

*Mignon Ariel King*

**Independence Unspent**

*[For Dr. S. H.]*

“I’ve saved this up for nearly a year,  
not quite knowing the proper etiquette  
to express: it’s too bad we didn’t fall in love.

We could not (and should not, of course,  
separately counter-fitted for it), yet on paper  
we look like a missed investment:

You, a Newbury Street art collector.  
Me, hapless Boheme in cotton and hemp.  
Two sums, totaled, expected to balance.

Your MP-something jazz with my vinyl Rock.  
Ming vases commingling with green glass and shells.  
All might have merged...somehow.

Back in college my girlfriends and I fantasized,  
sun-bathed on a tarred roof on Beacon Hill,  
bargaining with the blue for husbands like you.

High on your redwood deck exchanging witty  
metaphors of sky, looking down on street revelers,  
it was sad to remember thinking the world mine for the asking.

When you said it cheered you, re-minted  
through divorce, to discover women like me available,  
I just clenched the hard lemonade in my fist.

The setting was script-perfect: handsome scientist,  
toney townhouse, fireworks crackling overhead,  
but I stopped my ears with the city.

Chatted out from the taxi-ride home,  
I extended a hand into midnight  
to happily tip with singles.”