

Fight the Devil

She wore her hair in a long blonde braid
So you thought she'd be easy to understand
You couldn't have been more wrong but you didn't know it
Till you saw her hair loose and fanned
Across your pillow, and then it was too late
You were woven in her web of masquerading
In a way you would be unraveling forever
Like her soft wild stands of hair unbraiding

Those hot endless August nights
When you knew for certain she was gone
You sat in your attic room; you were sleepless and burning
With a pain as fierce and raw
As a razor, as a tearing at your skin
You were crazy with the pain, crazy with the heat
A sort of fever dream floating on
The sounds drifting up from the street

If you loved me, you would bring me roses
You would lie for me, steal for me
Fight the devil
You would call me angel, forget your own name
You would lie awake all night, lie awake all night

How trusting you were, how unafraid
Of falling, or surrender, of the devil, of the dark
When you called her name it was singing in your veins
But it seems when she called you sweetheart
It was just a title you vied for and won
And then lost in the next round to a worthy foe
Who met your standard and raised it
And you were powerless then but to let it go

If you loved me, you would bring me roses
You would lie for me, steal for me
Fight the devil
You would call me angel, forget your own name
You would lie awake all night, lie awake all night
If you loved me, you would bring me roses
You would lie for me, steal for me
Fight the devil
You would call me angel, forget your own name
You would lie awake all night, lie awake all night

If you loved me, you would bring me roses
You would lie for me, steal for me
Fight the devil
You would call me angel, forget your own name
You would lie awake all night, lie awake all night

If you loved me, you would bring me roses
You would lie for me, steal for me
Fight the devil
You would call me angel, forget your own name
You would lie awake all night, lie awake all night,
Lie awake all night, lie awake all night

©1994 Annie Gallup

For Money

It was snowing in New York that winter, snowflakes big as feathers
You helped me with my coat, complained about the weather
And then held that lobby door for me and for one brilliant blur
I could feel the cold and grit were real, then heated taxi at the curb
We slid and steered the icy streets, veered toward your address
I wondered how the hell I got myself into this mess
Course you argued with the driver when we made our stop
You said "All he cares about's his tip but does he want to do his job?"

We are loved for money
We are hated for money
We are judged, we are rated
We are what we are for money

You lived on the twenty-second floor, you had a view
You had a grand piano and a drink or two
I was staring out the window at the swirling snow, the lights
City seemed unreal and distant masquerading white
You said "Come with me," you led me to your room
It was awkward for a moment when I saw what you'd assumed
And I'm certain I displeased you but you recovered well
Offered me a nightcap as your poured one for yourself

We are loved for money
We are hated for money
We are judged, we are rated
We are what we are for money

So you bought me a taxi back to my hotel
Snow lay in dirty drifts and pools of slush and melt
I tipped the driver double asked the desk clerk for the key
And found a dozen roses you'd had sent there for me
Yes, you would send roses with a wave of your arm
Set the city's underclass in motion let the city swarm
With meaningless commotion you blame, exploit and ridicule
And use to make yourself the perfect gentleman by your own rules

We are loved for money
We are hated for money
We are judged, we are rated

We are what we are
We are what we are
For money

©1994 Annie Gallup

Grandma's Best China

If I was a little girl once, I don't remember
No, no, can't remember that
But I know there was a time when my Grandma was alive
And her house was soft as an old felt hat
Grandma herself corseted, powdered and stockinged
Into an impressive dignity
She was the cornerstone on which my family balanced like a circus act
She gave a sort of grace to our uncertainty

Under Grandma's roof was a world unto itself
With round corners, where everything was pretty
I'd breathe in its sweet scents; it was beyond my life's experience
This unchecked delight in femininity
What will I ever love better than the deep mysteries
Of her corner cupboard
Under lock and key, in alluring secrecy
Those treasures spoke to me like a lover

When the flowers would bloom in the spring
Grandma's magnolia tree burst into teacups
It was all her best china and the birds would sing:
Cup-of-tea cup-of-tea, sugar sugar, cheer-up
Oh, best of everything, best of everything

Grandma kept her house with the help of a hired girl she called Katy
And a man who worked the yard
He'd be out there on his knees among the roses and peonies
She lived there 'til it got too hard
They moved her away and they told her "Lie down, be still"
They meant for eternity
And she obeyed; she believed in the good book and heaven
And the holy trinity

When the flowers would bloom in the spring
Grandma's magnolia tree burst into teacups
It was all her best china and the birds would sing:
Cup-of-tea cup-of-tea, sugar sugar, cheer-up
Oh, best of everything, best of everything

©1994 Annie Gallup

Dancing With a Stranger

I am dancing with a stranger in a strange bar in a strange town
It's crowded, we bump the other dancers as he turns me around
He holds me pressed too close against him on a night so warm
Sweat is running down the collar of his uniform

I am dancing with a soldier. He's putting on a pantomime
Desperately going through the motions of a good old time
As though this were the dream brought him back halfway around the world
A hero in his uniform is dancing with a girl

He moves me round the floor like he's running a machine
As though he's learned to do a job, not to question what it means
Drum rolls out machine gun beat, rhythm he understands
Thunder underneath his feet and the power in his hands

I am dancing with a hero. There's agitation in his touch
Overcompensation, in the style of one who's seen too much
Accustomed to the forcefulness, anger, hatred, longing, fear
Nothing's ever strong enough, lose a taste for simple and sincere

I am dancing with a stranger, our lives connect right here right now
And when the dance is done he'll disappear into the crowd

I am dancing with a stranger

©1994 Annie Gallup

You Can Run

There are nights when I sleep like a baby
And dream without words, just color and form
And there are nights of barking dogs, lightning and thunder
What I know about angels I learned in a thunderstorm
So many storms, first summer on my own
Burning with fever and drenched to the bone
Waking in a strange room, my long legs strange to me
Saying—this is not my body, this is not my home

Oh, you can run...

So I'm driving down the street in a borrowed car
With my eyes wide open for the very first time
It's the age of Aquarius and everything is new
From the litter in the gutter to the curve of my spine
James Taylor on the radio
Making me long for love and experience

I can do what I want 'cause I have all the time in the world
To take it all back, make it right in the end

Oh, you can run, but you cannot...

I was born the right time for trouble it seems
Can make your own rules if you know where to run
But there's too many words coming into my dreams
Too many lies rolling off my tongue
Dog barking and the porch light on
But no one home I can look in the eye
Send me down lightning and angel's wings
No one's going to see me cry

Oh, you can run but you cannot fly

©1994 Annie Gallup

So Easy

It's a summer rain
You stand on the porch in your cotton blouse
Watch the raindrops falling through the linden trees
That grow around the house
And you're thinking; I've had too many lovers
You picture them all back through the years
As a line follows the curve of the earth
'Til it disappears

It's so easy, so easy, it's so easy

Summer nights when darkness fell
And fireflies hovered winking on
You were a child in a pale nightgown
Running barefoot across the lawn
And fireflies were an easy catch
You see it now as a flawed design
But then you held magic in your hands
Watch the little lights shine

It's so easy, so easy, it's so easy
So easy, so easy

How could you grow up jaded
Here where summer rains fall sweet
On ragged rows of white petunias
The air smells like wet concrete
And you wonder what you're missing
It's something you don't understand

'Cause everything you ever reached for
Fell into your hand

It's so easy, so easy, it's so easy
So easy, so easy

©1994 Annie Gallup

As If You Were There...

As if you were there in that darkened room,
Smoky bar, looking tough and mean
In your shades and your beat-up bomber jacket.
It was a phase; you were James Dean.
You had a fascination for self-destruction.
I'd have followed you anywhere, I was such a fool!
I wanted to talk about growing old together.
You talked of living fast and hot and dying cool.
"Grow up," I said. "Grow up and I'll come back and find you."
That's how I left you; that's how you let me go.
I didn't say good-bye, didn't close the door.
I just walked out into the blinding sunshine,
Running down the road.

As if you drove up in your '54 Chev
And let me in as though no time had passed.
I thought "My god you've come to look just like your father
But you still smoke Camels and drive too fast."
You told me you were working for the family firm.
I said "I thought we were going to change the world."
Your eyes crinkled up in a smile. You said
"So you still think only swine wear pearls?"
We were flying down 357
Past Ed Rosen's purple mailbox steaming,
The road was smooth, it went on forever,
That's how I knew that I must be dreaming, 'cause

No, it won't be that easy to find you,
It's a broken trail that you've left behind you.
You quit this town, unknown address,
But you are somewhere, you are somewhere, yes.

As if you were there in Cody, Wyoming
When I stopped for gas at the edge of town.
You were standing by a black Ranchero
In a Levi's jacket and a hat pulled down.
It was your gesture, your shoulder's curve.
I crossed the street to see you better.
You were picking up a little girl
In cowboy boots and a pale pink sweater.
I just stood there and stared at your face.

Not a trace of any man that I ever knew.
It was a false alarm. There's one in every crowd,
But somewhere there's a road I know that's following you, but

No, it won't be that easy to find you.
It's a broken trail that you've left behind you.
You quit this town, unknown address,
But you are somewhere out there, you are
Somewhere, yes.

©1994 Annie Gallup

All Those Fools

There are things he does without joy
Loving me is one
There's pain in his eyes
As he says he can't live without me
There are things I do
Without understanding why
I don't know why I tell him
All the sad things about me

All those fools
All those crazy fools in love
All those fools
The world is full of crazy fools in love

He says "I knew from the first I saw you
That I would love you
There was a loneliness in the way
You looked at me and frowned," yeah
I remember that day
The sun was shining in my eyes
And the darkness closes in now
As he puts his arms around me

All those fools
All those crazy fools in love
All those fools
The world is full of crazy fools in love

I say "I have to go now"
He says "Yeah,, I knew you would"
I say "It's not what you think"
But he sees right through me
I walk away and say
"I can leave and not look back"
But I'm angry that he saw my pain
And thought he knew me

All those fools
All those crazy fools in love
All those fools
The world is full of crazy fools in love

All those fools
All those crazy fools in love
All those fools
The world is full of crazy fools

©1994 Annie Gallup

Steak & Eggs For Breakfast

I love you baby, I love everything about you
I love the man who cuts your hair, his shiny little buzzsaw
Skimming across your scalp like those ears have got to go
While you contemplate the stillness at the center of your wristwatch
Even with that razor at your throat, ooh, it's such a thrill
Living on the laser's edge, one foot in the gravy
Little dab of something, ooh-la I love you baby

Love your steak and eggs for breakfast
Steak and eggs for breakfast
Love your steak and eggs for breakfast
Steak and eggs for breakfast

I love you baby, I love the man who makes your clothes
His little lapping measure mapping every gleaming inch of you
Every wrinkle, every curve, he's taking up the slacks
You're steady as a statue while he sticks you full of voodoo
Little flicking scissors snick and snip, snip and tuck
Ripping down your, nipping up your, clipping past your windpipe
Take my breath away, ooh-la, it's Romeo in pinstripe

Steak and eggs for breakfast
Steak and eggs for breakfast
Love your steak and eggs for breakfast
Steak and eggs for breakfast

I love you baby, I love the man who makes your
Steak and eggs for breakfast
Steak and eggs for breakfast

I love you baby, I love the man who drives your car
Tearing through the traffic like stiletto through a dishrag
Burning on the curves while you light a cigarette
Drink coffee in a clean white shirt while we do zig-zags
Run 'em in the ditch, leaving taxis in the dust

Sixty from a dead stop in one-point-three-four-zero
Still my beating heart, ooh-la, you're such a hero

Love your steak and eggs for breakfast
Steak and eggs for breakfast
Love your steak and eggs for breakfast
Steak and eggs for breakfast
I love the man who mows your lawn
I love the man who keeps your swimming pool clean
I love the man who does your taxes
I love the man who taught your dog to be so mean
Love your steak and eggs for breakfast
Steak and eggs for breakfast
Love your steak and eggs for breakfast

©1994 Annie Gallup

There Are Rules

There are rules but you don't know them
It's going to keep you guessing
Make a thousand big mistakes
Learn a thousand lessons
Someday someone looks at you
In a way you can't explain
And you keep it in your memory
With the tea leaves and the cold falling rain

There are rules but you don't know them
Your Grandma had a mandolin
The fiddle you were given
Was too hard and flat to fit your chin
And you played it badly
Always aching to the bone
To feel that mandolin's round belly
Pressing close against your own

There are rules but you don't know them
You can only suspect
Theme and variation, reap and sow, last straw
Cause and effect

There are rules but you don't know them
There were mannequins in all the stores
That had no hands. Their arms just ended
At the wrist or sometimes before
And of course it made you wonder
Course you just took what you got
But one day you might meet a stranger who'll say
"Keep your dirty hands to yourself, kid"

After that your hands would always feel dirty
Whether they were or not

There are rules but you don't know them
You can only suspect
Theme and variation, reap and sow, last straw
Cause and effect

There are rules but you don't know them
You reach to touch his silky limbs
And feel the universe contract
To fit the space you make with him
And your mind says "this is it"
Or "sweet romance"
Then it's gone. It's just a movie
Camera pulls back, pans to the scenery
It's a place you thought you'd like to go
But never had the chance

There are rules but you don't know them
You can only suspect
Theme and variation, reap and sow, last straw
Cause and effect

©1994 Annie Gallup

About Freedom

I want to talk about freedom
Because it's something I don't understand
I've got this automobile, I've got the wide road
I'm heading out to see the land
I've got this gravel truck in the lane ahead
Downshifting up a long climb
And I'm thinking "yeah, that's heavy"
I'm bouncing off the centerline

I want to talk about freedom
I want to talk about the open road
But I've got to get past this gear-grinding
Black smoke choking heavy load, oh

I want to talk about freedom
Because I lost good love to it
Love that felt like two gears meshed
And moving forward interknit
He said "I want my freedom back"
And though I let him go, I knew
I had never felt so free
As when I thought the search for love was through

I want to talk about freedom
I want to talk about the open road
But I've got to get past this gear-grinding
Black smoke choking heavy load

My grandfather lost his leg in the war
It was something that I owed to him
As though he himself had bought me my freedom
By cashing in his limb
It was too abstract for me
Now he's old and his mind's adrift
Free from time and space and purpose
Seems like a kind of grace, a gift

I want to talk about freedom
I want to talk about the open road
But I've got to get past this gear-grinding
Black smoke choking heavy load, oh

Well I'm glad I've got this road to drive on
I always like to think I'm free to go
And I want to talk about freedom
And what it cost to build this road
And all of my time that I've traded away
So I can buy into the machine
That drives the gears that drive the world
To keep pushing beyond its means

I want to talk about freedom
I want to talk about the open road
But I've got to get past this gear-grinding
Black smoke choking heavy load, oh

I want to talk about freedom
And the illusion of an open road
And all of these cars and all these people
Where we all came from and where it's all going to go

©1994 Annie Gallup

If I Loved You

If I loved you
It would make no sense
You are slouching in the doorway like cartoon coyote
Sidelong, studied indifference
If I trusted you
No, only a fool would trust you
I want fingerprints

I want the mark of your poet's hands
Pressed against my skin

If I loved you
If I took you home
If I gave you soup with heart of palm and Chinese noodles
Would you write me poems?
Or would familiarity make you flat
Discernible and banal
Would you thwack my knee with a rolled up magazine
Say "hey, old gal"

If I loved you I would buy you things
I'd dress you up in black on black
I'd take you out then take you home
Walk barefoot across your back
If I loved you I would wrap myself around the mystery
I'd wind you up and watch you going down in history

If I loved you
Like a mother would
If I sheltered you underneath my wings
Would you still need to be misunderstood?
Would you ramble in abstraction
Quote Rabelais for hours
Would you answer a question with a question
To hold me in your power

If I loved you
It would make no sense

©1994 Annie Gallup