

Letter to Neruda

by Samuel Peralta

You have been my woman's lover now for
seven years, ever since your two souls met
at La Isla Negra. Yes, I have known
about your assignations for some time,
your breakfast tête-à-têtes, your late-night trysts,

midday intermezzos punctuated
by wine and passionate exclamation.
I have unearthed your letters, your amorous
affirmations secreted in her books,
your verses excerpted in diaries.

I beg of you: Release her captive heart.
You have no need of her, your mistresses
surround you, innumerable are your
conquests. And I — I have only her. She
fills my soul, without her I am empty.

I love her, and sometimes in her absent
eyes I see the flash of remembrance — and
I think sometimes she might still love me too.
But I have not your art, nor scope. Passion
flows like torrents from your pen, where

they are quenched from my own. You are a force
of nature, an earthquake, a hurricane.
And I am left to woo her with nothing
but my shopworn metaphors, my contrived
rhymes, my incompetent pentameter.

So I have gathered for you this ransom,
one hundred and forty poems, all I have.

Available online at *«<http://fictionaut.com/stories/samuel-peralta/letter-to-neruda>»*

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I have packed them in my well-worn suitcase,
in verses of small denominations.

Take them. Only tell her you will see her

no more, that your art is for another,
that you will always cherish your moments
together. Then unbind her hands, loose her
blindfold, let her run back to me — back to
my waiting heart, inadequate but true.

