

A Pickle For Bernice



Poems by
David M. Schwartz

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Also by David M. Schwartz:

5/8 of Everything I've Written

'Ho, Ho', said the Platypus and Other Snappy Titles

Amber Waves Of Nausea

About the author:

David M. Schwartz was born and raised in the St. Louis, Missouri area. He attended Clayton public schools and earned his B.A. in Judaic Studies from the University of Missouri ñ Kansas City. Subsequently, he earned his MSW from the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis. While he doesn't write poetry or songs as much as he'd like, he still anxiously awaits his muse.

For information on proper pronunciation of any Hebrew transliteration, or to become his patron, write to him at david@davidmschwartz.us .

Dedicated To My Family And Friends.

If you are insulted by the content herein, you are either thinking entirely too much or not enough.

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A Farewell

November 26, 1996

I don't intend for you to read or hear this thing.
In fact, I'm not sure you deserve this apology.
I'm sorry we had our laughs and ambivalence
and I found the time so draining.

I never asked you for a gift much less a kiss,
and yet you hang on to the thread I try to snap.
Birthdays and holidays you'll find yourself alone.
I'm not yours to miss and my head won't rest in your lap.

I don't want to be cruel and expect fate to slap me too.
We both deserve more than sex.
If I'm going nowhere I'm still going without you.
Don't bother calling cause I won't change.
Don't bother calling me your ex.

If these were the blues, I 'd blow harp and sip whiskey.
I'd come crawling back in your fairy tale.
Don't dream of me, but be glad I'm gone.
Wish instead we didn't fail.
Grow up and stop acting so childish and frisky.
You aren't stupid or a playful cat.
I expected much more of you than that.

If you see me at a party walk away.
Don't expect me to hurt you or shun you anymore.
Don't come near my house or my store.
You taught me not to try so hard and what not to say
so please don't play anymore with my heart.

Breakfast With An Angel

July 16,1997

This morning I tasted holiness with my joe in a paper cup.

I sat across from an angel who told me what was up.

I told her it's been too long since I've felt this way,
and a long time since I cried.

We shared our joy and pain, how we're so damned mad we can't share
what's inside.

She told me of her grieving and distance from others.

Then muttered about courting disaster and mentioned her fears.

I asked between bites if heavenly messengers can make up for lost years.

"I'm not sure really, but it's worth a try," she said.

While we ate I wondered, how'd I manage to grow?

How'd I get so blessed? I hate to question fortune but how do I survive?

After the times I've made it home barely,

there must be a plan if I'm still alive.

I heard it in her voice to shut up.

"You ignore where anybody else has been,

and watch out! or your food will fall into your lap.

Don't get philosophical on me, cause I know truth from crap.

That's when I dropped the fork and said:

"Join me in the hot sun and let's feel our blood boil.

Let's leave this table and not get spoiled.

Maybe we'll share our lives this summer day,

cause I've got things to do before I'm dead, though it's too late for you.

While we ate I wondered, how'd I manage to grow?

How'd I get so blessed? I hate to question fortune but how do I survive?

After the times I've made it home barely,

there must be a plan if I'm still alive.

Child's Bovine Ballad No.34

October 18, 1995

I was walking north on Skinker
from McCausland and Clayton Avenues.
I was off to seek my fortune
knowing I would pay my dues.

I had my guitar on my back
and my Guernsey at my side.
We were headed for Delmar Boulevard,
when she up and died.

I brought her in from St. Louis County
trying to sell fresh milk.
This song raced through my mind
so it might not be smooth as silk.

A constable did stop and stare
in his car near N. Rosebury.
"You best leave, how I don't care.
Give me your beast and not tarry."

"Kind Officer, where do I take her now
as we're both herbivores?
I cannot bide the thought my family cow,
will be grilled and sold in stores."

"I'll make you wish you never came
nor ever dreamt this song.
I'll call in the word police
because you went so wrong.

The constable called in several crews.
They brought smoker, table and knives.
He held me at gunpoint on the street
while they fed their wives.

"Hark! I say you best rethink
what it is you eat.
you never autopsied her meat
and she's started to stink."

"We know what we consume
and we enjoy it with Worcestershire.
You'll be locked up until your doom
because you were a nuisance when we took her."

Now I sit in my cell.
If bored you know I am.
I wish I weren't a hack
and wrote about yams instead.

Now I sit in my cell.
If bored you know I am.
I wish I weren't a hack
and wrote about yams instead.

Coffee Klatch August 27, 1995

That coffee made me feel I haven't slept a wink in the last six hours.
I was thinking of your voice your body your reaction
if I dared called you after laundry and lawn work.

We both live at home and maybe we're monitored on the phone.
I wasn't asking to hold hands in a movie or even walk you home
but it was hard to approach you for five minutes last night.

I've no way of slipping you a note in your purse, your locker, your class.
We aren't in eighth grade anymore.
At these socials there still seem to be the boys and the girls
but where's the deejay playing top forty?

If we had run this coffee house the way it was supposed to have been
would you have listened to me play?
Would I have reached you or been pulled off stage by an invisible cane?
Would you throw off indifference like tomatoes or smiles like roses?

I can't sleep off last night's coffee cause I have laundry and yard work.
Oh, and this afternoon there's an outside August wedding where you won't
be.
How I wish we could share the sun the sticky sweat the fear
of approaching at the punch bowl and retreating to sleeplessness.

verses indicated by *

Corinna, Corinna, where you've been so long?)2x
I've been worried about you baby. Baby please come home.

*I woke up this morning, I could not think straight)2x
When I poured my cereal milk was dripping from the plate.

I got a bird that whistles, I got a bird that sings)2x
If I ain't got Corinna, life don't mean a thing.

*It's so long since I saw you and it's done me harm)2x
It could be spring or summer, but I know it won't be warm.

*I fell in love with so many, I lost all track.)2x
There's only one I want to hear from. Corinna won't call me back.

Corinna, Corinna, you've been on my mind)2x
I was in love with Corinna. I can't keep from cryin'.

*I was a lonely boy. I'm still a lonely man.)2x
I strayed home looking for her. Why won't Corinna understand?

*I don't have much luck in jobs or love without dues)2x
I stay home every night with these Corinna, Corinna blues.

Cross Town Trip March 2, 1997

We can go cruising this spring time
with no place but to get you home.
We'll feel tired but whole.

We can discover the city
by getting lost then going home.
There's no need to talk or blast the radio
long as you're with me.

The street names will all blur to green and white
and they won't lead us astray.
Why pay attention?

Come with me across the sea
of many textured streets.
Ride along through neighborhoods
returning the same day.
Rich or poor, north or west
-let's sail the paved sea.

We don't have days to drive or anything to pack.
No need for maps just the sun's path.
No need for maps just the sun pointing home.

Engagement July 24, 1997

You said you wanted to draw circles with your finger on my back.
We could take rainy Saturday afternoon naps,
You feeling my breath on your neck.
We could lay like this for two days despite the July heat
And on Monday morning we'd put notes in each other's lunch sack.

I told you I could hear you while driving, your voice in my ear.
No matter how our shapes might change nor how grey our hair,
you'd be there as if in my mirror.
When I'd get home you'd be surprised at what we didn't need to say.

I prayed only each other we'd seek, and must've won a divine lottery.
When I am alone or in a crowd, I know you are a blessing.
I pray that I not pray in vain, and hope I will give you joy.
More than that, how I can give you security.

You told me you would read or listen to anything I write.
You'll throw back your head and laugh as we ride,
as I sing you a song and tell you your presence is a wonder
and you'll ever be my light.

Words don't say what the moon can
under the Milky Way in the desert while you sleep.
If we could stop ourselves talking we'd hear our hearts beating
always young and nervous but that's what makes it all right

We both said we've met other pairs and would work on forever,
but make no vow for any choice above.
All we said was if the other passes,
remember them by passing on the love.
But we'll hush each other not knowing how to live alone.

Darling I'm dreaming so answer me true.
If I expect too much and want so much I'm to blame.
Yet your touch on my cheek told me last night.

I could show you a river with small pretty boats if I tried.
You could teach me to cook and save for our house.
We will have children and tuck them in,
keeping a moment each day aside.
Fantasy's fine but I only I want you nearby.

I love the breeze coming in the car,
and how it blows your brown curls.
You smile as you watch the passing trees.

You say you like the sun and breeze warming you inside.
It reminds you of maple and pine.
I wonder if you want me hear, but you say it's fine
just to be a girl again on a family ride.

We don't have much longer until we're home.
I turn to see you're dreaming.
I'm tired of the highway and lights in the mirror
then I see the moon beaming on your cheeks.

I have to keep my hands on the wheel,
though I want to kiss you and hold you close.
You've got your dreams and we seem distant.
If I woke you, is that how you'd feel?

You say you like the sun and breeze warming you inside.
It reminds you of maple and pine.
I wonder if you want me hear, but you say it's fine
just to be a girl again on a family ride.

You say you like the sun and breeze warming you inside.
It reminds you of maple and pine.
I wonder if you want me hear, but you say it's fine
just to be a girl again on a family ride.
just to be a girl again on a family ride.

Hash Browns In Heaven Revised July 17, 1996

I can picture you waking, shivering from the window breeze.
You shower, put on that flowered sun dress,
put on your plastic sandals with a smile.

We can read the paper for an hour
doing the crossword over coffee.
We can play games and let the lawn grow until another day.

When you make hash browns it's like hash browns in heaven.
I don't need eggs just a little pepper to spice up the morning
and just a little more coffee.
Pour me some, filling me with heaven.
We'll serve each other hash browns til noon.

We can eat sitting on the porch steps,
Maybe the mums would put on a show and you'd play my guitar.
We'd only go inside for more bagels and cheese.

I could write songs like this till Thursday.
It beats Sunday rides and shopping.
I want you beside me and I wish it were spring any day with you.

When you make hash browns it's like hash browns in heaven.
I don't need eggs just a little pepper to spice up the morning
and just a little more coffee.
Pour me some, filling me with heaven.
We'll serve each other hash browns til noon.

I could write songs like this till Thursday.
It beats Sunday rides and shopping.
I want you beside me and I wish it were spring any day with you.
And I wish it were spring any day with you.

Haunted April 24, 1997

I'm haunted, as if something's on my back,
like the foggy dew lingering on the grass.

These thoughts are taunting me, telling me this feeling won't surely pass.

What have I done to deserve these notions?

I've never tried hard to be unkind.

I've tried legal potions, just to quiet my mind.

But I've tired of these pipe dreams, tired of wasting time.

I long for a decent job and a family,

but I'll settle for cutting the lawn on a pastel pretty day.

Friends just seem to drift from my sight.

Have you ever felt that you're in your own way?

I'm haunted when I feel the late hour every morning.

I come home from work to work on my life.

Seems that my music is only a memory,

My tunes won't bring me money, but they get me through.

I'm scared as I realize solitude's my wife.

It's strange where years have taken me.

Afternoons outside were with my guitar,

I tried to change the world only in my head.

I was against everything then and now no more careful where I tread.

What have I done to deserve these notions?

I've never tried hard to be unkind.

I've tried legal potions, just to quiet my mind.

But I've tired of these pipe dreams, tired of wasting time.

I Nearly Forgot Revised August 3, 1996

I nearly forgot the tune to my song.

I nearly forgot what to sing.

I don't have stage fright, but I'm lost when I see you.

My words come out wrong.

I'm no major folk singer, nor a salesman with a line.

I may be out-dated but I want you near

and for you to say "I'm proud you're mine."

Here's a song that goes nowhere like the breeze in your hair.

I'm tired of lonely singing and I'm ready to share.

I'm so choked up and hope you'll join me soon.

I've got no place in the city or a country town.

I'm not a rambler waiting to return to your arms,

but I'm tired of playing the clown.

Here's a song that goes nowhere like the breeze in your hair.

I'm tired of lonely singing and I'm ready to share.

I'm so choked up and hope you'll join me soon.

I nearly forgot the tune to my song.

I nearly forgot what to sing.

I don't have stage fright, but I'm lost when I see you.

My words come out wrong.

In A Shopping Mall (The Rage) August 22, 1999

I only go shopping when I must,
When I must take drive someone.
I always try to find a bench or chair to rest,
To hide in the forest of carts and shoppers looking down on me.

Once and awhile I will look myself,
And turn away from faces looking back through my empty eyes.
It's as if they can read my thoughts or see the synapses misfiring,
The blood vessels in my head constricting.

I used to smile at an occasional baby,
Or a toddler waving at me.
Now I just turn away not wanting to scare,
Or to see how another big baby might cry.

I used to save up trips like these for the journal I no longer keep,
To put in amongst the thoughts about the shirts that were too expensive,
Or how the pants would shrink anyway.

Maybe I need a nap when I shop,
Or another cup of coffee,
Or a book which I will forget as I read.
Maybe I need to go to the exchange counter,
But what I need they won't have like a girlfriend,
Or a neckrub, or a slap upside the head.

I look on past all these people,
Pushing past the front doors, past the juniors section
buying things they don't need.
But they get examine the stuff like it will fill up their closets
or maybe their wounds.
Those garments and bath accessories surely can't help me.

I want to run through here turning over displays
Rummaging through the twill shirts,
cutting down sales people with my glare.
I want to rip open their magazines,
and knock down the charge application displays
Which I blame for half of my troubles for things I needed.

But they wouldn't let me back in,
And they sure wouldn't take kindly to me upsetting their jewelry carts
Or throwing acid on the t-shirts.
They wouldn't let me in these places,
If they could read my mind with all the jealousy,
frustration and loneliness building up inside.
They don't have a drop in clinic
-only high blood pressure, horoscope, romance and stress machines.
Their signs mock me when the marketing and sales managers ask if there
is something they can do for me.
But they don't want to really know,
like the 'hi, how are you's?' better left unsaid.

One day people will wonder what went terribly wrong,
As I have for years.
I fear what I might say or do, to bring these card-houses tumbling
Because I have nowhere left to go
and don't know when my bomb will explode.

I'm not sure what happened between March and today,
seems we shot from freezer burn to fryer and I liked room temp just fine.
The neighbors' dogs keep barking, messing on the grass,
and I'm hiding out of the sun.

Do you know what I mean when I say I've played at life?
From the job apps and meetings, indecision and such,
from surfing the net for someone or some gig to find me,
it's no wonder I don't sleep so much.

I've been half around the world to the Holy Land
and after midwestern travels there's a lot I misunderstand.
Like how come jobs and women don't call back?
Like how come everything so good fell underneath the tracks?

Don't tell me about therapy, I go.
It's about the larger things that I don't know.
I remember the way it was supposed to be,
when I was on float trips, when I was seventeen.
Can you recall that river and maybe just drifting by?

Don't worry, I'm just tired, but not about to cry. Maybe I will anyway.
Don't you worry about me.

The dogs are barking and I've been up half the night.
The margaritas and salsa reminded me I don't treat myself right.
So I'll fade off to work and wish five hours away,
coming back home not resolving to start again tomorrow.

The dogs are barking and I've been up half the night.
The margaritas and salsa reminded me I don't treat myself right.
So I'll fade off to work and wish five hours away,
coming back home not resolving to start again tomorrow.

Late September September 27, 1996

I went shopping today for fall clothes, hoping got find something warm.
But there wasn't anything good enough to be rejected.
I wish I had someone to give a sweater, someone who'd let me in her
arms.

Tomorrow I'm going to a wedding, and it's easiest to go alone.
I always thought they'd be like the movies, but fairy tales are fake.
I guess I've grown to know the isolation I can take.

Can you see I'm trying to have hope? I'm changing my attitude and luck.
But I've got nothing to stow for cold rainy days.
Thanks, I'll make it okay, but I can't learn how to duck.

I'm writing my heart here, but can't find anyone to play for.
Maybe I ought to keep it for myself, put it on a shelf.
Someone might find it too late in forty years.
How I wish you were knocking at my door.

I'm done with this song but the evening's not through.
I'm trying to change my ways this late September.
You aren't here to share a fire or hum along.
I'm a hopeless romantic but I wonder about you,
and missed chances are all I remember.

Can you see I'm trying to have hope? I'm changing my attitude and luck.
But I've got nothing to stow for cold rainy days.
Thanks, I'll make it okay, but I can't learn how to duck.

Mytho-Poetic Woman November 17, 1999

I see you coming from the gym,
When you get in the car,
And when you drive away.

You never turn your head,
Or brush your wet long black curls from your eyes.
Either you don't know or pretend I'm not around.

A clock is ticking somewhere,
And I cry alone
When I realize the city isn't big enough
For us not to meet.
I know your number and gave you mine.

Maybe I'll see you every eight years or so,
Remembering your light perfume and soft eyes.
I hope we'll talk before we're forty-five.

But when I see you I'll remember
To walk on past,
With that clock in my head
And more calendar pages to tear off.
Maybe I'll cry alone, wondering if you do the same.

I see you all pretty, healthy and successful,
And maybe still single as I walk on by.
I wonder if you are ready for someone,
If you are in love with being in love like me.

I walk on by as you drive away, not noticing me as usual.
If I laid down in the middle of the street,
Would you feel the bump driving over?
Is an empty street all we share?

Shoulders July 31, 1999

What I wouldn't give to grab onto your shoulders.
To feel your skin against my lips would do me good.
Maybe I'll taste your curly locks in my mouth
Or smell the lingering cologne on your neck.

Would it be okay to lay my head and neck
Across your strong shoulders?

They seem to have the strength of bridge spans
But are softer than a baby's legs.
Just to know you are there is the medicine I need.
Still I want to push you away because I am bitter
And your loss would be too much to bear.

But you offer to draw me to your shoulders.
You are sweeter than a sister could be, kind as a mother or teacher.

If it's all right we could fuse into one another.
If it helps you too we could become a pillars of salt.
But I beg you let me know if I ask too much.
My words don't feel so clear and I just need your touch upon my head.

Maybe it's all a dream and you won't let me wake.
I go through my days and weeks not knowing whether I am breaking up or
breaking down.
Yet you are still as a mountain and I never see you crumble.
I wonder if I am the only one to lose my grip and I want to scream.

Single Revised May 29, 1996

Inspired by Joni Mitchell's "A Case of You"

"You've got nerve asking me to pour my heart out"

I told the angel at the gate, who looked away.

She looked like someone I wanted to date but never asked out.

"Hey, I'm begging you. Give more chance. I can't dance or sing,
but I changed my choreography.

Being alone on an empty stage, I see people watching me
and I need a few smiles for this part I'm playing.

I wear my best face like others, and sweat drips before tears alone.
I try to interact but don't dialogue well.

Maybe I'm on the wrong stage, maybe I'm playing Hell."

Then she said: "Melodrama makes me sleepy.

Everybody's wearing tight jeans or leather, acting cool over coffee,
smiling with sunken eyes.

In bathroom mirrors you look brave like preparing for war.

Who's your enemy anyway?

You pine secret lovers, mourning loss you never had.

You copy love for art's sake, while listening to "Blue".

That comfort will never replace a body."

"So should I keep trying or never mind?

I want to get through alive and make the grade.

Maybe I should be alone if it means no charades.

I guess I'm stuck waiting to get discovered."

While waiting for an answer, I heard horns blaring for me to turn right.
I turned my head to the corner at the green light.
I saw a neighborhood gate in ivy and leaves.
I'm sure an angel grinned, but it's no through street, and I'm late.

Talkin' Suburban Folkie Nightmare Blues August 18, 1996

I awoke the other day, shakin' an' screamin'.
My ma found me strummin' air -must've been dreamin'.
She asked me what I recollected, I'd been inspected
by the I.R.S. and the D.D.S. and have no M.R.S. to call in sick for me.

It all started before my birth, when Bobbie Zimmerman was full of mirth.
He kept his hair short in New York City and liked that Guthrie fellow.
He and a few others talked like me, but he was talkin' World War III.
That was his dream, not mine. I'm still poor.

Anyhow, I worked all day, had some money coming my way.
I had debts paid off and nobody could scoff
cause I bought 'em snow cones.
After awhile I got some music stuff, I started to play places rough
without alcohol, cigarettes or teenagers.

I played some shows in coffee houses, patrons were louses.
They didn't ignore or tip me either and didn't often clap.
There i was past eleven havin' to wake at seven and nearly snapped.
I was ready to sleep in the juice puddle underneath the table.
Before I knew it i had it made, women liked me and my songs.
I had my harp in my shirt pocket, my amp in a wall socket, free coffee.
i had groupies taggin' along, another songbook in print and no sleep.

People asked me for lessons and I said okay,
ten dollars an hour then we'll play.
I had little time to look for full-time work.
All these projects had their perks, cause I'd still get a refund.
Then when I found my true love, things couldn't get much better.

I got Uncle Sam's letter saying I might as well quit. Here's an audit.
I went to court, nearly went to jail, sang my plea and this ends the tale.
I'll leave you with one thought, don't play music or you'll get caught.

I decided to quit the biz, wanted to play weddings, gee whiz.
Hung up the chord and boxed my axe, though I was okay on income tax.
Didn't matter I passed their test cause I was to cranky to play my best.

I told my family of this hell, remembered the Flintstones
when Pebbles and Bam-bam sang so well, and went on tour.
I never did but would've, and I'd play St. Joe if I could've.
So I'm left still scheming cause I didn't learn a thing from my dreaming.
I still need money and a honey, aint it funny. But I'm not on t.v.

The Ballad of Slugmunch May 5, 1996
It started in 1976, in Clayton, Missouri.
A nine year old boy liked bikes and a comic book.

What set him apart as told by his mum, was what he liked to cook.

They called him Slugmunch, because he ate slugs a bunch.
He found them at home and at school, and they made him drool.

He hid them in his coat or squished them in his math text.
He'd put them underneath his pillow and maybe a jar.
His folks took him to a priest in case he was hexed.
The priest said he couldn't be helped and was full of woe.

The neighbors taunted him and he was beaten by Jowly Jim.
Parents warned their families "Stay away!
You'll get his emotional disease!"

Sluggie ate lunch one muggy day after his lawn was sprayed.
He noticed the critters were not to his taste,
and they looked odd cause they became paste.
Down they went, and down he laid.

Some say he never got cured
though his legend endured and is told though his family moved away.
The neighbors still say...

They called him Slugmunch, because he ate slugs a bunch.
He found them at home and at school, and they made him drool.

The CoffeeHouse Trip January 5, 1998

I was bored one night so I went out for coffee, maybe see old pals.
I brought my guitar to try and win a young gal,
little did I know what I would find.
The guitars were all lined up like hogs outside a bar.

Instead of Harleys there were Guilds, Taylors and Yairis,
not to mention the Yamahas.

I found no stools at the bar, just mothers seeking lattes,
and the place wasn't so high brow that it served pate^í.

People had jobs and families...Wow.

Those folks started singing, sharing their tunes.

They opened their hearts and minds, they opened sugar packets
and stirred mochas with their spoons.

Some played with flatpicks, some with barehands
and though they sang so well, the words I couldn't understand.

I waited out my turn hoping to play something concretely
but I had the greater urge to get to the bathroom discreetly.

I was hurting and the whole room could tell.

I could have been home hiding, tugging at electronic heart strings,
hoping to find my virtual love destiny.

Suddenly I was jarred by the owner and machines.

He^íd used the last two percent and wanted to avoid bloodshed..

He sent his son to the store for milk and Saltines,
and he hollered after him 'and a pickle for Bernice.^í

A pickle for Bernice (2x), Son, don't you for-get a pickle for Bernice.

The patrons crowded round him, they heard his story before.

They knew his lady might boot him and offered him support.

Then sure enough things turned ugly when he ran out of Linzer torte.

Before I had the chance to act, the mob discussed alternate tunings.

They people were all ruffled when they called my act a joke.

I just smiled and nodded, trying to act tough.

Then up my eyes darted to a young maid as she spoke.

'A pickle for Bernice (2x) Everyone ought to bring a pickle for Bernice.
Gherkins can unite us as we crunch so peacefully.

Then you folky cowboys can carry on in peace.

The Guitar Song August 16, 1995

Some guitars are fat and some are thin.

Some are played alone and some are plugged in for more sound.

Some are painted pretty colors and mine is painted brown.

A guitar has a neck with lines called frets that help us play better.

There's six or more strings on deck and they can't get dirty or wet.

They're connected at the head and the bridge, sometimes across the holes.

The wood and strings give guitars their tone, helping us to sing and moan.

My guitar is worth a lot, cause it was my birthday present.

I have to keep it safe, to make sure it won't get bent.

I hoped you liked my song and you learned something about guitars.

I like to play for you and maybe you'll sing along.

I like to play for you and maybe you'll sing along.

The Second Salad Dressing Ballad Revised September 2, 1996

A parody of "Matty Groves"

"Oh Mother, oh Mother, the salad makes me afright.

I am afraid to swallow it, much less take a bite."

"Eat now, child, no other food is there my tot.

I know that you like salad and I added artichoke.

We both know I work two jobs, but we're almost broke."

"I dare not eat, I cannot eat, I dare not for my life.

I can tell from this brown stuff, the dressing can be cut with a knife."

"So what if you'd cut it with a knife, you'd use a fork anyway?

You're telling lies about this meal, a trying to make me mad."

"I smelled the plate, it smelled right back. It smelled worse than before. It stank worse than weed-killer and I'd sooner throw it out the door."

"I must plead won't you concede, to let me search the trash?

The expiration date may long be past or another evil's come at last."

"Had I meant, had I meant, to harm you foolish son,

Had I meant to do you in, I'd have hung you with a towel.

If you wish to waste your time, then through it dig young man."

"I found the bottle dear Mum like I said I would.

Now you won't think me rude or dumb when I warn of bad dressing."

"I'm sorry son, I'm sorry son, I'm sorry for my mistake.

You were right to question its freshness and we had so much at stake."

"Oh Mother, oh Mother, to the grocery we must go.

We must tell them about this stuff, before the store does close."

We went to the store just as we said.

They listened to our plight and said "Lucky you aren't dead."

So I tell you friends be sure your dressing is all right.

Throwing Out The Negatives July 9, 1998

I had some old pictures in a book I hadn't flipped in years.

I've been trying to clean my room and head

to get me some space where I can.

I didn't bother going through those graduations and happy days.
But I got rid of those diaries and all that held me down.
I still have those pictures, but the film was left in my strong box.
Now, I have grown tired between the work, the friends I've lost,
and everything too familiar but I'm the only one to blame.

Still, I'm throwing out the negatives.
I do not need them anymore.
I am keeping only useful things that do not cost much space
or give me pain.

Maybe in another June, I will write music for this song.
I will look back on your wedding and remember the light you deserved.
Today I heard some stories and they weren't your fault.
How things are not as they seem, and how I better watch where I walk.
Maybe I won't feel so defiled, so hungover and in need.

I might let others into visit, after tearing out things I no longer hold dear.
All my words sound the same so I can imagine what you hear me say.
If we had telepathy we could share what those photos never could.
But if we were in heaven, would you tune your harp to mine?
Would we get another chance like in the movies, to set it right this time?

Still, I'm throwing out the negatives.

I don't need them anymore.

I am keeping only useful things that don't cost much space or give me pain
You've done no wrong and I won't apologize because I may angered you.
But you can't see all that I've heaped up, and how I need to unload this
stash.

If I had a trailer, I would put there all I cannot take.

Even if I moved away, my view would mean nothing to you.

There's no feeling or names to tell about.

That's why I threw out the negatives.

But I'd never kick you out, and might even frame your face.

Stay awhile if you like, but don't make good-bye so hard again.

Every year I need to renew myself, don't you understand?

Time and space are all we've got. Let's just share them quietly now.

To St. Jerome Revised August 3, 1996

St. Jerome, are you looking down at me?
Can't you see, I hate to criticize
but you made an awful mess of religious history?

St. Jerome, you're resting comfy at home.
My brethren still see hatred and xenophobia.
Were you not careful reading the Good Book
or did you suffer from myopia?

You might have lunched with a rabbi
and read him your take on Moses' head.
He could have told you those were rays shooting forth
instead of horns, what dread!

Think about what you told Michelangelo.
You both botched Moses, my main man.
For hundreds of years now,
folks have thought my people hang out with Satan!

You might have lunched with a rabbi
and read him your take on Moses' head.
He could have told you those were rays shooting forth
instead of horns, what dread!

V^íaristichli May 21, 1998

Taken from Hoshea 2:21-22 (Pronounced Ve-ar-ees-teech-lee) Ha-Shem is another name for G-d, meaning The Ineffable name.

I will betroth you to Me forever, and I will betroth you to Me with righteousness, justice, kindness, and mercy. I will betroth you to Me with fidelity (or in faith), and you shall know HaShem.^í

My words:

This is my love and this is my friend. This is my love and bride and we know that our bond will last forever, and everyone knows that our love is strong.^í

V^íaristichli le^íolam.

V^íaristichli b^ítzedek u^ívmishpat,

u^ívchesed u^írachamim.

V^íaristichli be^íemunah v^íyada^íat et HaShem.

V^íaristichli be^íemunah v^íyada^íat et HaShem.

Zot dodi ^ëv zot rehi.

Zot ahavi ukalli.

V^íanachnu yodim she^íkeshernu nishar l^íad.

V^íkulam yodim she^íahavanu chazakah.

La-da, dadada, mmm, mmm, mmm

V^íaristichli be^íemunah v^íyada^íat et HaShem.

Vengeance July 31, 1999

I wish I could take you down and make you see our graves.
There's something unholy inside of me
And I haven't said these things for a long time.

Can you let me out? Can you break through this glass wall?
I need your help and my words and thoughts are so trite
But you already know them all.

Tell me what I'm thinking. Either way you're wrong.
If I had a bomb inside would you be able to tell?
Go run and hide.
So little keeps me from exploding.

I'd grab your hand and take you too,
Without any time to get our houses in order.
What I wonder sometimes is what separates me
from those who make it on tv?