

## David Conrad

### Fond Love

*for JoAnne Elizabeth Conrad*

Through summer sun and winter snow  
I watched the days and nights that ran  
Up my column and across my row  
a pattern of praise - I forget where it began.

This day that brought you forth into the fell  
world where I was ready waiting out this  
game of life and breath, of flower and fauna  
for you to deliver me from life and death.

Why it was so I never could tell -  
an examination or merely a quiz?  
I knew your bonny smile many years ago and ah  
waited your coming as to quote what the preacher saith -

await another coming that will soon be gone,  
occasioned in the hammered gold, not sad  
we dance this day in sun and snow anon  
and happy returns bid us our fond love to add.

### Glad Rags

*for Ray Souster, I.M.*

You must sit up in the chair  
straight back to write a good poem  
choose the font, the size, easy  
on the eyes, and then type in the rhymes

internal and end, to fill it out right  
loneliness, abandonment more  
than sex and motherhood be  
the stuff, we are left alone  
practically every second day.

Worn away this way, feel alone  
refuse to see the golden corners  
of solitude; flowers each to each

have to split roots to love. It's  
tough, and alone in the final flush  
of flower-hood, thrown in a garbage  
bag, come and gone alone, glad of life.

### **Life of a Master**

*for Terry Whalen, i.m.*

I listen to a string quartet of Haydn  
opus seventy-six, number two and picture  
the child of a wheel wright from some  
flee bitten town nowhere in an empire,

he could sing and was undersized for lack  
of food, tossed out when his voice broke,  
on the streets, the winding streets of Vienna,  
puffed up, over fed Wien. He stole into concert halls  
sang and played, uninvited to swipe  
cookies and cakes, was hired by the richest family  
in Hungary, worked for two decades, liveried,  
starched like a servant. Out of this he invented

balance, order, made all the pieces fit  
so well the blue bloods noticed. So the chaos  
continued through dinner dates and concerts  
and the London girls lionized. But he bent

the disparate parts into perfect shape and with  
a laugh or two thrown in for good measure. Before  
he died fascist Napoleon's cannons pounded the city of dreams.  
"Don't worry children," he told his clerks,  
"Papa is still here to take care of you."