

Jerry Lettvin was unique. Of course we all are, but Jerry was uniquely unique. I know, I know. Incorrect usage, but he, of all people deserved the appellation. A wonderful combination of genius and clown, he lived out loud and outrageously his whole life.

Jerry had poetry published over his lifetime, even translating the German poetry of Christian Morgenstern into English.

But the following poems were written by him to me over a period of six years while he was deep into Alzheimer's. I was so overwhelmed and grateful that he never forgot who I was (even proposing marriage to me again, at about two in the morning, a month before he passed).

During his last six years I was so determined to keep him happy that I paid no attention to the barely legible scribbles on the papers he occasionally gave me. I just put them aside for later. He strove mightily during this period to continue his work in vision (Jerry always knew how to strive mightily as all his students could tell you) but when my son, David, cleaned out his father's desk, he told me there were dozens of papers on vision begun with a single line and then ... nothing.

So I did not know the treasure I had in these messy papers until years later. Later took eight years to happen but, luckily, I had put them all in the same place, and as I deciphered what I had thought were probably meaningless fragments of thought that would bring back to me the pain of watching a brilliant brain dim, instead I found poems of clarity, humor, and beauty. His poetry flowed.

We are all aware of the effect of music on aging brains, but who had ever heard of poetry in this regard? This intrigued me and inspired me to share these works with all of you. They comprise a treasure that can only be increased by sharing

I was so lucky, as were many of you, to have this giant of a man in our lives. I do not mourn his passing, I celebrate his life. Enjoy these with me. Join me. I wish him a Bon Voyage—often!

With love from

Maggie Lettvin





Whatever signs of age, our years ensure
The state of love, unaged, will yet endure;
and though our wit and flesh are past their prime,
nothing in our bond can change with time,

Whichever of us goes, then none are gone;
there's no such thing as the surviving one.
Whichever stays, the other's also there
but gives no indication of just where.

Whatever signs of age, our years ensure
The states of love, unaged, will yet endure;
and though our wit and flesh are past their prime,
nothing in our bond can change with time.

Whichever of us goes, then none are gone;
there's no such thing as the surviving one,
whichever stays, the other's also there
but gives no indication of just where.

For Maggie, October 1, 2008

Whatever signs of age our years ensure
the states of love, un-aged. will yet endure;
and though our art and flesh are past their prime,
nothing in our bond can change with time.

Whichever of us goes, then none are gone;
there's no such thing as the surviving one,
Whichever stays, the other's also there
but gives no indication of just where.

Jerome Y. Lettvin

For Maggie on our 52nd wedding anniversary 7 Nov 99

DATE

Still Stirred By Her,

From having stayed in love with you, I tell
that you became the keeper of my soul.

Although we cling together as a whole,
I don't presume to think I know you well
by only viewing you in much detail,

For spirits have an isolating rule:
not even love provides the needed tool
to know each other on a common scale.

Love is not a process I control;

rather, it's the sentence of your spell
that, once pronounced, permits me no parole
and renders you my keeper and my cell.

To pray you for the key were no avail,
yet, oh so wonderful that you're my jail,

Jerry

For Maggie on our 52nd wedding anniversary. 7 Nov. 99

Still Stirred By Her

From having stayed in love with you, I felt
that you became the keeper of my soul.

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To pray you for the key were no avail,
yet, oh so wonderful that you're my jail.

Jerry

What is gained in life decays with age.

The ~~the~~ ^{the} open world ~~collapses~~ collapses to a cage,
And even love itself turns into rage
When we cannot embrace what we engage.

Growing old does not enhance desire,
no sparks appear to turn our warmth to fire;
when ~~the~~ ^{the heat} of passion grows, we just retire
and pray that all these flames will grow or higher.

Yet, for all that flesh ^{somehow} has not kept pace,
and all our limbs and ^{now have} ~~parts~~ lost their grace,
~~our~~ our love for one another keeps its place
and ~~each~~ ^{both} of us enjoys each other's ~~space~~ space.

Despite advance of time our love yet grows;
The passion that possessed us, ever shows,
and despite that all our ~~faults~~ faults by now expose,
You still like a thorn bush, you are like a rose.

Jerry to Maggie. September 17th, 2008

What is gained in life decays with age.
The open world collapses to a cage,
and soon love itself forms into rage
when we cannot embrace what we engage.

Growing old does not enhance desire,
No sparks appear to turn our warmth to fire;
where heat of passion grows, we just retire
and pray that all those flames will grow no higher.

Yet, for all that flash has somehow not kept pace,
and all our limbs and show have lost their grace,
our love for one another keeps its place
And both of us enjoy each other's space.

Despite advance of time our love yet grows;
the passion that possessed us ever slows
and despite that all our faults by now expose,
I am still a thorn bush, you are still a rose.

Time bids spades, we play our hearts,
and having lost, poor time departs;
what we have won is being two
and time gives up as nothing new.

Time bids spades, we play our hearts,
and having lost, poor time departs;
what we have won is being two
And time gives up as nothing-???.(New

Our future's past, our die is cast,
~~But~~ we are not designed to ~~be~~ cast,
We don't know how tomorrow we rise,
But would not have it otherwise.

The beauty of love provides the art
of being close when we're apart;
if model goes, the image stays
and shows itself in ~~other~~ ^{different} ways.

Life is shallow, love is deep;
Pain is worked, love we keep;
nothing in our lives endures
save that I'm forever yours.

Valentine's Day (really his 89th Birthday)

Our future's past, our die is cast,
for we are not designed to last,
We don't know how tomorrows rise
but would not have it otherwise.

The brush of love provides the art
of being close when we're apart;
if model goes, the image stays
and shows itself in different ways.

Life is shallow, love is deep,
Time is wasted, love we keep;
Nothing in our lives endures
save that I'm forever yours.

Jerome Y. Lettwin to Maggie Lettwin, 2009

How can we express in age
the love by which we both engage;
through echoes of our flesh go still
we love each other and always will.

Our flesh grows soft, our wits decline,
yet I am yours and you are mine;
our love unweakened still remains,
despite my follies, despite your pains.

We are as one, and so will stay,
whatever shows on judgment day.

How can we express in age
the love by which we both engage;
though echos of our flesh go still
we love each other and always will.

Our flesh goes soft, our wits decline,
yet I am yours and you are mine;
our love unlessened still remains,
despite my follies, despite your pains.

We age as one, and so will stay,
whatever shows on judgement day.

~~12~~ B-1-09

We know we were in love when first we met,
we've stayed in love forever as of yet,
and so we'll stay however old we get;
for love like ours there is no measure set.

There is no show of love that we rehearse,
no hidden pangs of passion that we nurse,
no satisfaction that we've done no worse,
no worry that we've overdrained our purse.

Love is far more wonderful than we ~~know~~ ^{know,}
There's really no one else save me and you.
Love never wanes in time, it only grows,
Of all the things we know, it's all that's true.

12:10 in 30000000

We knew we were in love when first we met,
we've stayed in love together as of yet,
And so we'll stay however old we get;
for love like ours there is no measure ^s yet.

There is no show of love that we rehearse,
no hidden pangs of passion that we nurse
no satisfaction that we've done our worst,
no worry that we've overdrained our purse.

Love is much more wondrous than we knew
There's really no one else but me and you
Love never wained with time, it only grew,
of all the things we knew, it's all that's true.

My Dear Miss Brady-

It is never too late to propose marriage to one's wife. There is, furthermore, a kind of security to hindsight that makes us promises after the fact so vain, so much a wager as the more glowing and improbable hopes that one presses as certainties on a wife-to-be. Thus, when I offer this marriage it is with the guarantee of three healthy children that, 19 years after our coupling, will be both our pride and despair. There is, also, an absolute certainty that we will enjoy, at least, 19 years of living together, endure them, spend them, pass them, whatever verbs apply.

Now I do not know of any proposal with so utterly definite a contract in which there is no provision for failure—and I am obliged to point out that it is impossible for anyone else to issue anything even resembling such a contingence(?)

But it is not on uniqueness alone that I feel that you ought to decide to have accepted my proposal of marriage. For you are in the admirable position of being able, with full knowledge of my character, faults, virtues, and other, even less ponderable qualities, to commit yourself in retrospect to having loved such a man as I in spite of a,b,c, etc.. To be able, in this way not only to justify the past, but to choose it now of your own free will, is such a reckless manifestation of passion as to appeal to you as eternal woman, *sub specie acfeminatis*(?), for even if the past is not contingent, you would not have it other than what it is. History does not usually meet with such warm personal approval, and, very possibly, is so cold and ??? because it has been treated as if it were.

The Protestant theologian, Kierkegaard, a somewhat too forward looking man, and for that reason, unhappy felt that one should live so as to make interesting memories.

It would be more to the point, not so much to look forward to a created past than to play with the past as with montages, collages, mobiles. Some things certainly, one wants to arrange beforehand, if possible, but there are so many interesting configurations to be made of ordinary things that I do not see why it is the future that one ought prepare rather than the past. Observe what Mozart would do with a worn- out melody and compare with the careful novelties of Berg.

So in proposing that you shall have married me some 19 1/2 years prior to this letter. I am not pushing on you a thing that you are obligated to take.

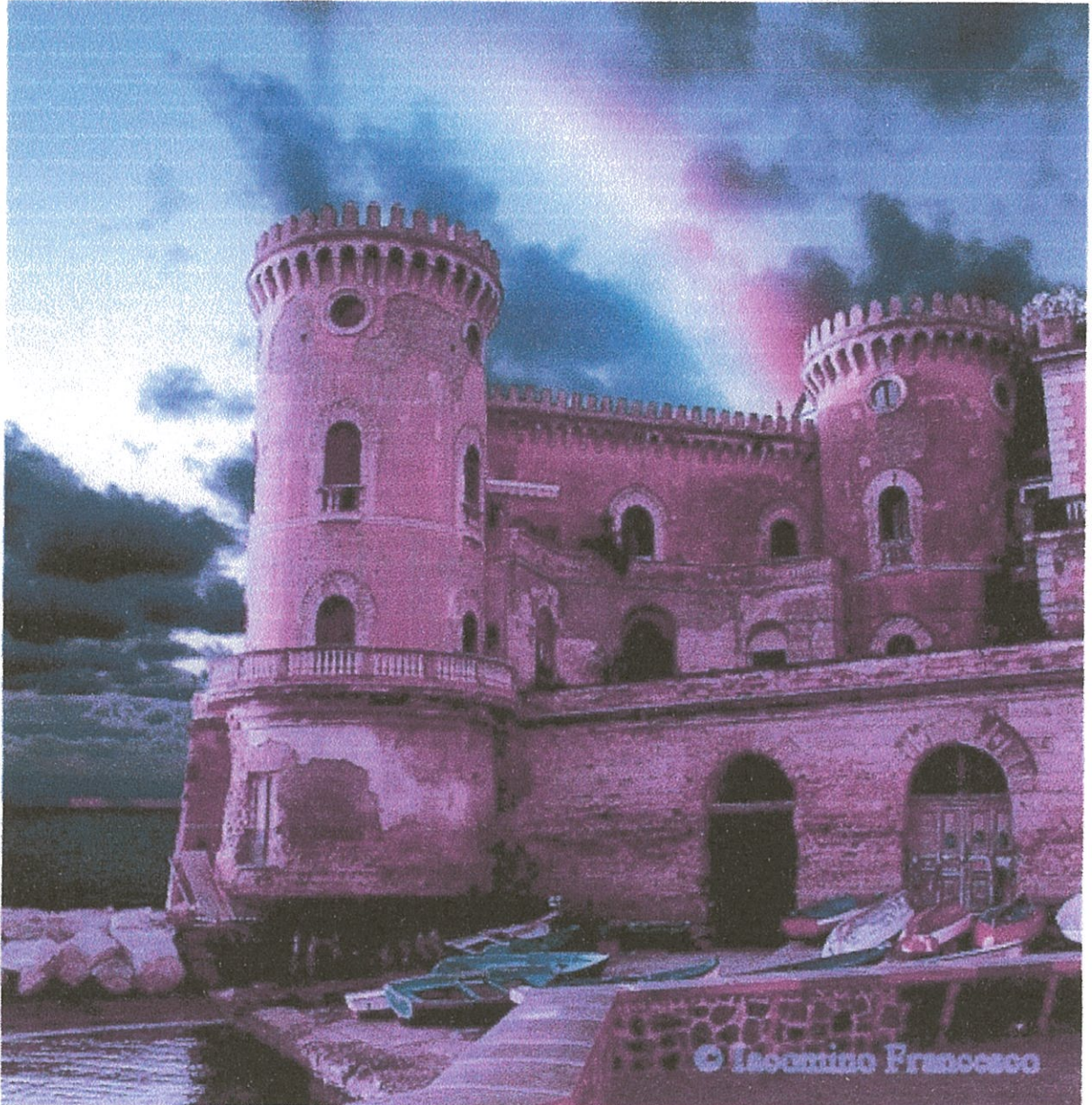
After all the time we've spent together in and out of bed, Boston, debt, trouble, humors and each other, there is such an armory, or warehouse full of incidents, attitudes, pastiches, actual events and foiled and fulfilled wishes, that no artist could ask for more—and what I propose for is to present you this hard-won, but quite astonishing past as a gift freely offered and one I very much want you to accept.

May I hear from you soon? I await your decision with beating heart.

With love as ever,
Jerry

Come se bella!

from ruthie (ruth@npqmag.org)



NAPOLI - RIVA FIORITA (posillipo)

FRANCESCO IACOMINO

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Jerry and Maggie in Naples



For Meggie

GRAMMAR TIME

The Grammar of Time does not allow

that what we remember was truly the case.

But what I feel and see even now

is the flow of your body, the glow on your face.

You are right to remind me that we have grown old,

that I have gone flabby, that you are now bent;

but somehow you've kept your original mold,

retaining your form, exuding your scent.

We cannot tell Time to nullify fate;

we cannot tell God to alter His plan;

the ~~best~~ we can do is to love as we wait

and enjoy one another the most that we can.

The best

FOR MAGGIE ON OUR 60TH ANNIVERSARY

The grammar of time does not allow
that what we remember was truly the case.
But what I recall and see even now
is the flow of your body, the glow on your face.

You are right to remind me that we have grown old,
that I have grown flabby, that you are now bent;
but somehow you've kept your original mold,
retaining your form, exuding your scent.

We cannot tell time to nullify fate;

we cannot tell God to alter his plan;

The best we can do is to love as we wait

And to enjoy one another the best that we can.

You have not changed at all for many years,
but not like furniture or work of art;
instead you seem a spirit that appears
to keep what's me from ~~falling~~ all apart
^{coming}
I hold distinct impression that my peers
regard me as your product ~~produced~~ from the start,
a ~~long~~ ^{wide} array of gears, wheels and gears,
but not endowed with feeling, taste and heart;

Yet both of us know better what we are,
that neither of us can endure alone
our love holds us together like a bar
and either both of us are here or both are gone.

You have not changed at all for many years,
but not like furniture or work of art;
Instead you seem like spirit that appears
To keep what's me from coming all apart.
I hold distinct impression that my peers
regard me as your product from the start
a wide array of levers, wheels and gears
but not endowed with feeling, taste or heart.

Yet both of us know better who we are,
that neither of us can endure alone
our love holds us together like a bar
and either both of us are here or both are gone.

Love is not so easily defined,
it's not a ~~rise~~ of soul or state of mind,
but once it comes it never goes away,
flesh and ~~that~~ ^{form} ~~can~~ ^{can} wither, love will stay.

Time can ~~erode~~ ^{wither} all of flesh and soul,
but only love remains and keeps us whole.
And though we've reached the boundaries of life
we stay unchanged in love as man and wife.

When we regard each other as we are
there's nothing in our past we need defend,
we loved each other from the very start,
and love, itself, engaged ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ all our art.

Love is not so easily defined,
It's not a risk of soul or state of mind,
but once it comes it never goes away,
flesh and brains will wither, love will stay.

Time can wither all of flesh and soul,
but only love remains and keeps us whole.
And though we've reached the boundaries of life
we stay unchanged in love as man and wife.

As we regard each other as we end
There's nothing in our past we need defend,
we loved each other from the very start,
and love, itself, engaged in all our art

The masks of California conceal
how anxious birds ~~like~~ alike
~~linger~~ for a ~~telegraph~~ telegraph
to tell each other ~~how~~ how they feel.

But spirits ~~can't~~ ^{can't} communicate —
that's exclusive to the flesh;
~~we may say how well we mesh,~~
we may say how well we mesh,
~~but~~ cannot cross the carnal gate.

So what is love, that ~~we're forbidden~~ ^{we're forbidden}
as metaphysics ~~must deny?~~
for you can't know what I call it,
and I can't ~~help~~ ^{help} for sure your mind

The closer that we say we feel,
the more we're certain we're alone;
I a geezer, you a crow,
who come together for a meal.

But love is what we cannot word,
a concept that we can't explain;
it has no center in the brain,
can't be implied, is not inferred,

between
Yet ~~between~~ us love is sure;
~~we can't~~ ~~what we~~ what we can't feel;
though ~~we~~ ^{we} can't ~~prove~~ prove
~~we can't~~ explain what we've expressed,
and ~~we~~ ^{we} may not describe what we endure,
not

The star and the nursery
are ^{both} a wonder and a bother,
~~but~~ now we only have red other;
happy anniversary,

The words of Caliban conceal
what lively Ariel might say,
were these but a simpler way
to tell my lover how I feel.

The closer that we say we fear
the more we're sure that we're alone,
I a geezer, you a crowe,
who share a concert, book, or meal.

But love is nothing we can word,
a process that we don't explain;
it has no center in the brain,
is not implied, can't be inferred.

Still, between us love is sure;
though we can't prove what has no test,
and can't explain what is expressed,
nor yet describe what we endure,

The altar, bed and nursery
were both a wonder and a bother.
Now we calmly love each other.
Happy anniversary.

The words of Caliban conceal
what lively Ariel might say,
Were there but a simpler way
to tell my lover how I feel.

Spirits don't communicate
that's exclusive to the flesh.
Lonely selves that want to mesh,
cannot cross the carnal gate.

What is love, if we're combined
as metaphysics must deny?
You can't know what I call "I",
and I'm not certain that you mind.

The closer that we say we feel
the more we're sure that we're alone,
I a geezer, you a crone,
who share a concert, book, or meal.

But love is nothing we can word,
a process that we don't explain;
It has no center in the brain,
is not implied, can't be inferred.

Still between us love is sure;

Though we can't prove what has no test,

And can't explain what is expressed,

Nor yet describe what we endure.

The alter, bed, and nursery

were both a wonder and a bother.

Now we calmly love each other.

Happy Anniversery

Today's your birthday. We have dwelt
far beyond what we expected;
all the passions that we felt
remain, however age-deflected.

I can't imagine better living
than taking you with no miss giving;
and though I'm not the best you find
enjoy that you have been so kind.

I've loved you ever since we met,
am grateful for the plans you set
and only have a style of view
which serves to tell ~~me~~ how I love you.

The more we age, the more I know
that as we sink, our love ~~withstands~~ can grow
and even as we cease to be
I'll feel for you as you for me.

Today's your birthday, we have dwelt
far beyond what we expected:
all the passion we have felt
remain, however age- defected.

I can't imagine better living
than taking you with no misgiving,
and though I'm not the best you find
enjoy that you have been so kind.

I've loved you ever since we met,
am grateful for the plans you set
and only have a style of view
which serves to tell how I love you.(I and You underlined)

The more we age, the more I know
that as we shrink our love can grow
and even as we cease to be
I'll feel for you as you for me.

~~There still remains~~
There still remains

Love shall leave all its past behind,
there still remains a newness of the time,
a world of wondrous feelings yet to find
still ~~that~~ makes our aging even more sublime.

The flesh supplies the essence of our souls;
we dine on age to taste the sweets of past
Facts of ~~history~~ ^{passion} still remain our goals
but only wondrous memories can last.

To sum your beauty is beyond my skill,
but memory of it makes it ~~something~~ ^{greater} greater yet;
time can pass forever as it will
but you remain unchanged from when we met,

Love itself leaves all its past behind,
there still remains a newness of the time,
a world of wondrous feelings yet to find
Still makes our aging even more sublime.

The flesh supplies the essence of our souls;
we dine on age to taste the sweets of past.
Facts of passion still remain our goals
but only wondrous memories can last.

To sum your beauty is beyond my skill,
but memory of it makes it greater yet;
Time can pass forever as it will
but you remain unchanged from when we met.

For Maggie

Love is strong, but undefined,
it grasps the heart, invades the mind,
pulls together what's apart.
much like science as like art.

Speech breaks up and thought is lost,
reason leaves at heavy cost;
all that's left to choose the day
is how to ~~not~~ ^{hold} ~~love~~ ^{our} love to stay.

Thrust of love informs us how
to keep it here and staying now,
forever present, though we be
pulled apart by ~~misery~~ ~~misery~~ ~~misery~~ misery,

For Maggie

Love is strong but undefined,
it grasps the heart, invades the mind,
pulls together what's apart
much like science as like art.

Speech breaks up and thought is lost,
reason leaves at heavy cost,
all that's left to close the day
Is how to hold our love to stay.

Thought of love informs us how
to keep it here and staying now. (here and now underlined)
forever present, though we be
pulled apart by misery.

Maggie's beauty does not fade with time;
she stays a living poem that one reads
over and over again, dwelling on the page.

In every canto lie the hidden seeds
of what will spring from pages not yet turned.
~~The~~ The leaves of ideas, the bridges of thought,
grow and blossom. They have earned
their growth as Maggie sought
when she seeded them. They are not a wild
but a garden, carefully designed to show
how every structure is beguiled
by other structures that grow
into complex unity. Who reads this can truly be
got the gift of the Maggie.

Maggie's beauty does not fade with age;
she stays a living poem that one reads
over and over again, doodling on the page.
In every canto lie the hidden seeds
of what will spring from pages not yet turned.
The leaves of ideas, the twigs of thought,
grow and blossom. They have earned
this growth as Maggie sought
when she seeded them . They are not a wild
but a garden, carefully designed to show
how every structure is beguiled
by other structures that grow
Into complex unity. Who reads this can brag he
got the gift of the Maggie.

Jerry Lettvin

FOR MAGGIE ON HER BIRTHDAY, AN EXPLANATION

So great this want that rarely needs suffice;
well-fed and slept, I make up love's arrears
when thoughtless trigger words, like seeds of ice,
condense your gathered humors into tears.
Then climax drains to languor of regret
and drifts us past that coupling in attack;
you hold my hands against your cheeks warm wet, 17
I press a softened language to your back.

For love's not passive, love does what it must
to bring a frenzy to our mutual need;
denied the usual instruments of lust
it cannot waste its ground upon lost seed.
To ~~love~~ in ~~tender~~ ^{cloying} phrase or ~~cloying~~ ^{tender} song
would make a common dildo of my tongue.

FOR MAGGIE ON HER BIRTHDAY, AN EXPLANATION

So great this want that rarely needs suffice;
well-fed and slept, I make up love's arrears
when thoughtless trigger words, like seeds of ice,
condense your gathered humors into tears.
Then climax drains to languor of regret
and drifts us past that coupling in attack;
You hold your hands against my cheeks warm wet,
I press a softened language to your back.

For love's not passive, love does what it must
To bring a frenzy to our mutual need;
denied the usual instruments of lust
it cannot waste its ground upon lost seed.
To wag in cloying phrase or tender song
would make a common dildo of my tongue.

Your youth is not dependent on your age,
your beauty, not defined by how you show;
The meanings that our lexicons engage
Do not apply to attributes we know,
Never all defined, your details grow,
each novelty calls forth another page,
develops simple things from long ago
into variations of a stage.

Yet how can nothing new in you be strange
when what I know of you is that you change?
And though your changeless changes ever grow,
you stay the only other that I know,
How odd it is that love deranges time,
~~you grow and change, you stay and change~~
~~however matters change, you stay such time,~~
~~what is that time,~~
Eternity will find our love sublime

March 15, 2005

BIRTHDAY SONNET FROM JERRY LETTVIN TO MAGGIE LETTVIN ON HER 78TH

Your youth is not dependent on your age,
 your beauty not defined by how you show;
The meanings that our lexicons engage
 do not apply to attributes we know.
Never all defined, your details grow,
 each novelty calls forth another page,
develops simple themes from long ago
 into variations of a stage.

Yet how can nothing new in you be strange
 when what I know of you is that you change?
And though your changeless changes ever grow,
 you stay the only other that I know.
How odd it is that love deranges time,
 Eternity will find our love sublime.

Home Run on Mother's Day 2007

The children begot, the mother be Gott,

the father be only a fool;

his function is most, and likely so not,

she persuades him that she is his fool.

But she is the shepherd, the ~~fool~~ fooler and fool,

the father is only a switch

that ~~turns on the process~~ throws her a ball, then stretches to catch

as his woman swings at his pitch.

She ^{is} ~~runs~~ all the bases, heading for home, having run all the bases

while he only stands there to watch

as she rounds the mounds as were they but phases

that lead her to finishing touch.

He drove the batter, while she drove the bat,

and the outcome was ever the same;

he falsely imagined control of the bat,

but she didn't, and she wins the game.

MOTHER'S DAY 2007

Her children begot, the mother be gott,
the father is only a fool;
his function is short, and likely or not,
persuades him that she is his tool.

But she is the shaper, the tooler, the tool,
and he is simply a switch,
that turns on the process, then stretches to cool
as his woman bats out the pitch.

It is she who runs bases, heading for home,
he who stands by to watch;
as she rounds the months as were they but bases
leading to finishing touch.

He drove the batter but she drove the bat
and the outcome is always the same,
he falsely imagines control of the bat,
but he doesn't and she wins the game.

To Maggie Lettvin on Mothers' Day 2007 from Jerry Lettvin

Happy Birthday
to Maggie
11 March
1958

~~Wherever~~

Wherever you go, the world is new,
yet all that you feel turns out to be true.
Whatever you do, you do for the best,
wherever you go, you bring troubles to rest.

There is no way to tell you how much I admire
how nicely you move to put out a fire,
how gently you treat all those in despair,
how nicely you quiet a troubling affair.

All this you do, you do in great pain,
hidden from others, you've nothing to gain,
Given the amount of work you allow,
still you can manage, I do not know how.

That I love you is certain, that I worry is clear,
there is no one on earth that I hold more dear;
and although all my medical thought is on fire,
I can only give my stand back and admire.

Happy Birthday to Maggie, 15, March, 2008

**Wherever you go the world is new,
yet all that you feel turns out to be true.
Whatever you do, you do for the best,
wherever you go, you bring troubles to rest.**

**There is no way to tell you, how much I admire
how nicely you move to put out a fire,
how gently you treat all those in despair,
how nicely you quiet a troubling affair.**

**All this you do, you do in great pain,
hidden from others, you've nothing to gain.
Given the amount of work you allow,
still you can manage, I do not know how.**

**That i love you is certain, that I worry is clear,
there is no one on earth that I hold more dear;
and although all my medical thought is on fire,
I can only give in, stand back and admire.**

~~Magpie has not brought me all the world,
and her attributes remain ~~unchanged~~.~~

Whenever Maggie goes the world shifts
and clusters round her waiting for her gifts,
for she alone resolves all hate and pain
and shows how everyone can live again.

There is no magic in her touch and show,
she ^{illustrates how there's} ~~illustrates how there's~~ not much to know,
And all who suffer hate, despair and pain,
give up ^{their fears} ~~their fears~~ and come to life again.

If there be angels, they can learn from her
how restoring freedom can occur,
living need not be protracted hell,
and all who hurt can learn to live as well,

Wherever Maggie goes the world shifts
and clusters round her waiting for her gifts,
for she alone resolves all hate and pain
and shows how everyone can live again.

There is no magic in her touch and show,
she illustrates how there's not much to know.
And all who suffer hate, despair and pain,
give up their fears and come to life again.

If there be angels, they can learn from her
how restoring freedom can occur;
living need not be protracted hell,
and all who hurt can learn to live as well.

Jerome Lettvin to Maggie Lettvin on their 61st Anniversary

November 7, 2008

When Maggie goes past, the flowers all bow,
petals are cast, I do not know how,
verdure expands, leaves curl out,
and everything shows off around and about.
It is as if they want to be seen,
admir'd in place by their critical queen.

There's something in Maggie that nature holds dear,
and spends time in dressing when she comes near;
plants go to flower, leaves all expand,
and things are excited by the touch of her hand.
Berries go ripe and fruits all go wild,
nature goes proud at the act of her child.

Christmas Poem from Jerry Lettvin to Maggie, 2008

When Maggie goes past, the flowers all bow,
petals are cast, I do not know how.
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and everything shows off, around and about.
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and spends time in dressing when she comes near;
plants go to flower, leaves all expand.
and things are excited by the touch of her hand.
Berries go ripe and fruits all go wild,
Nature goes proud at the art of her child.

Were we only ~~metaphysics~~ ^{metaphysics} you and I,

~~at the interface of earth and sky~~

all the rules of science would apply,
as we skate the interface of earth ~~and~~ ^{with} sky.

having no regard
for reasons why,

Nothing in the laws explains our state
by which the two of us imagine we relate,
invoking love as generator of our fate,
the active principle by which we mate.

But no recorded principles apply,
describe foundations for our coupling, you and I,
explain how we attract when we're not nigh
and yet can stand apart when we are by.

If we invent a metaphysics for our state,
it does not explain how we relate,
or how the two of us associate
and even if apart remain in mate.

Love, as force of nature, has no laws;
its effect has no description, nor its cause;
it begins, ~~and~~ continues without pause,
and ~~even~~ ^{even} as we die we know it ~~is~~ ^{is} and was.

Were we only matter, you and I,
having no regard for reasons why,
All the rules of science would apply,
so we skate the interface of earth with sky.

Nothing in the laws explain our state
by which the two of us imagine we relate,
making love is generator of our fate,
the active principle by which we mate.

But no recorded principles apply,
describe foundations for our coupling, you and I,
explain how we attract when we're not nigh
and yet can stand apart when we are by.

If we invent a metaphysics for our state,
It does not explain how we relate,
or how the two of us associate
and even if apart remain in mate.

Love, as force of nature, has no laws:
it's effect has no description, nor it's cause;
It begins, continues without pause,
and even as we die we know it is and was.

Jerry for Maggie

Maggie's beauty only grows with age
Every day provides another page
enlarging on her virtues. She always learns,
and understands all the foists and turns
of age and fate. She lives with thought,
not fighting time which holds her caught

Instead she's made a pact
with time on how they interact,
Mind and body stay with her,
and time can come to play with her.

To stay with her, I'd ~~make~~^{take} the oath
that when time comes, he'll take us both.

Maggie's beauty only grows with age
Every day provides another page
enlarging on her virtues she always learns,
and understands all the twists and turns
Of age and fate. She lives with thought,
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Instead she's made a pact
With time on how they'll interact
Mind and body stay with her
And time can come to play with her.

To stay with her, I'd add the oath
that when time comes, he'll take us both

Love cannot be clarified or defined.

It's not a passion or a state of mind

Not for that matter can it be designed,

And it is not blind.

I've loved you since we met,

and love you yet

without let,

I'm set.

Why is love so hard to define?

For any other feeling there's a clear line

It's not that I am gone and you are mine

That is it a matter of design.

clear

you're mine

mine

We're much too old to take love as play,

Both of us have sagged and gone gray.

And there is no way

to take love as play.

It's foolish to say we are an era.

But where you go ~~to the end~~

I'll be underne,

and not even one.

Love is not being

or missing

or missing

it is being

ME - ing

ME ING

HEE - ing

THEE ING

WE - ing

WE ING

Love cannot be clarified or defined,
It's not a passion or a state of mind.
Nor, for that matter, can it be designed,
And it is not blind.

I've loved you since we met,
and I love you yet
without let,
I'm set.

Why is love so hard to define?
For any other feeling there's a clear line.
It's not that I am yours and you are mine.
Nor is it a matter of design.

We're much too old to take love as play.
Both of us have sagged and gone gray.
And there is no way
To take love as play.

It's foolish to say we are one,
But were you gone
I'd be undone,
and not even one.

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It's foolish to say we are one,
But were you gone
I'd be undone,
and not even one.

Maggie holds a place among the saints,
So no one knows how well she sculpts and paints,
She relieves her friends from all their plights,
yet no one knows how cleverly she writes.
Maggie can spot an imminent disease,
but none can make out what it is she sees,
When everyone complains about the food
Maggie teaches how to tell what's good,
Whoever has discomfort long enduring,
Maggie finds a method for its curing.
Whenever any person comes to grief,
Maggie finds a method for relief.

It may seem that Maggie is a saint;
but she ain't.

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but she ain't.

Jerry Lettvin

Your presence is a present,
your beauty is a gift.
Your wisdom hasn't lessened
your principles don't shift.

Your work remains incessant,
your principles don't drift;
and yet you stay so pleasant
that all our spirits lift,

Your humor is incessant,
your enemies are stifled;
so please accept this present
as honor to your thrift.

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your beauty is a gift.
Your wisdom hasn't lessened
your principles don't shift.

Your work remains incessant,
Your principles don't drift;
And yet you stay so pleasant
That all our spirits lift.

Your humor is incessant
your enemies are stiffed;
so please accept this present
In honor to your thrift

To Maggie on
her birthday

15 March 2007

from Jerry

You and I have no ~~secret~~ ^{secret} past
save each other, and Time goes fast,
so quickly that neither of us can cast
a guess on how long we ~~save~~ ^{may} ~~last~~ ^{last}.

And yet, despite the years, there is no ~~the~~ sign
that I'm not ever gone, nor you not always mine;
There is no minor bond we need refine
nor any common future to ~~design~~ design.

It's strange, however old ~~we get~~, we've come to feel,
neither of us look backward with regret,
imagine how it were had we not met
and chose ~~another~~ some other lovers better yet.

But with the years we have become as one;
neither of us conceives the other gone,
~~we're still as tight as ever~~
nor dreams of other lives we might have won
or other wondrous deeds we might have done.

~~The magnificent~~
Dearest Maggie, let the decades ~~run~~ ^{wane};
there is no higher state we've still to gain.
Whichever of us goes, we ~~still~~ ^{both} remain
forever bound wherever we are laid.

You and I have no secret past
save each other, and time goes fast,
so quickly that neither of us can cast
a guess on how long either of us may last.

And yet despite the years , there is no sign
that I'm not ever yours, nor you not always mine;
there is no minor bond we need refine
Nor any common future to design.

It's strange however old we've come to get
neither of us look backward with regret,
Imagine how it were had we not met
and chose some other lover better yet.

But with the years we have become as one,
Neither of us conceives the other gone
nor dreams of other lives we might have won,
or other wondrous deeds we might have done.

Dearest Maggie let the decades wane;
There is no higher state we've yet to gain.
Whichever of us goes,we both remain
forever bound wherever we are lain.

Jerry for Maggie



Terry and Maggie. Our Heinz anniversary 2005.

Arthur

Maggie Luw:

Please wake me early
so that I may — among
other less interesting necessities —
see your lovely presence
the earlier.

J

