

# Two Poems

by [Michael Williams](#) (December 2020)



*Two People Under a Light*, Geng Jianyi, 1985

Single Life Blues

Formless lover, realize!—

Satisfy my pining eyes  
And be that concrete ecstasy  
For arms now clutching vacancy.  
All the transport and elation  
I harvest in imagination  
(Call it fancy, call it lust)  
Is a diet but of dust.  
I need substantial meals to feed  
My hungry soul, my heart-sick need.  
Take shape, my love, that you may be  
Exiled from my fantasy,  
Springing foreigner into  
This kingdom of the real and true,  
And my devotion naturalize  
As citizen, my dream and prize.  
You in the flesh, my longing quelled,  
We shall in youthful raptures meld.

A warm and damp reality,  
Struggling sensuality;  
A private Eden we'd create,  
Our twain appetites to sate.

Relaxed, perpetual embrace,  
Eyes tethered to adoring face  
(Wherefore into the soul to peer),  
Whispers caress the tender ear  
And breath upon the tingling neck,  
As intrepid fingers trek  
About the peaks and valleys of  
The body of the one I love.  
The chattering of wind-blown leaves  
Filter, as they slip the eaves,  
Through windows, beacons of the night:  
Pearly lunar, stellar light.  
And by this muted brilliance blessed  
We'd drift into contented rest;  
Our heartbeats synchronized in sleep  
While angels silent vigils keep.

But for my pining, I can't find  
You manifesting from my mind;  
For all my aching passions roused,  
My hermit-bed remains half-housed.  
Half a soul inhabits me—

A gentle type of misery.

## Chronic

*for Lucy Fudge*

Pain has an empire over me

And spans my many members;

And as I live, there's fuel to feed

The conquest's burning embers.

Expansive is the agony

Whose reign is 'round me girt,

With multitudes of tribes— diverse

Imperium of hurt.

Tyrannical of my existence,

Enslaving concentration;

My very personality

Is but its vassal nation:

The deluge of experience

And life's capacity

Is dammed into a tiny stream  
Of sore mundanity.

I have naught else; this misery  
Informs my every breath.

A pregnancy perpetual,  
Delivered but by death.

And yet, more galling than my plight  
Are hearts of stone and ears  
Of steel, when indeliberate swells  
A looming tide of tears.

The slam of pity's door to mute  
My song of suffering—  
No likewise melody could vent  
The pungence of this sting;

The litany of judgment aired  
In stupid, cruel emissions  
As if the callous fools I love  
Were suddenly physicians;

Their strange, indifferent flippancy

Gives me no space for peace,

Nor do their torrent of demands

And expectations cease;

I writhe in agony in bed,

Into a ball I'm curled—

But am expected, Atlas-like,

That I should bear their world.

Clinicians, practicing their art

In treatment of my ill,

Regard me as a lump of ore

That passes through a mill.

As bloodless as a statue's bronze;

Routine as a file clerk;

Cold as a glacier to my woe:

The doctor at her work.

Cycling sickness to a salve

(The latter fails again);

My symptoms chase their remedy

And I remain in pain.

Self-piteous? Indeed, I am—

But judge me not too strict:

Were this distress and succor's dearth

Your own self to afflict

You'd understand adversity

And even might be crushed

Beneath that understanding's weight,

And judgment would be hushed.

My only recourse is to faith

So, when of tears I tire,

I place my trust in God and pray

A rosary of fire.

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Michael Williams is a Catholic convert, a crude man of letters, a bleeding heart and a goofball. He—like St. Francis—is wedded to poverty, but with moderate success. His interests (apart from writing) include smoking cigarettes, drinking beer and whiskey, reading history books, playing chess, and entertaining his friends. He lives in Anchorage, Alaska with his faithful kitty, Olivia. He has been published in the *St. Austin Review* and the *Catholic Anchor*.

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