

FROM A FATHER  
TO A DAUGHTER  
ON THE EVE OF HER MARRIAGE

I held you and whispered, "The night cannot hurt you."

I walked, and I hummed, and I lulled you to sleep.

I gave you a glimpse of the wonderful virtue  
in loving all life, with a promise to keep  
your secrets, your fears, all locked deep in my heart.

In school, you were not very fond of attendance,  
and I understood when we drifted apart,  
as you tried the new dress that's called "independence"  
and discovered with pleasure it fitted quite well.

On choices you made, for the most part, I nodded  
and said to myself, "Yes, that's what I would do, too."  
and onward we danced, and we laughed and we plodded,  
and I smiled when I saw that you relished the true  
and the kind and the good, and you scorned what was fake.

You loved dogs and horses, made many a friend.

Not every plan worked, but each little mistake  
convinced me you never would shatter but bend.

In you was a merriment, none could dispel.

And now, on this day when you join hearts with one  
who stands by your side, here's a rule I still trust:  
change, as the moon, but stay warm as the sun,  
standing still gains you nothing but rust.  
Everything changes, the seasons, the friends,  
all beauty, all ugliness, sickness and health,  
all good luck, all bad luck, all fashions, all trends,  
all methods and motives, poverty, wealth.  
Winters may burden you, but don't forget  
spring resurrects, and while rain makes you wet  
it also feeds flowers that charm and delight.

That's the last of my lectures,  
and so, dear,  
goodnight.  
with all my love.