



**Everything Carries
Me to You:
Selected Poems
of Pablo Neruda**

Edited by Raymond Soulard, Jr.

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This volume is for Mark Shorette

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If You Forget Me

I want you to know
one thing.

You know how this is:
if I look
at the crystal moon, at the red branch
of the slow autumn at my window,
if I touch
near the fire
the impalpable ash
or the wrinkled body of the log,
everything carries me to you,
as if everything that exists:
aromas, light, metals,
were little boats that sail
toward those isles of yours that wait for me.

Well, now,
if little by little you stop loving me
I shall stop loving you little by little.

If suddenly
you forget me
do not look for me,
for I shall already have forgotten you.

If you think it long and mad,
the wind of banners
that passes through my life,
and you decide
to leave me at the shore
of the heart where I have roots,
remember
that on that day,
at that hour,
I shall lift my arms
and my roots will set off
to seek another land.

But
if each day,
each hour,
you feel that you are destined for me
with implacable sweetness,
if each day a flower
climbs up to your lips to seek me,
ah my love, ah my own,
in me all that fire is repeated,
in me nothing is extinguished or forgotten,
my love feeds on your love, beloved,
and as long as you live it will be in your arms
without leaving mine.

The Weary One

The weary one, orphan
of the masses, the self,
the crushed one, the one made of concrete,
the one without a country in crowded restaurants,
he who wanted to go far away, always farther away,
didn't know what to do there, whether he wanted
or didn't want to leave or remain on the island,
the hesitant one, the hybrid, entangled in himself,
had no place here: the straight-angled stone,
the infinite look of the granite prism,
the circular solitude all banished him:
he went somewhere else with his sorrows,
he returned to the agony of his native land,
to his indecisions, of winter and summer.
Lost in the forest...

Lost in the forest, I broke off a dark twig
and lifted its whisper to my thirsty lips:
maybe it was the voice of the rain crying,
a cracked bell, or a torn heart.

Something from far off it seemed
deep and secret to me, hidden by the earth,
a shout muffled by huge autumns,
by the moist half-open darkness of the leaves.

Wakening from the dreaming forest there, the hazel-sprig
sang under my tongue, its drifting fragrance
climbed up through my conscious mind

as if suddenly the roots I had left behind
cried out to me, the land I had lost with my childhood—
and I stopped, wounded by the wandering scent.
In the center of the earth...

In the center of the earth I will push aside
the emeralds so that I can see you
you like an amanuensis, with a pen
of water, copying the green sprigs of plants.

What a world! What deep parsley!
What a ship sailing through the sweetness!
And you, maybe—and me, maybe—a topaz.
There'll be no more dissensions in the bells.

There won't be anything but all the fresh air,
apples carried on the wind,
the succulent book in the woods:

and there where the carnations breathe, we will begin
to make ourselves a clothing, something to last
through the eternity of a victorious kiss.

The She Bird

With my little terrestrial bird,
my rustic earthen jug,
I break out singing
the guitar's rain:
alleged autumn arrives
like a load of firewood,
decanting the aroma
that flew through the mountains,
and grape by grape my kisses
were joined to her bunch.
This proves that the afternoon
accumulated sweetness
like the amber process
or the order of violets.
Come flying, passenger,
let's fly with the coals,
live or cold,
with the disorderly darkness
of the obscure and the ardent.
Let's enter the ash,
let's move with the smoke,
let's live by the fire.
In mid autumn
we'll set the table
over the grassy hillside,
flying over Chillan
with your guitar in your wings.

We are the clumsy passersby

We are the clumsy passersby, we push past each other with elbows,
with feet, with trousers, with suitcases,
we get off the train, the jet plane, the ship, we step down
in our wrinkled suits and sinister hats.
We are all guilty, we are all sinners,
we come from dead-end hotels or industrial peace,
this might be our last clean shirt,
we have misplaced our tie,
yet even so, on the edge of panic, pompous,
sons of bitches who move in the highest circles
or quiet types who don't owe anything to anybody,
we are one and the same, the same in time's eyes,
or in solitude's: we are the poor devils
who earn a living and a death working
bureautragically or in the usual ways,
sitting down or packed together in subway stations,
boats, mines, research centers, jails,
universities, breweries,
(under our clothes the same thirsty skin),
(the hair, the same hair, only in different colors).

Absence

I have scarcely left you
when you go in me, crystalline,
or trembling,
or uneasy, wounded by me
or overwhelmed with love, as when your eyes
close upon the gift of life
that without cease I give you.

My love,
we have found each other
thirsty and we have
drunk up all the water and the blood,
we found each other
hungry
and we bit each other
as fire bites,
leaving wounds in us.

But wait for me,
keep for me your sweetness.
I will give you too
a rose.

Your Laughter

Take breath away from me, if you wish,
take air away, but
do not take from me your laughter.

Do not take away the rose,
the lanceflower that you pluck,
the water that suddenly
bursts forth in your joy,
the sudden wave
of silver born in you.

My struggle is harsh and I come back
with eyes tired
at times from having seen
the unchanging earth,
but when your laughter enters
it rises to the sky seeking me
and it opens for me all
the doors of life.

My love, in the darkest
hour your laughter
opens, and if suddenly
you see my blood staining
the stones of the street,
laugh, because your laughter
will be for my hands
like a fresh sword.

Next to the sea in the autumn,
your laughter must raise
its foamy cascade,
and in the spring, love,
I want your laughter like
the flower I was waiting for,
the blue flower, the rose
of my echoing country.

Laugh at the night,
at the day, at the moon,
laugh at the twisted
streets of the island,
laugh at this clumsy
boy who loves you,
but when I open
my eyes and close them,
when my steps go,
when my steps return,
deny me bread, air,
light, spring,
but never your laughter
for I would die.

Always

Facing you
I am not jealous.

Come with a man
at your back,
come with a hundred men in your hair,
come with a thousand men between your bosom and your feet,
come like a river
filled drowned men
that meets the furious sea,
the eternal foam, the weather.

Bring them all
where I wait for you:
we shall always be alone,
we shall always be, you and I,
alone upon the earth
to begin life.

White Bee

White bee, you buzz in my soul, drunk with honey,
and your flight winds in slow spirals of smoke.

I am the one without hope, the word without echoes,
he who lost everything and he who had everything.

Last hawser, in you creaks my last longing.
In my barren land you are the final rose.

Ah you who are silent!

Let your deep eyes close. There the night flutters.
Ah your body, a frightened statue, naked.

You have deep eyes in which the night flails.
Cool arms of flowers and a lap of rose.

Your breasts seem like white snails.
A butterfly of shadow has come to sleep on your belly.

Ah you who are silent!

Here is the solitude from which you are absent.
It is raining. The sea wind is hunting stray gulls.

The water walks barefoot in the wet streets.
From that tree the leaves complain as though they were sick.

White bee, even when you are gone you buzz in my soul
You live again in time, slender and silent.

Ah you who are silent!

Ode To the Sea

HERE
Surrounding the island
There's sea.
But what sea?
It's always overflowing.
Says yes,
Then no,
Then no again,
And no,
Says yes
In blue
In sea spray
Raging,
Says no
And no again.
It can't be still.
It stammers
My name is sea.

It slaps the rocks
And when they aren't convinced,
Strokes them
And soaks them
And smothers them with kisses.
With seven green tongues
Of seven green dogs
Or seven green tigers
Or seven green seas,
Beating its chest,
Stammering its name,

Oh Sea,
This is your name.
Oh comrade ocean,
Don't waste time
Or water
Getting so upset
Help us instead.

We are meager fishermen,
Men from the shore
Who are hungry and cold
And you're our foe.
Don't beat so hard,
Don't shout so loud,
Open your green coffers,
Place gifts of silver in our hands.
Give us this day
our daily fish.

I Like For You to be Still

I like for you to be still: it is as though you were absent,
and you hear me from far away and my voice does not touch you.
It seems as though your eyes had flown away
and it seems that a kiss had sealed your mouth.

As all things are filled with my soul
you emerge from the things, filled with my soul.
You are like my soul, a butterfly of dream,
and you are like the word Melancholy.

I like for you to be still, and you seem far away.
It sounds as though you were lamenting, a butterfly cooing like a dove.
And you hear me from far away, and my voice does not reach you:
Let me come to be still in your silence.

And let me talk to you with your silence
that is bright as a lamp, simple as a ring.
You are like the night, with its stillness and constellations.
Your silence is that of a star, as remote and candid.

I like for you to be still: it is as though you were absent,
distant and full of sorrow as though you had died.
One word then, one smile, is enough.
And I am happy, happy that it's not true.