

MOTHER'S DAY  
POEMS

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## A MOTHER'S LOVE DETERMINES HOW

A mother's love determines how  
We love ourselves and others.  
There is no sky we'll ever see  
Not lit by that first love.

Stripped of love, the universe  
Would drive us mad with pain;  
But we are born into a world  
That greets our cries with joy.

How much I owe you for the kiss  
That told me who I was!  
The greatest gift—a love of life—  
Lay laughing in your eyes.

Because of you my world still has  
The soft grace of your smile;  
And every wind of fortune bears  
The scent of your caress.

ALTHOUGH CONSUMED BY FURY,  
YOU STILL LOVED US

Although consumed by fury, you still loved us.  
At least that is the knowledge of my heart.  
Screaming like a child, you would beat us  
Until you snapped, and then the tears would start.  
"You know I love you," you would cry, demanding  
More of us through tears than with your fist.  
And we, through tears, would nod our understanding,  
Too bullied in our pain to dare resist.  
Yet now that you've been dead for many years,  
And I have wandered through my own vast hell,  
I see the desperate anguish in your tears  
And hope at last that I can love you well.  
For only in my love can your love be  
The love that once, I think, you had for me.

## EVERY TIME I SEE MY PANSIES

Every time I see my pansies  
Vivid in the golden sun,  
You are with me in my garden,  
And I am once again a child.

Vivid in the golden sun,  
Their beauty brings me close to tears,  
And I am once again a child  
Learning to assume your grace.

Their beauty brings me close to tears  
As I join hands with you in love,  
Learning to assume your grace,  
Dancing to your inner music.

As I join hands with you in love,  
You are with me in my garden,  
Dancing to your inner music  
Every time I see my pansies.

## FROM THE DISTANCE OF OUR SEPARATION

From the distance of our separation  
I see the whole of which I was a part;  
I see the way my temper tore your heart,  
And then the love beneath the laceration.  
I see the landscape shaping our relation:  
Your fear that I might choose with little art,  
My anger at the dreams you would impart,  
The ancient paths that lead to confrontation.  
But knowledge needn't linger in regret,  
Nor wait upon some wind to clear its sky.  
We are none the worse for what is gone.  
The moments that I never will forget  
Are those whose careless grace must make me cry,  
Safe within a heart forever won.



## HAPPINESS IS LIKE A SUNNY DAY

Happiness is like a sunny day:  
All one's bitterness is drowned in light.  
Praise be the light, though it must pass away,  
Perhaps because compassion needs the night.  
Yet when one feels like swallowing barbed wire,  
More or less does nothing for the pain.  
Old memories return as if on fire,  
Tormenting one with unforgiving shame.  
How can I, who love you, come inside,  
Each wound to bind up with an ointment rare,  
Restoring the once effervescent bride  
'Neath misery no happiness can spare?  
So shall I sing to you of all life's beauty,  
Doing through the night my daytime duty.  
A song of love may not bring back your noon,  
Yet in your darkness, let me be your moon.

## HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY TO THOSE WHOSE CHILDREN

Happy Mother's Day to those whose children  
Are those for whom their love must be their womb,  
Pleased to labor in a common garden  
Pruning plants they would themselves have sown.  
Yes, praise to those whose love is notwithstanding,  
Mothers who could not be mothers, yet  
Of charity and need came to the calling,  
Taking from the world what joy they would.  
How well the will can ride an errant wind!  
Each fate is but the field of our endeavor.  
Reason may resist our heartfelt ends  
'Ere we share our passions with another.  
So may we all, through sacrifice and love,  
Daily do what will our spirits prove,  
Asking only for what we might give,  
Yielding not our labors but our lives.

## I KNOW I HAVEN'T BEEN AN EASY CHILD

I know I haven't been an easy child,  
But love for you lies underneath my whims;  
There is no way I could be tame or mild:  
I need sometimes to shout and wave my limbs.  
You're the wall I need to test my height,  
The countervailing force to test my strength,  
The chain I hammer at with all my might,  
Even though you have increased its length.  
It's tough, I know, to be both Mom and Dad,  
To raise me all alone, just hit or miss;  
To have to play at once good cop and bad,  
And give me grief before my goodnight kiss.  
But love against the odds is stronger still:  
I need your fierce, proud love, and always will.

## I LOVE YOU AND I NEED YOU, EVEN THOUGH

I love you and I need you, even though  
I may at times have made you tear your hair!  
I set myself apart, but even so  
Your presence and your love are always there.  
You are my jail cell and ten-ton door  
That keeps me from just being who I am.  
And so I pound the walls and go to war,  
Ramming all the rules that I can ram.  
Yet though I must rebel, all the while  
I know your love's the ground on which I stand.  
I wait upon the flash of your proud smile  
And twist inside at every reprimand.  
I'm sorry for the times I've caused you pain;  
After these brief storms, love will remain.

## I THOUGHT I KNEW A THING OR TWO OF BEAUTY

I thought I knew a thing or two of beauty:  
I've known your love since I was hours old.  
But now I bear myself the awesome duty  
That love turns into joy, and joy to gold.  
How precious to experience your pleasure!  
To be on both sides of the deep-felt glance;  
To know so well the moment's gift full measure;  
To be both lead and partner in that dance.  
No child can be but grateful for her children  
When loved so well as to know well to love.  
No mother can but hope her prudent passion  
Will move a heart to move as her heart moved.  
The love you felt for me I now can feel,  
Which makes it not more lovely but more real.

## M IS FOR THE MIRACLE OF BEING

M is for the miracle of Being.  
O is for its origin in love.  
T is for the tenderness of seeing.  
H is for a home no wind can move.  
E is for the ecstasy of living.  
R is for the recklessness of giving.

## MAYBE LOVE PUT SUNSHINE IN YOUR HEART

Maybe love put sunshine in your heart,  
Using light to leaven your long day.  
Maybe it was hard, but from the start,  
'Twixt blight and bloom the sunshine had its way.  
Sing, then, of mother's love, and your delight  
Descended down to me, that I might be  
Alive with sunshine, bountiful and bright,  
Yet yearning still for what you gave to me.

## MAYBE THERE IS NOTHING MORE THAN SUNSHINE

Maybe there is nothing more than sunshine  
Out upon the terrace of your heart.  
The miracles that might have been at one time  
Have long since found a reason to depart.  
Each day must be itself a new redeemer  
Returned to bring you home to inner joy.  
'Tis the long-held habit of the dreamer  
Simply to let sunshine spirits buoy.  
Destiny does not decree one's music  
As one has always ample chance to choose it,  
Yet cherishing what nothing can destroy.



MEMORIES LIE AT ANCHOR  
IN YOUR ARMS

Memories lie at anchor in your arms,  
Under the protection of your mountain:  
Music in the hollow of the wind.

## MERE HAPPINESS IS NOT THE SONG I'M SINGING

Mere happiness is not the song I'm singing:  
Of mothers' joy a jagged piece is pain.  
To love is to be amply burdened, bringing  
Hearts with gifts to an uncharted plain.  
Even so, one longs to be a mother,  
Remembering a richness unreserved  
'Ere one could barely recognize another,  
Sustained by love unsought and undeserved.  
Deeper than oneself is one's communion,  
A revelation reached alone by union  
Yet yearned for, though through years of love well  
served.

## MIRACLES ARE MIRRORS OF YOUR LOVE

Miracles are mirrors of your love  
Open as spring windows to the breeze.  
The child will in time a sailor prove,  
Holding course as wind and will might please.  
Eventually, what is left is beauty,  
Resonant with what was never sung  
'Twixt the wonder and the sense of duty,  
Salient as a word on silence hung.  
Dear as life is, there is something dearer,  
A truth that near dissolves as we draw nearer,  
Yet is what is once tales of time are wrung.

## MORE OR FEWER YEARS MAKE LITTLE DIFFERENCE

More or fewer years make little difference.  
Oceans are no more or less than streams.  
Tears or laughter, donnybrooks or dreams,  
Here there is no small inheritance.  
Even in the direst circumstance,  
Regardless of the measures and the means,  
'Ere the ends of days of kings and queens,  
So were we loved beyond all will or sense.  
Do, then, pay due respect to innocence,  
As dear and pure and simple as it seems,  
Yearning for no yield or recompense.

## MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS OUGHT TO BE FRIENDS

Mothers and daughters ought to be friends,  
But there is a lot that gets in the way.  
The determined pursuit of opposite ends,  
Ends up as harsh words we would rather not say.

Yet storms tend to pass, and passions abate,  
And love to outlast the days of despair,  
And comfort to come to those who would wait,  
And friendships to flourish in those who forbear.

So we must be patient, and fight, if we must,  
With the knowledge that love will endure what we do.  
The anger is wind, and the angels are dust,  
But love will be waiting whenever we're through.

## MOTHERS ARE AS TOTAL AS THE SKY

Mothers are as total as the sky;  
Older than the earth, and more enduring.  
They're rooted in our hearts like ancient trees,  
Halfway down to seething lava seas;  
Emblazoned on our sail, and on our mooring.  
Returning home, we dwell within their sigh:  
So maddening, so rich, so reassuring.

## MY, HOW YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER

My, how your life has been taken over!  
Oceans have flooded your once urbane hours,  
Testing with tumult the limits of joy.  
How restlessly rapt your ubiquitous rover,  
Eagerly poised on the brink of her powers,  
Reaching for all a quick mind might employ!  
'Mid such sweet turmoil, seared by affection,  
So may you savor your first Mother's Day.  
Depths are designed for delight, not protection,  
As passions sweep over the slightest objection,  
Yielding a grace that will have its own way.

## MY MOTHER, THE QUEEN OF MY HEART

My mother, the queen of my heart,  
Reigns in my sky like a moon,  
Pulling the tides of my senses,  
Lighting the paths of my dreams.

All melodies hence will play subtly  
Against this first, dominant theme  
That will turn their most delicate graces  
Into harmonies they'll never hear.

Nor can I visit the garden  
Where once I lay wrapped in her arms.  
The doors of the past will not open  
Though I live 'neath a dome of pure joy.



## THANK YOU FOR THE GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING

Thank you for the gift of understanding  
How deep within the heart one's love can go.  
A mother is the organ tone of feeling,  
Now grounding us in sorrow, now in healing,  
Knowing all the passion one can know.

Years of independence notwithstanding,  
On you all other loves depend, revealing  
Underneath our waves, your undertow.

## THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN THE WAY I LOVE YOU

There is no difference in the way I love you,  
Even though you're gone these many years.  
I think of you this Mother's Day as ever:  
The home that sits behind half-open doors.

Death has no finality, for love  
Is like a mountain when it comes to time:  
The change is slow, so slow that in a lifetime  
It does not dominate the landscape less.

And like a mountain you may see my yearning  
Dappled in the distance, just as music  
Alternates between despair and joy,  
Yet always, always turns the heart towards beauty.

This day is no less yours than when you were  
Alive within the confines of your flesh.  
You are alive in me, and will be always,  
Though I along with you return to dust.

## THERE IS NO FIELD AS FERTILE AS YOUR LOVE

There is no field as fertile as your love.  
How can I hold back my grateful tears?  
All your gifts my heart takes notice of,  
Now that my departure from you nears.  
Know that I remember the caresses  
You absently bestowed upon my hair,  
Or in the dark a thousand, thousand kisses  
Upon my cheek to tell me you were there.  
Most of what you've done for me, like flowers  
Of a season, sprouted, bloomed, and died.  
The memories of all those faithful hours,  
However, helped shape who I am inside.  
Eventually, everything we do  
Returns to us, as now my love to you.

## THERE IS NO LOVE ENOUGH FOR ME TO GIVE YOU

There is no love enough for me to give you.  
However much I feel, there should be more.  
All the love an angel choir might sing you  
Never makes it halfway up that shore.  
Know that I would burst my willing heart  
Your life to fill with pleasure overflowing,  
Or if I had the genius and the art,  
Undertake to paint your spirit glowing.  
More beautiful than all the summer fields  
Or all the cornucopias of fall,  
The wish my insufficient passion yields  
Holds me with a vastness I recall.  
Even as your love became my sea,  
Remember that the same is yours from me.

## THERE WAS A TIME NOT LONG AGO WHEN I

There was a time not long ago when I  
Had neither life nor love apart from you.  
All you said was absolutely true,  
Nor could I see myself save through your eyes.  
Kids have a sense of life, but don't know why:  
Your love alone gave my world its hue.  
Of all the things that touched me, there were few  
Untouched by your bright song or inner cry.  
My luck, then, to be so finely loved.  
Of you my world was sculpted, light and free.  
The graceful architecture of your heart  
Had its twin whichever way I moved.  
Even now, though we have lived apart,  
Recalling your love makes me glad to be.

## TO MY WIFE ON MOTHER'S DAY

To my wife on Mother's Day,  
Our habitude and light:  
May you be as happy as  
You make us with your love.  
Winds may blow the world away,  
Intent on reaching night.  
For us there'll always be a home,  
Everywhere you move.

## TO THE MOTHERS OF CHILDREN WHO NEVER WERE CHILDREN

To the mothers of children who never were children,  
Who died in the womb unnamed and unknown:  
You also were mothers, albeit but briefly,  
And loved with the love given mothers alone.

Yours was the stirring of life within life,  
The being of being all one being knew,  
The love of a love that knew only your love,  
The world to a world that knew no world but you.

Yours the unspeakable pleasure of giving  
Your substance to nurture the creature within;  
Yours the inscrutable song of creation,  
Bringing to being the dust of the wind.

Death is the end, but never the meaning;  
Life is a gift, no matter how long.  
You, too, are mothers, the bearers of beauty,  
The icons of love to whom this day belongs.

WE MAY BE LIKE LEAVES  
UPON THE WIND

We may be like leaves upon the wind,  
Each dancing towards our fated patch of earth,  
Leaving in a gust of slanting rain  
Or at some sunlit touch, our place of birth.  
Vivid memories of life at home,  
Early love, most vivid love, of you,  
Your arms the world, your touch our organ tone:  
One sea of bliss beneath all that we do,  
Unloosing tears as dark and wide we roam.



## YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WHERE WE RETURN

You have always been where we return,  
The home that is our harbor from the sea,  
The place where what we are can easy be,  
With nothing we need alter or unlearn.

That you would give has always been a given.  
Your love for us is something simply there,  
As plain and necessary as the air,  
And just as unpretentious and unbidden.

And though I cannot give you now your due,  
Which is beyond what these poor words can say,  
I give you all I can this special day,  
Which is the treasure of my love for you.



