

Beyond death's frail caul

by MMADfan

Love unexpressed can remain love unrequited.

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Notes: AU. Not DH-Compliant

Written by Albus Dumbledore in the story *Resolving a Misunderstanding*. The first stanza is a light parody.



How do I respect thee? May I count the ways?

Sweeter than any putrid potion,

More scintillating than Transfiguration class,

Of greater worth than any treaty,

Thus I respect thee.

I respect thee as night respects the dawn, and day, the dusk.

Beyond twilight's dim reach and unto the noon-day sun,

Thus do I respect thee.

How do I esteem thee? Shall I count the ways?

Unto heaven's vast extent,

Far beyond the reach of phoenix' flight,
Where no hoary mountain peak may grasp,
Beyond summer's heat or winter's rime,
Thus do I esteem thee.
I regard thee humbly,
As strength and will and hope,
Undulled by care of time
Or wear of woe, shine from thee.
I shall esteem thee more as life falls long,
As spark and breath, no longer strong,
Companion sun's borrowed light,
Fading unto pale moon, and then to night.
Yet my regard for thee can but wax and grow,
An expanding passion to onward flow
And fill my heart, my mind, my soul,
With thoughts of thee and only thee again,
Turning once and always unto thee,
To find thee only ever there.
For thus I love thee, countless ways,
Far beyond death's frail caul,
Unfettered by life's scanty bonds,
Loving thee without beginning,
Loving thee without ending,
With all I am and have to give.
Thus do I love thee and thee alone,
My life, my hope, my dearest one.

Author's Notes: This is a poem that Albus wrote for Minerva in [Resolving a Misunderstanding](#) ("RaM"). It first appears in Chapter CXIX: Love Unceasing, though he wrote it much earlier in the story. Because the poem will be referred to but not appear in another fic, [Death's Dominion](#), I thought I would post it separately, though neither I nor Albus is a poet!

As Albus described it in his letter to Minerva, the poem began when "a silly bit of doggerel entered my head, a bit of whimsy, you might call it, and I penned them on the reverse side of one of the lists. Missing you later, I found [the lists] again, and that bit of foolishness, and I was moved to add to the few lines I had written the previous week." The first five lines are the silly doggerel, then the poem proceeds with no specific poetic structure, though it more seriously continues the theme that the first lines began humorously.

Part of Albus's inspiration is obvious, even without having read RaM, but part of it arose from the initial misunderstanding he and Minerva encountered in the first chapters of RaM, and what Albus thought about when he learned of Minerva's distress with him – that it would be absurd to compare his feelings for her with those he might have for a potion, a treaty, or planning for class.