

# Love Among the Runes

*Poems from a Work in Progress*

by [David Solway](#) (January 2023)



*Sleeping Girl*, Egon Schiele, 1911

*for Janice*

**1**

I'm touched by Browning's "Love among the Ruins,"  
a staccato poem—yet deeply moving.  
"Love is best"—and yet not end of story.  
It could as well be "Love among the Runes,"  
the maze and mystery of all loving  
that must end. Play Despacito for me.

**4**

I sometimes feel that I am devil-sent,  
say, the "Great Pretender" whom the Platters  
uh-oh'd and crooned to the top of the charts  
back in the day of doo-wop sentiment.  
One wonders if it really matters  
for love's a pop song when the Lord departs.

**8**

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds..."—  
a bloody good start from the old Service  
the Bard adopted as his lede, witty  
yet lashed to the past, knowing how lust blinds.  
Same here, thinking of her, and made nervous  
by retrospective infidelity.

## 22[\*]

I'm thinking of the Goddess who once spoke  
so sweetly jubilant I could not turn  
my mind from every dulcet blandishment.  
Today, it seems, the White Queen's snorting coke  
and writhes beneath, as I can now discern,  
as through a frosted pane, some other gent.

## 26

Who was it said there's only so much love  
to go around? It may well have been me  
when thinking of the woman I adore  
but sad for others. When push comes to shove,  
remember it's a rare commodity.  
Seek it. The Lord ain't making any more.

## 29

I watch the kid mastering his skateboard,  
an act pertaining to the male gender.  
Petruchio knew this well riding Kate  
and never stopped to inquire, was Kate bored  
or resentful, thinking him untender?  
Not a bit, as she bore his loving weight.

## 36

Quite a journey we have consummated,  
from our exploring every sweetest hurt  
of loving to the heights of *Moonraker*  
until we were partly filled and sated,  
if not wholly. Still, now it's where's my shirt

and, baby, can you fill the salt shaker.

43

### ***Love Poem***

I tell her that I love her and I mean  
it, just like any man who's lost his heart,  
mind, nerve, and his penchant for survival.  
Nevertheless, the time comes to come clean  
and tell her, since I'm faithful to my art,  
I love another, too—me, her rival.

44[†]

If one loves past reason or unreason,  
one will understand *The Symposium*,  
*The Sorrows of Werther*, *The Magic Flute*,  
the “Pow! To the moon” of Jackie Gleason,  
the high and low of it, the distance from.  
Between one and one is a long commute.

57

Of course, when looked at from the perspective  
of the Hubble, or the extant copy  
of the *Aleppo Codex*, of heaven  
and hell, or of the constant, shaken sieve  
of time, or the cold reign of entropy,  
all's levelled—yet love is still the leaven.

58[†]

As Woody quipped, eternal life's a bore,

especially toward the end. I'd be glad  
to take it slow, for it would not bore me  
to live with you forever—even more!  
The joke can't hide the fact. This is so sad  
my Janice play Despacito for me.

### Notes

[\*] The reference is to Robert Graves' grammar of poetic myth, *The White Goddess*.

[†] *The Jackie Gleason Show* was a popular American domestic sitcom that ran from 1952 to 1970. Whenever a tiff erupted between Jackie and his wife Alice, he would respond by making a fist and exclaiming, "Pow! To the moon."

[‡] Woody, of course, is Woody Allen; the joke is from *Side Effects*.

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David Solway's latest book is [\*Notes from a Derelict Culture\*](#), Black House Publishing, 2019, London. A CD of his original songs, [\*Partial to Cain\*](#), appeared in 2019.

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