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Jack Foley

50 Designs to Murder Magic

Can you say she took your breath away

Yes, I can say that

But you talked on to her

And that

Required

Breath

Can you say

She was beautiful

Yes, I can say that

Her hair especially was beautiful

And her serious

Eyes

But she was also

Exceptionally kind

She listened when you spoke

Yes, and laughed

When I said

Something amusing

Yet her laughter seemed almost

Reluctant

As if she couldn't quite help herself

As if something came from within

(As something came from within me)

There was no way on earth we could be lovers

As I left she said, "It was wonderful to meet you"

I thanked her for being so considerate

Her hair moved often
As she moved

For Sangye

You're sleeping now
Deep into the morning
How brave you were
To speak so frankly
And so sweetly
To the one you loved best in the world
I love
When your eyes open
And I see the sun.

•

You let me see
Your secret places
And they all shine
And make sweet, sweet music.

Sonnet XVII by Pablo Neruda (translated by Stephen Tapscott)
. . . sent to Jack by Sangye

“I do not love you as if you were salt-rose, or topaz,
or the arrow of carnations the fire shoots off.
I love you as certain dark things are to be loved,
in secret, between the shadow and the soul.

I love you as the plant that never blooms
but carries in itself the light of hidden flowers;
thanks to your love a certain solid fragrance,
risen from the earth, lives darkly in my body.

I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where.
I love you straightforwardly, without problems or pride;
so I love you because I know no other way

than this: where I does not exist, nor you,
so close that your hand on my chest is my hand,
so close that your eyes close as I fall asleep.”

Jack's Response:

“I do not love you as if you were salt-rose, or topaz,
or the arrow of carnations the fire shoots off”
In the sweet darkness, when we have closed the door
And adjusted the pillows and said the word “dearest”
In the flame that comes to us in that darkness
In the light of the mind and body
We kiss and hold each other, mindful of the bliss
That comes to all animals, to all sentient beings
And wonder at the luck
That stretches itself throughout the room
As we merge
And my body becomes yours
And yours mine.

Jack Foley has published books of poetry, criticism, stories and sketches, and a two-volume “chronoencyclopedia,” *Visions & Affiliations: California Poetry 1940-2005*. He became well known through his “multivoiced” performances with his late wife, Adelle. His radio show, *Cover to Cover*, airs every Wednesday on KPFA-FM in California. In 2010, Foley was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Berkeley Poetry Festival. Foley’s most recent books are *The Tiger & Other Tales*, a book of stories, sketches and two plays; *Riverrun*, a book of poetry; and *Grief Songs*.