

FOREVER AND A MOMENT

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Dedicated to my wonderful, courageous daughter.

FOREVER AND A MOMENT

The story so far...

The key protagonist, referred to as Dear Friend, confronted by the loneliness of separation and isolated within the sparsely-furnished confines of the once blissful marital-residence, is harangued by the Voices. The Voices, some farcical in character, express the thoughts, reminiscence, reflections—indeed, the reflection of (subconscious) sentiment not articulated in conscious thought—and hallucinations that taunt and tease Dear Friend’s contemplation of his state and his transgression.

Dear Friend’s transgression: the neglect of love. Love marginalised in the shadow of folly—faithless vanity and petty reward—and its companion, disappointment. The story traces the turbulent transition, the insidious torment, the spiral of emotions from incredulity through wretched sorrow to hope, around and around. A transition inhibited by denial and the imperative of surrender.

The Voices:	Females:	Departed Love, and Seduction.
	Males:	Mockery, Old Dude, Preacher, and Vanity.
	Non-Gendered:	Darkness, Dreaming, Emotion, Folly, Fool, Infidelity, Intoxication, Reason, Reminiscence, Satire, and Wisdom.

Fool shadows Emotion and Mockery stalks Reason.

Legend:

Parentheses	(Notes Only)
Square Brackets	[Character(s)]
Spoken Dialogue	Left justified
Song Lyrics	<u>Title</u> underlined with song-lyric indented

THE BEGINNING

(Dear Friend is asleep (dreaming) at a table. The table, on which a box of assortments rests, is strewn with photographs.)

In My Imagination

[Dreaming]

A sail of paper, dowel, and coloured string
Secured upon a box of our most favourite things
A boat, a boat of bright and many colours
Devotion its sturdy keel, desire its timeless rudder
A boat, a lunar tide, the solar wind
A map, a picture of someone I once knew
To chart a course
In search of you, my dear departed-lover

A cage from which the songbird has flown
Lined with shards of mirrored-glass
A lantern, to reflect the light of distant stars
To light the way, across a lover's sky
In search of you, my dear departed-lover

Stars sequins on a cloak frayed and torn
An indifferent light to conceal the wounds
Not dark, not bright, not cold, not warm
Sounds of discord, now silent, in a distant space
A presence, now but memory's trace
Of a timeless dream, cursed by fate
And a careless, careless lover

I won't burden your smile, for reason or rhyme

I just want to be with you, one last time

One last time

One last time

In my imagination

In search of you

In search of you, my dear departed-lover

(Dear Friend awakes from sleep; the Voices are aroused. Dreaming retreats. Shadowed by Fool, Emotion moves to Dear Friend and observes the paraphernalia on the table.)

[Emotion]

A box of memories to delight and torment.

A box of memories.

A table and a chair.

A table marked by time.

A time of joy, a time of despair.

[Dear Friend]

A collection of memories at which I stare.

[Emotion]

In search of an answer though I now know it well.

[Dear Friend]

A riposte that taunts me if in contemplation I dwell.

If in contemplation I dare.

[Emotion]

(Looking to Dear Friend.)

Can love forsake love?

[Dear Friend]

Did I abandon you?

[Mockery]

(Reproachful of Dear Friend.)

Through careless inattention and faithless vanity.

[Emotion]

If only I had considered the doubt that cautioned your step.

Of the gathering coldness in your distant touch.

If only I had grasped the portent beyond reason now clear.

To the encroachment of your fear.

To the boding resentment, that clouded the light of your day.

That stalked the darkness of your night.

Love would never have journeyed this way.

The Wonder in Wonderful

[Dear Friend]

From that moment

When love first blessed my eyes

Time distracted

Skipped its beat to the tremor of my heart

And innocent desire

Soared like a phoenix on the rise

As gravity slipped its embrace

That moment when wonder

When wonder bestowed its grace

That moment

When wonder came into my life

Love is the wonder in wonderful

And you are the wonder in my life

Your blessing

Traced across my heart for all of time

Beats a symphony
A symphony of love sublime
Of which I rejoice
In the chorus and verse that is forever mine

Love is the wonder in wonderful
And you are the wonder in my life
You are the wonder in my life
You my love are the wonder in my life

That moment
When your smile first caressed my desire
That moment
When two willing hearts first conspire
That blessed moment
When wonder came into my life
From that moment

From that moment
When wonder came into my life

[Wisdom]

As truth is love's witness
From that moment

All else was less

[Emotion]

From that moment

My life had been blessed

[Dear Friend]

From that moment

When wonder came into my life

From that moment

(Reminiscence stands behind, overlooking, Dear Friend, as Dear Friend reads a line from a copy of his marriage vow.)

[Dear Friend]

A lover's vow: may our love defy the menace of time.

Stumble and Fall

[Reminiscence]

No-one could love another more, more than I love you now

And I look into your eyes and I see forever

A love so complete, a love without measure

[Infidelity]

But from anxious doubt where fear stalks in the shadows

I tremble that I may stumble and fall

I tremble that I may stumble and fall, stumble and fall, that I may stumble and fall

[Reminiscence]

Your beauty fixes my stare and tremors my heart

A stranger's glance evokes sympathy, not foolish jealousy

A too-familiar disregard, inconceivable on my part

[Infidelity]

But from anxious doubt

I tremble that I may stumble and fall

I tremble that I may stumble and fall, stumble and fall, that I may stumble and fall

[Reminiscence]

Your spirit, graced by a sense of flight, captivates attention

Assured, your presence seduces yet defies possession

Together or alone, desire is time's obsession

[Infidelity]

But from anxious doubt

I tremble that I may stumble and fall

I tremble that I may stumble and fall, stumble and fall, that I may stumble and fall

[Reminiscence]

Your wit leaves me breathless, suspended in wonder

Inspired, careful reflection, attracts one, and one to another

How could I not but admire you?

[Infidelity]

But from anxious doubt

I tremble that I may stumble and fall

I tremble that I may stumble and fall, stumble and fall, that I may stumble and fall

[Reminiscence]

Your charm sincere, and all consuming

Composed, self-less and reassuring

How could I not but love you?

[Infidelity]

But from anxious doubt

I tremble that I may stumble and fall

I tremble that I may stumble and fall, stumble and fall, that I may stumble and fall

[Dear Friend, Reminiscence]

May our love defy the menace of time

In the face of uncertainty and faithless vanity

And hold its innocence in blessed wonder

Through the laughter, and the tears

And in love's grace

I pray that I will not stumble and fall

I pray that I will not stumble and fall, stumble and fall, I pray that I will not stumble and fall

[Mockery]

(Incredulous, questions Reminiscence.)

May our love defy the menace of time? It's over, you idiot.

(Now looking to Dear Friend.)

I pray that I will not stumble and fall. Fool.

[Emotion]

(Protective of Fool.)

Careless conversation echoes in the still of the lonely night; even fools cry.

(To Dear Friend.)

The promise of love: a promise, blind.

[Infidelity]

Careless whispers, that taunt an anxious mind.

The promise of love: a deception, sublime.

I don't need to see, but I'm not blind, to what it is that teases your mind.

[Dear Friend]

Careless conversation echoes through time.

Time for reflection, time for regret, time for forgiveness.

Time to forget?

Time and the promise of love: until I kiss this time goodbye.

Time.

Until the End of Time

[Departed Love]

(Isolated, looking-out as though through a window. The other voices are in suspense/wonder.)

Looking out at the winter rain

Distracted

My eyes, reflected in the window, bare the pain
The rain falls as though tears across my face
My mind taunted by emotion attempts to trace
The madness that conspired our fall
From love's grace

Our love has come and gone and I still don't understand
Our love has come and gone and I still don't understand

From that precious moment when love first blessed my eyes
Until the end of time, forever and a moment
I thought that love would be mine
But the thief, the thief of time took you away
And love was the ransom, the price that I had to pay

Our love has come and gone and I still don't understand
Our love has come and gone and I still don't understand

Though memory will fade as will the disappointment
Time can never taint the love we shared
Or deny that I truly, truly cared through the laughter and the tears
And in time, in time I pray that I will come to understand
That I will come to understand
Why our love has come and gone
(Departed Love moves to the exit, takes a parting glance, then leaves.)

[Dear Friend)
(Isolated, looking-out as though through a window.)
Looking out at the winter rain

Distracted

My eyes, reflected in the window, bare the pain

Witness to the emptiness that I feel

The emptiness of love's refrain

Goodbye

Goodbye my love

Goodbye

My love, goodbye, but not I pray until the end of time

But not I pray

But not I pray, until the end of time

Goodbye my love

Goodbye

[Dear Friend]

I don't want our love to be a faded memory bleeding from your heart.

[Fool]

(Turning to Emotion.)

Love is forever; forever and a moment.

Love Won't Leave Me Here

[Fool]

Won't cry, cry a tear

Don't believe

No, love won't leave

Love won't leave me here

Love doesn't need an alibi

Love doesn't need a reason why

And love, doesn't need a last goodbye

Won't cry, cry a tear
No, love won't leave me here
Won't cry, won't cry a tear
No, love won't leave me
Love won't leave me here

[Emotion]

Players play, and players lie

Innocent desire

Love may conspire, but

[Fool]

Love doesn't need an alibi

Love doesn't need a reason why

And love, doesn't need a last goodbye

Won't cry, cry a tear

No, love won't leave me here

Won't cry, won't cry a tear

No, love won't leave me

Love won't leave me here

[Emotion]

Players play, players in disguise

Shrouded in desire

Love may conspire, but

[Fool]

Love doesn't need an alibi

Love doesn't need a reason why

And love, doesn't need a last goodbye

Won't cry, cry a tear

No, love won't leave me here

Won't cry, won't cry a tear

No, love won't leave me

Love won't leave me here

[Emotion]

Players play, and players fade away

But not, obsession's desire

[Fool]

So I won't cry, won't cry a tear

Don't believe

No, love won't leave

Love won't leave me here

Love may conspire, but

Love doesn't need an alibi

Love doesn't need a reason why

And love, doesn't need a last goodbye

Won't cry, cry a tear

No, love won't leave me here

Won't cry, won't cry a tear

No, love won't leave me

Love won't leave me here

Love doesn't need an alibi

Love doesn't need a reason why

And love, doesn't need a last goodbye

Won't cry, cry a tear

No, love won't leave me here

Won't cry, won't cry a tear

No, love won't leave me
Love won't leave me here

Love won't leave me here

[Mockery]

In every corner of this room.
In every curve within its space.
I search for the smallest trace.
For a certain smile, that smile upon Love's face.
To catch Love out, in Love's hiding place.
But in every shadow of the room.
In every shadow that I call Love's name.
The answer, the answer, is always, is always the same.
Love plays this game far too well.
Where Love is, I just can't tell.
Without a trace, in Love's hiding place.
(Looking to Dear Friend.)
Oh, no! Love won't leave me here, there, or ... anywhere.
[Dear Friend]
But you're not there.

Calling

[Dear Friend]
I hear your voice but you're not calling
I see your smile but you're not there
I hear your steps but you're not walking
A sense of presence
I hear your laughter, everywhere

But you're not there

It's just my heart's desire, just my desire recalling

The way it was, the way it used to be

I hear your voice but you're not calling

You're not calling

You're not calling

You're not calling, me

You're not there

A moment's torment, a moment recalling

Why it is that you're not, there

[Mockery]

A fool's lament

Blind to vanity, too blind see

[Dear Friend]

A moment, a falling

A moment, an eternity, forever, recalling

And you're not there

I hear your voice but you're not calling

I see your smile but you're not there

I hear your steps but you're not walking

A sense of presence

I hear your laughter, everywhere

But you're not there

A voice, a distant calling

A smile

Though the light fades within your eyes

The scent of innocence, so beguiling

A sense of presence, in disguise

Love, a distant calling

A pastiche

Coloured, in the moment

Once tinted, with anticipation

Now shaded, in bitter memory

A moment's torment, a moment recalling

The laughter, once ever so reassuring

The laughter now taunting, taunting me, everywhere

But you're not there

I hear your voice but you're not calling

I see your smile but you're not there

I hear your steps but you're not walking

A sense of presence

I hear your laughter, everywhere

But you're not there

It's just my heart's desire, just my desire recalling

The way it was, the way it used to be
I hear your voice but you're not calling
You're not calling
You're not calling
You're not calling, me

You're not there

[Fool]

(Questioning of Emotion.)

Love is a pastiche, coloured in the moment?

[Satire]

A pastiche, a French pastry, mmm...

[Reason]

(Interjects, carelessly.)

It requires neither courage nor wit to mock a fool.

[Emotion]

(Looking to Dear Friend.)

Indeed, to mock innocence.

[Mockery]

(Sneering at Reason; tersely retorts.)

Delicate, delicious, decadent.

[Intoxication]

(Pensively gazing into the distance.)

A tart so bitter-sweet.

[Emotion]

(Reassuring Fool.)

A pastiche, coloured in the moment? Love, innocent desire, no. Love, a relationship, perhaps? Once aroused with anticipation, a parody, an imitation, now chastened ...

(Looking to Dear Friend.)

... indeed, stalked by embittered memory.

[Satire]

(Looking to Fool.)

Tempted, or taunted, or downright bloody haunted love is a funny, funny thing.

[Intoxication]

Funny hah-hah or funny peculiar?

[Satire]

Indeed, love is a funny, funny thing.

[Mockery]

Make a fool of a pauper; make a fool of a King.

[Satire]

Contort, and distort, and definitely fraught.

Love is a funny, funny thing.

[Intoxication]

Love is a circus clown.

Make you happy, make you frown.

Laugh at love, laugh out 'loud.

[Satire]

Indeed, love is a funny, funny thing.

[Fool]

Love is not a French pastry.

[Emotion]

(Reassuring Fool.)

And love is not a circus clown.

[Preacher]

Love, carnal love, is a whore!

[Intoxication]

No, chocolate is a whore.

[Mockery]

(In disbelief.)

Chocolate is a whore?

[Satire]

(Leering at Preacher.)

Of course, chocolate is a whore. It satisfies a desire, leaves a hole in your wallet, and an empty wrapper in the waste-bin. Chocolate is a whore.

[Reason]

Idiots.

[Wisdom]

No.

(The mayhem subsides. Looking to Fool.)

Love is all, but none of these things.

Love is Not

[Seduction]

Love is not the hunger that torments a lover to despair

Not the dagger that cuts the lover's soul bare

Love is not the caution abandoned in the face of doubt

Not the anguish in a scorned lover's shout

Love

Love is all, but none of these things

Love is all, but none of these things

Love is not a river of forlorn-lovers' tears

Not a presence that the innocent should fear

Love is not a haven in which a lover hides

Not a fickle admirer that changes with the tide

Love

Love is all, but none of these things

Love is all, but none of these things

Love is not a flower that blossoms in the spring

Not a songbird or the chorus that it sings

Love is not a cloak that the willing dares to wear

Not the enchanted stare that lovers share

Love

Love is all, but none of these things

Love is all, but none of these things

Love is not a sensual style

Not a wicked smile

Love is not the way that lovers walk

Not the way that lovers talk

Love is not the dream that hides in waiting

Love is not the chance there for the taking

Love

Love is all, but none of these things

Love is all, but none of these things

[Wisdom]

Love is all, but none of these things

[Old Dude]

A chance at love, a chance at love, tonight.

[Intoxication]

Who is the old dude?

[Mockery]

I have told you before: I don't know.

[Satire]

He came with the house.

[Intoxication]

Oh. Oh!

Hurting Game

[Fool]

(Enchanted.)

Love

Bares the soul, in surrender's name

Tremors the heart, in silent screams

Breathless

[Departed Love]

(Distraught.)

In the quiet of disbelief

As the light fades on wonder and sepia dreams

Love, love is just a hurting game

Love, is just a hurting game

Just a hurting game

A hurting game

Love

Love, is just a hurting game

Just a hurting game

Cruel deception, in pleasure's name

Tormented memory tremors, in silent screams

Of promises, betrayed, in faithless scenes
Of love's hollow lament, a siren's chorus, a liar's verse
Lies that sour to bitter resent
As tears well, in tired eyes
Love, is just a hurting game

Love, is just a hurting game
Just a hurting game
A hurting game
Love
Love, is just a hurting game

I gave you my innocence
And the wonder years
I gave it all
For, scented balm and peddler's oils
You took, you took it all
And left me, naked in torment's room
Hope's blood, a stain upon the walls

Love, is just a hurting game
Just a hurting game
A hurting game
Love
Love, is just a hurting game

Love, is just a hurting game
Bares the soul, that bleeds with pain
Misery tremors, in silenced screams

Breathless

In the quiet of disbelief

As the night falls on wonder and foolish dreams

Love, is just a hurting game

Love, is just a hurting game

Just a hurting game

A hurting game

Love

Love, is just a hurting game

[Preacher]

(Looking to Dear Friend.)

Love, carnal love, if it is anything at all, it is the messenger of sorrow, the messenger of inevitable misery.

Morning Light

[Dear Friend]

I never knew of sorrow

Until the morning light laid witness

To the absence

I wait for tomorrow

I wait for your return

Each time the wind worries the wire-door

A tremor on my heart

I never knew of sorrow until you were gone

The tremor on my heart

Resists the silence of resignation

The trace of a love now so bitter-sweet
Sweet memory
Taunted by the prospect of a solitary retreat
I never knew of sorrow until you were gone
Until the morning light laid witness
To the madness of a life
Alone
I never knew of sorrow until you were gone

The tremor on my heart
Skips a beat at the thought
[Voices]
Of sentiment said, and left unsaid
[Dear Friend]
Of love surrendered
Regret should never be, for lovers
I never knew of sorrow until you were gone
Until the morning light laid witness
To the torment of disbelief
I never knew of sorrow until you were gone

The tremor on my heart
The trace of desire
[Voices]
In the shadow of a love left to sour
A love abandoned
Cloaked in the tattered threads of neglect
[Dear Friend]
I never knew of sorrow until you were gone

Until the morning light laid witness
To the emptiness
I never knew of sorrow until you were gone

[Voices]

Temptation, vanity's folly, the fool that I am

[Dear Friend]

I never knew of sorrow
Until the morning light laid witness
To the absence
I wait for tomorrow
I wait for your return
Each time the wind worries the wire-door
A tremor on my heart
I never knew of sorrow until you were gone

I never knew of sorrow until you were gone

The morning light, and I wait for your return

[Emotion]

When love was young it laughed at the night. It taunted caution and challenged the world.

[Dear Friend]

Now I stalk the shadows, trying to conceal this heartache that I feel. Could I have loved you more?

[Emotion]

A siren's song.

[Mockery]

Self-pity, it's an insidious comfort.

[Preacher]

No. Love, carnal love, is an insidious comfort. And the object of desire: evil, manifest. Satan is a woman or a wise-man is a fool.

Satan is a Woman

[Preacher]

Satan is a woman or a wise-man is a fool

Nothing else could be so evil; nothing else could be so cruel

Satan is a woman, or a wise-man is a fool

Forbidden temptation, a sensation bitter-sweet

Innocence seduced, the genesis of sin and deceit

A curse upon creation, Eden's damnation

The serpent's ruse, complete

Satan is a woman, or a wise-man is a fool

A seductive whisper or a serpent's hiss

A cruel game of control and deception, of show and tell, but little relief

With a touch of conceit, that beggars this beggar's belief

Satan is a woman, or a wise-man is a fool

[Mockery]

A man is led towards paradise on a promise more than fate

A fraught journey, along a treacherous path frequented by spite, scorn, and hate

All too often, before a man arrives, the path is closed, the final steps to heaven's gate

A cruel frightful state, that breaks a man's spirit and destroys his faith

Satan is a woman, or a wise-man is a fool

[Preacher]

Satan is a woman and a wise-man must choose

Between sin and the grace of Salvation

But from weakness, it is sin with Absolution that the fool for love will choose

[Mockery]

(Jostling the Preacher.)

Satan is a woman and this beggar-man is such a fool

Satan is a woman and this beggar-man is such a fool

Don't lead a man on, and then deny him satisfaction

Nothing could be so evil, nothing could be so cruel.

Satan is a woman, or a wise-man is a fool

[Satire]

(Spoken)

If Satan is a woman is God a man?

If God exists then God would be blessed with an immaculate mental faculty.

(Looking to Dear Friend.)

Begging the question: What woman in her right-mind would create a male of the species?

Ergo, if God exists then God is a man.

[Preacher]

Satan is a woman, or a wise-man is a fool

Satan is a woman, or a wise-man is a fool

Satan is a woman

[Wisdom]

No, and a wise-man is a fool, but only for love.

[Satire]

Now that's disconcerting.

[Mockery]

When a wise-man is a fool?

[Reason]

(Pointing to the Preacher.)

The serpent's hiss. Is not faith the curse upon creation?

[Emotion]

The sins of religion are not, of necessity, sins of faith.

[Wisdom]

Indeed, wisdom is to know when Reason should accept, on faith.

[Emotion]

(Taunting Reason.)

And when emotion, Reason should embrace.

[Reason]

(Dismissive.)

Mere belief, subjective disposition, surely?

[Fool]

(Questions Wisdom.)

Faith in God?

[Wisdom]

(Reassuringly places hand on Fool's shoulder and turns to Reason.)

Faith is not mere belief; nor is the ever-presence of uncertainty, of doubt, a matter of concern, to the matter of faith.

To receive the faith is to know love, completely.

(Looking to Fool; compassionately.)

To believe in love, completely.

[Emotion]

Visceral; the revelation of love through experience. To receive the faith.

[Reason]

Revelation or delusion? What then of certainty, of truth?

[Emotion]

What then, in the absence of certainty, would Reason deny? Love? Pure innocent desire; innocent of reason. Pitiless reason.

[Fool]

Sometimes it's not the truth that matters.

[Mockery]

Now that's disconcerting.

[Satire]

They're discursive affectation?

[Mockery]

What? No! Yes, and no. When a fool is wise.

[Intoxication]

Disconcerting, indeed.

[Emotion]

And what does one know with certainty?

(Pensive, and pleading.)

To believe, to trust, to surrender.

[Satire]

Oh, pitiless Reason.

[Mockery]

Oh, mock not the learned philosopher: the voice of reason, certainty's messenger.

[Satire]

And, of certainty, the voice of reason tells us, what?

(The Voices fall silent in contemplation, until Satire, in a moment of inspiration...)

I ... Therefore I Am

[Satire]

Learned Friends please

It is with solemn intent that I implore your attention

To my concern on the subject of distension

Of this lesson in history, of elementary flatology, and matters of mystery

The philosopher Monsieur Rene Descartes

While in contemplation of a book he had read

An apple fell upon his head

And gave him such a frightful start

The poor fellow was moved to fart

But from this state of consternation

In a moment of pure inspiration

He uttered his famous declaration:

Cogito ergo sum: I think therefore I am

But by oversight, or simply mistaken

A portent on the wind

The fart has been forsaken

I kid you not; it's a matter of concern; it's a matter of what?

Of what there is, and what there can be

Of whether there is a you, and whether there is a me

This matter of flatulence

Is a testament of provenance:

ego oboleo ergo sum: I stink therefore I am

So heed the warning, don't be alarmed, and don't be mistaken

Don't forgo that egg and bacon

[Mockery]

An offering of legumes or ham hocks

Or cheese that smells of putrid socks

[Intoxication]

And for something that easily slips from a prone or turned hip

Don't forgo that garlic, onion, leek, or turnip

[Mockery, Satire, Intoxication]

And for a seam of gas that seems to have an appetite for breaking out

Have another Brussels sprout

[Satire]

So all of these things, and some more, in moderation, should be taken

Just to make certain that that wind is breakin'

I stink therefore I am

(Pensive)

But something to contemplate

If I don't stink, therefore, I am not?

So please don't remonstrate

If I fart to ward-off oblivion's fate

A cruel fate

A nothing state
So please have no concern for what I ate
Or indeed, that I may flatulate
No really
With certainty

(Wisdom gestures to halt the nonsense. Dear Friend is standing at the table. Observing a photograph, at first amused, his disposition turns to anger then to sombre, calm reflection.)

[Dear Friend]

The stink. The stench. The stench of morbidity: of love, of contemplation. Oblivion. Oblivion: the perfect silence. The perfect silence.

(Darkness moves to Dear Friend. The other Voices are silent in trepidation.)

[Darkness]

(Reassuring, seductive, never threatening, except to the other Voices.)

Come with me.

There is a carriage that leaves tonight.

To journey beyond tomorrow.

To a time, to a place...

Come with me tonight.

Journey beyond this sorrow.

Come with me tonight.

Come with me.

Tonight.

(Pauses.)

Come with me.

For tonight we will travel faster than light.

To a time, to a place.

Beyond the malice of fear, anguish, and disappointment.

Come with me tonight.

Come with me.

Come with me tonight.

Come with me.

Journey beyond this sorrow.

Tonight.

Come with me.

Tonight.

Journey beyond tomorrow.

To our journey's end.

(Pauses to glare dismissively, menacingly, at the other Voices.)

In the company of those who will not burden, taunt, or judge you.

[Voices]

(In horror.)

In the company of the dead.

(A scream; Vanity.)

The Looking-Glass

[Vanity]

(Brazenly assumes centre stage, addressing the looking-glass in hand.)

This talk of departure is simply insanity

It is clear to all but the feeblest of mind

That the remedy to an ailment of any kind is: vanity

Yes, vanity

A matter of fact beyond all contention

A magic elixir, a potion, a fixer

Vanity

Vanity

It defies explanation, this sublime intervention

Vanity

Vanity

A moment of reflection, a moment of perfection

Vanity

(Vanity, momentarily distracted by his own image.)

Vanity

Love stalker, a smooth talker

Beguiling eyes, a wicked smile, a sensual style

A seductive inclination, an irresistible temptation

(Vanity pauses to reflect. The other Voices look on in silence and disbelief.)

(Now regaining focus.)

Introspection is my predilection

Yet, compassion, of a fashion

To solicit adulation

(Looking, momentarily, to the other Voices.)

But it's not my indiscretion, no

They're concerned with my obsession

No alcohol addiction

Or fetish for blood

No, they're concerned with my obsession

My obsession with love

Vanity

Arouses distraction

Vanity

A divine inspiration

Vanity

Enchants fascination, and...

Captivates, contemplation

Vanity

An obsession with love

An obsession with love

[Vanity]

Forever and a moment.

(Mischievously, insensitively, turns the looking-glass into Fool's view.)

All one needs is a looking-glass and that moment of reflection.

[Fool]

(To avoid eye-contact with the looking-glass, Fool turns away in fear.)

No!

No Friend of Mine

[Fool]

The face in the mirror sees through the disguise

The face in the mirror knows all of the lies

Knows the secrets I dare not share with myself

The face in the mirror is no friend of mine

The face in the mirror stares through my tears

The face in the mirror knows all of the thoughts that shadow my fear
Knows all of the shadows in which I hide
The face in the mirror is no friend of mine

The face in the mirror marks the passage of time
The face in the mirror reflects the trace of thwarted desire, and
Knows well the sense of despair that burdens my soul
But the face in the mirror is no friend of mine

In a room of mirrors with no window or door
In a room of mirrors but I can't be sure
Am I standing on the ceiling or am I standing on the floor?
In a room of mirrors there is no hiding place
But faithful imagination will plot my escape

The face in the mirror stalks the illusion
If I could just close my eyes then I could deny
The face in the mirror, who is no friend of mine
The face in the mirror, who is no friend of mine

[Dear Friend]

(Reflective.)

The face in the mirror knows the lies? The face in the mirror is no friend of mine.

The Words

[Departed Love]

(Reappears, isolated.)

Darkness falls to distract the light so lies can steal the truth

What am I supposed to do if I am still in love with you?

Words, no comfort for the misery

The witness to this careless conceit

A picture, of a thousand words

And each betrays the bitterness

In this bitter deceit

Words, and foolish pride, disguise the lies

Conceal what is surely true

So, what am I, what am I supposed to do?

If I won't feign the fool for you

What am I supposed to do if I am still in love with you?

Words, faithless platitudes, hollow

Like a cracked bell that rings untrue

A promise of love, an affirmation complete

Your eyes reflect the lies

The lies that your words repeat

Words, which veil the thief's contempt

Trust pawned, for a moment of stolen pleasure

So, what am I, what am I supposed to do?

Now that the truth, has the thief's measure

What am I supposed to do if I am still in love with you?

The words, a well-rehearsed verse of conceit and deception

The words, the false promise of love, and devoted affection

A beautiful smile, a portrait in relief
A smile so tender
But the words beggar belief
So what should I, what should I remember?
So what should I, what should I surrender?

What am I supposed to do?
If I won't feign the fool for you
The thief, of once sweet memory
The messenger of this misery

So, what am I supposed to do if I am still in love with you?

I don't want to hear, the words, the words, that you have to say

Deceit steals the colour from the light, dreams now rendered in shades of grey

The words, that hide the reason why, I must turn and walk away

[Wisdom]

Is there a lie more insidious than the lie one tells oneself?

[Mockery]

(Accusingly.)

And of infidelity?

[Infidelity]

I'm not the guilty one.

[Emotion]

Devotion, violated in the shadow of a promise; distracted by base desire, as though folly conspired with deception. Sweet memory, compromised.

(Looking to Infidelity.)

Denial: a siren's song, the song of the liar.

[Infidelity]

I'm not the guilty one.

(Looking around for support.)

These tears that I cry, these tears, these tears are my alibi. I'm not the guilty one.

These tears that I cry are my alibi; I'm not the guilty one.

[Satire]

(Postures as though a learned barrister then looks to Mockery.)

Officer I'd like to report a theft.

(Mockery postures to report. Satire stands beside Infidelity.)

Someone has stolen my client's knife.

The fact that it was found embedded deep down.

In the chest of his former best friend.

Who looks remarkably like his darling ex-wife.

Is simply a coincidence of life.

(Looking to Infidelity.)

So Officer, he'd like to confess, nay to merely attest.

To a most egregious act of theft.

Someone has stolen his knife.

[Infidelity]

(Looking to Dear Friend.)

Careless Whispers.

I know what it is that teases your mind.

[Reason]

A moment's deception. A moment of stolen pleasure.

[Emotion]

Of base desire.

[Reason]

Is not all desire base in that it covets gratification?

[Emotion]

Love is its own reward. And what of compassion?

[Satire]

Indeed, love is a funny, funny thing.

[Emotion]

And of contemplation? An obsession, perhaps, but an ephemeral secret-thought, a moment of fantasy, is that an act of infidelity: a faithless liaison?

[Reason]

Perhaps, we need to consider the nature of the commitment. But, perhaps, we ask too much of the feeble of mind?

[Emotion]

If only the feeble of mind would receive the faith. If only love would reconcile.

[Wisdom]

Reconciliation demands of the transgressor acknowledgement and contrition; only then can one receive forgiveness.

(Looking to Reason.)

Love, innocent desire, is not constrained by contract.

(Looking to Dear Friend.)

But of commitment, is not neglect an egregious act of infidelity—an abrogation of a solemn promise? An egregious act of contempt?

Demand, indeed desire, is chastened by the ever-presence of limitation.

[Mockery]

(Interjects, looking to Dear Friend.)

You can't have it all!

[Wisdom]

All else in good measure, but of love, innocent desire, all else, in measure, is less: mere folly. Dear Friend's transgression is more banal than a faithless liaison yet demonstrably reprehensible.

Regardless of intent, benevolent or not, folly—faithless vanity and its petty reward—was the object

of his desire; not love nor the promise of devotion. Careless whispers or careless neglect: a most careless deceit, indeed.

Begin Again

[Departed Love]

A distant chorus of sadness and remorse

The trace of bitter tears etched across my face

Of trust lost to careless deceit

I can't breathe in this pitiless space

Where wickedness was once the thrill of fantasy

The whispers of desire, now whispers of torment

[Departed Love, Dear Friend]

Blind to love's promise, too blind to see

To begin again, a life of my own, to begin again, a life on my own, to begin again, alone

[Departed Love]

Stolen memories, discarded, torn and scattered

Expectation deceived, shattered

Dreams lie, and lie in disbelief

Resentment, as though love no longer mattered

A cast-off whore, bloodied, bruised, battered

Desire, the sanctuary of faded memory

But denial is deceit, without love life is incomplete

[Departed Love, Dear Friend]

To begin again, a life of my own, to begin again, a life on my own, to begin again, alone

[Departed Love]

Distrust a constant companion
In the face of fear, misery's reflection
Can time distract suspicion and seduce desire?
So the heart's tremor can silence
The whispers of torment, the torment of the liar
Can hope and faith conspire, unseen in the shadows?
Before surrender, before love can begin again

[Departed Love, Dear Friend]

To begin again, a life of my own, to begin again, a life on my own, to begin again, alone

[Departed Love]

Before love can begin again
Must I learn to trust, to trust in love?
Or must I learn to disregard
The indiscretion of a moment's longing?
Before love can begin again

Before love can begin again

Before love can begin again

Blowing Out Candles

[Intoxication]
Party's not started and I'm blowing out candles
I'm blowing out candles
I'm blowing out candles

Party's not started and I think it's a scandal

I just can't handle
That love is a vandal

Love is a vandal

Party's not started and I'm blowing out candles
Party's not started...

(The other Voices are silent in disbelief. At first puzzled, now embarrassed and apologetic,
Intoxication motions toward Departed Love.)

It Don't Come Easily

[Intoxication]

Don't know what I did, but I'm sorry
Don't know what I did, most of the time
In the time that remains
If you will only explain
Though to me listening don't come easily
I'll try just the same
If you will only explain
What it is that I did?
And, why it is?
Why it is that I'm sorry?

Don't know nothing 'bout a lot, for that I'm sorry
Know a lot 'bout nothing, most of the time
In the time that remains
If you will only explain
Though to me learning don't come easily

I'll try just the same
If you will only explain
What it is that I did?
And, why?
And, why it is that I'm sorry?

Don't know what to say, but I'm sorry
Don't know what to say, most of the time
In the time that remains
If I could but explain
Though to me expression don't come easily
I'll try just the same
If I could but explain
What it is that I did?
And, why it is?
Why it is that I'm sorry?

So before I forget, let me express my regret
For what it is that I did, for which I am truly, truly sorry.

[Dear Friend]

Life, faith, love, and folly. What did I do that was so wrong? Was it so foolish? The demands of life...

[Wisdom]

All else in good measure. And the measure of a desire's worth, its status, is weighed in the burden of its loss. The burden of this wretchedness.

[Dear Friend]

If only I could turn-back time.

[Mockery]

Oh, yes let's do the time-warp again.

[Intoxication]

It's just a step to the left.

And then a jump to the right...

[Reason]

Idiots.

(In reference to Intoxication.)

And you're drunk.

[Mockery]

And you're ugly.

[Reason]

Yes, yes, yes, we all know where that conversation leads. Have you ever conceived an original thought?

[Satire]

Oh, why bother when there is an ocean of delicious morsels from which to sample? Witticism, platitudes, ambiguity. Oh, ambiguity, delicious ambiguity. And the wicked delight of plagiarism.

[Reason]

Plagiarism is theft.

[Satire]

Plagiarism is an art not a crime.

Well ... it's only a crime if you do it badly.

[Mockery]

It's only a crime if you get caught.

(Looking to Dear Friend.)

And you, got caught!

[Fool]

(Perturbed. Looking to Wisdom.)

What are they talking about?

[Wisdom]

A violation of rights. A violation of responsibilities.

[Fool]

Plagiarism?

[Emotion]

Playing with words. An insensitive taunt.

(Looking to Mockery, and Satire.)

Enough.

[Dear Friend]

The stupidity of my contemplation.

[Mockery]

The stupidity of your action.

[Dear Friend]

The plans of mice and men.

[Mockery]

Oh, spare me the platitudes.

[Satire]

Platitude or rationalisation? Oh, rationalisation: sublime sanctuary.

[Wisdom]

To a person of good conscience, denial is a retreat haunted by disquiet.

[Satire]

Oh, we're being serious are we? We don't like that.

(Pointing to Dear Friend.)

Off with his head.

[Fool]

No!

[Emotion]

Enough.

[Folly]

The folly, the folly of what I once thought. Love cast into the shadows; disregarded in the pursuit of folly. The folly of what I once thought, important.

I Once Thought

[Folly]

(The hint of resent, self-pity, and disappointment.)

I once thought to reach beyond the stars
To where knowledge lies in wait of a willing heart
To assail the barriers behind which bigotry could lie in wait
So the only challenge to the imagination
Would be the intrusion of an insistent time

I once thought to reach beyond the stars, beyond man's conceit

I once thought to steal the darkness from the night sky
To veil the world in eternal light
To subdue the shadows in which fear could lie in wait
So the only tears that a child might cry
Would be tears of laughter adrift in joyous flight

I once thought to steal the darkness from the god-less night sky

I once thought to distract the focus of the sun's light
To render love blind, and
To light the darkness in which faithless vanity could lie in wait
So the only heartache a lover might know
Would be the sweet heartache of watching their child grow

(Now leering at Dear Friend.)

I once thought that I would be loved forever, and love in kind

Life, faith, love, and the folly of what I once thought

Life is but a cruel joke that conceals the truth from the fool

Faith, a curse on the forsaken abandoned to a pitiless fate

And love?

Love has passed me by

I once thought that I could change the world

And though I have forsaken faith

In an act so cruel

Life and love have played me for that fool

[Dear Friend]

(Resentful.)

Folly? Folly. Faithless vanity and its petty reward. Faithless vanity has played me for that fool.

Forever and a moment, the eternal fool!

[Mockery]

Self-pity, it's an insidious comfort.

[Satire]

So you have said, over and over...

[Intoxication]

And over again.

Inside, outside, upside, down.

Over and under, around, and around.

This way, that way, a leap and a bound.

On and off ... life's merry-go 'round.

[Mockery]

Self-pity.

[Emotion]

(Reproachful, addressing the Voices of Mockery, Satire, and Intoxication.)

Torment.

(Compassionately, addressing Dear Friend.)

Insidious torment. From the darkness into the light; from the light into the darkness. Over and over, and over again.

(Once again addressing, in turn, the Voices of Mockery, Satire, and Intoxication.)

Compassion, understanding, respect.

[Fool]

(Questions Folly, but turns to Emotion seeking reassurance.)

But faith in love?

[Emotion]

Love, innocent desire, innocent of reason. Sublime, all else is less, all else, in measure, is mere folly. Something else, more than less: love.

[Fool]

(Looking to Dear Friend, in anger, and incrimination.)

Players play, players in disguise.

[Reason]

(In reference to Fool.)

The Fool.

[Emotion, Reason]

(Turn to each other; in reference to Fool.)

The Fool for Love.

No Friend of Mine (Reprised)

[Fool]

The face in the mirror sees through the disguise

The face in the mirror knows all of the lies

Knows the secrets you dare not share with yourself

[Dear Friend]

The face in the mirror is no friend of mine

[Fool]

The face in the mirror stares through the tears

The face in the mirror knows all of the thoughts that shadow the fear

Knows all of the shadows in which you hide

[Dear Friend]

The face in the mirror is no friend of mine

[Fool]

The face in the mirror marks the passage of time

The face in the mirror reflects the trace of thwarted desire, and

Knows well the sense of despair that burdens the soul

[Dear Friend]

But the face in the mirror is no friend of mine

[Fool]

In a room of mirrors with no window or door

In a room of mirrors, can you be certain, can you be sure?

Are you standing on the ceiling or are you standing on the floor?

In a room of mirrors there is no hiding place

But faithless deception will plot your escape

The face in the mirror stalks the illusion

If he could just close his eyes then he could deny

The face in the mirror

[Dear Friend]

Who is no friend of mine

[Darkness]

(Extends a hand, beckoning Dear Friend.)

Come with me.

A carriage leaves tonight.

Journey beyond tomorrow.

To a time, to a place...

Come with me tonight.

Journey beyond this sorrow.

Come with me tonight.

Come with me.

Come with me tonight.

Come with me.

Tonight.

Journey beyond this wretchedness.

Tonight.

It's Too Soon to Say Goodbye

[Dear Friend]

Through the silence

The night carries the distant sound of love

Threatened by the whispers of worthless regret

Loneliness in paradise, all but desire's content

Disappointment, shadowed by tears

The tears of bitter resent

(Dear Friend motions towards Darkness.)

[Voices]

(In desperate reassurance.)

Though the dawn taunts the twilight

It's too soon to say goodnight
Though heartache torments the silence
It's too soon to say goodbye

It's too soon to say goodbye

[Dear Friend]

Memory
Threatens to fade to a distorted recollection
A collection of images
Of a love, once realised
Portraits of perfect innocence?
Of a love, at once denied

[Voices]

Though the dawn taunts the twilight
It's too soon to say goodnight
Though time torments the memory
It's too soon to say goodbye

It's too soon to say goodbye

[Old Dude]

Chance
Threatened by the gathered doubt
Of embittered contemplation

[Voices]

In silence, defiant of resistance
To the demands of foolish pride

Chance anticipates, love's command

[Old Dude]

A chance at love, a chance at love, tonight

[Voices]

Though the dawn taunts the twilight

It's too soon to say goodnight

Though pride torments the chance

It's too soon to say goodbye

It's too soon to say goodbye

Though the dawn taunts the twilight

It's too soon to say goodnight

It's too soon

It's too soon to say goodnight, and

It's too soon to say goodbye

It's too soon to say goodbye

Forever and a Moment (Opening Verses)

[Dear Friend]

(Once again motions towards Darkness.)

The chill of sorrow and regret

A parting glance in the faded light

Reminiscent of the faded chance

Of love's circumstance

(Pleading to Darkness.)

Please answer me this: Does goodbye mean forever?!

Misery steals the light

It burdens my breathing, and falls heavily upon my eyes

And the tremor on my heart falters at the thought of what has become

Of love lost

Yes, through careless inattention and faithless vanity

(Dear Friend looks towards the table of photographs.)

Memory resonates in a discordant symphony of comfort and torment

As I dare not contemplate a future without you

This fool failed to recognise love in winter's guise

Insensitive to the sadness that shadowed your eyes

And the distance in your uncertain touch

Have I forsaken love, innocent desire?

Or has love forsaken me?

[Voices]

From the embers of love's fire

Hope against hope that our two hearts will conspire?

[Dear Friend]

(Attention towards Darkness.)

Please answer me this: Does goodbye mean forever?

[Sorrow]

(Sorrow moves to Dear Friend. Emotion attempts to intervene but is discouraged by Wisdom.)

Sorrow's Curse.

I have been alone forever.

Forever.

Forever and a moment.

You don't know loneliness.

You don't know how it feels.

To be alone each day.

Knowing that you will be alone tomorrow.

And tomorrow.

And tomorrow.

The isolation closes in on you.

Oppressive.

Like the walls of a collapsing tomb.

Darkness descends.

And to this hell there is no end.

All you hear, all you feel.

Is the heavy beat of sorrow's heart.

As your being tremors with anguish.

Is that your wish?

To portray the wounded part.

Is that your desire?

And, to extinguish love's fire.

To be alone forever.

Forever.

Forever and a moment.

You know not sorrow.

You know not how it feels.

Your self-pity is abhorrent.

It is for me.

It is for me that you should feel.

Sorrow, pitiless sorrow.

Pitiless.

It's my curse.

It's why I'm alone.

To be alone forever.

A tormented witness to other's pleasure.

Forever alone.

Forever.

Forever and a moment.

Forever alone.

Forever.

Forever.

Forever and a moment.

Alone.

Come stand with me.

In the shadow of loneliness.

Take my hand.

Feel the coldness.

Smell the fear.

Taste the resentment in bitter tears.

There can be no pity, there can be no escape.

Stand with me through eternity.

In this wretched place.

Then you'll come to understand.

What true sorrow means.

Then you'll understand.

The folly of denial's scheme.

And how loneliness.

And how the loneliness.

Screams!

(Sorrow turns away from Dear Friend to be comforted by Emotion. And, startled, Dear Friend turns away from sorrow.)

[Emotion]

It would seem that Sorrow is not pitiless at all.

(The Voices, desperate, defer to Wisdom.)

[Wisdom]

I can do no more.

Silence falls heavily on my heart.

Of reconciliation, forgiveness waits in the light of acknowledgement and contrition.

But denial is the fortress of the besieged.

And if Dear Friend will not receive the faith: to believe in love, completely.

To believe, to trust, to surrender to love.

Then...

(Looking to Dear Friend.)

I can do no more Dear Friend.

I can do no more, if you will not, receive the faith.

And put this wretchedness to an end.

Dear Friend, I can do no more.

[Emotion]

When love was so young...

[Old Dude]

So young, so young...

Redemption

[Old Dude]

Temptation, devil in the blood
Revelation, turn down the light
Salvation, a cross through my name
Redemption, a chance at love
A chance at love, a chance at love, tonight

There's a picture on the mantel
Of me, when I was, so young
Nothing I couldn't handle
Nothing I couldn't out-run
Things were so different then
When I was, so young

Temptation, devil in the blood
Revelation, turn down the light
Salvation, a cross through my name
Redemption, a chance at love
A chance at love, a chance at love, tonight

I know nothing 'bout a lot
Know a lot 'bout nothing, most of the time
Listening didn't come easily
Learning, cruel if not unkind
Things ain't so different, from
When I was, so young

Temptation, devil in the blood
Revelation, turn down the light

Salvation, a cross through my name
Redemption, a chance at love
A chance at love, a chance at love, tonight

A fragile flower
Caressed by the morning light
Wilts at the sun's scorn
The guilt that hides behind these tired eyes
Torments me, day and restless night
How could I have been, so cruel?
Careless existence, eternity's fool
Can things be so different now? ... from
When I was, so young

Temptation, devil in the blood
Revelation, turn down the light
Salvation, a cross through my name
Redemption, a chance at love
A chance at love, a chance at love, tonight

A chance at love
A chance to do it right
As truth is love's witness
I'm ready to surrender
To the tenderness of this night
I want things to be so different, from
When I was, so young

Temptation, devil in the blood

Revelation, turn down the light
Salvation, a cross through my name
Redemption, a chance at love
A chance at love, a chance at love, tonight

[Voices]
A chance, a chance at love
A chance at love, tonight
A chance at love, a chance at love, tonight

[Old Dude]

If only, if only...

[Emotion]

(Looking to Dear Friend.)

Is that how you want this to end, an eternity of misery and regret, forever and a moment?

[Infidelity]

Careless whispers. I know what it is that teases your mind.

[Mockery]

Careless whispers? A dirty little secret? No.

Careless conversation. Careless existence. A secret he dare not share with himself.

[Fool]

Careless conversation echoes in the still of the lonely night ... the sun's scorn.

[Voices]

Naked in torment's room.

[Dear Friend]

No.

[Wisdom]

Is there a lie more insidious than the lie one tells oneself?

[Dear Friend]

A secret I dare not share with myself? Careless existence? No, I could not have loved her more.

[Satire]

Rationalisation: a retreat haunted by disquiet.

[Wisdom]

Denial is the fortress of the besieged. Forgiveness waits in the light of acknowledgement and contrition.

[Voices]

Naked in torment's room. A cage from which the songbird has flown. Lined with shards of mirrored glass.

[Mockery]

Cutting reflection ... the sun's scorn.

[Voices]

Words, that sour to bitter resent. As though love no longer mattered; a cast-off whore...

[Fool]

Innocence. Bares the soul in surrender's name.

[Dear Friend]

Innocence.

Disappointment, resentment ... scorn?

Innocence. No.

[Voices]

Naked in torment's room.

[Old Dude]

Innocence: vulnerable, exposed, and humiliated.

[Folly]

The disappointment of my life.

[Old Dude]

I turned on her. Innocence. Forgive me, please, forgive me.

[Dear Friend]

Forgive me.

A fragile flower caressed by the morning light ... the sun's scorn.

Innocence.

How could I have been so cruel? Eternity's fool.

[Emotion]

Is that how you want this to end?

[Dear Friend]

If only...

Forever and a Moment (Closing Verses)

[Dear Friend]

Please answer me this: Does goodbye mean forever?

[Voices/Excluding Mockery]

(Beckoning.)

For if forever is how long it takes

If forever and a moment, then

I will wait

I will wait

Sweet memories of spring

Of filtered sunlight through the trees

The fragrant scent of sandalwood

And children's laughter

Caressing the gentle breeze

[Dear Friend]

(Hesitantly responsive.)

Spring blossoms

From the torment of sorrow

Faith carries the blessing of tomorrow

Life and love renewed

[Voices]

I hope against hope, for the love of you

[Dear Friend]

(More responsive...)

Precious love has not forsaken me

I must believe

Though life's promise no more than fate

Then for the time of chance

A fleeting moment or an eternity

I will wait

I will wait

Please answer me this: Does goodbye mean forever?

For if forever is how long it takes

If forever

If forever

If forever and a moment, then

I will wait

I will wait

I will open my heart for love's embrace, and I will wait

I will wait

Forever and a moment

I will wait

[Mockery]

Wait!? Wait for what? Go to her now you idiot.

(Pauses. Compassionately.)

Listen and learn, tonight, before it's too late.

[Dear Friend]

(Looking to the distance.)

But what would I say? The words! A too familiar conversation; a tattered faded postcard of a place we've already been.

Last Stand for Love

[Voices]

(Coaxing a hesitant Dear Friend.)

Let's try again

I am sorry for the heartache that I have caused

Let's try again

In the chaos of our lives

Distracted by an insistent time

We have come too far to let it all just slip away

Love, is an adventure fraught with danger

A petulant, neglected child in need of nurture

Love, our past, and our future

Don't let it all just slip away

Let's try again

A last stand for love

Let's try again

A last stand for love

Don't let it all just slip away

[Dear Friend]

The thought of being without you

That beautiful smile

Even the frown upon your face

That gentle caress, that lingering trace

Even the bite of frequent redress

That bite, that bite upon my cheek

No, the thought of being without you

Ice never melts with the fall of snow

The coldness of my touch

Careless, reckless, yes I know

Through foolish pride I withdrew inside

I chose to hide

From the disappointment of my life

And to blame innocence

The one that I loved

The one that once, loved me

[Voices]

Don't let it all just slip away

Let's try again

A last stand for love

Let's try again

A last stand for love

Don't let it all just slip away

[Voices, Dear Friend]

Let's try again
I am sorry for the heartache that I have caused
Let's try again
I now know the worth of precious love
And anything of worth is never easy, I know
But we have come too far to let it all just slip away
Love, is an adventure fraught with danger
A petulant, neglected child in need of nurture
Love, is its own reward
Love, our past, and our future

Don't let it all just slip away
Let's try again
A last stand for love
Let's try again
A last stand for love
Love in danger, love a distant stranger
Don't let it all just slip away
Let's try again
A last stand for love

[Dear Friend]

But forgiveness is burdened by the absence of trust.

The Message

[Departed Love]
(Isolated, at the exit to the room.)
In the quiet of resignation
In the still of the cold, careless night

In defiance of circumstance
Fate without chance?
Though forgiveness is burdened by the absence of trust
If love is the message then I'm willing to concede
If love is the message I'm ready to believe
Completely
I'm ready, I'm ready to believe
If love is the message then I'm ready to believe

[Dear Friend]

The emptiness
A surreal impression of something, something once real
An ember of desire
Something else, more than less
Of innocence, without reason
Something else, more than less: love

[Reason]

Wisdom is burdened by the absence of faith

[Departed Love]

If love is the message then I'm willing to receive
If love is the message I'm ready to believe
Completely
I'm ready, I'm ready to believe
If love is the message then I'm ready to believe

[Dear Friend]

A discordant chorus, a pleasure so bitter-sweet
Of loss, of surrender, of desire's torment

Yet, something else, more than less
A presence, in the moment, complete
Something else, more than less: love

[Fool]

To love is to lose, to not love, is to lose completely

[Departed Love]

If love is the message then I'm willing to concede

If love is the message I'm ready to believe

Completely

I'm ready, I'm ready to believe

If love is the message then I'm ready to believe

Completely

I'm ready, I'm ready to believe

If love is the message then I'm ready to believe

[Dear Friend, Departed Love]

Completely

I'm ready, I'm ready to believe

If love is the message then I'm ready to believe

(Departed Love withdraws. Dear Friend motions toward the exit, pauses at the table to admire a photograph of Departed Love.)

[Dear Friend]

Love is the wonder in wonderful and you are the wonder in my life.

You are the wonder in my life; you my love are the wonder in my life.

(Dear Friend hastens an exit accompanied by Wisdom. Wisdom pauses, amused, gestures to summon the other Voices. The other Voices, relieved and self-congratulatory, overlook their separation from Dear Friend.)

Love is Not (Reprised)

[Seduction]

Love is not the hunger that torments a lover to despair

Not the dagger that cuts the lover's soul bare

Love is not the caution abandoned in the face of doubt

Not the anguish in a scorned lover's shout

Love

Love is all, but none of these things

Love is all, but none of these things

Love is not a river of forlorn-lovers' tears

Not a presence that the innocent should fear

Love is not a haven in which a lover hides

Not a fickle admirer that changes with the tide

Love

Love is all, but none of these things

Love is all, but none of these things

Love is not a flower that blossoms in the spring

Not a songbird or the chorus that it sings

Love is not a cloak that the willing dares to wear

Not the enchanted stare that lovers share

Love

Love is all, but none of these things

Love is all, but none of these things

Love is not a sensual style

Not a wicked smile

Love is not the way that lovers walk

Not the way that lovers talk

Love is not the dream that hides in waiting

Love is not the chance there for the taking

Love

Love is all, but none of these things

Love is all, but none of these things

Love is all, but none of these things

[Wisdom]

Love is all. And of Dear Friend?

(Now alert to the separation, embarrassed and anxious, they hasten to be reunited with Dear Friend; all, that is, except Vanity who is preoccupied with the looking-glass. Alert to the sudden quiet, bemused, Vanity assumes centre-stage and continues to reflect.)

[Vanity]

(Into the looking-glass.)

Faithless Vanity, pfffff.

It's simply not true for Vanity is always, is always, is always faithful to you.

Do it All for Love

[Vanity]

(Admiring his reflection.)

You're the best thing

Yes, you're the best thing

You're the best thing

In my life, tonight

Do it all

Yes, do it all

Do it all

For love, tonight

Before the morning

Yes, before the morning

Before the morning light

Love may be gone, yes, tonight

But you're the best thing

Yes, you're the best thing

You're the best thing

In my life, tonight

So do it all

Yes, do it all

Do it all

For love, tonight

Do it all

For love

Tonight

Do it all

For love

Tonight

Before the morning

Yes, before the morning
Before the morning light
Love may be gone

So do it all
Yes, do it all
Do it all
Do it all
Do it all
Do it all
For love
Do it all
For love, tonight

You're the best thing
Yes, you're the best thing
You're the best thing
In my life, tonight

Do it all
Yes, do it all
Do it all
For love, tonight

Do it all
Do it all
Do it all
Do it all
For love

Do it all

For love, tonight

(Shadowed by Fool, Emotion appears at the door and insistently gestures Vanity to join them.)

[Vanity]

(Looks to Emotion.)

Pfffff.

(Vanity continues to admire his reflection. Dear Friend returns, hurriedly, to collect his coat.)

[Dear Friend]

(Pausing to reflect.)

To love is to lose, to not love, is to lose completely.

(Dear Friend switches-off the light. Vanity, in darkness, no longer able to admire his reflection in the looking-glass, screams in horror.)

THE END