

Poetry Series

Fidel Arcenas
- poems -

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Fidel Arcenas()

A Simple Life

Flowers bloom
By weathering the storms
And patiently bearing the pains
Of changing seasons.
Joys comes only
When sadness rips
Our hearts apart.
We find strength
To climb our rugged mountains
From the warmth
Of your hand in mine
Or mine in yours.
It is no mystery:
We forget the simple truths
For we tend to find meanings
In places where
There are none.

Fidel Arcenas

A Word Is An Orphan

A word is an orphan
That fears not oblivion.
Nor does it cry
To attract attention
[Unlike a flower that oversteps
Its leaves to claim a throne,
Or butterfly that flutters from
Stem to stem in search
Of sweets.]
Alone yet not lonely
A word just waits
For you to find it.

Fidel Arcenas

Apocalypse

Behind these huts, a patch
Of paradise lies, where we chased
Grasshoppers and butterflies; sipped
Nectar from stems of wild flowers.

Today,
This village, genesis of our lives,
Home to our homes, mourns
The death of its river, suffocated,
Our elders say, by a fuming monster
A few miles away.

Fear-laden grief, like apocalypse mist,
Fills our huts, creeps into our hearts;
We strain our ears to catch
The croak of frogs.

Nothing.

We pull our blankets over our eyes,
Not knowing if tomorrow
We live or die.

Fidel Arcenas

Broken Bond

Broken bond

Irrepressible wave unto the shore,
You rush into my tender willing embrace
The stars play Gregorian chants of yore
As heavens fill our chalices with grace

Our hearts by bonfire flames entwined
Sway to the rhythm of Pacific winds;
Time tiptoes to its cabin to unwind,
The brevity of hours its rescinds

To let us find our eternity
In our solemn bond on which we vow;
But your flighty heart alters so quickly
Leaving me broken, so desolate now

The tide recedes and life loses its rhyme,
Yet from this nadir where I bear my grief
With faith shall I rise in my own springtime
To retrieve my heart from you, heartless thief;

I shall redeem myself no matter the pain,
Blaze new trails and build my own bastion
Where only sincere and pure hearts shall reign
Then shall I proclaim by vindication.

Fidel Arcenas

Cheers

Waiter, beer please,
I'm in a mood to talk
To the bards, the muse
By my side, serene and
Beguiling, tempting me
To disrobe my pretense.

'Novice, stop please,
I'm in no mood to tease.'

'This is serious business,
Making love to words,
Caressing the breasts
Of truths.'

Waiter, another please,
I thirst of reasons to be,
Of excuses not to be,
Of pretending I can,
Of knowing I can't.

'Take it easy, every novice
Must die before he can.
Let me help you find
Yourself.'

A long journey, I'm sure
But tonight I found a friend
In this bar, where I drink
Until I begin to dance
With words.

Fidel Arcenas

Conversation With A Young Lady

A young lady asks:

What's the secret to happiness?

With a voice
waned by age
the old man
whispers:

In your basket
collect simple things
others don't see
and give them all away
as gifts;

However small
a gift may seem,
be child-like
in giving.

Does the smile
of a sleeping child
not create a patch
of heaven in
a mother's heart?

Be like a candle
that willingly
gives up its life
to share with
others its light.

What about truth and beauty?

A flower speaks
only of beauty,
offers itself
for you to own,
yet it thrives on

and never decays.

Truth is fire on top
of the highest hill
which you cannot
extinguish even
with your eyes.

How do I deal with problems?

Fear not the storms,
the bamboo bows
to the winds and
when the worst
is over, it is
standing still;

Ride on the waves
of changing seasons,
they always carry
you to shore.

How do I find love?

Seek it not,
if your love is true
love seeks for you
and will surely
find you.

Fidel Arcenas

Crave Not For Nearness

Crave not for nearness

Don't crave for nearness in times of longing
It desecrates the vow we have sworn to keep;
Bear the moments of sadness for they're sun
To flowers whose nectar nourishes our hearts;

Embrace the silence of distance for it speaks
The language beyond the realm of beaten air,
Revisit the feathered whispers of soft fingers
That play stirring music in your own garden;

Learn to fill the void of absence with smiles
Strum the strings of your desires if you wish
But always with my gentle rhymes in yours
For even in our isolation we are truly bound;

Proximity belongs to true and honest minds
Neither temptation nor weariness can break;
We are one just as the rivers and oceans are
Destined to meet despite how long it takes;

When finally we kiss there'll be no regrets;
We'll share stories without embellishments
For we thrive not on questions and excuses
But on the invincibility of our love and faith.

Fidel Arcenas

Drawn Together

I watched intently
As three clowns wept
In an old cafe

One of them wailed
He had enough
Of making people laugh

Another grieved
He'd rather starve
'Clowning makes
Mockery of me.'

[Red circles on their cheeks
Smudged by tears paint
Sad abstracts of absurdity
They couldn't see.]

They drank pensively
Tears dripping
Into glasses fast empty

Suddenly a toast
The greyest raised
'Cheers
Tomorrow a clown
I cease to be! '

To his funeral yesterday
Only a few came to pray
All clowns
Drawn together
By misery.

Fidel Arcenas

Farewell To Summer

Sultry heat wafts into my glass of red
Bubbling in revelry of memories
When her sweet laughter-lilted lullabies
Cradled our dreams and secret fantasies.

In this cafe by the glistening sea,
She watched in glee our castle loftily
Taunting waves from afar: 'Come and crush me! '
'Til twilight's tides soared to even the shore.

Behind bright blue skies, where could she be?
Stealthily, with hand creased by age, I wave
'Cheers! ' I hear yuppies behind me loudly.
Summer day is everybody's birthday.

In this cafe by the glimmering sea
Sultry heat wafts into my glass of red.
My searching heart bleeds alone and lonely
In this darkness of heat I crave for death.

Fidel Arcenas

I'LI Tell You Stories

I long to write
Deathless lines of poetry
I wonder kindly
If I can hitch your way.

Hop in, you say
I'll tell you stories
Of saints and demons
I can never slay.

Seek not your crown
In any public throne.
You'll find what you seek
In simplest of stones.

Fear not your fears
Even in solitude.
Trut not common flares
They nver fill your soul.

Embrace patience
By seasons flowers bloom,
Unafraid of storms.
Write in heat never haste.

Find your own; peace
In darkness where you lie.
Dream through lonely nights
Where happiness awaits.

Fidel Arcenas

Let Me Take You To An Old Cafe

let me take you to an old cafe
dying at the end of an abandoned road

it used to be the home
of poets and lovers like you and me

seldom does anybody go there now
everybody has gone to the city

to find something better
than love or poetry

I did too
and look what happened to me

come, my friend,
let me take you to this old cafe

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Letter To A Friend

In our childhood we walked to school
With absent minds
We often laughed not knowing why.

In summers we climbed trees, buised our arms,
Laughed at our clumsiness.
We swam in that murky river not caring
Whether we floated or sank.

I remember Joseph found dead floating
Where the river met the tide.
We didn't cry, we thought maybe
God didn't want him to bull us anymore.

Your father died.
You told me he fell climbing a coconut tree.
Days later, you and your mother and
Your two older sisters went away.
You did not bother to bid me goodbye.

I wanted to find you.
I asked my parents to help
But they had things to do.

As years went by, I made other friends.
We seldom laughed.
We smoked and rank cheap rum and talked
About things that made us sad.
One time I was with them,
I thought of you and how we fished and halved
Our catch even if you hooked more than I did.

I went to a university.
Worked in a Chinese noodles factory
Whose owner curse me all the time
Because I brought books and read
After I stoked the fire.

I thought of you once in a while.

Each time I smiled.

I'm sorry I can't help you now.
You've been given death.
I am neither a lawyer nor
A judge who decides people's fate.

How I wish we had met even once before
We trod separate, irreversible paths.

It's Sunday tomorrow.
I will go to church,
I will light candles,
I will pray.

One of the reasons why
I am not saying
Goodbye.

Fidel Arcenas

Memories

i lost my way
sipping coffee from cup
half empty
of rhymes and memories

trains pass me by
sitting lonely on chair
half broken
by words and memories

drops of rain pour
bitter power on rye
half eaten
by mice and memories

I dry my tears
seeking shelter for soul
half wasted
by love but yours only

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She

She, love of my life, walks
Alone along this lonely trail,
Hears the faint chirps of
Precocial bird, drowning in
Fallen leaves; she picks it up
And finds its nest; further still
She meets a child weeping
By the trailside; she takes his hand
And leads him home; weary of the
Trek she rests in a candle maker's
Shed; it was dark when she bids
Goodbye.
'Wait, take this with you.'
So through the long she walks
Alone along this lonely trail,
Guided by the wisdom
Of the candle maker's light.

Fidel Arcenas

Stealthily, Free Verse

You sit on my desk,
Your legs, a sonnet's couplet,
Perfect in meter and rhyme.
You look at me and smile;
Your dimples brighten my room
Lit only by glitched browser's light.
You puff your cigarette, blow
Smoke that wafts soothing incense
On my face, weary of weaving
Words into flawless lines.
From the other room, we hear
Carefree soles pounding on the floor
In perfect jibe with the sensual beat
Of percussion and drums.
For one brief moment we stare
Deep into each other's eyes... then
Stealthily, we exchange verses
From the depths of our own souls
Passionately free of meter and rhyme.

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Step Into Mine Light

come, partake of the nectar of my light
fill up the void of your fantasies, as mine
rainbow gently slips through the window
of your cold, lonely, darkened dampness

fear not the virgin rays of tender fingers
as they peel the scars of broken dreams
that suffocate your soul, and harden the
softness of your once lively, loving heart

[darkness blinds your eyes to the magic
of small truths: the blossoming of roses
as dawn breaks; the glistening of leaves
that cleanse and refresh our mornings]

come, sip the sweetness of my sunshine,
spurn the decay of sunsets, and dare to
share with me the rare immortality of your
beauty; there shall be no nights with me

by my sword, I swear to fill your cup with
love and ecstasy for all the world to see.
traverse your night and embrace my day,
step into mine light, and forever be free

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Stranger

you are dawn's scented drip
on my dusty window broken
by years of painful solitude

faintly i hear your song
or is this another imagining
born out of my own madness

it has been always like this
since a stranger walked into
my door, only to suddenly vanish

without a trace

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Verte

Verte

A tribute to Absinthe

Long condemned in bars of common myths
She shuns the sunlight yet her heart shines bright;
Bathes herself with scented woodworm piths,
Defies the absolute absence of light.

For truth darkness cannot forever hide,
Or beauty no brutal lie can deny;
She breaks free to be every artist's bride,
Lights many a poet's pen like a firefly.

Her soft green eyes never fail to smile
Drawing lonely rebels to her fireside
Where sweet dreams are born and nothing is vile
To her our darkest secrets we confide.

Lover, wife, friend, muse confidant to all,
Verte, slowly, sweetly, we rise not fall.

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Wandering

Tequila dawns and solitary beers
In an orgy of forbidden dreams
Lead to cemetery sadness as
Bells toll for the Angelus, we

Who try, and in our youth we
Tried a thousand times, to trek
To the utopia of our summer
Still we fail to sing hallelujahs, and

The lighthouse's light gets fainter
And fainter like beads of sweat
Crawling out of a bottle kicked
Into a waterless gutter

That cuts through our guts
Who cares, we cared a million times,
About realities. We crave for illusions
To illumine our existence

In this universe of bloodshot eyes,
Empty hearts, blazing hate,
Feigned love, desperate greed
That fill the abyss of our emptiness

When will this end
We wonder, yes, we wondered
Countless times, when this wandering
Through mazy nothingness

Will ever end

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Whispered Words

From our porch
By the beach
We watch
Our emerald-anniversary sun
slowly
e
b
b
at the divide of sea and sky

Your shaking hand
Tightens on mine
I look into your eyes

You smile
I understand

At the peak
Of our years I said

Your serene beauty
Flutters gracefully
Waking up my ecstasy
You are sky to me

You replied

You excite me
With waves of joy,
Fulfill my widest fantasy
You are my sea

Now
As twilight unveils
Our emeral moon
You kiss my cheek softly

You whisper
'Forever'

I nod
You smile
We understand

Soon
Our gasps
Will end

Yet our love
Shall remain
As bright as the sun
As full as the moon

And our kiss
Shall fill the heavens
With s t a r s

Fidel Arcenas

Wounded Word

Words galloped
Over my fend
All but one got away
It tangled with wire
Bleeding profusely

I freed it
Very gently
I cradled it in my palm
As soft drops of water
Cleansed its wound

I noticed
It lost a limb
It read
Thanks.

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