

# **VERY HAPPY**

*New poems from*

**AUSTIN HUDSON**

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Dedicated to my most loyal  
and constant reader  
*(you know who you are)*

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## BUILT FOR FOREVER

This poem is not built for forever.

Let's assume, however unlikely,  
that it resonates with you and becomes timeless.  
Printed and reprinted in books  
and engraved into stone  
and retold from memory into perpetuity.

Or, much more likely, it stays here.  
Written on a page or on a screen  
and shared between the people who know me  
and the people who know them  
for as long as anyone remembers me  
or you  
or us.

Maybe you'll have children (or already do)  
and those children will know about the poem  
who will then tell their children about the poem.  
Regardless of which one of these situations comes true,  
the outcome will remain the same.

Some time in the next few hundred  
or the next few thousand years

humans will dwindle and decrease  
be it by our own doing  
or by something entirely separate from us.  
Maybe I will be extremely lucky  
and one of those humans will remember this poem  
and will recite it again.  
But probably not.

Even in this best case scenario,  
this poem is still not built for forever.  
One day the sun will explode and swallow Earth  
and everything we've thought  
or written or cared about  
will disappear into cosmic fire.  
Maybe we will have left Earth by then,  
but that doesn't matter.  
Somewhere down the line,  
somehow, it will all end.  
Everything ends eventually.

So in the bigger picture,  
I mean, the MUCH bigger picture,  
this poem matters about as much  
as the nap you took after working  
in the garden today  
or the laughing fit you shared with a lover  
or the dessert you chose not to have.  
All things being equal like this,

if none of these things matter,  
then maybe it all matters.  
Maybe it's all the small, stupid things  
that won't exist forever  
but do exist right now and are lovely  
and perfect for you.

This poem is not built for forever,  
although neither are you.  
And that's definitely the most interesting thing  
about any of it.

## **COME TO BED**

Come to bed

The dishes are all returned to their cupboards

The laundry categorized and sorted

And the messes that dwell on our countertops

weren't liable to go anywhere today anyway

The sheets are calling

They're soft and wonderful and they smell like you

and that detergent you like so much

This is what home smells like now

You've made me smell like home

We still have time

If you come to bed now, there's time to read

I can run my fingers through your hair

massage your scalp and read to you

from the book of poems on the nightstand

Or we can fall asleep early

Together beneath the ceiling fan

our legs entwined, your soft exhale on my neck

The last thing that I think before sleep comes:

I hope I can put away your dishes forever

## WHAT WE DESERVE

The things we deserve,  
and the things we receive,  
are all together two entirely different things.

Many great men have gone to the grave  
and left behind shining buildings  
in the steel canyons of important cities,  
but a far greater number of men  
have gone to that same earth and soil  
with nothing to their name or legacy  
save a few scraps of paper  
and a few memories in a few aging heads.

It is either unfair, or perfectly just,  
that all people return to the ground  
with just as much as they entered with.  
I haven't decided which yet.

But until I decide, I will start to dedicate  
all these things to you, in your name,  
so that you may live forever,  
or at least as long as I am here.

## TERRIBLE ME AND YOU

When you drive, you get  
so angry you could spit  
and I'm known to throw  
the one-off childish fit  
We're both too stubborn to agree  
but it's obvious it's true  
that I'm just terrible me  
and you're just terrible you

You never make it  
on time for a date  
and I always chide and  
lecture when you're late  
We can sit and argue it  
until faces turn blue  
but I'm just terrible me  
and you're just terrible you

A lot of folks are bound to scoff  
and argue that we're better off  
to stay a hundred yards from one another

but I don't think they'll ever see  
the way the two of us can be  
and convincing them is just not worth the bother

You're loud and you're impatient  
but you're mine  
and you tell me I'm obnoxious  
but that's fine  
We bicker like we mean it  
even though we never do  
because I'm just terrible me  
and you're just terrible you

## IN FEBRUARY

In February

I cautiously part my curtains  
like spreading the pages of an old hardcover  
and look through my window.

Outside, flurries of snow dance silently  
and fall in repose  
like a dancer at the end of the first act  
waiting for the curtains to close again.

Were I younger, perhaps,  
I would leap to the foot of my bed  
retrieving my thermal top  
thermal bottoms

fluffy socks

snow pants

warm shirt

mittens

puffy coat

and knitted cap  
before bounding out the door and  
thrusting myself into the snow  
a multicolored beast

ravaging the pure white landscape.

And were I older, perhaps,  
I would close the curtains again

and harrumph to no-one in particular  
before taking my leave in my easy chair  
and waiting for a well-meaning neighbor  
to complete my task for me.

And although my spirit is young  
and my body feels older  
I am still the right age for the task  
so I trudge solemnly to the coat rack  
and my thermal top  
thermal bottoms  
snow pants  
warm shirt  
gloves  
insulated coat  
and knitted cap  
(the one from that ill-fated trip  
to Yellowstone, where we drove  
all day to arrive and find  
the town completely closed and asleep)  
and dispatch myself into the snow  
to shovel it clear with  
foul words and morning breath  
in the cold winter air  
until I finally return inside  
strip off my layers  
and shower in the hottest water  
my skin can tolerate  
before getting ready for the day.

And while this injustice now feels raw  
I know for certain in two or three months  
I'll speak fondly of the silent snow  
and the secrets it buries  
watching through a curtained window  
some early morning  
in February.