

At Seventeen

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I learned the truth at seventeen
That love was meant for beauty queens
and high school girls with clear skinned smiles
who married young and then retired
The valentines I never knew,
the friday nights, charades of youth
were spent on one more beautiful
At seventeen I learned the truth

And those of us with ravaged faces,
lacking in the social graces
Desp'rately re-mained at home
inventing lovers on the phone
Who called and say "come dance with me"
and murmured vague ob-scenities
It isn't all it seems at seventeen

A brown eyed girl in hand-me-downs,
whose name I never could pronounce said
" Pity, please, the ones who serve,
they only get what they deserve.
The rich related home-town queen marries into what she needs
A guarantee of company and haven for the elderly"

Re member those who win the game, lose the love they sought to gain
In debentures of quality and dubious in-tegrity
Their small town eyes will gape at you in dull surprise when payment due
exceeds accounts received at seventeen

To those of us who know the pain of valentines that never came,
and those whose name were never called when choosing side at basketball
It was long ago and far away The world was younger than today
and dreams were all they gave for free to ugly duckling girls like me

We all play the game and when we dare to cheat ourselves at solitaire
In-venting lovers on the phone, re-penting other lives unknown
that call and say "Come dance with me", and murmur vague ob-scenities
at ugly girls like me, at seventeen