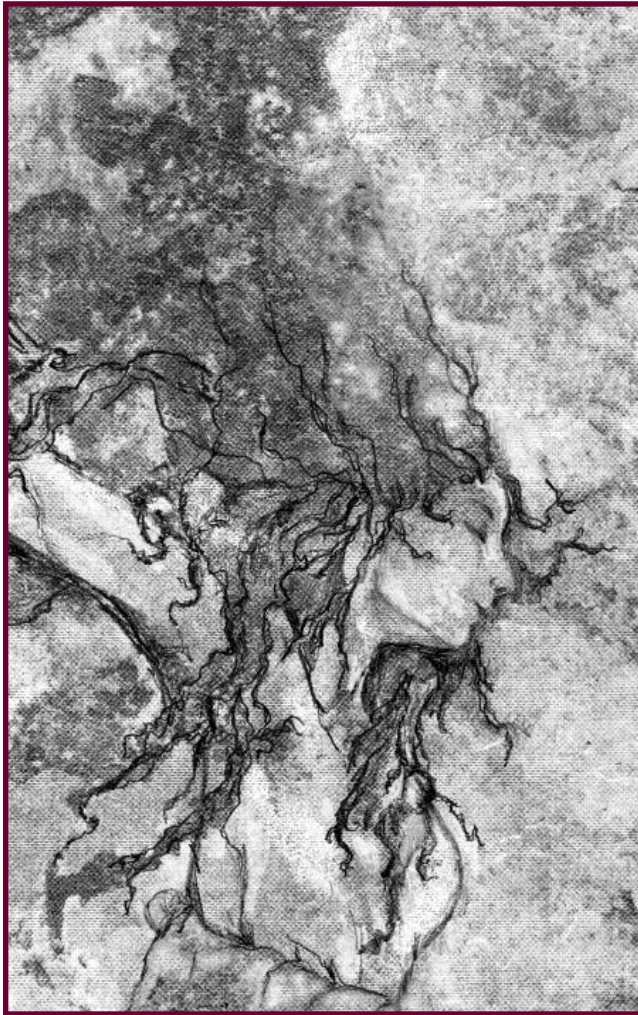


The Physics of Love



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The Physics of Love

Impossible to distinguish
where you end and I begin.

The laws of nature bind us:
the force of gravity draws us to each other;
time cannot break us apart.

We are a graceful exercise
in quantum physics,
a dynamic continuum
of inseparable feelings,
quarks connected
at the subnuclear level.

We are infinite in our desire;
finite in our commitment.

Like the peculiar Möbius strip,
even when we are miles
from each other,
we are still unendingly
together.

Lie

Floating between us
a fleck of verbal debris
dust-like on the tabletop.

We brush it away
with the flick of a hand
and everything is made pure again.

But the angry little mote
drifts back to its place,
joining past sins and indiscretions,
increasing, expanding, ever-growing
until in the blink of an eye
it is the only thing
that either of us can see.

Long Division

We never could manage
add or multiply.

We struggled with subtraction,
off and on.

But we became experts
at breaking things down
and sharing the spoils.

The one thing
we did so very well together
was mastering long division.

Judgment Day

Turn about is fair play.

That he should do to me
what I once did to him,
when once my prying eye
whipped like a tornado
through boxes, drawers, and closets
searching for the ashes
of a smoldering fire
that I knew I must extinguish
with a few well-placed
and bitter tears.

And now, my search
only a vain and ancient attempt
to secure my place in his heart,
he rifles through my clutter
and finds a clue
that entices him
to seek that much further,
to interrogate me
with aching, hurtful evidence
firmly in hand.

How can I answer the probing stare,
the angry reproach?
For yes, I am guilty.

It is true that I betrayed him,
that I harbored a decaying corpse,
not yet fully bone,
buried in the casket
with all my silent mementos,
accumulating dust
and other notes.

Perhaps it was the smoking embers
of my own little fire
that begged me to suspect him,
that urged me to sniff for smoke
where there was none.

The punishment
for my unrealized suspicion
is the revelation of my own true sin,
and the consequences
will disable my heart
like a blackened clot,
an ailment for which
there is no swift cure.

Where Once Slept Love

Crystal drops before a blind eye,
honest thoughts whispered
on cold, deaf ears,
the cruel silence
of an angry tongue,
stifling itself.

And through it all,
a frigid statue's vacant, icy stare
beating on me
like a summer sun.

A void where once slept love.

Tossing, turning,
tangled in the sheets,
sweating,
trying to come to grips,
and praying for a match to set
our crippled hearts on fire.

Marital Misfits

We do not fit.

We can talk
but not to each other.

We can make love
but instead we have sex.

We can do anything
but we feel nothing.

We are not forever.

Two-Story House

I'm packing up the old red tote bag
and the matching black suitcases
with what few shreds I think are safe
to call my very own.

You can have the toaster,
and the TV and stereo too.

I'll take the cats because they are mine
in my heart, and I feed them, you know.
Although I'm sure you would disagree
and say they love you more.

We never see eye-to-eye on anything,
so why should the cats be any different?

We've been living in a two-story house
for years; your story and mine.

When I say black, you say white.

It reminds me of that childhood game
where you whisper a story around a circle
and it comes back all twisted and changed.

That's us in a nutshell.

Whatever we do,
we see it in opposite ways.

Two stories, two sides to everything.

Yours and mine.

I took my car and everything else I had
before we married.

And again, I take the cats.

But to you I leave the furniture,
including our angry bed.

Goodbye to the two-story house.

The Rose-Carved Band

My rose-carved golden band
 sleeps on a bed of red velvet
 in the drawer of a wooden chest.

I take it out,
 now and again,
 and slip it on my finger,
 remembering how it felt,
 remembering what it meant.

I try to remember
 how we were,
 or how I was,
 when we were for each other
 from now until forever.

And forever never came.

Rushing Current

Alone and aching, feeling jaded,
and fading away to grey.

So secure in my solitude,
certain that the cat's pajamas
were all I ever needed
to keep me warm at night.

Then you dive into
my pool of contentment,
covering me with ripples
up and down my body,
carrying me on
a rushing current of hope,
past dreams I thought
had ended for good
not so long ago.

Flames

We are sudden kisses that cannot wait,
stolen in not-so-private places.

We are hearts that can easily break
into sharp angry pieces.

We must stop before it's too late.

We are so hot that
we could easily catch fire.

We're burning inside with desire.

We are so hot that
we need to be careful,
because if we are not,
surely we will go down in flames.

Caretaker of My Heart

You are the caretaker of my heart,
keeper of my jealous rage,
one who listens and hears –
 all at the same time;
feeds me,
nourishes my hungry spirit,
warms my durable feet,
puts me on a pedestal,
 adores me –
 as only a goddess should be adored.

You are my lover,
the perfect complement to my soul;
companion and fellow sufferer
 who rises above it all
 and saves me from myself.

Enchanted

The way your hair falls over your eyes
when you bend the strings,
so intently stroking magical notes
that fill an otherwise stagnant air -

I am under your spell.

And when you run those agile fingers
up and down my spine
with strength and loving grace,
like an angel playing a harp -

I am enchanted.

As you warmly whisper my name -
your breath into my eager ear,
your fingers tangled in my hair,
electricity excites the room -

I am at your mercy once again.

Love On A Pedestal

Out of reach,
too good for me.

You deserve better.

Out of reach,
too good for you.

I deserve better.

We can step down
from these pedestals,
meet on common ground
and discover that
we are not perfect,
just perfect for each other.

Aftershock

The ground trembled
 beneath my sleeping feet.

A butterfly halted,
 paralyzed mid-flutter.

The mockingbird was mute.

No petals unfolded,
 not a single leaf rustled.

Dew drops, suspended,
 ceased to drip.

The moon was in shadow.

The sun did not burn,
 the wind stopped howling.

And in that twilight second
 the rain did not fall . . .

Except from my eyes.

Now You Are Gone

How I envy you – and fear you too –
for you can see me in my place of pity,
how I cry and bash my head against the
wall.

And nothing helps me, nothing at all.

That is my emptiness,
and you see it, but you hide from it.

That hurts me.

You hurt me.

Everything reeks of pain.

Even the shriveled leaves
scraping over the glass hurt my ears
and make me weep.

But they are almost all gone
now that winter is settling in.

I am now more empty than ever before.

You are gone, gone for good.

No – gone for bad.

For now there is no hope,
and I will die if I cannot stop my sobbing,

The Shirt

Two o'clock in dreamy dark
and I pace from stove to sink
until I see it waiting for me
crumpled over a kitchen chair.

The shirt.

I bury my nose in its raggedness
and inhale you,
one chambray thread at a time.

The frayed blue cuffs,
the missing button,
picnics in the pines.

Speckles of rust and paint,
knocking around the house,
bagels in bed on Sunday.

And the pinhole tear -
I mended it, even though I knew
you were gone.

But I still have it.

The shirt.

Your Violin

On a tarnished brass hook,
dangling from an age-old string,
hanging on the wall,
beside the piano,
for too many years,
your violin gathers
a fine layer of dust
and a smattering of worthy memories,
ones that we created,
whenever you bent the strings for me
and I warbled sweetly for you,
and we were together
in harmony and in tune,
like a carefully orchestrated
symphony of two.

That Fragrant Moment

Oh how I long to revisit
that sweet and fragrant moment
among the tall and waving blades
atop the higher meadow
where once he kissed me
with the softness of a cloud
and the earthen passion
of a wild rusty fox.

And I did not hesitate
to part my lips and seek his heart
and leave him with an ache
that would not be fulfilled
even as autumn opened her door
and trees cast eerie skeletons
on the glassy milken ground.

Now in the season of new-born petals
when buzzing indigo insects soar
and worldly woes are lost to us,
we cannot share the Elysian secrets
and celebrate the spirit of nature,
for he is gone like the restless
dandelion puffs in the wind.

Your DNA

My bed is a soft and cozy petri dish,
a home for your valuable genetic material
that I so highly value.

You are always with me,
inside and out.

I inhale your essence as I sleep,
and when I wake,
whenever I wake,
you and your DNA sample
are still there,
incubating between the rumpled sheets.

Rivers of Ice

I have ice in my veins,
rivers of ice
stopped dead in their flow.

Enclosed in a hard shell,
surrounded by cold reality
screaming to be free,
I long to speak
the words you beg to hear.

But too many before you
have set my world in motion.

And now, the softness is hidden
or gone.

I want you.

I need you.

Just don't expect me
to say the words aloud,
or at all.

My heart can only talk to you of pain.

Designs

I love design.
I can design anything.
Need a landscape?
How about a dress?
A business card?
A book cover perhaps?
I have lots of designs.
I even have designs
on you.

Falling

Paisley covers over a bed of roses
thorns that pierce my thighs
and sighs that hang in the rain
that burns like an acid pain
in my eyes, my eyes, oh Lord,
how it blinds my eyes.

A shadow walks upon my floor
it looks inside and begs for more
Say, can't you hear me calling?
I'm in the dark and falling for you
like stars in a constellation
seen only under magnification
when a dream comes under the lens
and I have to face the truth
the history in the ticket booth
beneath a roll of paper
and a half-spent roll of pennies.

Almost

I almost believe you
when a pear-shaped sapphire
embeds itself in the ruby setting
that is your angry left cheek,
and wisps of damp golden strands
frame that little jewel
for one brief moment.

I almost believe you,
but I cannot even hear the words
that tumble from your trembling lips
onto the heavy carpet of air
that floats between us.

Bells ring inside my head,
the alarm that warns me
to pack my bags and hit the road
before my gaping wound infects
with the germs that spread from lies.

I almost believe you,
as your magic fingers sweep my chin
and linger at my heaving breast.

Almost.

Caught In The Act

You knew I was coming.

I am never late.

Whispers and a woman's girlish laugh
caught my ear.

I opened the door and
there you were,
wrapped in the pale blue sheets,
wrapped around her pale pink body.

I slammed the door and left.

You ran after me,
wrapped in a sheet, the rain falling,
rain falling from my eyes.

Between the drops I heard you saying,
"It's not what you think."

Really?

You have no idea what I think
or what I know.

Dancing in the House

Dancing in the house tonight,
I'll waltz in every room,
a rumba in the kitchen,
and in the bedroom too.

I'll fox trot through the living room
and two-step in the shower.

A righteous celebration -
I live alone at last!

Freedom feels so good
I'll cha-cha on the ceiling
like an Isadora fly.

No grace, but lots of movement
will limber up my spirit.

I'll cast away my shackles
with a twist of rock 'n roll.

Hiatus

A fifty-one-month hiatus
 spent with the astronomer.
A vacation that ended badly
 when I found Venus poured into our bed.
Now back in your arms again
I can't help but wonder,
 will you love me better
 this time around?
Or will I go wandering again
 if things go wrong,
 seeking answers or solace
in a man who seems ideal
 but whose feet are made of clay?

Intersection & Impasse

You raise questions
better left dead.

Probing deeply,
I beg for answers
but reach an impasse,
a dark and vicious
blind alley.

Mugged by one question
then another, and another.

And now I am struck,
wounded and paralyzed,
frozen in the intersection
at Memory and Reality,
two careless, unpaved roads
winding around
the who-we-weres
and the what-we're-nots,
detouring past the who-I-was
and dead-ending
at the what-I-have-become.

Shoe Story

We are a pair of old loafers,
insanely worn,
floppy and out-of-shape.

Souls full of holes.

Two heels run down
from years of dragging,
waiting to find
suitable replacements.

Dragonfly Days

A lifetime ago in dragonfly days
the still air eased by a breeze,
like a breathful gift
from the puckered lips of a god.

The wonder of you alive
in the sweet and grassy scent,
carried aloft like a dream
on a velvety butterfly's wing.

You were there;
now you're gone.

And the shiny blue fliers
continue to buzz by
over a sea of summer mustard
that waves like a prayerful song,
seeking the door to heaven
in note after note without end.

Love Can Be

Love can be Sahara hot
until a cloud bursts open
and washes passion away.

Love can be a bed
redolent with desire
or as vacant as a stare.

Love can be a prison,
a heart bound up in chains,
aching for a breath of freedom.

Love can be two players
pitted in an endless game,
one match after another.

Love can be a gift,
the kind that keeps on giving
from now until the end.

Love can be a miracle
that fills a lonely heart
and makes it sing in joy.

About the Author

Joelle Steele is a writer, artist, publisher, and educator. Her works include almost 700 articles, 30+ books, 50+ short stories, 65+ contract templates, and numerous poems, lyrics, jingles, promotional pieces, Web pages, advertisements, illustrations, photographs, and fine art paintings. She frequently weaves her many interests into her works, including horticulture, genealogy, writing, art, photography, cats, and astrology.

Since 1994, Joelle has created and developed several Web sites on which she sells her work and provides a variety of informational resources. She also teaches many different classes through the extended education programs at colleges in the South Puget Sound area of Washington state.

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- ◆ Researching & Writing Your Family History
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