

# Love Poem

*John Frederick Nims (1913-1999)*

My clumsiest dear, whose hands shipwreck vases,  
At whose quick touch all glasses chip and ring,  
Whose palms are bulls in china, burs in linen,  
And have no cunning with any soft thing

Except all ill-at-ease fidgeting people: 5  
The refugee uncertain at the door  
You make at home; deftly you steady  
The drunk clambering on his undulant floor.

Unpredictable dear, the taxi drivers' terror,  
Shrinking from far headlights pale as a dime 10  
Yet leaping before red apoplectic streetcars --  
Misfit in any space. And never on time.

A wrench in clocks and the solar system.  
Only with words and people and love you move at ease.  
In traffic of wit expertly manoeuvre 15  
And keep us, all devotion, at your knees.

Forgetting your coffee spreading on our flannel,  
Your lipstick grinning on our coat,  
So gayly in love's unbreakable heaven  
Our souls on glory of spilt bourbon float. 20

Be with me, darling, early and late. Smash glasses --  
I will study wry music for your sake.  
For should your hands drop white and empty  
All the toys of the world would break.