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SUBURBAN EYES was written over the winter of 1982/83 in Toronto during a period of time when our ten year marriage was questioning itself. It contains poetry written by me; to my wife and other women (friends); from my wife to me and other men (friends & colleagues); by another woman (friend) to myself. The book was named after Loretta Urban. *Suburban Eyes* had a sell-out print run of 700 and is the only book of poetry with a "Playboy" style centerfold.

This book would not have been written without the inspiration of two poets with whom I had several conversations within the previous year. First, I thank Raymond Souster, without whose guidance and inspiration through constructive suggestions, my writing may have stayed in the filing cabinet and never been published, in particular, *Giants of the North* (Third Eye Press, 1992). Secondly, I owe a debt of gratitude to the late Dorothy Livesay, (Writer in Residence at the U of Toronto at the time) who took a look at my first book of poetry (Poetics, 1982) and said that only 10% (11 poems) were any good. She stated that one poem was the best (Yonge St. and Roxborough) and I should discover why this and the other (10) poems are good and work on that style and perfect it.

Canadian Book Review Annual supplied the only review (dual with *Auschwitz*):

"It is hard to believe that *Suburban Eyes* and *Auschwitz* were written by the same person. (*Auschwitz* review).. *Suburban Eyes*, by the same author and already in its second printing, is a disappointing contrast. It is a book of "love and friendship, life and death, fidelity and marriage." These themes are treated in an insipid and maudlin way that fails to arouse interest. Titles like "Young Lovers," "College Sweetheart," and "Run Into My Arms" abound. Of these 28 poems, only one ("Yonge Street and Roxborough") is even worth mentioning. The book reads too much like the ramblings of a first-year college student to be taken seriously."

N.M. Drutz.

YOUNG LOVERS

Young lovers as friends,
cast pebbles upon the waters,
watched by the birds of the air.
They step into the night
opening the doors of love.

Young lovers who start as friends,
hope as they grow old,
casting pebbles
will be as easy as
when they were just friends.

COLLEGE SWEETHEART

So now you've gone
and left me here, to
think of the good times
and remember the cheer,
the year was short
that we knew, weeks passed
and friendship grew,
now summers gone
and fall is nigh,
soon to be together my
college sweetheart and I,
to place a kiss upon
her lips is all in my design,
to squeeze the grapes upon
her bush and taste
of her sweet wine.

RUN INTO MY ARMS

I catch you off guard
when my affections
are too open, and you
take long walks
in the open fields
within your heart.

Don't hold back!
You want to touch me
and I your soul,
then you retract
your emotions.
Don't hold back,
when you see me coming,
run into my arms!

LEAVING

Sometimes I wish
you weren't going away,
we've only just met, you and I.
It seems the wayward
underside bursts the moment
you are gone.
We haven't had time
to understand each other,
but it's always the same with me,
fleeting friends and fantasies.
I deserve to remain,
while you release your
flies from amber.

YONGE STREET AND ROXBOROUGH

She stood on the curb
as I drove my Fairmont
up to the stop line. She
held up her head and began
walking across the street,
leaving beads of tears
falling on the pavement.
She walked proud and expressionless
save those sorrowed eyes,
in front of my Fairmont.
A victim of some unknown tragedy
to me, as she carried
her sorrow well hidden,
to Yonge Street's western side.

I wanted to reach out and help,
but the light turned green
in front of my Fairmont,
and I was on my way home.

SHIFT WORK

After I dropped you
off at work last night,
I went for a beer.
I can't remember if
it was a Golden or a 50
or whatever.
When I drink alone
it takes a long time
to finish my 50
or whatever.
Why is it
the only time
we get to go out together
is when you're working
shift work,
and then you're gone
and I'm left alone,
to drink my 50,
or whatever?

COMMON TEARS

Can you voice the dust of all those years,
through a veil of common tears?
Does it all have to come to an end with doubt,
when you had given your all, they cast you out?
You were better than they, I detect,
you had all the energy and enthusiasm, they
had all the energy and no respect.

2D-NORTH, ST. MICHAELS HOSPITAL

I am in the midst of human wreckage,
people who have fallen
by the wayside of life,
hopeless cases hanging about
these hospital corridors,
frozen in their despair,
unable to cope with
their reality of life,
and you poets are oblivious to the pain,
going about your writings and
never paying attention
to what's really happening.

Paper isn't alive and breathing,
it can't speak out to you, it
only absorbs the words you
write upon it,
oblivious to my pain,
for I am in the midst of
human wreckage.

YOU ARE YOUNGER

You are younger than I.
I crave for you in my night dreams.
It is only then that I can touch you,
but you will never know my desires,
for you crave another, less pure
but infinitely more desirable.
She lives on a high frenzied wire.
I am more subdued and quiet,
living reality in the recesses
of my imagination.

When she arrives with you,
I draw back into my protective shell.

SOMEONE

Someone

had written her a love song
which she read
under the hot noon day sun.

Someone
must have known her well enough
to want to share
his life with hers.

She
absorbed the heat on her nakedness
while she stood
in her back yard tanning,
reading the rhyme of this love song.

She
wondered who could be so sweet
in the lines that were spoken.

She
would have liked to answer this person
who wanted to share loves token.

When
she finished reading
she could not return the same,
for beads of sweat fell from her breast
washing away the name.

SUSAN

I have tried
to talk to you, through
my paper and my pen,
I want to reach
your inner thoughts, but
where do I begin?
We've grown apart
in spirit and in passion,
heated words, hurled
at each other, like
so many stones, building
the wall we fashion.
It's not like us
to want to be destroying
ourselves, in order to be free.

AS FRIENDS

(by susan walmsley)

The waiting and indecision
is worse than the fear of rejection,
I suppose.

I don't think you will
reject me but rather
draw me towards you
in a long overdue embrace.

I thought you really cared,
so I waited for you to tell me
how you really felt. You never did.
And the waiting and indecision
is worse than the fear of rejection,
I suppose.

At one time you kissed me,
gently and sadly, turned and
walked away. Another day
I thought, another day.
From the start,
we could have been more than just friends.

I remembered the way you studied me,
caressing my face and body
with your eyes,
acting out the parts of a play
within your heart.

I wanted to tell you how I cared,
but when it came time for you to leave,
I noticed a strange sadness
in your eyes.

So this is the way it will be?
Never to see you again,
all the joy and laughter shared,
I thought you really cared?

And the waiting and indecision
is worse than the fear of rejection,
I suppose.
You make me angry with your silence.
Why can't you
come forward with
your feelings, tell me,
tell me anything?

Separated.

There, I've said it.

This one little word could
make all the difference
in the world, my world,
your world, divorced
within my heart.

Would that make any difference to you?
The difference between running silent
or running to me with your feelings.

I'm waiting for your response.

We can be more than friends
but the waiting and indecision
is worse than the fear of rejection, I suppose.

REJECTION

Please leave
and let me follow behind.
We will never be friends.
We will never be a part of
each other. Sharing
is not within you.

Do not come closer.
We are no longer lovers,
nor can we reconcile.
Please leave
and let me follow behind.

THE VIRGIN

How can you be
so opposed to
the sexual satisfaction
of a hooker
when in all your virginity
you have known little
of the flame that
can kindle in your heart
and know nothing of
the fire that can
burn in your pants.

SEVEN YEAR ITCH

I tried to talk to you
while you slept
and as you mumbled in bed
with your eyes closed,
I listened.

We have been lonely
you and I,
going to bed each night
but only to sleep,
and now you say love songs
in your restless slumber,
reaching out to touch my face,
calling someone else's name.

THE TIME HAS COME TO PAY THE PIPER

The time has come to pay the piper
said the lady to the loon,
for such a melancholy melody,
green backs for the tune,

The time has come to pay the piper
said the trees to the land,
none to soon came the reply,
for the best of songs at hand.

I know of no other place to be
to walk along beside the sea,
lazy, hazy starlight upon grass,
and hear of songs that last.

The time has come to pay the piper
said the lady to the loon,
for such a melancholy melody,
a ten spot for the tune.

Up tree one bark, down to earth
green upside leaves over brown,
robin wings and spider mirth,
no other way to come down.

The time has come to pay the piper
said the lady with outstretched hand,
for such a sad, sad melody,
the time has come to pay the band.

The moon's upon the mountain tops,
the lady has been delayed,
she gave him all her love,
and the piper has been payed.

PANDORA'S BOX

I slipped a note beneath your door,
I heard it slip across the floor,
and as I knelt I thought I heard
a gentle cooing like a bird.

There was a sound I could only guess
was the slow unzipping of your dress.
I knew you were home, I'd seen the light,
the little one that doesn't burn so bright.

I went to knock but to my surprise,
I heard two different heavy sighs.
I opened the door to my demise
and saw a stranger between your thighs.

The note that slid across the floor,
the one I slipped beneath your door,
it was to have said that I'd been untrue,
but now I know the jokes on you.

I thought I'd seen his face before,
this morning behind the clinic door.
Now, you may think that he's the best,
but ask him who failed the VD test!

YOUR HEART

The sun melted your heart
like a brick of butter
in my hands,
flowing through my fingers,
finding the floor.
My legs ran me fast
to a cool place to harden it
back again, but I
could not save it all
and what I could save,
I will keep forever.

THE GOOD THINGS IN LIFE

I too, appreciate
and savour the sips
of a natural tea.
I can get close to the warmth
of a suburban fire.
I can feel the uncut lawn
after virgin snow has gone.
I too, appreciate
the good things in life
and dream of you all night long

WHEN IT COMES TIME FOR YOU TO LEAVE ME

When it comes time
for you to leave me,
will you remember
or will you forget me?

I sat beside the fire
holding your hand in mine.
I gazed into the flames,
I saw you dreaming.

When you smiled
and closed your eyes,
I suddenly felt the fire
that warmed your heart
was not in the same room
as the one that warmed mine.

When it comes time
for you to leave me,
will you remember
or will you forget me?

WHEN I WALKED INTO YOUR LIFE

I walked into your life,
I was walking like a blind man.
I stepped into your life,
I was not at all a sane man.

I stood on the corner of the street,
I was saving tears for another day.
I stood on the corner of the street,
you came and showed me a better way.

I walked and talked beside you,
I dropped the burdon from my shoulders.
I talked and walked beside you,
you changed into pebbles those awesome boulders.

I pulled you close to me,
you released me from my chains.
I pulled you closer to me,
I could see I was not insane.

I walked into your lifestyle,
I was walking like a blind man.
I stepped into your lifestyle,
I could not see beyond my outstretched hand.

I realized you had shaped my future,
and released me from my past.
I hoped I could repay you in your future,
and make these precious moments last.

SHADOWS, REFLECTIONS OF LOVE

Our shadows were holding hands
for when we last walked together
and sang love songs in the sand
I knew you wanted to touch me.

Mostly for you
not so much for me,
when our distance grew
I was a little hurt.

Much too easily
we melted in each others arms
it seemed somehow to me
when we first met
it seemed somehow to me
we melted in each others arms
much too easily.

I was a little hurt
when our distance grew,
not so much for me
mostly for you.

I knew you wanted to touch me
and sing love songs in the sand
for when we last walked together
our shadows were holding hands.

IS THIS ALL YOU'VE GOT?

It's getting cold out here.
I'm a stranger at your door.
I raise a weak fist, a knock,
hard enough to hear.

It's getting lonely out here.
I see a light upon the floor.
I raise a weak fist, a knock,
shadows move in fear.

I've walked a fair mile
along the winding road.
I raise a weak fist, open up!
Feed my aching smile.

Is this all you've got?
Bread through the mail slot!
A morsel of chocolate!
Is this all you've got?

You can trust this old man.
Please don't throw me out.
I'd rather have the whole loaf
than eat the crumbs of doubt.

It's getting cold out here.
I'm still at your door.
Unlatch it. Open it wide.
I want so much more.

I WAS THINKING ABOUT YOU

I was thinking about you,
how you've grown
since we first met.
How you've changed
since we first met.

I was thinking about you,
how we've grown
together,
apart.
I was thinking about you.

When I dream,
I dream about you.
But when you dream..?

Maybe that's why
I was thinking about you,
of how you've changed
since we first met,
of how we've changed
since we first met.

I FELT YOUR EMBRACE

When we first met, I felt your warm skin
without even touching you and through my poetry
you read my life without even touching me.
Then you chose a special verse,
one segment of yourself to bestow upon me,
a verbal yearning, a silent thank you,
not realizing that in those words,
I embraced your life having never even
touched you.

A SONG FOR YOU

(by sylvia gerl)

There's something inside me
crying to be let out
because I need you so badly,
but doesn't get a chance.
Lions and giraffes
behind bars in a foreign land,
not speaking the same language,
not being citizens,
to work or go home
or to get away.
I'm constantly travelling in circles
and when I change directions
I'm facing a brick wall,
an ocean of not knowong,
having a committment
to those people who want
to play their particular games
and those humourless,
nameless faces, that make my laws
and restrict my longings.
That is, enough to keep me alive.
Maybe you can release me,
or maybe you're one of those caged animals,
are you game?

SUICIDE ON JARVIS STREET

One summer night she waked alone
across a street of cobblestone
and with each step of echoed breath,
she feared no evil, laughed at death.

Fair of face and soft of skin,
pure of heart having never known sin,
she chanced to meet a man disgraced,
a slug unto the human race.

Feeling pity as she always does,
felt sorry for him, just because,
but through the booze and drugs of night,
he saw her in a different light.

His mind went crazed,
he swirled about as in a daze
and struck her firmly 'round the head
until he thought that she was dead.

Then he pulled her to his lair
and tainted her soft virginal hairs
and when she woke the night was cold,
she felt so used and so old.
Slowly she walked home to rest
and ripped her heart from beneath her breast.