

What Worth Love?

Oh my heart, once at rest, yet of late
Unsettled, adrift, and besotten,
Rocked by storms, now your uncertain fate
To be dashed to pieces, forgotten.
Or else, becalmed, to speak now, and say
What worth love, that wretched tempest, nay,
What worth love? If such ill is love's gift,
Better, my heart, alone than adrift.

Adrift now, love's embrace to await,
For without love I remain, rotten,
And her return lifts from me a weight,
Brings safety from the misbegotten
Winds that cruelly blow and blow away.
What worth love? To answer, I assay,
All and all, worth measured without thrift,
Back from broken pieces love does lift.

To lift from ruin love's touch helps not.
What worth love? That greedy, wretched leech,
She who drinks, gorging, and leaves to rot
Her victim, helpless, beyond the reach
Of reason and of thought, mad with loss
Of blood and of mind. Love? I say dross!
Again, my heart, I pray you take heed,
From this grip of love we must be freed.

If freed from love, then equally ought
We be freed from life. You speak and preach
Against love, the leech, but is it not
That the surgeon might, in his own speech,
The leech prescribe, and so cure the cause
Of malady? And so as the loss
Of excess does life to balance lead,
What worth love? It is the cure we need.

What need, my heart, have we of ill love?
Remember, pray, the pain of love's end.
When such joy, and then the lack thereof,
To misery and sorrow does wend.
When last we loved, her beauty unmatched,
And upon her our affections latched,
Until her love dwindled and did die
And so, too, a piece of you and I.

Remember I the pain, but above
All else the bliss that love did us lend.
While you such pain would quick be rid of
A thousand times the pain I'd contend
To feel again so deeply attached.
Such love, not so easily dispatched,
A bind of beauty, that does us tie.
What worth love? Unbounded by the sky.

My heart, made a fool, with love gone mad,

But more fool I, who such love once had.

The joy I long to feel once again

And with it, oh my fool heart, the pain.

