

LORD, MAKE US OR BREAK US

The lady I had likened to a rose
In seven months, the last moon most of all,
Did in sincerity her heart disclose,
That I might know the passion I had held
Was there reflected, causing me to fall
Into what now I know is truly love.
She seemed not new, but we seemed paralleled;
From two we wished to form a dual hand
That could befit a perfect, single glove.
Not as before, where gazing stemmed from me,
Our arms and lips did forge a common band.
Her eyes, in mirroring my own desire
Made me to cherish her proximity.
She was not unfamiliar in our find,
But seemed of years a friend I did admire,
Although a week of moons our friendship was.
But we were seeing from the heart, not mind,
So even though this natural was pure
And beautiful to us, we had to pause
To ponder if of God it would endure.

No passion in this world is worth God's love.
He loved both her and me before we knew
The breath of air or sunlight from above,
And our small friendship is to His a void.
Our jointed days, if they should come, are few,
But unity with Christ shall ever be!
When these emotions shall have been destroyed
And feeble images of dust transformed,
We shall with Christ abide eternally.
For me, if I must hate and leave this one
For Him, I will, for I must be conformed:
My life is His, and so is hers, I know.
So, if as one His will cannot be done,
Then we must verily be two and part.
It must be this: where He shall send I go,
For I do love Him more than my own life.
He is the Lord Whose throne is in my heart:
His loyal servant I must be till death,
Though He should lead through poverty and strife,
Though He should soon or later take my breath.

But now I wonder at this lovely friend;
Her qualities and features I adore—
And others also these with hope attend.
Indeed, her loveliness of face and form
Are truly fair, but I have found much more:
This tender earthly vessel holds a soul
Whose substance God has made to stand the storm.
When hardships mount and difficulties pose
Themselves, her spirit plays a sturdy role,
For she depends on Heaven's strength to guide
Her steps where, in this hostile world, she goes.
And yet, her soul is soft and quick to melt
Before her Lord when weights are multiplied,
In all her burden-bearing she is fair:
As Christian true, she carries them while knelt
In prayer, and God her faithfulness repays.
For all of these, for this dear girl I care.
Her soul belongs to Jesus Christ above.
So, not with flesh, which in the years decays,
But with her heart in Christ my heart's in love.

But there are fears that from the "old man" rise—
Oh, to be parted from this nature vile
Which causes me the problems I despise!
It issues pride and views the world for lust.
But how I joy that Christ did reconcile
My perished soul by His death on the cross!
So I must rest on Him with faith and trust,
Not leaving room for worries or for fears.
For there is only gain with Him in loss.
Yet losing is the fear that plagues me here—
I fear that loss will issue bitter tears.
The love I have for her I wish to keep—
She is my sweetheart and her love is dear.
If she did pass because of riot's works
Or in this accident-prone world did sleep,
I fear, without abundant aid from God,
My countenance would fall where heartbreak lurks.
So I shall look upon my Savior's face
And will not fix my eyes upon the sod,
For doing so would be to mock His grace.

Indeed, my thoughts shall rise to levels high—
Already do I see her gentle soul

Above the beauty that allures the eye.
And in this mate-choice that my soul shall make
I wish to let my Master's Word control.
For if I apprehend His counsel not,
I may in passion make a grave mistake
That, through my life, might hinder duties owed,
Because His perfect will must be my lot.
She could not ever like Delilah be;
But, if we walked unequally His road,
This would suffice for reason not to wed.
And yet, would it not be a crime if we
Avoided out of fear a holy match?
If He unto a sacred tie had led,
And we had missed our joining by a doubt,
The love so dear I now to her attach
Would be a curse to haunt my sad review.
Oh how I wish this love to be devout!
Without God's seal, this binding must undo.

So many times I cast my line to draw
A like desire wherein a common walk
Might start, but all I caught was what I saw—
And seeing does not solve a solitude.
Nor can a friendship merely rise from talk,
Because what dwells behind the words and face
Must be the magnet that attracts the mood.
How time has made our meeting seem as set!
If God had not corrected her old case,
And had He not relieved my former care,
How could we on an even plain have met?
It seems that He bestowed this rendezvous.
Yet, surely I had wanted this affair,
For I petitioned with an open heart
And by sincerity my wanting grew.
I learned to love her, as I learned her way—
It was not as before, a vain upstart,
For when I fully knew her quality,
And, knowing mine, she did my care repay,
We did compact a true affinity.

This love, though quiet now by circumstance,
Grows still within me and would shout aloud:
“How can I bear this taciturn expanse!”
And in my heart I hide anxiety,

Because there seems to be a subtle cloud
That slyly slipped between and silence made
Of our communicative melody.
This offers opportunity for doubt:
When openness of motive is delayed,
A wretched and destructive search ensues,
Inventing thoughts that from my worries sprout.
What perfect time and placing for a test
To see if trust our widened space subdues!
If truly our affection is ordained,
Our dear attachment then is surely blest!
And since we are God's children, we shall know
If we should love or from love be restrained.
Our tender feelings and endearment will
Be made to cease or for His glory grow,
Be banished or remain within us still.

And so, unto my precious Lord I pray;
I offer up the love in her I've found
For Him to give me back or take away.
I hold her up to God and ask His choice,
Because to Him in service I am bound.
If we as head and helpmeet cannot be
And still pursue the leading of His voice,
Obeying purely, wholly as He planned,
I ask the Lord to bear her love from me.
Upon the road that Jesus wills I run
I may meet jagged crags and plains of sand;
I may be tortured by the devil's crowd
Or withered by the wind and rains and sun;
Disaster, tears and heartache may be mine;
My only peace may come to be a shroud—
And could she share these plagues, if they should rise?
Christ only knows, and He must give the sign.
It's God's decision if we be a pair.
Thus, I do cleave my heart before His eyes
For Him to close or lift from it my care.

They say that marriages are made above.
I think not all are so, but mine must be!
If God returns my yielding of this love,
I'll cherish her as long as I shall live;
I'll cling to her and she shall follow me;
What's dear to me will be what's dear to her;

I'll try not much to take, but more to give;
I'll constant stay, though all the world's in strife,
And troubles will our sharing never stir.
As one we'll live for God; or we'll not mate,
If He should deem us both a single life.
Our hearts will lock to serve Him with our all,
Or from this tender binding separate.
With cheeks together we will view the Cross,
Of leave each other to His varied call.
We'll complement each other by our band,
Or let Him break us, counting nothing loss.
Our walk together will endure or end.
We'll part or ever journey hand in hand
To work and labor where our Lord shall send.

And now these double-hundred lines to you,
My fair and fragrant Rose, I do address.
In them our situation you can view,
Perhaps not all precisely; but, the part
That truly lies in me I wish to stress:
I love you, darling sweet, more than such verse
Can ever tell—words cannot tell the heart.
I love you, I do truly love you, dear.
Please, let the meaning stay, though I rehearse
Those words a million times—my love is real.
If God our dual paths to one does steer,
My happiness will be too great to show!
But if denied, that will my joy not steal,
For by His matchless grace my heart can calm.
Our love would bitter be and full of woe,
If we could not be blessed in being matched—
So many prayers precede this lengthy psalm!
And let's pray yet that we may know His will:
If parted, painlessly to be unlatched,
Or sweetly wed, if left as lovers still.

— *David L. Hatton, 10/14/1969*