,

I wonder if we'd feel strange

If we knew just how missed we'd be.

If my love died, I'd start the search.

I would deny that he was gone.

I'd take my compass and my mace

Because the show, it must go on.

I'd say if he'd be anywhere,

The pyramid: he'd meet me there.

But I'd drive by the lake to find

There was no pyramid left behind.

Not in the bog, among the sharks,

Not in the fog, not through the dark...

Though in the distance, I'd hear drumming

I'd hear a faint George Michael humming

I'd listen for a voice to say,

"You must stand clear, darkness is coming."

But they'd be memories in my head,

And fantasies would come from those

That maybe my love wasn't dead.

I'd bear-dance with his see-through ghost.

I'd kill to hear him call bullshit

Whenever I would tell a lie.

I'd kill for puns and clever wit,

And pans of water filled with ice.

And for pineapples laced with spit.
I'd drink it just to give him life.

We ache as humans, this I know
Some days this ache will stay and grow.
And fester 'til we feel as though
It always was and is to be.
Although this pain will never go,
Not all the way, at least for me,
Some of its shackles come apart
Each day he holds me to his chest
And says, "I know, I know sweetheart."

And when I'd wake in dead of night,
When mere street lamps provide the light,
I'd say his name to stars above,
But none would answer, "Yes, my love?"

Each time that I would hear the horns
Of mighty trains, whose cars endured
The aftermath of many storms,
I would remain completely torn:
Should I jump on, or only mourn?
For no one else shared such respect
For what those mighty cars have seen.
And who am I that I should ride,
Without Conductor by my side?
'Cause I would ride alone and wave,
And when the train would start to slow,
No voice would whisper, "Get low, Babe."

My hands would never feel warm
The ache would leave me lost, forlorn.
There is no mitten anywhere
No single song in all the land
That could console my empty hand.

They claim the show, it must go on.
Come now.
How could it?
The show would surely fall apart.
The curtain drops, the lights go dark.
If there's a flame, there's only spark
Because there's warmth
To start it.