

Listen To Our Birds

by Darryl Price

We know a poem isn't going to stop you
From invading our town. It won't get you to
Listen to our birds any more than to our
Sunsets. That's not why we do it. We know

A poem isn't going to break the blade of
Your knife like an invisible karate move. It's not
Meant to. What it does is sing, nothing more,
Nothing less. It lets loose a certain rhythm, a

Back beat, that's all. It provides a place for
Another voice to exist among the annihilation and carnage
Of endless war. It carries the words of love
To always new ears. It doesn't strap on bombs

Before it goes to marketplace. You don't find it,
It finds you. We know a poem won't stop
You from rigging the election, from buying the favors
Of bad men, from selling out people for profit.

All it does is sing, and sing, and sing
Some more. If this irritates you, we're so sorry
For the rather rude inconvenience of our humming together
For peace. We know a poem is not going

To stare down a tank barrel for too long.
We get it. Sooner or later you're going to
Have to look at your million dollar watch and
Make a million dollar nasty decision before it gets

Too late for any decent dinnertime. There are those
Who are with you all the way to the
Proverbial bank. They'd like to use all those annoying
Poems for some kind of ballistic target practice. We

Know a poem isn't your thing. You can't tell
Us apart. You think we all look the same.
Of course this is all part of the ongoing
Sadness you create when you ignore the poem's sound.

We know a poem isn't going to make us
Any new friends. We've all known a poem that
Was burned in your bonfires. But did you know
This one was for you? It's about feeling something.

Bonus poem:

Matters

I would want you to be as happy at the
End as at the beginning. I would want the courage
That you found to be as natural as your high
When you can't help yourself. I would want the thrills
To be all your moment like a panoramic view from
The lighthouse of the heart. I would want to feel
The happiness in your fingertips as we walked along the
Edges of your own shoreline. I would want you to
Feel at home in your own gait, your own laughter,
Your own stance. The poem wouldn't adorn you as much

As fly by you and give you its wind, wave

You its wing on a nodding shaft of sunlight. I
Wouldn't want you to be named after any star because
That field could not begin to account for the amazing
Blue depth in your eyes to me. I would want
You to be able to dance with every adventurous drop
Of rain. I would want you to be free to
Explore your own strength for beauty. I would want you
To climb into my arms for naked peace, with fun
Goodwill, but not without a healthy curiosity. I would want

You to always be the person inhabiting your soul. I
Would want you to be still growing into yourself even
At your age. I would want you to disregard these
Crazy ramblings and kiss me over and over again. I
Would want you to be anything you want to be
And not what any poet wants you to be. I
Would want you to be surrounded by caring friends who
Could never harm you. I would want you to be
Your own poet, although I'm more than happy to step
Into the role when you need me, but you don't.

Consider this a letter of resignation. I'm honored by your
Presence. It's the purest proof that love is worth every
Humiliation, every trip and fall, every injury and setback. I
Would only want you to be careless as well as
Careful when it comes to matters of the heart. You
Will know what I mean when you are standing at
The crossroads. Trust in yourself first. Safety is as much
An illusion as anything else with bars on the door.
I would want you to be the one who gets
The job of living well done with kindness and mercy.

I would want you to be engaged with the energy
That heals the world. I would want you to be
The last human being standing. I've said about all there

Is to say. I just wanted you to know. These
Words are all I have to hold you with now.
I want you to be blessed one more time. It's
Important to me. Otherwise I wouldn't say it. I would
Want you to be smiling as you read this. It
Is real if we make it an action toward being
So. I would want you to be sure and ready.

