

# (Like a Pop Song) This is the Head of a Sunflower

*by* Darryl Price

This is the head of a sunflower as well  
as the butt of a beetle as well as  
the membrane with its busy veins of traffic between  
sky and cloud as well as the upside down skeleton  
of a raindrop as well as the groove twisting

in a line around your sweet kissable thumb as  
well as the balding white spot scuffed atop the  
toe of your mowed down old moose slippers as  
well as the polished slick talons on the eagle  
somewhere pumped up from the kill as well as

the moment the feeling flag slaps its stitches against  
the pant legs of the day begging for an ice cream  
as well as a tired old poet making a  
sad grunting noise through his chin as he types  
with one finger as well as the colorless mass

of cocoons blowing away on any given spring day  
and turning into flowers tying on their new bonnets  
as well as you still crammed into my heart  
like a folded map I've kept for all these  
years or a message I've never been able to

code out or like some pyramid on the horizon  
I just can't seem to ignore anymore even though  
I want to as well as the milky way flying  
through outer space like a swirling rush of water all  
lit up from within from its own blushing crush

on life as well as this unwieldy ball of  
sentences as well as this fishing line cast into  
the unknowable electric currents of now and never and  
maybe forever eh as well as a tiny spastic  
hope clinging to a fast falling building as well

as any dream lingering on the edge of sanity  
as well as the boy who forgot to go  
home and grow up as well as the girl  
who fingered her hair and smiled at the boy  
as well as vanished years that tumbled into rainbows

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Bonus poems:

For When the Flood comes  
by Darryl Price

Take this, not my hand. Take this pill. It will  
dissolve all the other pills and leave you  
with nothing but your awake self. Take this  
dove dropped note on the window sill to mean  
something's coming. Take this suddenly there  
shaft of shine above your head as the best

way out. Leave a sign for any others;  
that you were here. Take this breath and climb out

of your own way. Exhale and don't look back.  
Take this to the one it is meant for and  
please don't worry about semantics. Take  
a good look around you as you go. Take

heart. Take the song in my voice with you, but  
only listen to it when you feel like  
it. You must journey alone, but you are  
never alone, not like that. Take this hat.  
It's a good hat. It will keep the sun out  
of your eyes. It will not betray your trust.

Take the rain and the snow and be thankful.  
Take these shoes. They will walk with you and not  
ahead of you. They will stop when you need  
rest. They appreciate looking at the  
beautiful trees with someone like you. They  
will spend as much time as you wish looking

up at the stars with you. They are in no  
kind of hurry to get somewhere else. Take  
this offer. It has no expiration  
date. It's for unlimited access. Take  
this map, it will not lead you into a  
sand trap, but over and around trouble,

if used correctly. I made it myself  
from memory, but it's a guide not a  
stone tablet. Take this meal. I put as much  
of my love into making the bread as  
I possibly could muster. I hope it  
nourishes you, whenever you take an

honest bite, with goodwill and friendship and  
courage. Take this passage and remember

who you are to yourself and to the world.  
Make it work. Take this drink of water. Take  
this time to celebrate, even as we  
mourn, even as we determine to live.

Windy Idiots  
by Darryl Price

are at war with women  
and children. They have their  
guns, but we can't have books?  
Idiots are at war

with rainbows. Harrison  
was right about the taxman.

Idiots are at

war with demands for justice.  
Idiots are at  
war with parks. They have their  
guns, but we can't have freedom

of expression? Guns

are meant to kill whatever  
you aim them at. I

will love you all I can.  
Idiots want you to  
hide your love away. They  
have their guns, but we can't

have exploration or  
curiosity? They  
have their guns, but we can't

accept others into  
our homes or our arms? They  
have their guns, but we don't

get time to think, or feel,  
or act upon our own  
deepest feeling? Idiots  
are at war with sea

ice. They have their pollution,  
but we are targeted

for caring about

all life on the planet?  
Idiots choose money,  
not kids' lives. They have their  
guns for trophy wives. If

I drop this flag, someone

please pick it up. Idiots  
are at war with the

poorest of the poor. They  
have their guns, but we were  
surely made for one another.  
They have their guns,

but if the tide is to

turn, it will be us doing  
the turning toward

something else. Idiots  
are at war with character  
and common sense. They

only love the game if  
it simulates a war  
against any and all  
new ideas. We believe

in taking chances.  
The windy idiots

are at war with the easy

chair of dreaming dreams.  
They have their guns, but we  
have a hunger for more  
fun adventures of the

heart together, okay?

When I Say  
by Darryl Price

I don't have anything to say, I only mean  
I love you. When I say I don't have anything  
to say, I mean it's only me. When I say that  
I don't have anything to say, I wish you would

say, I know exactly what you mean. When I say

we're all candles in the dark, I mean won't you share  
with me the meaning of your light? I mean don't be  
afraid to show me who you really are. When I

say I don't have anything to prove, I mean you  
don't have anything to live up to. When I say  
I love you, I mean I'm glad you came along, and  
very glad to accept you in my arms, if you

should ever need me to. Happy to know you are  
your own beautiful part of everything I care  
about in this whole world. But, of course, the words can't  
express that deeply enough for me. When I say

I've got to go, I only mean I wish I could  
stay, my dear friend. If all things must pass, then so be  
it, but know this, whatever I am, wherever  
I am, I will always be your companion

of the heart. When I say, we're here at last, I mean  
nothing can come between us. So, even if I  
don't have anything left to say, I give you my word,  
you're now and forever welcome to all my love.

A Beginner's Guide to Something or Other  
by Darryl Price

Certain people just know how to sing back  
to some things, calling from stone or through red  
bone, to accept the gift of a new song  
and make it their own for awhile. Of course  
you'll be entrusted to give it away  
again because it is a wild thing and

thus belongs to the endlessness of sky  
and the warm inviting branches of the

timeless guardian trees. It's the only  
way we can show great care for all beings.

If healing is to be done then begin  
it until you finish--the result will  
always mean the same as a miracle.  
You must learn to say goodbye as you smile  
and say hello as you ache. It's not a  
mad riddle of any sort, but it's an

open path, a path of do no harm. Your  
role is to be, not to own anything,  
but ever to acknowledge the living  
edge wherever it confronts you or takes  
your hand with true human humility  
and empathy. They suppress that kind of  
simple lovely thought throughout the concrete  
centuries only because they feel they

alone are entitled to the power  
and we are not. They beat us to death and  
burn our beautiful poems, but still we  
live on and sing on every tongue's measured  
breath like mushrooms or berries. That's because  
there is a nourishment that will not be  
denied for long. It comes from our own hearts  
and independent minds and protects us.

This is What They Want  
by Darryl Price



I don't care, but some part of me  
still does. I know that's confusing.  
Once I held a Swallowtail on  
my finger. Its feet felt soft as

string. Now there are no butterflies  
in my backyard. I sure miss them.  
Been standing in the pumpkin fields  
before so cold, so cold my smile

was shaking in my face. I looked  
for you, but you were still missing.  
You weren't in the clouds. On the moon.  
But maybe you were in the winds

that day. I know something beyond  
the playful slap on the back was  
trying to tell me to listen  
for you. It hurt to not pick up

the sound of your laughter mingling  
with all the rest. I don't want to  
pretend I'm okay. I should be  
going inside now. How is the

world still so beautiful? I can't  
believe I am walking in it  
like I just might belong. I don't.  
I've never. I mean not without

your heartbeat. I mean not without  
your song. I mean not as myself.  
Sometimes words get in the way of  
my talking to you. Can't get out

of the way. I am in the way.  
My poems are in the way. My  
tears are in the way. We shared a  
rose and a fire. That's all I know.

### The Elephant by Darryl Price

in the room is secretly  
satisfied to be no bigger  
than a bread box. A shoe box. There  
are no bread boxes anymore.  
Hardly enough elephants. The  
one in the room is flying high;  
no one knows what is a trapeze  
I suppose. Welcome bowlers! Our  
elephant in the room would like  
you to count all the sky bones--make  
sure they are still there. The you know  
what inside the room would like to

remain anonymous throughout  
these proceedings. The elephant  
in the room wants to know what is  
happening in your backyard. What  
are you thinking and believing?  
The elephant in the room needs  
you to stop trying to belong  
to a normal world order and  
focus on survival with some  
empathy on your dignity.  
The elephant in the room thinks  
you cannot be mere spectators

when love is at stake and lies have  
become laws. The elephant in  
the room, by his very fact, feels  
we must listen but we don't have  
much time. Let's talk out the front way  
then. Together. The elephant  
in the room explains: to give your  
gifts well is to make a loving  
person out of yourself, to not  
be angry with anyone.  
If we don't see each other just  
remember the good things first.

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### **HOW TO REMEMBER IMPORTANT THINGS by Darryl Price**

Save the whales. Save the dolphins.  
Save the bored housewives.  
Save my hands, so often cupped over the sorrow in  
being alive. Save the beautiful  
made-up cherries of delight  
I feel everywhere in your presence.  
Save the sprawling landscapes  
of late night cafeterias of the mind.  
Save the often forgotten radios of our flying dreams.  
Save the hand-printed love  
letters of early morning light. Save the inexhaustible  
curiosity of a small interior poem of silence.  
Save the naked air.  
Save the Spanish tongue of Neruda.  
Save the sparkle in  
the brushstrokes of a Picasso.  
Save storm and the rainbow.

Save the North Sea. Save shadows.  
Save all hearts from  
beginning to break again.  
Save the ripped apart sky from  
the rain of so many angry bombs leaking inside.  
Save the secret handshake. Save the Pandas.  
Save the sea turtles. Save the roses. Save the last dance.  
Save the sailing boats and floating planes  
of melting romance. Save whatever makes  
no sense. Save this feeling. Save the butterflies  
with passionate, provocative kisses.  
Save the question of imagination. Save the end  
of the poem until you really need it. Save the  
world from itself. Save your wild goodbyes.  
Save every word.

Talking to a Locked Gate by Darryl Price

"Fun is the one thing that money can't buy."--The Beatles

Poetry is an act  
of love. Who do you think  
you are? I'm not on your  
wave, you riders of young  
dreaming lovers, their hands  
tied together in brave  
hope for the future. An  
act of love. Who are you?

I am not on your side,  
you armies of trial and  
terror, you proud puppets,

stompers of desire and  
exploration, mistakes  
and spontaneity.  
Poetry is my love  
for you. I am not on

your path, you critics of  
the imperfect fumble,  
artists trying to score  
lightning into magic.  
I resist. You gender  
deniers of the great  
mysterious spirit  
in nature. Poetry

is an act of my love.  
I return your beauty,  
manipulators of  
precise political  
correctness, the strict lanes  
of bricked-up feeling, spit  
while proclaiming freedom  
for only your own pain.

Poetry is at the  
heart of all life, a wild  
sensuality I  
celebrate like a priest,  
diverse and giving. Who  
do you think you are? I'm  
on the side of dancers,  
starry-eyed rain makers.

Poetry is an act  
of fun. Silly has no

religion. It has no  
government. It is not  
precious. It is our friend.  
Do you think you are sane?  
I'm on the side of shells  
on the beach, light that shines.

So Little  
by Darryl Price

I must apologize for only having words  
with me. They seem so little to give and  
offer you. All their hats seem to  
have been around now for quite some  
time. Others before me have worn them far  
better than this. This makes me sad,  
because sadness is not what you deserve,  
because what I want to give you  
is a kind of freedom, of knowledge  
about the feelings you deliver to  
me just by being around in the  
world. Even that sounds less than sincere.  
I wouldn't accept that opening offer either. Flowers like  
those just don't belong in this conversation,  
  
not yet. Not by a long, hanging shot.  
I'm trying to give you something you  
can accept without regret or debt, something  
you'll recognize and remember, something we alone  
share in our midst, a thing that  
exists solely because of our presences together  
and not out of mere circumstance. A  
belief that is at once a beautiful

truth and a ringing bell, that does  
not fall over into thorn bushes if  
it rains too hard. Not a plucked  
sun, but a celebration of all suns.  
Words don't fail me now, there's just not enough  
of them to write your name between

the so few stars. It's impossible to  
align our planets. This I know. I  
am not asking for that kind of lit-up on a stage  
miracle. We grant what we can out  
of our own beneficence in this life.  
I only want the chance to say  
into your ears the best words that come  
naturally from the well within my core-self.  
To not be a liar with you.  
To not be a coward in the  
face of a world of doom. To  
give the gift that belongs. To  
say that in spite of the frost  
that accompanies you in your stocking feet

I will meet you there. That being  
said I don't know if these words  
are good enough to bring you this  
message. I bless them as best I  
can and set them between all the bars on this life's window ledge  
like my own tiny doves. They know  
their own hearts. That's all I can  
ask of them. But of you I  
ask nothing. You are enough. And when  
they read this to you do not  
hate them for their ignorance about the  
dance, but teach them the steps that  
made you laugh, that let you cry,

that lifted your eyes again, and caused your smile to turn on.

A Song the Lorax Taught the Table While We Were Playing Cards  
Late into the Evening by Darryl Price(original first draft)

The trees have become afraid of our love song. They used to bend forward with all their might, clicking into place and building impressive physics. Now they carry their frames backwards and upward trying to flee something always behind us. We were not good shepherds. We only wanted something to eat and a

place to sleep. You can see it in the faces of the colonized leaves. They hate us. The trees have become afraid of our love song. It used to mystify them and bring them into listening range. Then we fired the first shot, we swung the first axe, we cleared centuries of their stories and put them in toothpick jars.

They used to love our determined broken trails through the snow, but now they toss the moon high above our heads and weep. Their armor is broken all the way through. Even the haunted forests have become more abandoned than full of millions of tiny lights. The trees have become afraid of our love

song. They are shutting their eyes again and ascending to the heavens without us. Maybe at the top of the world they still throw flowers at each other. The trees have become afraid of our love song. They hear it now as the end. Their march is no longer to reach the center of everything, and join in a

beautiful, joyous windy celebration of branches and bark. They need a healing circle, but it's all in their heads now. Only the saplings have the old dreaming heart, but even they are caged and kept behind miles of tar and soot. The trees have become afraid of our love song. That seems a real shame. Where

do we go from here? A butterfly with something important to say is still going to have a very tough time being heard as anything more than a butterfly up to butterfly things. The trees have become afraid



of our love song. It is printed on their hardened faces. They do not agree with the meaning of lots of space. The trees

have become afraid of our love song. But some of us want to understand again. Some of us would like to be part of the healing circle without causing any pain to other living beings. Some of us will always admire the fierce beauty of their construction and join the council in the sky to pledge our own individual

devotion to their rooftop safety in this craziest of worlds yet. The trees have become afraid of our love song. But, this song before you is a poet's attempt to make contact and say we are indeed friends forever. You will always be included in our thoughts and prayers. Nothing would be the same without you. Thanks for such a lovely hill. .

#### Forever Stars by Darryl Price

The time to be remade as authentic men and women is finally come, deeply creeping up our shores with its final blessing in hand. We've been living here among the nameless reminders for lost centuries and they have done their colorful dances all around us in the hotel lobby

of the heavenly hosts. Sacrificial soldier bees have kept their favorite lilies coming to the happy surface for electrical shoulder stimulation and visited every other monastery on the planet. Ambassador butterflies have landed and left the wind sprinkled

with a new jam of the same forever skies in a velvet tribute to the sadly fallen. The missing moons have spread their smiling out robes over

the world's sleepers like a glistening dreaming wave.  
But now the tatters of our tears must tell as well  
another tale. Something else must be done for those

who know us not. A new world is coming. We must  
leave for sharing a guiding kind and strong music  
once more for its mindful passage to the unknown  
spaces ahead so that it always includes the  
best things we remember as beautiful and good.  
This is no time to worship ancient shells. Oceans are gone.

Don't think water. Think people. There are those who will  
always drive the submarine to the coordinates  
to halt the end of the world, but they won't stick  
around to watch you blame each other. The time is  
on its own as are we. There are fascists inside  
every species. The garden should remain open

despite the dangerous flying insects. Its gates  
should always spell friendship and hope. This is no time  
for coded cries for help. We must gain the wall and  
keep it in our hearts that what will always come is  
what we have given to be made truthfully in  
our selves. This is the unbreakable mystery. dp

## A World of Possible Flowers

by Darryl Price

"There are many dark places;but still there is much that is fair, and  
though in all lands love is now mingled with grief, it grows perhaps  
the greater."--J.R.R. Tolkien

If the love never came you must have been

Dragging your feet. If the hatred carved your dreams  
Into warning signs, you must have been looking in  
The wrong direction for that ever-glorious ghost army.

If the love never stayed lit in the hills  
You must have been asleep in the hay. If  
The eyes of the angels turned to stone you  
Must have been dipping your hands into the wrong

Fountain. If the love dissolved into the rug like  
An imaginary spill you must have been lost in  
The crumpled lane of clothes on your floor. If  
The game was thrown into the garbage by mistake

You must have forgotten your own name when you  
Were asked to sign for your soul. If love  
Is too tired to continue you must be feeling  
Pretty much alone by now. There is a sea

Of nothing but broken stones, but if love were  
To sail there, each one would sprout, and where  
The hint of a green continuation begins so begins  
The trickle of a world of possible flowers. If

Love never came down the road there would be  
No need to go anywhere ever again. If the  
Hate can make you wonder what is the point  
Of an organic truth, you must give up your

Dancing shoes forever. If the love never came we  
Never existed anyway. If the love never came we  
Never got the chance to say out loud the  
Whispered promises of the graceful winds at our bursting

backs. Nothing is over just because everything is changed

or changing. The love comes from you or it  
comes from nowhere. If the love never came you  
must have been spending your money at the race

track of the current lies. If the love never  
came you must have given them the wrong street  
For delivery. If hate can make you nail your  
Windows shut the sun might as well go home. dp

