

AFTER A WHILE

After a while you learn the subtle difference
between holding a hand and chaining a soul,
and you learn that love doesn't mean leaning
and company doesn't always mean security.

And you begin to learn that kisses aren't contracts
and presents aren't promises.

And you begin to accept your defeats with your head up
and your eyes ahead,
with the grace of a woman, not the grief of a child.

And you learn to build all your roads on today,
because tomorrow's ground is too uncertain for plans
and futures have a way of falling down in mid-flight.

After a while you learn that even sunshine burns
if you get too much
so you plant your own garden
and decorate your own soul,
instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers.

And you learn that you really can endure,
you really are strong,
you really have worth,
and you learn,
and you learn,
with every goodbye, you learn.

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