

SONGS I WISH YOU KNEW

SOLEDAD R. JUAN



With an Introduction by Avelina Juan Gil

SONGS I WISH YOU KNEW

The Poems of **Soledad R. Juan** (1918 - 1942)

Edited and with an Introduction by

Avelina Juan Gil

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This is a project that has taken over half a century to complete. The poems were originally transcribed from the handwritten notes of Soledad into computer format using the old Wordstar software, laboriously undertaken by my husband Generoso in the 1980s. In the past few months, my sons Danny & Carlos upgraded the files to MSWord, sorting, collating, and reformatting the data for website publication. This is the result.

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SOLEDAD R. JUAN: AN APPRECIATION

Soledad Raval Juan (1918-1942) was a poet during the late 1930s, a period which in Philippine history is called the "American Regime." She was acclaimed "Poetess of the Year" in 1939 by the *Philippines Free Press* magazine, which used to publish short stories and poems submitted by readers.

Her Life. Soledad R. Juan was my only sister. A year younger than I, she was born in Dansalan, Lanao, a town so small that it had no hospital and no doctor on call. When she was born, only our father, Lt. Valentin S. Juan, was with my mother. Frantic for help, he ran to the home of his commanding officer, Col. Francis Burton Harrison, and begged Mrs. Harrison to help his wife deliver her baby. Because only the infant's father was around, the colonel decided that the baby should be called "Sole dad", and so my sister was baptized *Soledad*, and her nickname was *Choleng*.

In 1923 our father was assigned in Surigao, a province in Mindanao, as provincial commander. On January 8, 1924, he led a company of soldiers against the Colorums, a growing group of religious fanatics who were threatening the peace and order of the province. In the encounter with five hundred Colorums wielding bolos and spears, the constabulary force of twenty soldiers and Lt. Juan were killed in no time. My mother was widowed at 32, and Choleng, 5 years old, and I and our two brothers were orphaned. A third brother was born six months after our father died.

Mother took us to Laoag, Ilocos Norte, her home town, where she taught at the local elementary school to support us, her five children. In 1928 we moved to Zamboanga City, in Mindanao. Choleng, ten years old, was in grade 5. We lived in a house close to the beach, and in no time, all of us five children learned to swim and swim well. Four years later, when the family moved to Albay, Choleng was a sophomore in the high school. In 1935, then 17, she enrolled in a pre-med course in the University of the Philippines.

Tall and slim, she enjoyed the swimming sessions in the physical education class, and in her second semester, she made it to the UP girls' swimming team and practiced tirelessly for the annual girls' swimming competition with the team of the Philippine Women's University. She won the second place! She also caught a cold so persistent that the UP doctors had her confined in the UP Infirmary for a month. Diagnosed for tuberculosis, Choleng left college and started treatment.

In the 1930s, the standard treatment for tuberculosis was to have the patient live in Baguio where the air was cool and pure. Choleng stayed in Baguio for two years, following

the only cure known then: Eat a rich diet that included taking the yoke of ten eggs daily. Two years later, in 1939, she was confined in the newly established Quezon Institute in Manila, a sanatorium where experimental treatments for tuberculosis were conducted. Choleng always volunteered to be a guinea pig for such experiments.

In December 1941 the Japanese invaded the Philippines. The Japanese army, needing the buildings and facilities of the Quezon Institute, turned out all the patients there. My mother rushed to Manila to take Choleng home. She found her daughter lying along with other patients on a mat in the corridor of a small hospital in Manila. Because Choleng was too sick to travel to Laoag, Mother rented a house in Mandaluyong City and took care of Choleng. But without medication and medical care, Choleng died six weeks later, on May 1, 1942. She was 23 years old. She was buried in Mandaluyong City.

The Book of Poems. Soledad may have written poems in her early teens, but only her poems written from May 1938, when she was twenty, are extant. How her poems were recorded and saved is almost an incredible story. Soledad had a close friend in the Quezon Institute, also a patient in the hospital, who shared Choleng's interest in writing poems. She called herself *GerFlo*, evidently her pen-name. She collected the poems of her friend, written on half sheets of tinted bond paper, added her own poems under her pen-name, and bound the 160 sheets into a slim booklet.

Two weeks after Choleng died, my mother had a visitor – GerFlo. She gave my mother the booklet of poems of Choleng. The book bore no title; GerFlo said the poems were handwritten by Soledad and were arranged chronologically by date of writing, Mother told us later that GerFlo had recounted to her that Choleng wrote many of her poems when she was very sick, shaking with ague and burning with a fever. Much to my regret, we never learned who GerFlo was.

The Poems. Many of Choleng's early poems explore the surprise and the wonder of young love. Is her feeling for a boy merely a "crush"? or is it the real thing? When she was twenty-two, her poems were slightly analytical, exploring the feelings of jealousy and the uncertainty of romantic love. But she dealt with jealousy lightly, with now and then a statement of cynicism about the emotion she knew as love. Below her poem "Hero Worshipper" she had appended a note (*Absolutely idiotic*). In not any of her 139 poems on love between girl and boy did she express the ecstasy of requited love nor the fulfillment of her expectations upon the discovery of mature love—the love that ends in marriage.

Soledad used plain everyday language in simple readable poems. She favored traditional rhyming verses in quatrains, with three or four stanzas to a poem. She had a facility with rhymes and a wry humor which revealed itself in some poems. In "Isn't It a Pity?" she wrote:

You could write such tender notes to send me every day;
You could be my hero, so romantic and so gay;
Everything would be so grand and ah, so meant-to-be—
Isn't it a pity that you are not in love with me?

Isn't It a Pity? (July 10, 1949)

In her sonnet sequence Soledad used the English sonnet, a 14-line poem in three quatrains followed by a couplet, rhyming *abab cdcd efef gg*. Also called the Shakespearean sonnet, it states a situation in three quatrains and draws its conclusion in a couplet, ending the sonnet. Juan modified the sonnet slightly: She stated a situation in two quatrains, traced her reaction to the situation in the third quatrain, and then gave her conclusion in the final couplet.

She wrote one sequence of twenty-eight sonnets, all celebrating her young love, mutely offered but unrecognized, unrequited, and unremembered.

You mean so much to me...I love you so!
But this you do not know, you do not know!

Sonnet XXII (5 March 1940)

Avelina Juan Gil
14 February 2011

SONGS I WISH YOU KNEW

1. SURPRISE

I turned in startled wonder
And searched the distant blue
To see if the vast dome of heaven
Has yielded a comet or two.

Or is it a new beam in science?
I looked around me to find
What dual ray of strange power
Seems to burn into me from behind!

Then two stars amazingly near me
Arrest my bewildered gaze,
And for the fleetest of seconds
I gasp in a breathless daze!

And then I see you smiling,
Indulgent in my surprise;
So I look right up at the twin stars,
For the twin stars are your eyes!

(May 22, 1938)

2. TELL ME

Did he ever think about me
As within these walls he stood?
Could it have been me he dreamed of
In some meditative mood?

When he wrote those little verses
That he loved to pen each day,
To whom could he have dedicated
All those things he wished to say?

When he stood before the window
In the twilight soft and gray,
Would he fondly talk of someone
Whom he talks with every day?

Or when golden tropic moonlight
Found him sleepless--slumber gone--
Would he wonder if the moonlight
Found another wakeful one?

He had dreams about the future--
Dreams his fancy set aglow,
Had he any dreams about me?
Tell me, will I ever know?

(August 13, 1938)

3. ROOM V

Simplest room you've ever seen,
Definitely masculine;

Saber hanging on the wall
For those drills, parades, and all;

Reading lamp at head of bed
For those nights he read and read;

Bed beneath the window sill --
Drafts could never make him ill.

Bookshelves with various books,
Tales of heroes, mines, and crooks;

Magazines about the stars,
Trips to Saturn, Neptune, Mars.

Study table close at hand;
Lesson books of every brand;

Sacred pictures on the wall--
Blessed boy -- the best of all!

(August 27, 1938)

4. TO AN ENGINEER

I love to watch your restless head
When puzzling problems claim your time,
Bent over figures, drafting plans,
Or a blueprint's intricate design.

I love to watch your hands at work
With slide, protractor, rule, or pen,
To see them measure every line
That must be checked and checked again.

I love to watch your smiles come up
Amused or teasing, grave or gay,
I love them all, whate'er the mood
That sends them forth to light my day.

I love to watch you anytime --
Whate'er you do, the whole day through
It seems I never have enough
Of merely gazing thus at you.

But best of all, I love to watch
The tenderness that fills your eyes
When naught exists but you and me
And love that never dies.

(September 4, 1938)

5. QUERY

It must be sweet indeed to love
And have your love returned --
To know one of the greatest joys
The heart has ever learned.

And yet I often ask myself:
Could there be sweeter pain
Than to love with all your heart and soul
And know you love in vain?

(October 4, 1938)

6. POWDER ROOM POSER

Of course I like him quite a lot
But really that is all.
You'd like him too when all he says
Is thrilling to recall.

I honestly don't love him (I'd
Admit it otherwise.)
But if I don't, for mercy's sake
Why can't I meet his eyes?

(October 6, 1938)

7. WITHIN YOUR EYES

I used to find the greatest joys
In looking in your eyes
When you and I were deep in love
And love wore no disguise.

You never said the tender words
That a lover's lips let fall,
But in a language all their own
Your eyes would tell me all.

Then some misunderstanding rose
To cloud our azure skies,
And soon you learned to screen your love
And keep it from your eyes.

They still are warm and full of life;
They twinkle as before.
But, oh, I miss that ardent look
That yesterday they wore.

Sometimes in one brief glance of yours
I glimpse that longed for light;
But quick as thought it vanishes
Completely from my sight.

Someday when you are mine again
And Pride has paid its price,
I'll find the sweetest, deepest love
Once more within your eyes.

(October 8, 1938)

8. THOSE OCTOBER DAYS

It was enough to have you
Those fleet October days—
To see that you still loved me
In countless little ways.

Each casual conversation,
Each random thought expressed—
All held some deeper meaning
That others never guessed.

Sometimes in golden silence
You merely gazed at me,
And vision proved more fluent
Then speech could ever be.

The future held no promise
Of other days like those.
How swiftly came the parting
That drew them to a close!

They left me precious mem'ries
The years cannot erase.
Dear God, I thank thee humbly for
Those sweet October days.

(October 11, 1938)

9. SAY IT

My dear, I know how tender
And sweet you are to me,
How eager to be near me
You always seem to be.

Our friends all say you love me.
They see it everyday
In stray remarks of yours, I guess,
In actions that betray.

Your manner just proclaims it;
You show it in your eyes.
They say it far more often
Than you could realize.

And yet you never tell me
How much I mean to you;

You never say one word of love,
One promise to be true.

To me who loves you so much
Your love is heaven-sent;
So say, *at least*, you love me
And I shall be content!

(October 20, 1938)

10. WOODLAND RETREAT

Upon a green and grassy bank
I lie in restful ease --
Above me the heaven's boundless blue
About me rustling trees.

In calm unbroken solitude
I watch the clouds go by
And wonder if the soaring birds
Can see me where I lie.

A gentle zephyr comes along
To whisper of that or this,
And lay upon my eager cheek
Its cool refreshing kiss.

And at my feet a cheerful brook
Goes gurgling on its way,
Content, it seems, to dance along
Each lazy summer day.

When worn with care I love to lie
Upon that pleasant knoll
Where nature's voices calm my heart
And soothe my weary soul.

(October 28, 1938)

11. BURNHAM PARK

Tranquil and calm is the scene spread before me
Bathed in the night of a tropical moon;
Studded with stars, like the skies bending over me,
Lies in repose the silver lagoon.

Deep is the hush of the slumbering city;
Naught but stillness reigns in the park
Save where the strain of some fond lover's ditty
Rises and falls where the shadows are dark.

Softly the wind with the breath of pines scented
Sighs through the trees like a lover denied,
Bringing me thoughts of one evening enchanted
When it walked by the shore and you walked by
my side.

Swiftly they'd passed, those moments of magic
We lived in the present and none could foretell
What fate lay ahead, whether happy or tragic;
Was it true love or merely some ephemeral spell?

Years took you out of my quiet existence;
Grown were the saplings that stood by the shore.
Yet that memory stayed with a puzzling persistence
Till we meet once again where we'd lingered before.

Once more I gaze at the scene spread before me
Bound to my heart with invisible ties
Ere I eagerly turn to your form bending over me
And the deathless affection that lives in your eyes.

(Que va deathless?)

(November 2, 1938)

12. VIGNETTE

I'd like to write about the stars
that heaven loves to wear
Upon a gorgeous gown of blue
bejewelled everywhere.
But when I think of stars I find
that none of those that rise
Are quite as lovely as the stars
that glisten in your eyes.

I'd like to write about rippling brooks
that gurgle all day long
And blend their silver symphonies
into an endless song;
But when I think of rippling brooks
their music seems but half
As sweet to me as something else--
the ripple of your laugh

I'd like to write about
the golden glory on display
When suddenly the sun bursts forth
upon a gloomy day;
But when I try to write the lines,
I find that all the while
My thoughts keep straying to
the glorious radiance of your smile.

The world is full of lovely things
I'd love to write about,
There's boundless beauty everywhere
if one but seeks it out,
Yet for the sheerest loveliness that
ever came to view
I would not roam the world, my love,
I'd simply come to you.

(December 20, 1938)

13. CHRISTMAS INTERLUDE

Christmas comes but once a year--
A year but all too short
When we both rediscover love
And happiness holds court.

Gorgeous presents fill the shops
Yet none of them compare
With what this season brings from you;
The fact that you still care.

Christmas comes but once a year
With laughter, cheer, and song,
But when it brings a gift like yours,
It stays the whole year long.

(December 30, 1938)

14. BON VOYAGE

When starlight sheds its gleam and glow
Upon the shining sea,
And breezes murmur soft and low
In haunting harmony;

When mem'ry fills your solitude
With dreams you wish were true,
And makes that rapt romantic mood
Come stealing over you;

When on the deck the moon invades
Each nook and gilds it through,
And half forgotten serenades
Come floating back to you--

Perhaps you'd watch the liner's wake
And think of one adored;
But if you do, for goodness sake,
Don't tumble overboard!

(January 10, 1938)

15. LOSS

It was too beautiful to last --
The happiness we shared,
It had to end just when we found
How much we really cared.

When just you came into my life
The future looked so bright
How could I know that Death would come
And take you in the night!

I miss you, oh, so terribly --
You know I love you still;
And in my heart is emptiness
That only you can fill.

We had such rosy dreams -- Alas,
They were not meant to be!
And now that I have lost you, dear,
Life holds no joy for me.

(Requested)

(January 15, 1939)

16. TWENTY

Ready at the threshold of life she stands,
Waiting for the call to serve--
Ready to meet Life's grueling test,
Knowing that only the best of the best
Survive;

Equipped with a pair of willing hands,
Courage and spirit in reserve
Just like hundreds of eager young others --
Under the skin all sisters and brothers --
Keenly, completely alive.

God bless those hands so willing to work,
That spirit so determined to help;
Keep her mindful of duty
In palace or charity--
Youthful, hopeful twenty.

(February 20, 1939)

17. IT'S NO USE

I try my best to forget you --
To shut my mind on the past,
On all that existed between us
But was far too lovely to last.

Each time I see in the distance
A form that seems so much like yours,
How quickly I seek the oblivion
That a change of direction assures!

I carefully try not to notice
Your voice that still sounds in my ear
When I chance to recall some expression
Of yours that I once used to hear.

And whenever I find myself humming
The songs you liked so much to sing,
I hastily change them for others
To which mem'ries of you do not cling.

No matter how great the temptation,
I conscientiously try to avoid
The type of movies you fancied,
The kinds of books you enjoyed.

I try, oh so hard, to forget you,
Allowing myself no excuse;
I try to forget that I met you,
But, darling, I find it's no use.

(February 29, 1939)

18. THAT'S ALL I ASK

Though this mad rush denies us now
All chance to be alone;
And though the crowds do not allow
Your eyes to seek my own;
Though powers now beyond our range
Decree you feign that mask,
One sign that your love knows no change—
Sweetheart, that's all I ask.

(March 18, 1939)

19. UNFORGIVEN

I've quite forgotten how we erred
And came to drift apart --
Some thoughtless act, some careless word
That wounded like a dart --

You long ago forgot its sting
At least it hurts no more
Yet, darling, why can't everything
Be as it was before?

(March 24, 1939)

20. AFTERGLOW

Those days were, oh, so beautiful
So exquisitely sweet!
I'd never known that life could hold
Such happiness complete.

What perfect understanding linked
Your heart, dear one, with mine!
How tenderly we said our love
In every wordless sign!

Impulsive fancy, bright with youth,
Was always there to lend
Its glorious dreams to gild those days
That somehow had to end.

Yet they still live in memory
As matchless as before.
Forever let me keep them thus --
I could not ask for more.

(April 1, 1939)

21. AFTER THIS

It's been so glorious knowing you
And all you signified

That even if now we were through,
I'd still be satisfied.

It was as much as anyone
Could ask of earthly bliss --
I could be brave should love be gone,
My darling, after this.

(April 17, 1939)

22. WRITTEN ON A POSTAL CARD

My dear, he hardly knows me;
He can't even tell me from Eve!
He's forgotten there ever existed
Anybody like me, I believe.
Yet supposing he happened to meet me,
And talked to me face to face,
Do you think that perhaps – Good heavens!
There isn't anymore space!

(April 17, 1939)

23. EYE OPENER

In all these days of pained recall
I have but one regret:
The thought that you could find it all
So easy to forget.

So easy for your grief to melt
Within another moon;
It could not have been love you felt
If it could die so soon.

(No date)

24. SENIORS (BY A SENIOR)

S – is for **Soundness** of mind and of thought,
Essential where all mental battles are fought.

E – is for **Endeavor**, persistence uncowed;
Undaunted by failure, with patience endowed.

N – is for **Nobility**, honor defined;
Stamping with greatness the truly refined.

I - for **Ideals**, the highest and best,
Drawing us onward, surmounting each test.

O - is for **Order** of effort each day,
Marking our labors as years drop away.

R - is for **Reason** to rule us and guide us
Whatever good fortune or ill may betide us.

S - is for **Scholarship** in the search for the light
Where truth rules, there error shall give way
to right.

(No date)

25. SENIORS (BY A JUNIOR)

S - is for **Simplicity** in thinking that they
Are the wisest and the most learned minds of
their day.

E - stands for **Ego**, their most obvious possession.
They have far more than this in the teaching
profession.

N - for **Notoriety** in class and without;
For being the noisiest ones beyond doubt.

I - is for **Impudence**. Talk about nerve!
They never get punished for the way they
deserve.

O – is for **Opacity**, being impervious to light.
They resist every effort to teach them what's
right.

R - is for **Restlessness**, for like germs,
They refuse to keep still; you'd think they
had worms.

S - is for **Sense** which they need most of all.
Were they left to themselves, the heavens would
fall.

(No date)

26. REVIEW

Those dreams were meant to be nothing but dreams,
Air castles denied us by fate;
And now it were best to forget them, it seems,
When regretting comes sadly too late.

But dreams like these are too lovely to die,
And I still love to dream them again;
How much it would mean to me, darling, if I
Knew you did the same now and then.

(No date)

27. LEAVE ME NOT ALONE

Leave me not alone, my Jesus,
To fight this tempestuous gale;
Unless Thou give me strength,
Night will find me at length
Weak and spent mid the sleet and hail.

Leave me not alone, my Jesus
This weak little vessel to sail
For if now we were parted
On these oceans uncharted
This pitiful voyage would fail.

Leave me not alone, my Jesus,
A mere human so helpless, so frail;
I need Thee, my Guide.
Do Thou walk by my side
Evermore through Life's thorny trail.

(No date)

28. I THOUGHT I COULD BE BRAVE

I thought I could be brave, sweetheart,
If all our hopes proved vain
I thought that if we had to part,
I could forget the pain.

But though today I smile and say
'Twas just a sad mistake,
I simply cannot smile away
My heart's unceasing ache.

(April 27, 1939)

29. ECHO

I still recall that way you had
Of wrinkling up your nose
When prompted by the fun we shared
Your carefree laughter rose.

But that was when your heart and mine
No painful parting knew;
Ah, would that we could laugh again
As once we used to do!

(May 25, 1939)

30. LOVE IS A FUNNY THING

Love is such a funny thing --
It knows no neutral ground;
And though you bravely fight it off,
It firmly hangs around.

It tempts you with alluring sweets
Compounded of delights ---
Of ardent looks and tender words
And moon-enchanted nights.

Then when you've had one tiny taste
And find you want some more,
It spreads its wings and flies away
With all the sweets it bore.

(May 26, 1939)

31. DAILY RESOLUTIONS

I'll forget the love he cherished
And the warmth it brought to me;
I'll forget it lived and perished
Like some fleeting melody.

All the joy and all the sorrow
I shall bury out of sight;
But all these can start tomorrow
While I think of him tonight!

(November 1939) (The Corps, November 1939)

32. SHALL I?

Shall I see you look again
At me with tender eyes?
Would I see those eyes again
Reflecting sunny skies?

Shall I come to port again?
And shall I feel anew
The infinite security
Of being loved by you?

(May 29, 1939)

33. MASQUERADE

I rave about another boy,
A new acquaintance who
Has brought, at least, some of the joy
That ought to come from you.

I let him linger in my mind,
Which you, instead, should haunt;
I dream of him but, dear, I find
It's really you I want!

(June 6, 1939)

34. ON SEEING YOU AGAIN

Sweetheart, it was worth all the longing,
All the pain and heartache I'd known,
It was worth all the anguish of waiting
To find that you still were my own.

To see you again and discover
That you still care as much as you do --
It was worth it to find that, as ever,
I still have the right to love you.

(Purely anticipatory!!)

(June 9, 1939)

35. CONCLUSIVE

Just a month, dear, from that date--
I would see you then.
I could well afford to wait
Till you came again.

Though the days all seemed to crawl
Along as such days can,
I knew I would forget then all
When you came again.

After that long months had passed,
I kept wond'ring when

I would see your face at last--
If you came again.

Now my world is black and bare,
Bruised my faith in men;
I'd have known you still did care
Had you come again.

(June 12, 1939)

36. TROPIC DUSK

The glorified sun sinks out of sight,
And a haze seems to float in the air;
The breeze seems to pause in its gentle flight,
And the trees seem to whisper a pray'r.

Even Time seems to stop on its onward rush;
In a moment the day will be gone;
And the world seems to wait in a breathless hush--
Then the lights in the park blink on.

(June 19, 1939)

37. UNPARTED

The days have borne you far from me;
I know not until when
I'll have to wait, my love, before
I see you once again.

Yet though the miles between us lie,
To me you're always near--
I only have to think of you
To feel that you are here.

(June 28, 1939)

38. RENUNCIATION

I chose not to answer your letter
 Though I know you expected me to;
I still feel the vague disappointment
 That I found in that letter from you.

I read it through over and over--
 At least ten times the day it came;
But each reading revealed no new meaning;
 The thoughts remained ever the same.

I sighed when at last I decided
 You had made no attempt to explain;
How little you dreamed that omission
 Would encourage my doubts to remain!

If you get no reply, I am certain
 You won't bother to write anymore.
In time you might even forget me
 Since you no longer care as before.

We might as well stop correspondence
 Since it holds naught but heartaches for us;
It's best that I leave this unanswered:
 Sweetheart, it is easiest thus.

(July 11, 1939)

39. REITERATION

It isn't hard,
 Dear, to recall
The day that I
 Admitted all.

And said I loved you --
Words long sought --
Then see the joy
Such words had brought.

But that was long
Ago, my dear,
How much can happen
In a year!

I love you yet!
I wish I knew
If that still means
The same to you!

(July 24, 1939)

40. LET ME SEE YOU AGAIN

We just said "So long," then as usual,
With a smile and a ghost of a sigh;
And though 'twas the last time I saw you,
I hope that it wasn't good-bye.

I still hope that once more I shall meet you,
I'll be waiting, my dear, until then;
It can't be all over between us --
At least, let me see you again.

(July 28, 1939)

41. IS IT FAIR?

I refuse to believe this is final,
We can't let it end up this way!
How can we consider it finished
When there's still so much to say!

Not to answer the letters I wrote you
As though you no longer could care;
To deny me the least explanation—
I ask you, my dear, is it fair?

*(What the other party might have said, but,
alas, didn't say!)*

(July 29, 1939)

42. WRONG PARTY

I hear him whistling out of sight
And till he comes to view,
I realize what it would mean
In case it would be you.

I hear his footsteps in the hall
That once your footsteps knew;
A knock like yours upon the door--
But, ah, it isn't you!

And with a sigh I wonder why
It should be someone new
When all was well enough before--
When it was always you.

He likes to come to talk, you know,
As once you used to do,
And oh, what joy those talks would bring
If only he were you!

(July 29, 1939)

43. IN THE DARKNESS

Sometimes some faint nocturnal sound
Arouses me from sleep;
With frightened eyes I look around
The darkness seems so deep!

The light of morning seems so far ...
And then into the night
The headlamps from some passing car
Send forth a shaft of light.

And as the car approaching, runs,
That light sweeps through the room
How it restores my spirits once
It had dispelled the gloom!

I wish my thoughts could likewise touch
Some darkened saddened life
And bring the light that cheers so much
Where gloom and grief are rife.

(July 30, 1939)

44. TAPS

A nameless longing seems to call
To me across the lapse
Of years when on the stillness fall
The sweet sad tones of *Taps*.

A restless yearning kin to pain
Sweeps o'er me from the start,
And half-forgotten mem'ries rain
Unbidden on my heart.

The pine trees waft each clear note through
And, swaying thus, impart

A sigh that seems an echo to
The sigh within my heart.

That vague nostalgia now grown dear
Through memory perhaps
Will always fill me when I hear
The haunting tones of *Taps*.

(August 9, 1939)

45. THE PINES OF NOTRE DAME

Sometimes they are dark and forbidding,
And the skies back of them seem to frown;
Then soon without warning or bidding
A violent storm crashes down.

Sometimes they are gay and capricious
With the breezes that gambol around,
And the needles that prove ambitious
Find themselves shooting to the ground.

Sometimes they are sober and lazy
As the afternoon slowly drags by,
Not stirring a bough in the hazy
Warm air -- not a breath -- not a sigh.

But when moonlight arrives with a mantle
Of silver to lay on each crest,
Then they look, ah, so peaceful, so gentle
And that's when I love them best.

(August 17, 1939)

46. YOUR BROTHER

I seem to see your chin and his chin
 With the same stubborn line that I know,
And I see in the set of his shoulders
 The same you that I knew long ago.

When he speaks I can easily fancy
 It's you I am hearing instead,
For his voice holds the same husky cadence
 That used to enrich all you said.

The slightest sound of his laughter --
 How it stirs me to mem'ries anew
Of the school days we went through together
 When I heard the same laughter from you!

And that way he possesses of shaking
 His head in pretended despair --
To me it is -- ah, so familiar
 I'd know it as yours anywhere.

There is so much of you in your brother;
 I see you in all that he does,
And I think of our brief association --
 How swift and short-lived it was!

Yet though it's a pleasure to watch him
 And even pretend you are he,
I would like it a thousand times better
 If you were the one I could see.

(August 29, 1939)

47. FINIS

The whole thing's over now, I guess --
 Finished -- ended -- through!

And that one chance of happiness
Is gone like morning dew.

I never dreamed that it would be
So hard to see it fade;
Now memories are all I see;
The game is ended -- played.

(September 5, 1939)

48. A NOVICE TO AN OLD HAND

You talk of how you've met with love,
And hear me in return—
Each seeking in some subtle way
The other's past to learn.

Yet if the truth could but be told,
Surprise would be your due
To find how little I have known
Of love compared to you!

(September 13, 1939)

49. NOW YOU ARE BACK

I wonder how the years have changed
You since I saw you last!
You would not wonder why I care
If you could read the past.

Four years ago! You never knew
How much I loved you then!
Now you are back. How much I long
To see you once again!

(Sept. 15, 1939)

50. THE DAY AFTER

The hop last night -- what fun it was!
We danced the whole night through.
We'd newly met that night, and yet
How fast our friendship grew!

I still can see your manly form
That won my heart at once;
I still can hear your merry laugh,
Your weak, if funny puns.

I was to leave for home at dawn,
Time just gave us but one night --
But ah!--what mem'ries we would keep!
What letters we would write!

And now I sit and dream of you
I hope you do the same;
I'd write to you but--sakes alive!
I can't recall your name!

December 1938; The Corps)

51. TONGUE-TIED

I hear her talking with you now
With all the smoothness due.
I seem to get tongue-tied somehow
When I'm in front of you.

Just when I want to show my best,
To wit I lose all claim.
How well she holds your interest--
Why can't I do the same?

(September 12, 1939)

52. TO A PHYSICIAN

I watch your progress down the ward
Your pauses here and there --
Within my eyes a fond regard,
Within my heart -- despair!

For if a score of patients here
And all the nurses too
Look as I do when you are near,
What chance have I with you?

(October 13, 1939)

53. HERO WORSHIPER

I wonder just how well he knows
The power of his look--
That steady penetrating gaze
That reads me like a book.

For though he boasts of no dazzling smile,
His hair no rippling wave,
He only has to look at me
And I become his slave!

(Absolutely idiotic!)

(October 7, 1939)

54. IN A FEW DAYS

In a few days the term will be over;
A few more days with you and then
We'll be saying goodbye -- perhaps never
To meet in the future again.

I'll have only my memory of you
If Fate stands unyielding and stern.
So much time to discover I love you --
So little to be loved in return!

(October 26, 1939)

55. AU REVOIR

In token of history - taking,
Of laughter and fun in the wards,
Of days that were history-making --
So glad to have met you . . . Regards!

(October 30, 1939)

56. NOVICE

The first love has ended and gone on the rocks
'Twas my heart that had broken to little bits then
I said it had made me wise as a fox
And vowed it would never happen again.

In love, when two youths hurt each other
Till parting seems only the possible cure,
The heart must be broken by one or the other,
"It won't be mine next time!" I was sure

Along came a new love that started me singing,
How gaily we laughed 'neath the clearest of skies!
I knew that such happiness soon would be bringing
The day of tormented and tear-laden eyes.

This time 'twas my turn to do the heart-breaking,
The day soon approached when we both had to part,
But ere I could start his bold heart even aching,
The clever young lad coolly broke my own heart!

(Absolutely fictitious--almost, that is!)

(November 4, 1939)

57. CHANGE OF HEART

I longed indeed to see the day
When you and I would meet again,
And in my mind I saw the way
That I would greet you then.

But that was Summer, this is Fall,
And still no meeting anywhere.
You may come soon or not at all--
I simply do not care!

(How Sad!)

(November 10, 1939)

58. HOSPITAL SCENE

Whither, nameless stranger,
Doth haste now carry thee
In uniform immaculate?
What can thy errand be?

To fight perhaps some danger
Some ruthless enemy?
To ease perhaps some hour of pain
Or tortured misery?

Whither, handsome stranger,
Doth duty summon thee?
To my regret it never yet
Has happened to me!

And Cupid, the arranger,
Has loosed no dart on thee,
Nor let you know my heart is yours,
That used to be so free.

I watch for thee, my stranger,
But when thy form I see,
You do not even deign to cast
A passing glance on me!

(November 9, 1939)

59. HARD TO GET

Although I like you quite a lot,
I hope you do not guess it;
I'd rather hear you say it first
Ere I myself confess it.

You seem quite taken up with some
Of whatever charms now grace me,
But if it's me you want, by gum,
You'll have to come and chase me!

(November 22, 1939)

60. THE SEA

Moonlight gilds the sighing sea
That lies before me spread,
Extending to the distant line
Where Earth and Sky are wed.

Beneath apparent surface calm
It surges hour by hour;
Revealing by its restless mood
Its silent latent pow'r.

With every little move it makes
A million facets gleam
And sparkle in the light that pours
From every moon-sent beam!

My heart is like the sighing sea,
Your heart, the moon above
That makes it gleam and sparkle in
The radiance of your love.

(December 13, 1939)

61. RECOVERY

Now that we're through
I suppose that I
Should pine away
And wish to die --

To leave a world
Where all is pain,
And anguished tears
Forever rain.

But such, my dear,
Is not the case;
Of a broken heart
I find no trace.

Nor do I ask
What Death can give;
I still am very
Glad to live.

'Tis not that I
Was never game;
I simply know
You feel the same!

(December 10, 1939)

62. OBITUARY

At last we meet again -- but, ah,
In what a casual way!
No flame, no drama to recall
The love we shared one day.

It simply faded bit by bit,
Untended and unfed.
It's no use resurrecting it --
'Tis dead, my friend, 'tis dead!

(December 20, 1939)

63. REARMAMENT

Each time that you
And she would meet,
My heart in pain
Would miss a beat.

And dark indeed
My prospects looked
With all your love
Already booked.

But now I learn
With wildest joy

Her heart is for
Another boy!

You do not love
Each other then?
How bright the future
Looks again!

And now that we
Know whose is who,
Have I at last
A chance with you?

(January 20, 1940)

64. OF COURSE NOT!

We simply met and talked awhile,
And soon are friendly--friends.
But, really, nothing more than that
For soon the visit ends.

And though he writes a note to me
And signs it "Faithfully,..."
He doesn't mean a thing by it!
Of course not, why should he?

(January 13, 1940)

65. THEORY

Of course he doesn't care at all
I might as well forget him
He hasn't even come to call
Again since I first met him.

And what if he did write that note?
It only took a minute
To dash it off -- and, anyway,
No special thing was in it.

Of course he doesn't care at all;
It is easy to conceive it
The only trouble with me now
Is why won't I believe it?

(June 17, 1940)

66. GIVE ME TIME

Give me time to forget you;
Do not come too soon.
Give me time to let you
Leave my heart immune.

Do not come tomorrow
Lest I lack the strength
To save me further sorrow
By avoiding you at length.

When I have Reason heeded,
You may come to call
To see how I've succeeded
If I succeed at all!

(January 19, 1940)

67. DIAGNOSIS

When two weeks seem like two years,
My friend, what does it mean?
I saw him last two weeks ago,
But two years ago it has been.

What made it seem like two years?
The endless wait, I guess.
Can I be getting that way then?
Yes, I fear it, yes!

(January 20, 1940)

68. IF YOU SHOULD EVER READ THESE LINES

If you should ever read these lines,
I wonder what you'd say.
Would you perhaps express surprise
To find I feel this way!

My dear, could you but read the signs
I cannot hide from view,
The knowledge that I feel like this
Should not be news to you!

(January 21, 1940)

69. SUMMARY

Perhaps I could join them
And share in their laughter,
Indulge in their teasing
And the fun coming after.

We could stand at the railing
And watch those below us,
Exchange comments, or parry
The remarks they would throw us.

'Twould be equally pleasant
To go for a walk,
Or just sit on the steps
And quietly talk.

In fact I'd be willing
To go anywhere,
But, my dear, what's the use?
You wouldn't be there!

(January 22, 1940)

70. RESIGNED

I'm aware of the sad complications
That would rise if you loved me, my dear,
What rocks would be lying before our craft!
Any trip would be hopeless, I fear.

So perhaps it is just as well, darling,
There is no danger of your loving me.
At least, I can love you in safety
Though small comfort indeed that would be!

(January 1, 1940) (How sour the grapes are today!)

71. NIGHT WATCH

In the still small hours when sleep has gone
And left me lonely here,
I watch the dying moon till dawn
And think of you, my dear.

Each day my hopes are roused anew;
Shall I not see you soon?
Or can your love be dying too
Just like the dying moon?

(February 5, 1940)

72. SUMMER SONG

Such a glorious summer day,
Brilliant with the sun!
All too soon it fades away
And night is well-begun.

Then across the starlit sky
Sails the radiant moon --
Calm reflection of the fiery
Sun that set so soon.

Radiant as the moon in view
Now my mem'ries shine,
Reflections of the time when you,
The glorious sun, were mine!

(February 9, 1940)

73. SOLO ACT

I try to keep
Three hours free
In case you come
To call on me;

But though I wait
Expectant here,
The hours pass --
You don't appear.

I stroll along
The passageway
Where you, yourself
Are wont to stray

For all the good
It does, I find

I might as well
Stayed behind!

Still, loath to see
These efforts fail
I even pause
Beside the rail.

But since you do
Not join me there,
Must I believe
You do not care?

(March 7, 1940)

74. CONTRAST

She talks about the man she loves
And fears his love is dead;
While I, in silence, sit by her
And dream of you instead.

Two hearts—love-hungry! Yet she is
More fortunately blessed:
I never owned you, while she knows
She once his heart possessed.

(March 19, 1940)

75. DENIAL

But if I never really
Did love you anyhow,
Why should I care if others
Attract your fancy now?

So write your eager letters,
Admire your lovely girls.
Go praise their pretty pictures,
Their figures and their curls.

And when I don't expect you,
I beg you don't appear.
Or you will see me, darling,
As I sit sulking here!

(March 21, 1940)

76. EXPLANATION

Johnny's eyes resemble yours
While Wally wears his hair
The way you do and thus secures
The likeness plainly there.

When Lewis laughs I often find
He laughs as much like you;
And Tony's teasing call to mind
Your brand of teasing too.

'Tis Tom whose taste in reading goes
In your familiar fashion
And Ed as everybody knows,
Has sports for his chief passion.

Yet though I treat them as I do,
I simply like these fellas
Because they all resemble you --
So why should you feel jealous?

(April 4, 1940)

77. SEMI-FINALS

You do not love her after all,
I should have hope anew.
That means one person less to call
My rival, dear, for you.

But someone else is in your mind,
You see no other face,
I lose one rival just to find
Another one in her place.

(April 11, 1940)

78. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

What does it matter, dear, if you
Don't love her as I have thought?
I am still far from coming to
The peace of mind I sought.

For you're in love with someone else
Who says you are fancy-free?
Ah, why could not that someone else
Have happened to me!

(April 12, 1940)

79. BEREFT

Those days are past, and you have gone
To where I may not join you ... yet ...
While here I stay, beloved one,
Unable to forget.

Unable to forget the bliss
That used to reign while you were here,
The joy that now I have to miss,
The love I held so dear.

Ah, could you not have waited just
A little longer, love,
Till I myself had turned to dust
And joined you there above?

(April 28, 1940)

80. LUNGS

I think that I should like to see
My lungs in fluoroscopy --

To find the famous hilus glands
And single out the fibrous strands;

To spot each precious cavity
And talk of how it came to be;

To watch the graceful diaphragm
And trace it in a diagram;

And maybe even see my own heart
Where all my troubles seem to start!

Lungs are owned by fools like me,
But my own lungs I may not see!

(May 2, 1940) (With apologies to Joyce Kilmer)

81. RELAPSE

When first I fell in love, my friend,
And felt its thrilling burn,
What pain was mine before its end!
How much I had to learn!

And though I've grown more sensible
And sober too since then,
It sounds incomprehensible
But I'm in love again!

(May 9, 1940)

82. QUIZ

Must you think I'm still in love
With that other guy?
Must you think he ranks above
Someone far more high?

Aren't there ever cases when
Love like that is through?
Can't I love some lad again,
And can't that lad be you?

(May 18, 1940)

83. FEMENINA

Feminina --- womanhood!
What praise is hers from birth!
Embodiment of every good,
The toast of all the earth.

Throughout the ages in all lands
Her virtues have been sung;
And kingdoms had been changing hands
Where woman's voice had rung.

What movements had her favors stirred:
A smile, a sigh, a song --
And all obey whate'er the word:
The Queen can do no wrong!

Eternal puzzle of the race!
Yet whence should manhood grieve?
Where would be beauty, love, and grace
Should Feminina leave?

(July 1940) (Femenina. July 1940)

84. THE GLORIOUS FOURTH

Solemn statement weighted down
With the cares of state,
Wearing Fame's imperial crown,
Symbol of the great.

Bankers dignified and grave
Riding quickly by,
Watchful of the charted wave
Keen and sharp of eye;

Businessmen with cases packed
With statements, briefs, reports;
Spruce and well-groomed salesmen backed
By trades of various sorts;

Grocers, farmers, workingmen
People of all classes
Masters of the sword, the pen,
Men that sway the masses;

Fathers eager as their sons
On this holiday --
All of them were youngsters once
Boisterous and gay.

On the nation's birthday then
Hear them shout a cheer
See them grow young again --
Young in heart and spirit when
The Glorious Fourth is here.

(May 23, 1940) Requested)

85. ELIZABETH

(A tribute to Mrs. Elizabeth Sayre)

Radiant in her sphere she moves
A queen exuding charm.
See those captivating ways;
See that smile so warm.

Poised, serene amid the glitter
Of a "state affair,"
Skillfully she fills her place
With a regal air.

Like the true aristocrat
Keyed to any pitch,
She can meet on any plane
Alike, the poor, the rich.

Yet throughout the taxing day
Behold the tender wife!
Blessed with such a mate, what more
Could one ask of life?

For unshadowed by these gifts,
Deep in her you find
All the virtues mothers need
To guide the growing mind.

Loving mother, tender wife,
Diplomat in one --
Laurels in this threefold task
Are not always won.

Yet she holds her own with ease,
The perfect hostess there.
Where indeed could one be found
More gracious and more fair?

(May 23, 1940 Requested)

86. RAVINGS

Once upon a morning dreary while I
pondered weak and weary
Over many a T. B. symptom that on me
had left its track;

While I nodded nearly napping, suddenly
I heard a tapping
As if someone gently rapping, rapping
on my aching back.
"Heaven help me now." I muttered, raving
on about my back
Life never seemed so black.

Ah! Distinctly I remember it was in the
bleak December
But my clammy perspiration seemed to ooze
from every pore.
Though my heart was wildly beating, "One, two,
three," I sat repeating

Till a voice in accents fleeting sadly bade me
count no more.
Then I turned. I saw a figure and the spotless
Gown it wore ---
'Twas the doctor nothing more!

(May 1940)

87. DO NOT LEAVE ME YET

Night will soon begin to steal
Across the glowing sky;
Soon enough, we'll have to feel
The pangs of pained good-bye.

Darling, let me have you near
Every chance I get;
Linger just a while, my dear,
Do not leave me yet.

Even now as here we stand
Gazing at the hill,
Darling, ere you take my hand
Pause beside me still.

Soon the sky will dim above,
Soon the sun will set;
Linger just a while, my love,
Do not leave me yet.

Let these moments bring to us
Just one taste of bliss;
'Tis not long I'll have you thus
Close to me like this.

Soon enough I'll be alone,
Silent with regret;
Linger just a while, my own--
Do not leave me yet.

(May 27, 1940)

88. THE OTHERS

Others speak in words impassioned,
They could fill a book
With those lines so finely fashioned
On that liquid look.

Though their speeches highly flatter
Though their eyes betray them,
What do all these praises matter
If your eyes never say them?

(June 13, 1940)

89. SOLITARY

I feel the loneliness descend
Upon my grieving heart,
While all around the shadows bend
To watch the tears start.

The longing for you sears me through,
'Tis more than I can bear;
And so I turn to cling to you
But, ah, you are not there!

(June 25, 1941)

90. RAINY NIGHT

Last night I heard the raindrops beat
Upon my window pane,
For all I know, some stranger might
Have stood there in the rain,
But unknown. I only slept --
He would have knocked in vain.

'Tis thus my love outside your heart
Stands waiting silently;
And longingly I look within
Where I would wish to be.
But how to wake you up indeed
And make you notice me!

(June 26, 1940)

91. COME, LAY YOUR HEAD

Come, lay your head upon my breast
And tell me why you sorrow
To see the day drag out and pass,
Yet dread each new tomorrow.

Come, lay your burden down awhile
Till weariness should fade;
Where friendship failed to lend a hand,
Then love perhaps shall aid.

Love, let me smooth that furrowed brow,
And kiss your cares away
As rain redeems the earth she loves
And freshens it in May.

(May 2, 1940)

92. ISN'T IT A PITY?

We could be so happy walking down the passageway;
Yes, and ah, the lovely things that we would have to say!
I could be so steadfast, so unchanging, and so true --
Isn't it a pity that I'm not in love with you?

You could write such tender notes to send me every day,
You could be my hero, so romantic and so gay,
Everything would be so grand and oh, so meant to be --
Isn't it a pity that you are not in love with me?

We could get poetic in the evenings by the rail
As we watched the colors of the sunset slowly fail,
Even as we gazed upon the swallow's flight above.
What a pity now that we are not in love!

(July 10, 1940)

93. BLEAK DAY

No sun lights up the leaden skies.
The raindrops' monotone
But it serves it seems to emphasize
I am alone.

I watch it die, the weary day,
My heart is silent, numb.
The world is bleak and wet and gray --
He did not come!

(July 10, 1940)

94. FAITHFUL

She worships at her dead love's shrine
And fails to see about her
Two other hearts as good, as fine--
Yet incomplete without her.

The one could bring her so much joy
And as it, oh, so gladly;
The other is a loveless boy
Who needs her love so badly.

The call of each will never dim;
She only has to heed it.
But, no, she gives her love to him
Who no longer needs it.

(August 18, 1940)

95. REPLY

You seem to think that she did not care
To cast on you a second glance,
And that she never chose to share
With you some bright romance.

That these were false, you never guessed,
Nor would she show that you possessed
Far greater chances than the rest
Since you could please her best.

Your late reproaches now contend
She never cared for you a bit;
How could she take your heart, my friend?
You never offered it!

(August 21, 1940)

96. CASE HISTORY

With my heart so close to breaking
From a love about to end,
Was there any harm in taking
Consolation from a friend?

He was kind and deeply tender,
Even gave his heart to me
Till I almost did surrender
Mine with lasting loyalty.

Then did Peace begin to flower
All the days were calm and sweet
Till you came with all your power,
Sweeping me off my feet.

There was magic in your laughter;
You were different, I knew.
Oh, those lads whom you came after --
How could they compare with you?

So I'll always dream about you,
Sing your name in every song,
Feel that life is dead without you
Till the next love comes along!

(Sept. 30, 1940)

97. MORE THAN WINE

You think yourself a worthless boy
Whom love chose to desert,
Unable to bring to others joy
And giving only hurt.

Dear lad, you know not how you cheer
And lift this heart of mine;
Your laughter I have found more dear
Than other people's wine.

(November 4, 1940)

98. CHRISTMAS –QUEZON INSTITUTE

In the wards when it's Christmas, how happy we are--
With the windows all dressed with lantern and star,
And the doorways arrayed with all colors of lights
That warm up and brighten the coldest of nights.
Glad carols are chorused and gay laughter rings out,
And merry young voices are heard all about
As fir trees are decked out to shimmer and shine
With glittering trimmings of every design.
Quick fingers fly faster, the more Christmas calls,
As flowers are turned out to dress up the halls.
There are garlands and wreaths with ribbons a-flying
To tell the world that the old year is dying.***

Amidst miniature hillsides and pastures once green
Where shepherds at rest with their flocks can be seen,
A stable is built with meticulous care
And our Lord in His manger lies quietly there.
And hands that are tender and loving and sure
Arrange this old Play that will always endure,
As Joseph and Mary take their places around
And the beast and the lamb go to sleep on the ground.

All about is the magic of clothes that are new
As the light feet trip out when the small tasks are through
To a program of music and dances galore
So delightful you find yourself asking for more.
Till skyrockets and fireworks illumine the sky

And trace their weird colors and patterns on high
Ah, but that isn't all; there is more the next day,
There are games then and prizes to be carried away.
And from then till The Day—ah, what there is to eat!
To down all the goodies would be quite, quite a feat!
There are apples and nuts; there are raisins and candy,
And, oh, everything else that makes eating so dandy;
Then the grand Christmas dinner the finishing touch--
What is Christmas indeed without dinners and such?

In the wards when it's Christmas, how happy we are,
For kindness pours in from near and from far!
And prayers are lifted to heaven above—
Glad prayers of praise, of thanksgiving, and love!

(November 4, 1940)

99. FADE-OUT

And now I come to learn by chance
That you are in love once more,
That you had found a new romance,
A new girl to adore.

I shall not think of your eyes meeting
Her eyes instead of mine,
Nor of her learning your repeating
Those words that were mine.

I shall not sigh if friends should mention
Your name when I am there,
And when we meet again, no tension
Shall charge the quiet air.

I shall not let you see me mourn
Nor show how much it matters;

And smiles shall hide those hopes forlorn,
Those dreams now torn to tatters.

I shall not let the least hint fall
Of mem'ries so many;
In fact, I'll show no grief at all
Because I don't feel any!

(November 19, 1940)

100. LOVE SONG

Love, let me rest in your embrace,
My head upon your heart,
Your kisses warm upon my face
In ecstasy, sweetheart.

And when you whisper, let me hear
The tender accents fall
In terms of fullest love, sincere,
Unchanged till Death would call.

Ah, hold me, dearest, hold me close,
And gaze upon me thus!
'Tis then my dreaming being knows
What dreams mean to us.

(November 29, 1940)

101. PAST AND PRESENT

The winds are at play once again
In the streets and the park
And the leaves are dancing around
The fragments of paper are whirled
In a mad turntable
Ere they flutter at last to the ground.

And my thoughts seem to turn to a
scene on a similar day
When happiness filled me through
And my heart in its joy seemed to dance
With the winds at the thought
Of a long cherished dream come true.

By now it would seem I should
choose to think of the past
To muse on the joys that I knew
But why should I care to dream of
the past, beloved
When I have the present and you!

(December 6, 1940)

102. FROM THE DEPTHS

None to thrill me with his presence
Give my heart that burst of speed.
Boredom mounts and never lessens--
Life is dull indeed.

None to dream of or moon over,
None to scribble verses to,
None to call my love, my lover--
Oh, for someone new!

(January 5, 1941)

103. LET ME WEEP

Let me weep! My heart is broken,
For he said to me
Every word he could have spoken
Except three.

Long I angled, hoped and waited
For that brief refrain,
Even had him almost baited ---
All in vain!

Let her weep till her grief is ended;
Let her feel the pow'rs .
Anyway her heart gets mended,
In twenty-four hours!

(January 22, 1941)

104. FROM A WHEELCHAIR

Oh, the green grass and the blue skies--
How bright they look today!
I long to dance with the butterflies
But I can't run out to play.

I sit in my chair with motionless feet
And finger the railings near by,
And gaze at the children nimble and fleet
As away on their races they fly.

The bee at the flowers beneath me hums
As he thinks of the wealth he has won,
And a gay breeze laden with perfume comes
To lure me out to the sun.

But I sit on my chair the whole day long
And think of that far-off day
When I shall be well and sound and strong
And can run and dance and play.

(No date)

105. LEAN ON ME

You never talk about your cares to me
Nor mention how
The worries etch those lines so cruelly
Upon your brow.

I know naught of the burdens small or great
You have to bear
Alone; your shoulders carry all that weight.
Have I no share?

Although your mood be low some dreary day,
'Tis soon reversed;
'Tis not I who drives your gloom away --
You do it first.

If but I knew each patience-preying mess
Your troubles start,
Then maybe I could sooth your weariness
Or cheer your heart.

But no -- no hint that anything went wrong
That day or this;
You'd have me think that life is a perfect song:
Nothing amiss.

(No date)

106. REPORT

Placid and peaceful, this life of seclusion;
Sorrow or hurt there is none.
Love with its torment and pain and illusion --
With all of it I am done.

Gone are the griefs that could wound me so keenly
Gone all the doubt and the fear
Now does my eye meets each new day serenely,
Free from the furtive tear.

Now all those tearing emotions are ended,
Comfort and rest can I get.
Time may be slow but it leaves your heart mended
Skillfully nurtured and set.

Radiant aloft is the dove of peace soaring;
Quiet and calm is my station.
Quiet and calm and fearfully boring --
Oh, for a new flirtation!

(September 11, 1941) (Graphic, September 11, 1941)

107. SOMETHING MUST BE DONE ABOUT IT

Along they come, the lads you'd love,
'Twere better to ignore them;
They follow in the footsteps of
The ones who came before them.

For soon there's one who'd come around
More often than the rest;
There's something seems to keep him bound
And hold his interest.

And then one day his words are low
And hesitantly spoken,
He wants to speak of love -- I know
By every sign and token.

But soon, too soon, I see the clue
His hesitation spells;

He starts to speak of love, 'tis true,
Of love with someone else!

He raves of her whom he would gain;
What subject would be dearer?
Alas, I must perforce remain
The sympathetic hearer!

It seems to be the common slant
Of many a likely mister.
They only want a confidante
And tr-r-ea-t me like a sister!

(August 19, 1941)

108. CONFESSION

Yes, my dear I love you--
Though goodness knows how hard
I tried to keep this heart of mine
Forever under guard!

I firmly tried to feel that you
And I were only friends--
Close friends, perhaps, but nothing quite
Beyond the usual trends.

I kept denying to myself
That what I felt was love,
Only to find that it was you
I keep on dreaming of!

I said I merely liked you, dear,
Believing it was true;
But ere the truth could dawn on me,
I fell in love with you!

On second thought, I don't see how
It otherwise could be
When you're the best, the finest man
In all the world to me!

(June 22, 193)

SONGS I WISH YOU KNEW

Sonnet I. RETURN

I walked today along a shady lane
Where you and I in other days had strolled;
Again I heard the birds in glad refrain,
Again I saw the fields in green and gold.
I thought to find the place meant naught to me;
'Twas but a passing fancy you and I
Had shared; 'twas but a happy dream to be
Forgotten after we had said good-bye.

I slowly passed each landmark that we knew
Till, near your home, I felt my pulses race
But that I told myself, was merely due
To this return to some familiar place.
And then I saw you -- and my heart declared
Our love was real -- we had *always* cared.

(June 11, 1937) (*Tribune*, March 5, 1939)

Sonnet II. LET ME GAZE INTO YOUR EYES

Let me gaze into your eyes and read
The messages of love they hold for me;
What use have we for language when the need
Is filled by looks for love's fond eyes to see?
I see the glorious radiance rise, my love,
Within your eyes. What more could be desired?
Let raptured silence reign! Your eyes, my love,
Are far more eloquent than tongue inspired.

What words can frame the boundless fire
That love creates within the youthful breast?
Let bard sing forth, let lyrist tune his lyre—
These seem but weak, inadequate at best.
In ecstasy the minutes come and go
When your eyes tell me *all* I want to know.

(April 5, 1938)

Sonnet III. FORGET ALL TIES

Forget all ties that ever bound us, dear,
No vows, no shackles hold you to my side;
Let not a sense of duty keep you near--
Forget our dreams, our hopes, ungratified.
You are free to take what other friends may give
To seek the joys of life, and have your fill;
And though my heart would ache to see you leave,
I will not hold you here against your will.

Fate should lead some other love, to find
Your heart and set it once again on fire,
I only ask that Fate to you be kind --
Your happiness is all that I desire.
But if, like mine, your love has never changed,
Come back ... forget we ever were estranged.

(April 13, 1938)

Sonnet IV. SPEAK NOT

Speak not to me of great reception halls
Where stately ladies walk with stately men;
Speak not to me of dancing long at balls
Nor revelry till goodness knows but when.
I would not hear of how an endless round
Of parties, concerts, shows--all rest forgot--
Is heaven. No, those pleasures find me bound;
They are not mine to taste. I know them not.

But speak to me of quiet, calm repose
When I may think and give my thoughts free play,
Explore each nook imagination knows,
And roam the world a million times a day.
Then shall my soul find joyful hours alone
When all is mine that fancy bids me own.

(August 7, 1938)

Sonnet V. BEFORE WE MEET AGAIN

We parted friends, though more than friendship had
Between us flourished -- young, alive, aglow;
Yet when we ended all, we sanely said
There would be no regrets, no tears to show.
Then gradually it seemed that, after all,
Your love, though hidden, had not ceased to grow;
Perhaps you sometimes dreamed in fond recall
Of all those happy hours we used to know.

And now how soon we are to meet again!
How shall it be? Shall we be casual friends?
A mere hello, no ling'ring pressure when
With studied smiles we shake each other's hands?
How much I'd give to know what really lies
Within your heart beneath that calm disguise!

(August 8, 1938)

Sonnet VI. LET LOVE SPEAK

Somehow it's disappointing, dear, to get
Your weekly letters. Do you wonder why?
I eagerly await them all, and yet
When they arrive, they hardly satisfy.
You merely write about the things you read,
The shows you see, a slant or two on art;
It seems you never pay the slightest heed
To what you know is in my heart.

Before you left, your eyes spoke of love sincere.
I longed to hear the words you would not state;
I knew you loved me; yet, while you were here,
Your lips seemed sealed--I thought that Love could wait.
I've waited since and still you're all I seek;
So, darling, in your letters, let love speak.

(October 1, 1938)

Sonnet VII. YOU'VE ALWAYS KNOWN

You've always known the most delightful thing
To say to me when compliments were due.
You'd say it, I suppose, because you knew
The smile, the flush of pleasure it would bring.
Such phrases always make my young heart sing;
The way you said them always thrilled me thru;
And for a time I felt that they were true
Until it seemed your love had taken wing.

You have not ceased to say them, yet, how could
You mean them if, indeed your love were fled!
If you declare them just because you should,
If you no longer feel the love that bred
Those compliments. then don't you think it would
Be far more kind to leave them now unsaid?

(April 30, 1939)

Sonnet VIII. NOCTURNE

All night, dear heart, when I have gone to bed
And only soothing darkness meets my view,
While silent hours pass with measured tread,
I'd be awake and fondly think of you.
Into my store of memories I reach
And, one by one, go over them again,
Reliving all the ecstasies of each--
Ah, love, what happiness we tasted then!

Perhaps 'tis foolish to be thinking thus
Of dreams I should have buried long ago;
Yet, if those dreams could not come true for us,
These tender memories--must they also go?
Still let me cherish them in fond review
They're all that I have left of love and you.

(May 19, 1939)

Sonnet IX. UNCERTAINTY

It has been ages since I saw you last,
Since last I heard your voice I love so well;
It has been eons since that day long past
When, love, you took my hand in brief farewell.
You knew it would be weeks ere we, anew,
Could have more hours like those to call our own;
And yet, no word, no message came from you--
You did not even call me on the phone.

I count the days and, in surprise, I find
'Tis no more a month since last you came--
A month of always having you in mind
And wond'ring if your love remained the same.
I long to see you--yet for all I know,
I may have really lost you long ago.

(May 24, 1939)

Sonnet X. TODAY

Today when you're so far beyond my reach,
And there is not the slightest chance for me,
I can adore you--fondly dwell on each
Remembered hope, each wish that could not be.
I can, in fancy, whisper now each name,
Each word I never dared to say to you,
Or weave the wildest dreams that I could frame
They cannot hurt--I know they won't come true.

No search into the future will reveal
That you, dear one, might still be meant for me;
I'll never let you know the way I feel--
I know too well how hopeless that would be.
But I can worship freely at your shrine
For disappointment cannot now be mine.

(September 2, 1939)

Sonnet XI. KISMET

If I had met you earlier--who knows?--
It might be me you would be loving now,
And she whom you now love be no more close
To you than friendship only would allow.
Instead, the situation stands reversed:
For her your gaze, for me a passing glance.
What might have happened had I met you first?
For futures hinge on simple circumstance!

Perhaps if I should try, I still might touch
Your heart and even enter through the door;
For since she cannot love you half as much
As I, she surely cannot need you more!
Yet I must stand by, helpless to the end--
The "other person" has to be my friend.

(October 4, 1939)

Sonnet XII. CAMOUFLAGE

If I were not compelled to see you thus
With someone else, I would have less to bear,
And freed from seeing two that are not us,
I might sometimes forget how much I care.
But, ah, how often there indeed you stand--
The two of you--within full sight of me,
Oblivious wholly of the world at hand--
Each other's eyes the only things you see!

I may not even show the slightest sign
That these emotions surge within my heart,
Nor hint by word or look what pain is mine
To see you both within a world apart.
 But I must take it gamely on the chin
 And laugh as though it did not hurt within!

(October 11, 1939)

Sonnet XIII. YOU HAVE TO GO

You have to go. We must accept the truth
And bravely smile the while we separate,
Content we had this much, at least, of youth
And happiness before it was too late.
It would not be so hard to bear if I
Were certain that this were merely "Au revoir."
It may mean more -- perhaps it means good-bye...
The roads are so uncertain where we are!

Then let me take one last long look at you --
Your eyes that always had so much to tell,
Your brow, your chin that courage always knew,
Your lips that even now must say farewell --
 That on my heart I may imprint your face,
 A living image nothing can erase.

(November 1, 1939)

Sonnet XIV. AS SHORT AND SWIFT

As short and swift as ever days could be
Were those that touched my life with yours this Fall.
How well I know how those days meant to me!
Could they have meant the same to you at all?
Could they have meant the pleasure hours through,
Of seeing, talking with, and being near
To one you'd only chanced to meet, but who
Had suddenly, disturbingly, grown dear?

I wonder if you ever miss me now
That you have gone, the way I miss you too.
Or if at times you find you wish somehow
Within your heart that I were there with you.
I wonder if you ever wonder too
If I myself relive those days with you!

(November 12, 1939)

Sonnet XV. SHOULD ANY MESSAGE COME

Should any message come from you today,
It won't be much--perhaps a line or two.
I know I cannot hope to hear you say
The things that I would love to say to you.
Perhaps I'll never hear you whisper low
In tender tones, "I think of you so much."
Nor ever hear you say, "I love you so!"
As matters stand, how could I hope for such?

I only hope I brought to you, my dear,
Some sunshine, even for only a day,
So you could take along as souvenir
Some pleasant memory to tuck away.
To know I meant that much to you at least,
Is full reward for all that I have missed.

(November 4, 1939)

Sonnet XVI. I SEE A COUPLE

I see a couple at the altar stand
Exchanging vows to last until they die;
And after they are one, he takes her hand
They turn. The man is you, the woman, I.
The years roll on to show a cozy home
Within I sit, the children at my feet,
With peace and love and joy to call our own,
And you, my love, to make my world complete.

And yet why do I indulge in dreaming so,
In fancies that might never come to be
When, more than anybody else, I know
How unattainable you are to me?
I keep on reaching for the moon above
When I have naught to win it with but love!

(November 25, 1939)

Sonnet XVII. WHAT GLORIOUS DREAMS I KNOW

What gorgeous dreams I know I could create
Concerning us with love to show the way;
What happiness I could anticipate
If I were sure you could be mine someday!
And yet when my imagination tries,
As it so often does, to dwell on you,
I stop it there, for that way madness lies.
What chance have dreams like these of coming true?

Attempting thus to quiet eager hope
And bring my hungry longing to a close,
Repeatedly I limit fancy's scope
And gently turn away dreams like those.
Then joy shall reach perfection undisguised
If, after all, they should be realized.

(Contradictory to Sonnet X)
(November 30, 1939)

Sonnet XVIII. I WATCH THE PLACE

I watch the place where you are wont to pass,
In hopes, my dear, that when you come into view,
I may receive the honor that I class
As high -- a greeting and a smile from you;
A greeting and a smile in your eye
The kind regard they are the symbols of.
How much I prize that kindness! Not that I
Expect it to develop into love.

I know that there are many in your crowd
Who offer you so much of what I can't,
That there are others well endowed
With anything that one like you could want.
 With such a fine array at your command,
 Why should you care at all to seek my hand?

(December 9, 1939)

Sonnet XIX. IMPOTENT

With just a handshake and some witty jest
We'll part as ordinary friends would part;
And I shall stand there leaving unexpressed
The love that must be hidden in my heart.
If it were not so useless to reveal
My feelings, I'd have done so long before;
But no -- 'tis plain to see that all you feel
For me is simply friendship, nothing more.

Perhaps you'll hurry down the steps, and I
Shall linger at the window in the hall
To see you wave a nonchalant good-bye,
If you will ever turn to wave at all.
 And, impotent, I shall be waiting there
 While you will go, not knowing that I care!

(December 29, 1939)

Sonnet XX. PERHAPS

Perhaps it was your warmth, your eagerness,
Your quick response that made me think you cared.
Perhaps what I took for tenderness
Was nothing but the sympathy you dared.
At any rate, cold Reason did not speak --
To warn my heart it was not so at all;
And soon my rising hopes reached the peak
Where, unsustainable, what could they do but fall?

Surveying now the tragic wreck, I find
There was no one else but me to blame.
Perhaps it was your way of being kind;
No fault is yours, I love you just the same.
I thought you cared, my dear, but I was wrong;
'Twas only an illusion all along.

(January 18, 1940)

EYES THAT SEE NOT - A TRIAD

Sonnet XXI. ONE

I see the upward sweep your lashes take
When suddenly you lift your eyes to mine,
Surprising me ere I can even make
My gaze remote or dim its telltale shine.
In wild confusion I can only smile,
Embarrassed, as I seek some swift disguise,
Half-fearing yet half hoping all the while
That you have read the secret in my eyes!

But as I tautly wait for you to say
Whatever words will break the sheer suspense,
You go on speaking in the usual way
Not even dreaming that I am so tense.
 You mean so much to me--I love you so--
 But this you do not know, you do not know!

(March 5, 1940)

Sonnet XXII. TWO

I welcome every chance to look at you,
To study every feature on your face
When you're not looking -- when you scan the view
Or when you simply gaze off into space.
My eyes soon seek your lips and linger there
Until, as I have often done before,
I wonder with a kind of calm despair
When they will utter what I am waiting for.

I know I would not have the chance to feast
My eyes on you if you observed me more;
Yet if you did, would that not mean at least
That I meant more to you than heretofore?
 Perhaps 'tis just as well you do not know it,
 For if you cared at all, you'd try to show it.

(March 12, 1940)

Sonnet XXIII. THREE

The right technique would be for me to stem
My feelings till you're ready to advance,
Instead of recklessly betraying them
In every little act, in every glance.
Aware of this, I firmly start to sham
An air of light indifference to you,
And then, before I know it, there I am --
Committing every single thing anew!

How often have I thus confessed my love!
A thousand times perhaps, I cannot say;
That ought to be enough but -- stars above!
Why can't you, *won't* you, see I feel this way!
Are you so proof indeed to every wile
Or have you really known it all the while?

(March 13, 1940)

Sonnet XXIV. GOOD NIGHT

Good night, my love, wherever you may be,
Wherever in that distant twinkling maze
Of roofs and lights night finds you far from me--
So far beyond my aching yearning gaze.
Across this vastness separating us
The city lies, of which you are a part.
Ah, happy city to be able thus
To hold you clasped, enfolded to its heart!

Sweet dreams to you, my love, and may I dream
The very dreams that touch your sleep tonight.
So might we meet in dreams whose only theme
Is one brief heaven ere the night takes flight.
Good night, my love. Though I but breathe each word,
May they tonight within your heart be heard.

(February 8, 1940)

Sonnet XXV. COME, MY LOVE

Come, my love! It has been long enough
That you have stayed away. I miss you so!
And Time, I find it, is not strong enough
To break the ties our hearts have come to know.
I must behold you near me once again,
And though your stay be brief, I won't complain.
Just let me see you soon! Reunion, then,
Will seem the sweeter after all this pain.

If only you could halfway realize
What keen, yet patient, longing I have known
To see your face again, to see your eyes--
You would not tarry while I grieved alone.
Come, my love, I shall be stronger then
To bear your absence till you come again.

(May 4, 1940)

Sonnet XXVI. SURRENDER

In full acknowledgment of sweet defeat
That comes when woman finds, at last, she cares,
With eager eyes I offer at your feet
This heart of mine with all the love it bears.
My lord, you need not even ask for it.
Before you, here it lies, yours for the taking,
And if its fullness break it bit by bit,
Its end were served were you the cause for breaking.

It seems the very act of loving you
Can bring such boundless happiness, can breed
Such joy exceeding all I ever knew--
That it becomes a privilege indeed!
The world may know my love is all for you.
I do not care--I only know 'tis true.

(July 30, 1940)

Sonnet XXVII. I SEARCH YOUR MANNER

I search your manner for the slightest sign
That you at least have noticed what I feel,
Convinced, somehow, you could not but divine
What I have made no effort to conceal.
In mingled hope and sharp anxiety,
Not even knowing what I wish to view;
I search those eyes of yours that seem to see
All but the heart I mutely offer you.

But since you do not choose to take it up,
And deep within your bosom give it rest,
I sigh the sighs that seem to fill my cup
And fold the hands your too brief touch has blessed.
And turn to Fancy for that kiss divine
From lips that I may not feel on mine.

(July 31, 1940)

Sonnet XXVIII. YOU CAME

You came with all the sudden pleasure wrought
By swift surprise--a gift to me no less--
And for one breathtaking moment brought
A world of sunshine to my loneliness.
Then like two ships that in mid-ocean cross
And greet each other, nevermore to meet,
Our lives diverged--with who shall know what loss--
Destined for shores where other oceans beat.

Had Time but granted us our one desire
To sing a longer song, love might have found us;
And hand in hand, with such a blessed fire,
What worlds we might have glorified around us!
But we were meant to meet but once somehow;
The gap between us only widens now.

(September 22, 1940)

Sonnet XXIX. TODAY I CHANCED TO LEARN

Today I chanced to learn from other lips
What once I longed to hear from yours so much:
The words that would have thrown into eclipse
My previous joys which had not known your touch.
I learned you loved me once!...And now, alone,
I hold this tardy secret to the light
And merely shrug my shoulders, pleased to own
Indifference is all it can excite.

But in a rush, my memories come thronging:
The haunting thoughts of you that knew no pause,
The wishes unfulfilled, the heartsick longing;
And dream-deep gladness fills my soul because
I know that once, in other days more blest,
I ruled supreme the heart within your breast.

(No date)

PICTURES OF SOLEDAD



Soledad at 18, 1936



In the yard of Mother's ancestral home in Laoag



At the corridor in Quezon Institute in 1942, her last picture



At the stairs in a cottage in Bagiuo



Soledad (x) in a Sailor's Dance, in a UP program, 1935



Soledad and I, 1938



Left, Soledad posing for a picture to send home for Christmas

These are the surviving photos of my sister Soledad "Choleng" Juan, who died of tuberculosis in 1942, after having been evicted by the invading Japanese from the Quezon Institute Hospital.

Among her other published poems, more were found to have been scribbled in a notebook that was kept by a friend.

Avelina Juan Gil

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