

# My Secret Love

The barbed darts  
of the less understanding  
may cause pain  
when it results in  
stiffing the nobler nature  
of man . . .

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much greater measure than the love I gave them because they came to me in great profusion in exchange for the littlest care.

But my love brought pain in its wake. I was young then, and I was not wise. People passing by our house or coming in for a visit would immediately exclaim, "What a lovely home! A young woman surely lives here."

Time and again I hear such remarks. I looked at the flowers and they seemed to say, "Don't mind them, they mean well." Yes, perhaps. But I was not ready to take their words in that light. I was beginning to be afraid that I was different and to be different from all other men was, to a young man like me, the height of unmanliness. In a dilemma I had to make a choice between love for flowers and love for self. I chose the latter.

As days went by my growing neglect for the plants and flowers was registered in the speed the poor dears wilted, withered, died. In the wake of their going came a pain, soul deep, refusing to be soothed in the many years that followed. I knew it was there because like a breeze of nostalgia it swept through my being time and again. My refusing to have any plant in my new home to which I moved from the old, my stifling the itch for flower arrangement wrought in me a change. I was unhappy. I realized that something important was missing in my life.

The recurring pain of the soul unsoothed must be eased; the great longing for flowers must be satisfied. So, now that I am heavy with forty-five years of weight, now that I have acquired a thin sheet of wisdom to shield me from the barbed darts of the less understanding, I can, with some degree of courage, give vent to my secret love for the children of Mother Nature — the flowers.

SO YOU WANT TO BE . . .  
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be sized up by a once-over. You begin to be sorry for the time wasted for good nothing. You wish it were a long way off before the start of classes, but time can not be checked just as you can not hold back the dawn.

Suddenly "big ben" thunders forth its lengthy announcement that classes are about to start. So to school you go, with a couple of oversized books. You look impressive. Your brain may not be above board but with those huge commodities in your arms it is sufficient advertisement that you belong to the college elite, that "eres estudiante de derecho." You make the ladies sigh. At this time you do not care for the impression and the sighs. Your heart is at a state of convulsion awaiting the moment of reckoning when to the professor you render an accounting of the day's agenda. . . . .

Now we come to you who wear double crosses: the inevitable working students, who are not immune to extra-curricular activities besides.

At break of day when it is time to get up it is so easy to sleep; but come Sundays or holidays, you can not sleep even when it is no time to get up. Because this is a working day you must have to get up. You have to earn. Monetary claims with perennial school activities must be satisfied. Your account with the university is probably piling up. With the examinations just next door, "permits" to take the exams must be had.

To office you go with your load of law books. Friends and people who see you wonder whether you also have classes at the City Hall or at the Goticaco building. The building is where you work; the books, for the moments when you do not work. Your job is one that involves transactions with people and bosses. When there are no people there are the bosses.

Somehow you manage to make a sneak preview of the day's lesson. You finger the pages covered by the provisions assigned. You nearly faint. You come to the painful realization that the two articles of law eat up nearly a hundred pages. You forget that in law a three-little worded enactment is as complicated as tens of cases based on it. What do you care for the cases? You would say that you are  
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I HAVE almost come to an age when whatever people say about me matters but little. At forty-five one ought to possess some measure of wisdom, or at least, some semblance of it. To me it has been slow in coming, a confirmation of the common claim that knowledge comes but wisdom lingers.

This brand of wisdom in me has much of the ingredient of understanding of the lack of it in many people. In their attempt at expressing themselves they become too frank at times and, if they try to be kind in their opinions, they let slip in the most unconscious manner a word seemingly innocent yet unkind and cruel in its ultimate effect upon a sensitive nature into which the barb of the arrowy word makes a painful lodgment. To ease the biting pain of a remark like that my poor outer self has to say in a soothing voice to the shrinking sensitive me within: It is said in love.

One of my very few loves has been for flowers for as long as I can remember. Flowers, no matter what they are, wherever they may be found, have always had a strong attraction for me. In years past I had them all over our place — out in the garden growing in pots or in the ground; up on the vines on the trellis or on the walls; down from the eaves hanging pendant from potted plants; up on the roof in a mess of intricately woven vines; in the house peeping or openly blowing from pots and vases. They were everywhere, and I loved them all. I knew they loved me in a