



The sad poem *Reassurance* marks the start of a relationship going wrong. But why is the reassurance needed? Looking back, it is clear it would have been better to have discussed the problem in addition to writing the poem. Too often, we expect people to know intuitively what we are thinking and to respond as we would like. But how can a person really know what is wrong, if we do not tell them?

Reassurance

16th January 1974

Tell me that you love me –
No, don't try to turn away.
I know you show me in your deeds,
But I want to hear you say.

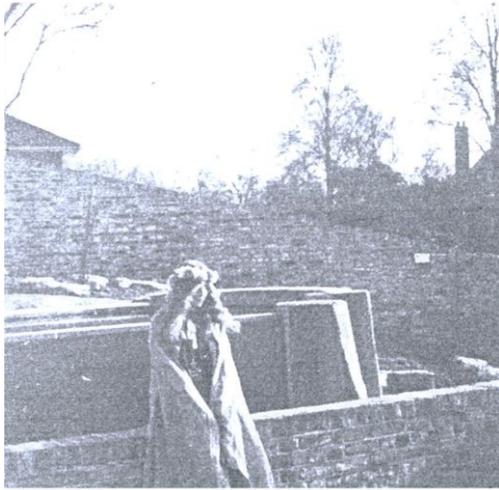
Tell me that you want me.
No, don't look the other way.
I know you want me by your side,
But I want to hear you say.

Tell me that you need me.
No, don't smile and glance away.
I know you need me in your life,
But I want to hear you say.

Tell me that I am your life
And without me you'd not last a day.
I know you prove it with your deeds,
But I want to hear you say.

Tell me that I am your queen,
Without me skies are always grey.
I know you think it in your heart,
But I want to hear you say.

Tell me, love: I want to hear.
Why do you turn away?
Why don't you ease my heavy heart?
Why can't you say?



Portrait of the author at Regents Park Zoo,
winter 1970-71, taken by a friend

Epitaph was written as the poet's pen portrait of herself in her mid-teens. The image the world saw of a bright, eccentric persona vanished into darkness when she was alone. This is typical of autistic masking. The poem is also a song, with an eerie, haunting tune which is difficult to sing.

Epitaph

August 1971

In the day
She wore sun in her hair;
But at night
She wore black.

In the day
She wore the sky as her cloak;
But at night
She wore black.

In the day
She wore garlands of flowers;
But at night
She wore black.

In the day
She wore the day;
But at night
She wore black.



Waiting for the Dawn describes the author's situation as she neared the threshold of recovery.

Two years before the poem was written, a curate had told her about God's unconditional love for her, while she was recovering in hospital after a failed operation.

She accepted God's love for her, and returned to church. A few months later, she handed her will and her life over to God's care, trusting that God could not make any more of a mess of her life than she had. The following spring, she met the person who would lead her to recovery through the 12-step program.

It was to take another fourteen months after the poem was written, before she came to believe that recovery program could help her as much as it had transformed the lives of others.

Waiting for the Dawn

30th October 1982

An empty wind blows through my mind,
And like the icy blast of death,
The night clings to my aching soul.

I have no certain cause for sorrow,
Though in this mortal body, pain wracked,
I do find some shadows of the past.

God, at least you do not forsake me.
You make these shadows easier to bear,
And send me help when night becomes too dark.

Beyond this darkness, I can trust the dawn,
And sleep can ease, though only for a while;
But when that dawn will be, I cannot say.