

After A While

After a while you learn the subtle difference
between holding a hand and chaining a soul

And you learn that love doesn't mean leaning
and company doesn't mean security

And you begin to learn that kisses aren't contracts
and presents aren't promises

And you begin to accept your defeats
with your head up and your eyes open,
with the grace of an adult, not the grief of a child

And you learn to build all your roads on today
because tomorrow's ground is too uncertain for plans
and futures have a way of falling down in mid-flight.

After a while you learn that even sunshine burns
if you get too much

So you plant your own garden and decorate your own soul,
instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers

After a while, you learn that you really can endure...
that you really are strong
and that you really do have worth

Close variants of the poem are credited to the same or different people, ranging from Jorge Luis Borges (an Argentine writer) to Veronica Shoffstall (who is said to have penned it for her high school year book).