

Sitti "At 17"

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I learned the truth at seventeen That love was meant
for beauty queens
And high school girls with clear skinned smiles who
married young and then retired
The valentines I never knew, the friday nights,
charades of youth
Were spent on one more beautiful At seventeen I
learned the truth

And those of us with ravaged faces, lacking in the
social graces
Desp'rately re[mained] at home inventing lovers on the
phone
Who called and say "come dance with me" and
murmured vague obscenities
It isn't all it seems at seventeen

A brown eyed girl in hand-me-downs, whose name I
never could pronounce said
"Pity, please, the ones who serve, they only get what
they deserve.
The rich related home-town queen marries into what
she needs
A guarantee of company and haven for the elderly"

Remember those who win the game, lose the love they
sought to gain
In debentures of quality and dubious integrity
Their small town eyes will gape at you in dull surprise
when payment due
Exceeds accounts received at seventeen

To those of us who know the pain of valentines that
never came,
And those whose name were never called when
choosing side at basketball
It was long ago and far away The world was younger
than today
And dreams were all they gave for free to ugly
duckling girls like me

We all play the game and when we dare to cheat

ourselves at solitaire
Inventing lovers on the phone, repenting other lives
unknown
That call and say "Come dance with me", and murmur
vague obscenities
At ugly girls like me, at seventeen

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