

PHYLLIS
LOVES KELLY

PHYLLIS GOTLIEB

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POETRY BY PHYLLIS GOTTLIEB

Who Knows One? Poems. Toronto, Hawkshead Press, 1962.

Within the Zodiac. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964.

Ordinary, Moving. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969.

Doctor Umlaut's Earthly Kingdom. Toronto: Calliope Press, 1974.

The Works: Collected Poems. Toronto, Calliope Press, 1978.

Red Blood, Black Ink, White Paper: New and Selected Poems 1961–2001.
Toronto: Exile Editions, 2002.

“mr & mrs frankenstein” in *The Stars As Seen from
This Particular Angle of Night: An Anthology of Speculative Verse.*
Ed. Sandra Kastu. Calgary: Red Deer Press, 2003.

PHYLLIS
LOVES KELLY



PHYLLIS GOTLIEB



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
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Phyllis and Kelly Gotlieb, April 3, 1949,
shortly after their marriage
Courtesy of Calvin Gotlieb

BACK COVER PHOTO:

Phyllis and Kelly Gotlieb, February 2008
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P R E F A C E

Many thanks to Ian Lancashire,
Professor of English at the University of Toronto
for his keen eye for poetry and speculative fiction,
and for his lifelong friendship with Phyllis and me.

Calvin (Kelly) Gotlieb

EDITOR'S NOTE

A few of the originals of Phyllis's Valentine and birthday poems for Kelly have not survived, and many are without date. Phyllis typed or hand-wrote them on funny cards, letterhead, and note paper. She used picture clippings and dingbats ornaments, and her poems took many forms. The first poem, for example, links 18 little children's cards on a red cloth chain shaped like a bow with hearts. Three of her already published love poems, included here, show Phyllis's flair and wit as a modern poet writing for a cultured audience she did not know, but the rest are occasional poems, addressed to one person, telling a lifelong love story.

In the design of this book we have endeavoured, where possible, to recreate the physical appearance of Phyllis's poems. We sought out long-forgotten dingbat fonts, replicated little sketches, and on occasion allowed the paper and the typeface to tell us when a poem had been written. Normally we chose a poem's first line for a title when Phyllis began only with a salutation.

Ian Lancashire
Toronto 21.01.2014

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EPILOGUE

BY CALVIN (KELLY) GOTLIEB

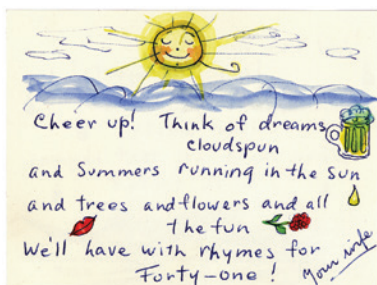
- 97 Kelly Loves Phyllis in Six Weeks and Sixty Years

FROM HER HAND

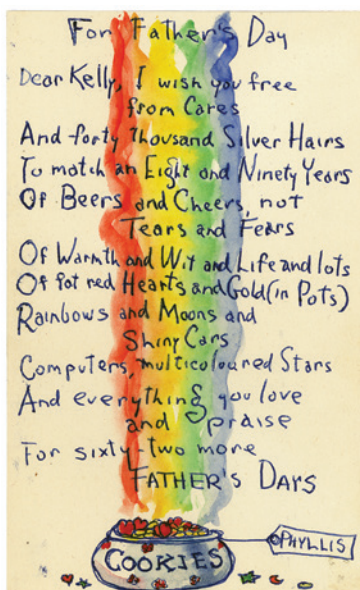
- iii Don't like rakish?
Dear Kelly, I wish
A birthday flies
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FROM HER HAND

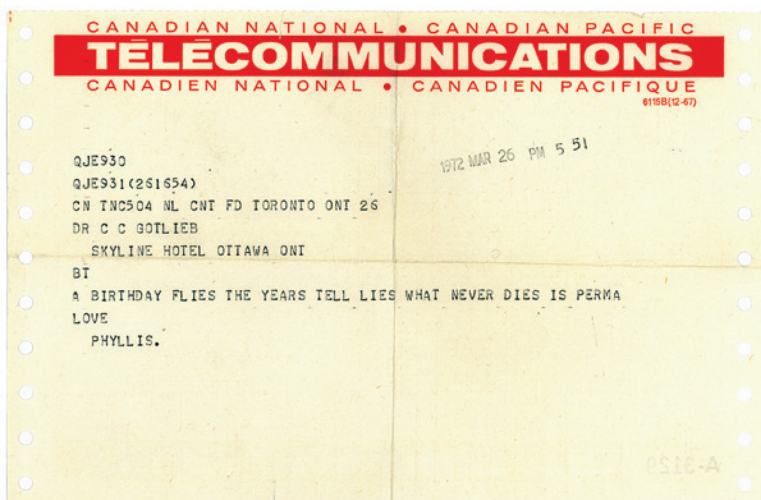




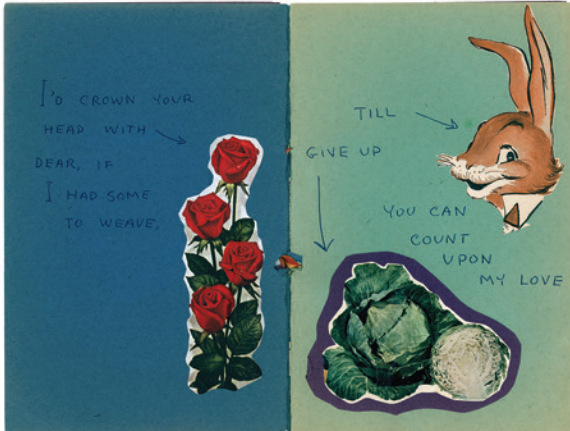
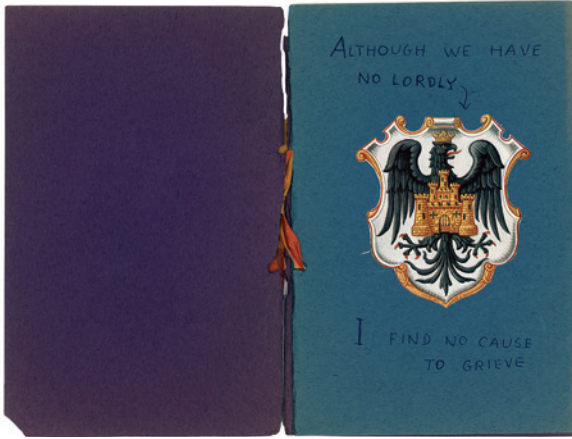
[1961]

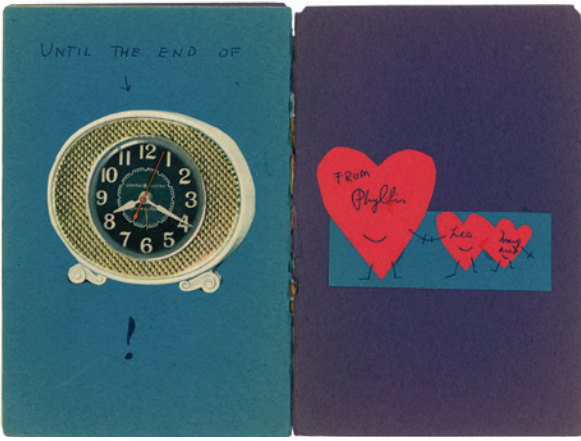
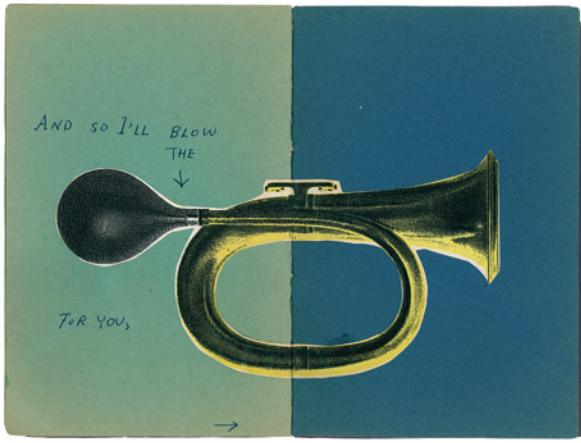
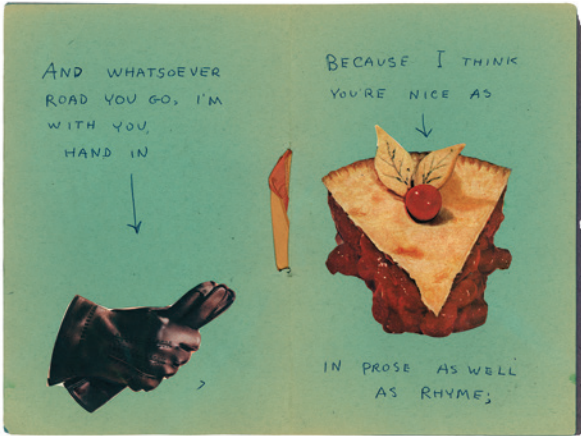


[JUNE 16, 1982]



[1972]







PRELUDES



I searched the racks of Valentines
In rigid regimental Lines

In heaps & piles
In ranks & files
In portents & in signs

With throbbing hearts
Cupids' darts
Wishes & fishes
In golden dishes

Bows & arrows
& Sceptured Pharaohs

And as I cringed at drip & drivel
I felt my heart turn crisp and Shrivel

Nearly loony
With the croony
Of the tuny
Juny moony

Oven-simple
Deep as a dimple

And the sick, and the insulting
And revolting
Sent me bolting,
Till, exulting—

I cried, Hell!
I'll tell
My love with a Yell!

Without the dove
The stars above,
The flowers & fuzz
Because

It's hot as a stove
Spiced as a Clove
Rich as a Croesus
And golden fleeces

Sharp as a pin
Jealous as sin
and
Intoxicating as gin

Sweet as rain
On the parching grain
Complex as the human brain

Varicoloured in depth & stratum
Binding as the force of an atom

Early & late straight as a datum
Fanciful as a quote verbatim
And final as an ultimum!

In short, dear, anything but trivial
Even to celebrate the Convivial

Even if what I write is doggerel
My love is fresh as an inaugural

And, guaranteed, of course, for life,
(No money back)

Your loving wife
Phyllis

While I was hanging around waiting for Cupid
to inspire me today my brain grew numb & stupid
and all the rhymes I'd been saving
for ages, specially, grew heavy as paving
Stones, and I thought Gee whiz, this
won't do, a Valentine should be light as a kiss
Or a cake, & twice as sweet, fine grained as a feather
In the wind, lovely as springtime weather,
a heart's a nice red, but a snuffly nose
is not a rose, not a rose
and a hacking cough ain't music, so I'll put away all fancy
dancy & romancy
ideas & simply say

I love you!

it's as true and as good today
as always, Phyllis

1960S



It's surely not a dreadful fate
to be a year past 38
but lovely to be 39
because it rhymes with wine & dine
and thank you, I'm just feeling fine,
crispy pickles in the brine,
a heart-bespangled Valentine
rosy fruits upon the vine—
not necessarily a sign
that you'll be growing fat & warty
next year when you get to forty
and so I lay it on the line
with (love) my dear
because you're (Mine)

Phyllis

[1960]

Don't like rakish?
Don't like sporty?
Don't like fat? and don't
like warty?
When that's all that rhymes
with forty?



Cheer up! Think of dreams
cloudspun
and Summers running
in the sun
and trees and flowers and all
the fun
We'll have with rhymes for
Forty-one!

Your wife

[1961; see iii]

For Kelly

At 42 the drift
of the years flows faster
but the race is not to the swift
or the first one, but the laster

At 42 the toll
of the years may seem weighty
I'll wait to condole
with you at 4 & 80

Years rich with goods
of love & laughter flowing—
don't count the woods
while the tree's green & growing

Your everloving
Phyllis

[1963]

FIRST PERSON DEMONSTRATIVE

I'd rather
heave half a brick than say
I love you, though I do
I'd rather
crawl in a hole than call you
darling, though you are
I'd rather
wrench off an arm than hug you though
it's what I long to do
I'd rather
gather a posy of poison ivy than
ask if you love me

so if my
hair doesn't stand on end it's because
I never tease it
and if my
heart isn't in my mouth it's because
it knows its place
and if I
don't take a bite of your ear it's because
gristle gripes my guts
and if you
miss the message better get new
glasses and read it twice

[PUBLISHED IN 1969]

It's nice
to have a crusty slice
of bread

a simple wish
a steamy dish
of stew

a cheerful face
a place
to lay my head

a gal. of wine
a Valentine
and Y♡U

from your Wife and Crew

Bony Fingers

Kidding aside, dear, I couldn't find
Any kind
Of heart-full card with words to rhyme with "Kelly"
Except "jelly belly"
Which you haven't got
Or "rakehelly"
Which you're not
Or "Nelly"
(Who's she?)
But gee
Whiz, I'm glad that words like "wine" and "dine"
Wilt thou be "mine"
For you I "pine"
(And balsam), and lots of ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡ in a line
And all the cheerful things that make love shine
Still rhyme
with
Valentine

your bony-fingered wife

For Kelly

O
it's a speeding Kiss,
it's a
lancing Love-
Letter, a smirking
French Letter, a
Lightning-Streak hurled at the Heart,
it's a
Bolt to strike you Sky-Blue-Pink, it's
our Daily Bread, our Nightly Sleep, our Sex, our
Scotch & Martinis, our
touch of the Door-Post, our Sunrise
and Evening Light, our
Goings out & Comings Home, it's
our Curses & Blessings,
our Lives & Loving, it's

A Valentine!

from his eternally loving Wife: Phyllis

1970S



A BIRTHDAY FLIES
THE YEARS TELL LIES
WHAT NEVER DIES
IS PERMA[NENT]

LOVE
PHYLLIS

[TELEGRAM, 1972; see iii]

The Usual

when I talk of love
if it makes your teeth ache
sorry it does not *pleure dans mon coeur*
comme il pleut sur la ville
I drag my nails down my scabbed heart
till it's ridged as an Ashanti warrior's face
and forbidding

say it is a ship
registered under the Liberian flag
riding its bilge, old rust & shifting oil
it beats, it beats

you've heard everything beats like a heart
birds' wings or engines, everyone
takes the world's pulse
tell me what a heart beats like then?
in fire a star

I know whose heart
attends a strange measuring device
a marvel of chronologic accuracy
I set my clocks by, it is my pacemaker
beats a yard apart, a fathom deep
through its chest wall I swear I hear it say
timeless, timeless

my old scarred lug's a
blood veteran, stormbringer
inharmonious organ fitted with
pipes, bellows, wheezes, lubdubb and oh
my workday love, my love
my Monday love

[PUBLISHED IN 1974]

For Kelly, 53 years +

Tonight as ever
I deliver my sleep
into his arms.

Lovingly, Phyllis.

[1974]

To:
My Valentine, the Pres.:

A Valentine's a love-shaped thought
saved for a year's one day
like money buried in a pot
—but crocks have walls of clay
and vaults, of steel

myself, I feel
I'd rather be more profligate
and spend the lot in living
than save for one day's giving

for love's a gift and not a debt
no tax or tariff, gross or net
and fiscally its statements send
all punditry confounded:

no matter how much love you spend
the interest's still compounded!

From:
Your Valentine, the Sec.-Treas.
P

No need to tell it
Sell it
Yell it
From rooftops jot it
On paper, blot it
On blotters, bawl it
Call it
Doll it
Up with laces, plot it
Like a story, pot it
Like Spam
Spread it with jam
Weigh it by gram
Swear it. By Damn!
You've got it!

from Yours truly

↗ P.
(mystery)

for Kelly

this is the Ancient Order of the heart
a fleshly pump, the Queen of Metaphor:
the heart of oak, the heart of gold, the core
a scoundrel's rotten to, the aching part
of frustrate love, the target of the dart
the organ that takes arms and goes to war
against the head, the live red source of art

—till it's a scrap-paper hypocrisy
a trashy truth that no-one will believe
this Grand Medallion of an image; me,
I never trifle with a Valentine
because I always wear it on my sleeve
when I say *have a heart* I mean *take mine*.

Phyllis

[insignia given with poem; see vi]

*

well

love, you got it or not
if not it's groan writhe scratch &
throw stones
got, it's riding a tiger
flesh balance between rib & stripe
sway and lead from the powered head
turn away
fierce mortal breath, fang & tail flick

why not

flense the creature, make out on
its tame rug? ah, that
tupping hangs out
in another part of the dictionary

love is riding a tiger
a slide over blood and fired bone
you and thin skin between
the way you like it, and
if one should ask
what rough beast

you tell him, sweetheart
tiger riding is love

[PUBLISHED IN 1974]

Dearest Kelly,

i thought I saw a Slice of Life
fragrant with love and light
i looked again and found that i
was absolutely right!
Dear love, it's full of spice!
i cried:
let's take another bite!

your Valentine
P.

1978

Dearest Kelly

May your days be mainly sunny
(with light showers, for the garden)
and all your puns be funny
& your arteries never harden
please accept our love & money
(and for lateness, grant your pardon)

with love from all

P., L., M & J.

[1978]

why ring the changes on a rhyme
when the bell-clapper tongue is dumb
and every word's as old as Time
and Time itself is moping-mum
with dredging rhymes: and frozen numb
embattled words all push & shove
add two by two and cannot sum
why look for rhyme, when you have love?

forever is a jangled chime
and *darling* is a brittle crumb
and *sweetheart's* long beyond its prime
and old *undying's* time has come
when all the songs are wearisome
as broken clocks that cannot move
beyond a dullard's tick & hum
look for no rhyme when you have love

oh Prince! its act is kingdom-come,
the fact of Heaven its deeds prove,
its thought is new as light.

my sum
is added. Rhymeless, I bring love.

P.

Dearest Kelly,

this is a leaf from a book,
a tree, a life
that tells of lifelong love, deeper
than a library of books,
greater than a redwood forest
my old love for you delivered
freshly in this fragile envelope
of old paper, but always new,
ever renewed

your everloving Valentine

Phyllis

Roses seem to wither
in late autumn weather
without caring if we're
apart or together.

It doesn't slice the cabbage
it doesn't salt the stew
it doesn't mash the turnips
if I love you.

If you love me
it doesn't calm the sea
or crack an oak or flutter
the wings of a flea.

But what love manufactures
is good warm stuff
& between you & me
it's enough!

Yours,
P.

Dear, when you ride a toboggan
wear this cap upon your noggin
when you make the winter scene
use it well to warm your bean

if you travel far from home
may it well protect your dome
for woven in every thread
are all my blessings on your head.

Love, P.

INTERLUDE



Great Valentines Through The Ages

CLEOPATRA to ANTONY

My dear, you'd have a valentine
that's sexy, hot, and scented
the only thing that stops me, is
—it hasn't been invented

HELOISE to ABELARD

We'd live again those memories clear
my heart with joy recalls
if I but had my wishes, dear,
And you still had your balls

STELLA to SWIFT

My dear sweet Dean,
for my Valentine
I would prefer your
heart conjoined to mine
but if you cannot
send it through the post
then I suppose
I'd like
 1 silk apron
 1 faience snuffbox
 & 2 silver buttonhooks
the most

ELIZABETH to RALEIGH

Alas, sir Walter, sad to see
you are so near to croak
yet all you ever gave to me
was one old muddy cloak

ELIZABETH BARRETT to R. BROWNING

Dear Robert, we shall never quarrel or fuss;
to you, the trousers & to me the bonnets;
labour division's unity to us:
you get the monologues, I'll take the sonnets.

ME TO YOU

When everything is said & done
—and boy, has it been done & said!
my love is world and stars and sun
& hand & heart & head & bed.

With love,

P.

Suitable Limericks

1.

The world is a desperate place
that's not garnished with velvet & lace
but its corners of night
turn to arches of light
by the warmth of the love in a face

2.

Romance seems a delicate flower
that might wilt in a wind or a shower
this perennial breed
is deceptive: its seed
is the love that gives Romance the power

3.

To produce the supreme Valentine
choose a couple as old as good wine
when the lifetime they share
brews a loving as rare
as the blessedest fruit of the vine

Yours & Mine.

P.

1980S



A Valentine for Kelly

Although we have no lordly [crest]
I find no cause to grieve
I'd crown your head with [roses]
Dear, if I had some to weave,

Till [rabbits] give up lettuce
You can count upon my love
And whatsoever road you go,
I'm with you hand in [glove]

Because I think you're nice as [pie]
In prose as well as rhyme;
And so I'll blow the [horn] for you,
Until the end of [time]

From Phyllis, Leo, Marg and ...

[words in square brackets are pictures; see iv-v]

K.

♡ + ♡ = 1

We may be frazzled, dizzy, dazed
Maybe we're cracked, but we're not crazed!
And if we're sore, it's not at heart
And broke as well, but not apart

♡

We groan! So what? We still don't whine
It's why I'm yours, it's why you're mine
A hale and hearty Valentine!

↓

♡ ♡ ♡ ♡
♡ ♡ ♡

P.

1980

Dearest Kelly

When every verse is tried and trite
and whispers on the phone
so weakly hint the loving light
what can be said or shown?
I keep your pillow warm at night
in bed, beneath my own

Your Valentine

1981

Valentine Cowboy

for C. Gotlieb

Con Amore
Molto *vivace*

P. Gotlieb: Op. primum
Et ultimum 1982

1.

I was reading old letters this morning ♡ ♡
And Valentine hearts fat and red ♡ ♡ ♡
And I hoped that no love-thought a-borning ♡ ♡ ♡
Got withered unspoken, unsaid ♡ ♡ ♡

2.

I can't make much music with fingers ♡ ♡
My voice spins the dead in their graves ♡ ♡ ♡
But I never had much need of singers ♡ ♡ ♡
When our love fills the clefs and the staves ♡ ♡ ♡

3.

So I keep writing words that I know you ♡ ♡
Will find kind of trite and outworn ♡ ♡ ♡ ♡
But if you keep your eyes open they'll show you ♡ ♡
A love that is sweetly newborn ♡ ♡ ♡

4. chorus

These Valentine hearts aren't for breaking ♡ ♡
Like oaks clove from lightnings above ♡ ♡ ♡
But to wear in all weathers by making ♡ ♡
The ice melt its teeth on our love ♡ ♡ ♡

ad libitum, ad infinitum

1982

For Father's Day

Dear Kelly, I wish you free from Cares
And forty Thousand Silver Hairs
To match an Eight and Ninety Years
Of Beers and Cheers, not Tears and Fears
Of Warmth and Wit and Life and lots
Of fat red Hearts and Gold (in Pots)
Rainbows and Moons and Shiny Cars
Computers, multicoloured Stars
And everything you love and praise
For sixty-two more

FATHER'S DAYS

Phyllis

[pot of cookies]

[JUNE 16, 1982; see iii]

A ♥ for K.

O Valentine, O Valentine
in passing years the spirits entwine
to each the tree, to each the vine
my Valentine, Dear Valentine

though flowers shrivel, branches crack
frost whitens earth, cloud turns the sky black
the red heart is the Spring's ensign
O Valentine, my Valentine

We breed no thrilling nightingale
no peacock spreads a starry tail
the humble sparrows on the lines
sing songs of love for Valentines

The years go faster than they come
and lips for want of words may turn dumb
but Love speaks subtle, swift and fine
from eye to heart, O Valentine

P ♥

1983

For Kelly

A Valentine's theme may be raveled and worn
perhaps old Cupid's feathers seem ragged and torn
his arrows look blunted
his bow warped and stunted
such sentiments gather the nettles of scorn

but mountains may scar while their beauty stays grand
and green shoots spring yearly from mold-covered land
so my words might still sing
like the streams of the spring
as hearts quicken freshly when hand touches hand

no matter how tattered the verse and the line
(as a purse full of money need never be fine)
old songs still find grace
in the memory's embrace
and a heart's love need say only:

Dear Valentine

From Phyllis

1984 and counting

1984

A few thought-I-saws and a lot of love

① I thought I saw a Valentine
as dreary as the sky
I looked again and found that it
was something in my eye
a blink, a kiss, a wish, my love
the blackest clouds defy

② you look at life and feel too well
the winter's iron claw
love, look again and then recall
the oldest living law:
that all renews, in grass or flesh
somewhere, somehow, in awe

③ I do not see the universe
in rumty-tumty rhymes
I shake them out and try them on
searching for fair designs
burnished with love, richer than gold
these are my Valentines

Phyllis



♥ Erratum: not “rhymes” but “lines”

1985

Kelly

I went to find a rebus
a riddle round and rolling
I only found a moebius
(I picked it up while strolling)

I saw some 📞📞📞
and rang them

I found some 🎵🎵🎵
and sang them

I found a 🗨️
It did not fitt
with all my love for you in it

then by and by, my 🐦👁️
found ☆☆☆ and 🌀🌀🌀 and 🌸🌸🌸
along with miscellaneous
things to improve the hours: 🚗📌📖🔧🔗📞📞📞

they did not 🍷 my love for you
not lemons, bars, nor cherries
for we and love

go 🧤 in glove,

and sweetheart, it's the 🍓🍓🍓

Your Love

Phyllis

1986

My dear, I hope this Valentine
moves you to rejoice & shine
beaming when you see that your face
gleams upon a brilliant surface,
and reflects my love that glows
and blesses you from head to toes.

P.

For Kelly

A Valentine

New love is
Like a sapling with delicate
Quivering leaves
That move at the slightest
Touch of air
And bow down helplessly
Under a great
Windstorm

Old love is
An ancient maple, an oak, a redwood
With roots as deep as
The center of the world
That only the greatest
Earthquake or the most powerful hurricane
Could wrench away
Or even greater
The banyan that drops roots endlessly from its
Reaching branches to grasp the earth, the world
And never dies

From your old lover

Phyllis

Twenty-seven Views of Forty Years

1. Eating snails at LaChaumière
2. months of engagement
3. when you learned I was pregnant with Leo
4. the really hot honeymoon drive from LA to San Francisco
5. homecoming after seven weeks away in Manchester with the Ferranti
6. the Avenue of Cryptomerias in Nikko
7. a croissant breakfast in Paris
8. hearts of palm in Rio de Janeiro
9. both our mothers finding fears of poverty groundless
10. Bob-Lo Island on a trip to Detroit
11. hurting from Leo, Margaret, Jane,
12. but never forgetting love and pleasure from them either
13. twenty thousand burned-brown faces in Nanjing
14. upside-down house during renovation
15. both of us lasting through some pretty bad seasons
16. Hong Kong Harbor and a thousand bobbing junks
17. thirty years of roses seen from the patio
18. the stars from the deck of the Amerikanis
19. the Jupiter Symphony in the Rocky Mountains
20. a New York Martini
21. the Fonda del Sol
22. Hide and Seek at the MOMA
23. first night any time of being away
24. coming home after any time of being away
25. home anywhere
26. love anywhere
27. us anywhere

For Kelly
from Phyllis

1990S



for Kelly

Dear Love, I have run out of rhymes
after writing all those lines
of Valentines
so many times
all of the moonshine, May wine, Cupid's darts
so sweetly wreathed around with fat red hearts
all of the moons so bright you'd never believe them
loving hearts so true no one could ever deceive them
all of that jazz so hot
so many words well wrought
for me and you
and all of it true
my words have never come cheap
and every one is yours to keep
my golden-souled
my never-grow-old
Prince
♡

beside the waves that lap
above the pistons that tap
among the sea-ringed islands where the dancers clap
in the lands of pineapples, mangos, limes
dear love, I have run out of rhymes
your love
♡
Phyllis

70, for Kelly

Slipping years are little measures of an
Ever deepening life that
Values loving, always grows in
Ever widening ripples of awareness,
Never wanes, nor diminishes the value of a
Trust in living love, it is good as a green
Youth where years are little measures only

Phyllis

[1991]

For Kelly

HAPPY HAPPY

· **BIRTHDAY** ·

· **BIRTHDAY** ·

· **MIRTHDAY** ·

· **BRITHDAY** ·

· **MYTHDAY** ·

· **EARTHDAY** ·

· **YOURDAY** ·

· **MY DAY** ·

· **THIS DAY'S** ·

· **FRIDAY!** ·

Sloppily but
lovingly
Phyllis

1992



For Kelly

Rocky Valentine



LOVE EVOLves like planets turning
ever to the burning sun
scattered dust made whole in turning
atoms burning to be one
see God tap them and they run!
LOVE makes one and one be one



LOVE is part of rEVOLution
LOVE's the one that turns the sun
LOVE's no problem or solution
LOVE makes one and one be one
LOVE and LOVE make two be one
turning in the burning sun



from your loving Phyllis



1992

For Kelly



UNIVERSAL VALENTINE



Sperm and Ovum
songs of Joy



longing years
create this Boy



sweet blood-pulsing
veins entwine



to bind together
life's sweet line



loving ever
yours and mine



two hearts make one
our Valentine



From your eternally loving wife
Phyllis

1993

For Kelly

Seventy-two
looks sexy on you

Lovingly
Phyllis

[1993]

For Kelly

V is the initial of your Virtues: Vision, Values, Vitality, Vivacity,
also Velocity
A signifies our Affection, All I know about you, and our wonderful
Apartment
L for Levity because though we've got Lots of Love we can always
use a good Laugh
E stands for Everything you've done to give me the happiness I
wouldn't have had without you
N is for nights of loving and the pistachio Nuts you bring for the
martiNis we both enjoy
T means the hundreds of Times and rhymes I made to Tell you
These old gold standards
I is for Images & memories of pleasure, Insights ever expanding,
and Intimacies
N means Nothing but love and Nothing better, and
E is for Everything Else, Ethan, Everlasting, Effervescence, last in
first love

Yours ever
Phyllis

1994

♥Heart O' Mine: A Soft-Shoe Shuffle♥



A can stand for Anything that makes you smile a while
B is for the Brightness of that smile
(too rare when doused by Care)



D may be Discouragements, but Dare to say they'll fade away, so
Efferesce & Energize, and lift the brows of those blue Eyes
For not so Far away's a better day For you & me,
It rhymes with Gee, I'm glad I've Got you for my Valentine
O Heart o' Mine!



when I feel way low down
you cheer me Just
to have you round & near me, Kid
you give a Lot of Love & Loving's
everything to Me, O heart of Mine!



Nobody ever loved before the way I love you more and more
Oh Oh Oh, the chorus is: Heart o' mine!



I'm Putting down some Cupid's darts: ♠️ ♡️ ♠️ ♡️
dear Monarch, from your Queen of Hearts
I know this Ragtime Rhapsody is running kind of long



but I don't care when one word more will fit into my Song
That's new & True
And loving yoU
O Valentine



my Wonderful ever so
eXtra special
Yeah Yeah, You
Zap me, kid!



♥ Valentine! ♥

Your ever, forever-loving
Phyllis

For Kelly

Easy Aces,
regal Kings
know their places
in the scheme of things

Courtly Queens
and jumping Jacks
strut their scenes
in the shuffling Packs

You and I
will join their throng
and live with joy
our whole lives long!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Lovingly as always
Phyllis

1995

70, for Kelly

Slipping years are little measures on an
Ever deepening life that
Values loving, always grows in
Ever widening ripples of awareness,
Never wanes, nor diminishes the value of a
Trust in living love, it is good as a green
Youth where years are little measures only

+5, for Kelly everlastingly

Finally a cornucopia of babies tumbling
Into your heart and a garland of praises
Validating everything you longed and strove for:
Enduring love and a footstep into the future

= 75

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

From your always loving and grateful-to-have-you

Phyllis

[1996]

For Kelly

What is there left to say after so much time?
revolutions have risen and ebbed and empires
fallen into scattered fragments, children
have grown tall and established small dynasties

and after so many words and diagrams
poets, artists, jewellers and schoolyard children
have filigreed, declaimed, scribbled and sung
bright burning hearts and candied melodies

when love is not cartoon or scribble or even the word
but the passion beneath the quotidian
touches, for one day, one more day, one more

as ever more

Phyllis



For Kelly

One More Soft Shoe

What is there left to say
after the years months days and hours
of loving time
with messages of flowers and hearts
that rhyme with Cupid and his darts,
with Junes and moons and dreamy tunes
and lace and candy curlicues

it's all been said

if all's been said and done and told
that doesn't make the message old, but fresh and new
as ever was

and all that there's left to say is

I love you

Phyllis



For Kelly

All of my rhymes
are worn and old

love's always new
and good as gold

so, not to garnish
or refine

I am your gift
and you are mine

Happy Birthday!

Lovingly Phyllis

1997

For Kelly

How do I love you? more
① than the Earth loves the Sun
② than the honeybee loves pollen
③ than the bear loves honeycomb
④ than dynamite loves fire
⑤ or a Welshman loves a choir
⑥ more than the nestling loves the nest
⑦ or the suckling baby loves the breast
⑧ more than a table needs four legs
⑨ much more than an omelet needs eggs
⑩ than mushrooms love the damp & dark
① ① than cats love sleep, ① ② than dogs love bark
① ③ than pens love ink, ① ④ than I love ink
and all that love's for just one day!
just think how much is on the way
tomorrow, from your Valentine



lovingly, Phyllis



1998

For Kelly

77

seventy-seven
the product of two small primes
one big Prime to me

Happy Birthday!
Always loving

Phyllis

[1998]

for Kelly

I lo**V**e you better than the stars and the sun because you keep me warm by day **A**nd by night

I **L**ove you better than Browning's poems because his words are on the pag**E** and yours are living and breathing

I love you better tha**N** whiskey and gin because they confuse and you clarify

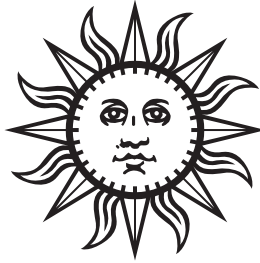
I love you better **T**han paper and **I**nk because they are flat and you are three-dimensional

I love you eve**N** better than lov**E** because you have given me both love and a life

Phyllis

1999

For Kelly



SEVENTY-EIGHT IS
FOUR TIMES NINETEEN, NOW YOU ARE
FOUR NINETEEN-YEAR-OLDS!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

From your loving wife

Phyllis

[1999]

For Kelly

As long as I love you
Old love is still new
As twilight is still day

As long as you love me
The clouds are drained of grey
Dolphins dance in the sea
And leaves burst from every tree

From your passionate old woman

Phyllis

Dearest Kelly

May your days be mainly sunny
(with light showers, for the garden)
and all your puns be funny
& your arteries never harden
please accept our love & money
(and for lateness, grant your pardon)

with love from all

P., L., M & J.

2000S



A song

I'm
going to
walk down the street
on my fidgety feet
and I'll be
wearing a smile
that's as wide as a mile
I'm
going to
sing you a song
that's just as broad as it's long
and
then I'll
knit you a rhyme
you can wear all the time
right next to your skin
don't even have to tuck it in
'cause you're my Valentine
until the sun don't shine

you're
going to
walk down the street
with a smile on your feet
and
when you
quicken your pace
it'll climb up to your face
you'll let my melody
wrap you in harmony
you'll nestle into my song
and all the long
sunshiny day
things will all go your way
with angels' kisses and roses and wine
'cause I'm your Valentine

Phyllis

For Kelly

For the Giver
live long life!
For the Lover
Here's your Wife
And forever
loving true
dearest Giver
I thank you.

Phyllis

What? You're 81 years old?
Congratulations!!!

YOUR HAIR'S STILL GROWING!!

YOUR TEETH AREN'T FALLING!!

YOUR EYES ARE STILL BRIGHT BLUE!!!

YOU HAVE THE WHOLE WORLD
IN YOUR ARMS

DEAR MAN, AND I LOVE YOU!!!

Happy birthday!!!

Phyllis

2002

LOVE UNLIMITED AND UNINCORPORATED

Est. 1949

February 14, 2003
Dearest Kelly,

Here is your annual accounting of my love for you:

A: Counting the ways I love you:

1. Truly
2. Deeply
3. Forever

B: Counting the days I have loved you:

54 years	19,710
6.5 months.....	168
Leap year days.....	13

Total	19,891

Authentic value of this portfolio:...more than money can buy
Lovingly as ever
Phyllis

Keep this statement in your Assets file for handy reference

For Kelly

Every year

I love you more

Glowingly, whole-

Heartedly

The days go by but

You and I

-

Take them and

Wring out some joy

Over and ever again, so—

**HAVE A HAPPY
BIRTHDAY!!!!!!**

your everloving Phyllis

2003

For the Birthday Boy, Kelly

If sweet was sour and salt was sweet
The ocean made of cream of wheat
And centipedes had fourteen feet
I'd live with you and be your love

Though horses flew and angels screamed
The world was something dragons dreamed
And nothing was just what it seemed
I'd live with you and be your love

If trees were grey and roses brown
And earth was up and heaven down
And life a bitch and God a clown
I'd still be yours and you my love

Though eighty-three's not thirty-eight
Love's always fresh, it has no date
The children laugh, the kisses wait
And I am yours, you are my love

From your everloving
Phyllis

[2004]

1
Your blue eyes will turn brown
like mine

2
and roosters crow
at half-past nine

3
Roses will make
the richest wine

4
and you still be
my Valentine

P.

2005

Dearest Kelly

I spent hours
to write a poem for your
eighty-fourth birthday

but my efforts went
for nothing because this year
is like the mast's peak

of a great ship with
the sail vast and billowing
over the sea wind

or the summit of
a tower built with mighty
stones and little moss

so please accept my
homely haiku and endless
love forever more

Eight-four and onward!

Your everloving
Phyllis

2005

My love when with you or apart
Has blessed you from the dayspring's start
As whiskey basks in battered casks
Your love does in my dented heart.



Phyllis

For Kelly

If all the world was good as gold
and no one sickened or grew old
and angels sang from star to star
telling how wonderful we are
and water tasted more like wine
we might not need a Valentine—
but in this old mixed bag of lines
with age and pain that cut like knives
love is our wealth, our gold, our wine
though spoken in this inky line:
You are my life, my Valentine

Phyllis

2007

For Kelly, Dear Valentine ☆☆☆☆☆

I may not have much poetry left for you but I still have lots
of

LOVE

LOVE

LOVE

LOVE

LOVE

LOVE

LOVE

LOVE

From your everloving
Phyllis

For Kelly

With years my poems flew away
And left me in a light of day
So hard and harsh I shook with fear
But—gave the gift of once a year
The blessing of the Valentine
Where I can spill the words like wine
So filled with love in every line
That you may drink them one by one—
I swear they never will be done...

Phyllis
Your forever lover.

2009

ENCORES



for Kelly

A
Valentine

Any fool can lo**V**e in spring and summer
Love is **A**pple blossom and new wine
But when frost has crink**L**ed summer's glamour
th**E**n a lover needs a valentine
A vale**N**tine
Well-aged love is rich and s**T**eeply flavoured
In a life that's deeply loving, ever
Wi**N**ter's bitter light can still be savored
Every day's a good one for a lover

from your loving wife, Phyllis

For Kelly

C is for caring and

A is for always

L is for loving

V for vitality

I is for insight and

N is for never mind anything else, it's your birthday!

G is for sheer goodness and

O how I love you

T is terrific and

L is for a Lot more love,

Isn't it great? Yes and

E is forEver

Blessed be your Birthdays!

Phyllis

2000

for Kelly

Three Haiku

1

Amor

at night when I lie
down beside you your touch e-
lectrifies me still

2

Vincit

when your eyelashes
brush my cheekbone I swear this
must last forever

3

Omnia

what are clocks and time?
when I write it down it is
forever, for you

from your always loving

Phyllis

1997

For Kelly, a Haiku

One fresh year coming
Shining like gold and brimming
With my love for you

Phyllis

Happy Birthday!!!!

Dear Sir

I purr and sheathe my claws
as Lovingly as Nature's Laws
allow.

The lot of Woman and Man
bound in the knot that's Gordian
is never neat, but Leaves untied
black snarls of anger, hate, and pride
inseparable from the rope
and indestructible as Hope
that must be smoothed and kept in place
to add by contrast light and grace
to love

If like a tom and tab
we sometimes hiss and scratch and jab
I'm still from here to Heaven or Hell
your favourite

Mehitabel

A gift

Brilliant am I
Really, truly, what's
Unruly
Smooth I, newly
Happy Birthday! use me duly!

EPILOGUE



Kelly Loves Phyllis in Six Weeks and Sixty Years

*Calvin (Kelly) Gotlieb*¹

Nineteen Forty Seven
Chamber music concert
Great looking blonde A poet!
Perfect date Ten times
Six weeks The Cosmos of Conversation
Will you marry me?
Can't now Finishing school
Ninety Forty Nine
Father dies Dating again
Yes, I'll marry you²

Nine months later
Baby Leo Four days old
Daughters Margaret, Jane
Travel the world
Europe Israel Brazil China
Japan Australia Yosemite Mexico
Eighteen books Poetry, Science Fiction³
Blessed grandchildren
Sixty sweet years⁴

Gone at eighty three
She Graced This World
And Imagined Others

¹ See web.cs.toronto.edu/people/profiles/gotlieb.htm

² See marriage photo front cover

³ See Wikipedia

⁴ Google "Toronto Star Valentine's Day article Department of Computer Science"

Phyllis Fay Bloom was born in Toronto on May 25, 1926, to parents whose family owned a movie chain in Toronto. Between obtaining a B.A. at the University of Toronto in 1948 and an M.A. in 1950, she married Calvin Carl (Kelly) Gotlieb in June 1949. Born in Toronto on March 27, 1921, Kelly earned his B.A. (1942), M.A. (1944), and Ph.D. (1947) in physics at Toronto, where he joined the faculty in 1949. They have three children, Leo Ronald, Jane Elizabeth (Lipson), and Margaret Susan. Leo initially followed Kelly into computer science, and is now a management consultant in Toronto, where Margaret also lives; Jane is the Albert W. Smith Professor of Chemistry at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. Phyllis raised this family as Kelly pioneered the field of computers and earned respect as the father of computer science in Canada. He has been honoured as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and the Association for Computing Machinery, and with the Order of Canada (1996). Phyllis returned to her love of writing in the early 1960s, publishing five books of poetry between 1962 and 1978. Her collection *Ordinary, Moving* won a Governor General's Literary Award nomination in 1970. As her poetry grew, it overlapped with her international fame as an author of superbly-written speculative fiction: a dozen novels and short-story collections, from *Sunburst* in 1964 to *Birthstones* in 2007, came from her pen. She won the inaugural Prix Aurora Award for best novel in 1982 for *A Judgement of Dragons* (1980); and the Sunburst Award, an annual prize for Canadian fantasy and science-fiction authors, is named after her first novel, for she is affectionately regarded as the mother of Canadian science fiction. Kelly and Phyllis enjoyed traveling and other activities together, however, in later years they took particular pleasure in their four grandchildren (Ethan, Jacob, Oren and Rachel). Phyllis Gotlieb continued writing until her sudden death at 83 in Toronto on July 14, 2009. She was interred at Pardes Shalom Cemetery, Maple, Ontario. Kelly continues to remain active on his own in their sunny apartment in downtown Toronto.



CALVIN AND PHYLLIS GOTLIEB

VINCE TALOTTA / TORONTO STAR

Phyllis Loves Kelly sounds like the title of a romantic movie. Instead it is the title of this wonderful and witty collection of love poems and occasional verses composed by Phyllis Gotlieb for her husband Kelly. They mark sixty years of anniversaries and Valentine days. The sentiments expressed come directly from the heart, and they have the effect of allowing the reader to eavesdrop on a long and happy marriage with lots of love (and maybe even a little lust!). Phyllis Gotlieb was a poet noted for the playful brilliance of language and imagery (as well as the author of outstanding science fiction). C.C. (Kelly) Gotlieb is one of Canada's most respected and renowned computer scientists.

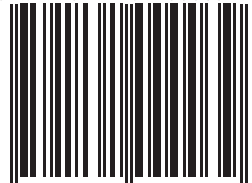
-John Robert Colombo

One of my favourite memories of Phyllis was at a poetry reading at the Ad Astra convention in Toronto, many years ago. Her beloved husband Kelly was there to listen, and she read a (somewhat cranky) love poem* that was clearly written for him. But Kelly was daydreaming, or had dozed off, and she gave him a severe nudge and what could only be described as a Look when she was done! He sat up with a start, and the whole room cracked up.

-Sandra Kasturi

[*'First Person Demonstrative']

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