

Did You Ever Really Love Me?

Erin Keston

Growing up you were all I ever thought to please.
Your smile was the epitome of comfort—
Free with seeming ease—
And so I tried my very best
To seek to not displease.
And in return, you were there whenever I had need.

You helped me through my darker times
And were there for every fall.
To lift me back up once again,
And support me when I stood tall.

But every time you looked at me
It was not me you really saw;
You projected your wants and fears on me
And the mistakes you wished to ignore.

And every time you looked at me
Your expectations went unsaid;
The silence of conformity
That now whispers in my head.
To follow the path set out for me—
Its straight and narrow debt—
To be what you expect me to be,
In my actions, thoughts, and dress.

But now I see how caged I am,
Trapped in the circle of your arms.
Held by your affection,
Your smile a wondrous balm.
The promise of your love
Hanging heavy above my neck,
Ready to fall in an instance
If your expectations are not met.

So now that I see the cage you've made,
The expectations you've forced on me.
The blade that hangs above my neck.
The expense of being free.

Of being me.
Tell me, did you ever really love me?