

# **COMPLIMENTS**

**Richard Denner**

C O M P L I M E N T S

\*

Richard Denner

\*

Faerie Gold Press  
Ellensburg  
2022



This book imitates St. Mark's Church In-the-Bronx  
Poetry Project version of Jack Spicer's *Admonitions*.

**Dear Mignon,**

Thank you so much for your loyal offering! I, too, want you to know I am not whimsical in my affections. I am afraid I have not learned detachment from other people's "stuff" for them not to have an effect on me--just a "sucker for a need" kind of person, sometimes to the point of thinking that at least I am being useful when some-body uses me, and I let it happen, as they think I do not see it, tending to think that if someone steals something from me, maybe they need it more than I do, but it is never the same after trust suffers a blow.

I feel I swallow lead sometimes. I LOVE SO MUCH, I HURT SO MUCH, I LAUGH AND CRY SO MUCH, I QUESTION MY SANITY. I am not sure how to explain this, nor why I feel compelled to do so, but you have been asking me. My mind processes as it absorbs, and at some point, I do things that do not seem rational.

I approach someone to tell them what "I see" when it is really none of my business--just an imperative, an inner command stronger than I am--so, I follow it and say it or do it. Maybe it involves what is going to happen to them, and I "know" things that make me feel like an intruder, secrets, which is uncomfortable enough when I do not say anything, but it is very peculiar when I must say something, and it can involve a total stranger I see in a public bathroom or a store, or it can be someone I know, the problem being with someone close to me, it pushes them away. Whether this is because they do not want to hear what they already know, or do not know, or know that I know, who knows!?

It makes me question why I cannot be stronger than the "command," why I cannot withhold the action. I never question the validity of my feelings, but, interestingly, sometimes, I do not even know what I am talking about, but I know that I am making sense to whomever I am talking to, and they do not believe I do not know what I am talking about because I am going into such detail, but I really have no clue. I am like a child who knows what she is thinking, but does not know how speak, who knows the picture she wants to draw but cannot express it as conceived, ALWAYS falling short, ALWAYS on the edge, ALWAYS intensely, ALWAYS so many things. I have been aware of this since I was three years old. I love words so much, and I resent them even more--the shortest bridge between two people and the most limiting factor I experience!

Have I unloaded enough for one letter? I do value the person I

perceive you to be, and I see your determination and dedication, and I  
admire you with much true affection.

Your friend,

Richard

For Nancy

The rain falls  
on our sunny days.

We grow old,  
and all we know

is memory.

Like a dumb snail  
we listen to the sky.

Our passions  
break through to

the breathing

of a fresh  
green feeling.

### For Eve

An afternoon feeling  
brought into the light  
the instant I look  
into your eyes.

A need to continue,  
minute overlapping minute,  
no logic to it--  
to focus an obscure desire.

For Rhonda

You laugh  
with the thunder  
circling the moon.

You see  
backlit cows hanging  
upside down in the sky.

You ride the wind  
making dandelion  
wishes.

You try to flee  
but return, sealed  
in a green cell layer.

For Ellen

Always young  
always high

Maid of earth  
made of sky

You with starlight eyes  
I with voodoo ways

I do what I do  
to be with you.

For Helen

Even we  
even so.

The candle burns  
the candle burns.

For Bonnie



Love is composed  
of basic ingredients--

Shared solitude,  
clean sheets,

And the fire  
in our bones.

For Mary

Everything's  
the world.

Everywhere  
it's happening.

Everything is  
everywhere.

Life's a daisy chain.  
Check the pull date.

**Dear Mignon,**

You ask for my help with your poem, and it seems to boil down to how you notate your "lines" and this can be a tedious approach for someone with as many fine lines as you have, being so quick on the turns.

Find the music, following the measure. I break where there is a word that makes the meaning stand out, and this creates what Creeley calls a "node" which is like a swelling place on the stem that begins to flower, so the node word then suggests something to the reader. However, the first word of the next line goes a different direction than the reader expects, and this creates surprise and interest and keeps the poem moving. This works for me because I tend to be sarcastic and play with double meanings and words within words. I look to the masters for guidance and then make my own rules.

I find it to be a continual battle against ASSHOLES trying to drag you to their level, so you'll need hipboots in this shithouse. Force through to what you can do, and always keep contact with your roots.

Someone I have been admiring lately, who reminds me of your style, is Sharon Doubiago. Look to the masters for your grounding and to your peers for new directions, remembering the dictums: MAKE IT NEW (from Ezra Pound) and NO IDEAS BUT IN THINGS (from William Carlos Williams) and, lastly, DONT FORGET LUNCH (from Frank O'Hara).

**Simply,**

**Richard**

For Jane

Two roses in the park  
two noses in the dark.

Flowers blooming  
in and out--

Monsters moving  
in and out--

Sometimes I think  
It's been a fall scene

A false scene  
since the very beginning.

Two roses in the park  
two noses in the dark.

For Denise

You have a quick mind  
and soft lips.

I have a soft mind  
and quick lips.

Walking up Maple  
crossing to Alder--

“A Hawthorn?”

“No, a Russian Olive.”

Around us, the leaves  
fall all fall long.

For Hilary

Do I hear trumpets  
or is it thunder?

Shadowy letters flicker  
*The End--*  
crazy.

Inside and out,  
just totally black.

I'm not sure  
if I should take a walk  
or lean back.

For Willow

A march of reds  
and yellows  
in a marsh of reeds

A marshmallow  
over an open fire  
in Indian summer

We really should know  
where the nearest firehouse  
is located.

To Joan

The touch of your tongue  
on my lip

My palm on the curve  
of your hip

A cut rose in a vase--  
an invisible rose is growing here.

For Rose

A stunning sunrise--  
the sky bloody and bruised.

Make my bed.

I'll be ok  
if I can get up--

The rest  
is gallows humor.

For Jewel

Eyes that cry



lips that kiss  
awake to bliss.

Everything to see  
forget  
and see again.

I could not invent  
better moment.

For Judy

I gave you a ring  
turned your finger green.

If you want  
you'll get close.

If you don't  
you won't.

Silence in the roar  
silence I can hear.

Postscript for Carré Otis

I wander in a dream  
near the ocean's edge.

How did this crab  
get in my mouth?

Defiled by the thing  
a puppet on a string--

Yakity yak  
yakity yak

Every second second  
yakity yak.

