

# Letter to Neruda

*by* Samuel Peralta

You have been my woman's lover now for  
seven years, ever since your two souls met  
at La Isla Negra. Yes, I have known  
about your assignations for some time,  
your breakfast tête-à-têtes, your late-night trysts,

midday intermezzos punctuated  
by wine and passionate exclamation.  
I have unearthed your letters, your amorous  
affirmations secreted in her books,  
your verses excerpted in diaries.

I beg of you: Release her captive heart.  
You have no need of her, your mistresses  
surround you, innumerable are your  
conquests. And I — I have only her. She  
fills my soul, without her I am empty.

I love her, and sometimes in her absent  
eyes I see the flash of remembrance — and  
I think sometimes she might still love me too.  
But I have not your art, nor scope. Passion  
flows like torrents from your pen, where

they are quenched from my own. You are a force  
of nature, an earthquake, a hurricane.  
And I am left to woo her with nothing  
but my shopworn metaphors, my contrived  
rhymes, my incompetent pentameter.

So I have gathered for you this ransom,  
one hundred and forty poems, all I have.

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Available online at *«<http://fictionaut.com/stories/samuel-peralta/letter-to-neruda>»*

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I have packed them in my well-worn suitcase,  
in verses of small denominations.

Take them. Only tell her you will see her

no more, that your art is for another,  
that you will always cherish your moments  
together. Then unbind her hands, loose her  
blindfold, let her run back to me — back to  
my waiting heart, inadequate but true.

