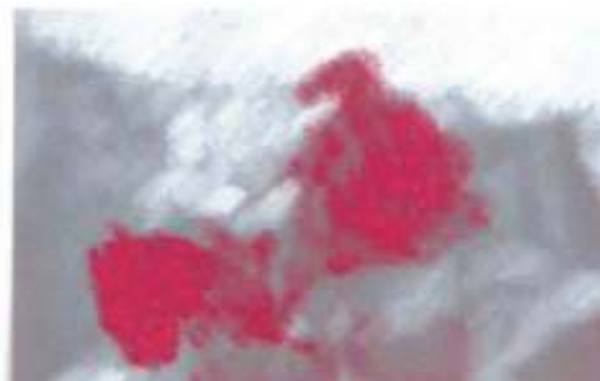


THESE THIRTEEN ROSES

The first rose
 Is for the pain I never meant to leave behind...
 It's a rose asking forgiveness for my faults,
 And the full circle of new and beautiful beginnings...
 The second rose
 Is for the enduring consequence
 Of my everlasting care, my love, and my eternal need
 For you to be by my side forevermore...
 The third and fourth rose
 Is the faith and hope to the us
 Of our existence together... This faith is the knowledge
 That our love will be undying...
 And this hope in time will erase whatever distance
 Or whatever chasm lies between us...
 The fifth and sixth rose are for the charity
 Of our individual souls entwined together...
 God is with us... And while it seems He's given
 And taken away for reasons we may never know –
 He's given again to eclipse our hearts and minds
 With suffering or superficial wants no more...
 He's telling us our search for love is over,
 And the reason for past loves lost
 Was for this love found in you and I...
 A love more miraculous and inescapable
 Than ever before...
 The seventh rose is for strength
 To put our fears and insecurities behind us...
 We do this with the eighth rose, asking God
 To come into our lives to stay... And to suffer not
 In ever again being a lost or broken anchor
 On the tumultuous seas of life and love...
 But to find the courage to no longer deny
 The reflections of the destiny we choose
 And so need and cherish in the forever
 Of this time and beyond...
 The ninth rose is my promise to you!
 I will always be there in the happiness and the sadness
 Of your needs... I will always try to understand
 As I love you and keep you by my side
 As a treasured gift – a Gift from God's Great Heaven –
 Never to forget or forsake, always praying and asking,
 Together or apart, that there be peace within us...
 The tenth rose is my passion in marriage to be ordained
 By God... To keep the fires of your heart, your mind,
 And your soul burning, to be satisfied in love
 Beyond all earthly desires...
 The eleventh rose is for my commitment with you
 To the forever with you I wish to keep...
 And I know this to be true



How far is heaven?



Because God has told me so...
 The twelfth rose is the strength I have to see,
 To feel, to touch, and to cherish all there was,
 There is, and forever will be about you... To never
 Take you for granted, and to make you the one and only woman
 In my life for which I worship... A love for all of time
 So beautiful and harmonious in its intensity
 That no man or woman, no problem or sinfulness
 Will ever come between us...
 The thirteenth rose is you... The most priceless gift of my life!
 A gift sent to me from heaven above that makes me
 Want to shout in psalms the promise made of forever love...
 A gift of love for you, and of you, through the width
 And length of eternity and beyond... To you I give
 These Thirteen Roses and the promise of these words written
 And spoken for all eternity to read and hear –
 My trilogy to you of marriage and forever love...

This poem was made into an illustrated poster in the summer of 1998... It has also been read for many couples in wedding ceremonies from Alaska to Maine... (See page 114)

Here is what has been said about the Poster/Poem “These Thirteen Roses...”

“Thank you for remembering me with your generous gift. The good wishes it conveys are very meaningful to me, and I appreciate your thoughtfulness.” Hillary Rodham Clinton

“I read THESE THIRTEEN ROSES and I cried. Not because of sadness, but because it shows a breeze of awareness within the true beauty of the soul, which is so often hidden from us in our personal eternal devotions. I love your works!” Sigrun Boller-Nurss

“Thank you Allen for letting Michael and I recite your poem THESE THIRTEEN ROSES at our wedding. It shows the great depths of a true relationship. The joys, the pain, struggles, and the victories of two people joining their lives to become one. It will be our privilege to make this joyful psalm, love and pledge to each other “forever...” Victoria Blackman

This poem, was also meant to be read at my wedding (which was cancelled) on February 14, 2003... I call this day a day captured by the feelings of the unfeeling... “O why did she betray me? Explain and you were lost; explain and you were saved; explain those who enter the gates of love eternal, as though reborn... Make me not afraid of the empty, my bed with her unmade...” Something else will again someday, someday, with something else spell “love...” Dark world, dark night – missing her – in painful memories, longing and hopeful thought, the love of my life... Happiness (one would hope) is more than a minute long... Does she remember when?

I now believe in love like I believe in cancer... If they are not treated right, they are both diseases...

...A restless exhibit (beauty), the periphery drawn as later