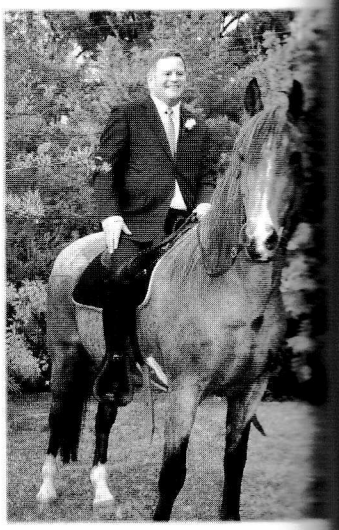
A YEAR WORTH WAITING

I saw you first from horseback, by the show jumps, drinking tea,
and when I limped off grazed and bleeding your tender smile glowed into me.
Your golden hair brushed softly as you picked the gravel out,
and your soothing voice distracted me as I tried hard not to shout.
Soft autumn sun lit on your face, as you laughed "I'll do no harm!"
and as you leant in closer I felt goose-bumps on my arm.
I wasn't seeking romance; I'd a road to take alone,
but your caring made it easier and I took your warmth back home.

I saw you in the winter; you bought the jumping saddle round,
in the vain but valiant hope that it would keep me from the ground.
Wind raddled with rain swept past us as you stood there in my door,
and we planned a group adventure while our drips met on the floor.
You glanced in to the embered fire, the cottage filled with warm,
and looked at me with words unsaid, your mouth could not quite form,
You wouldn't come inside to chat and share the fireside glow,
and only left your charm with me when you turned and chose to go.

I saw you in the springtime, the Howqua gurgling its delight,
your green eyes matched the valleys' calm in rainfall softened light,
as you rode beside me gently, mindful of my tender knee,
which you'd bandaged only yesterday when I whacked it on a tree.
I watched you laugh as toddlers toiled up dripping from the stream,
you sent them back in warm dry clothes, which they promptly paddled clean.
You stayed to clean the homestead so I wasn't left alone,
and I wished with wistful envy a girl like you could be my own.



I saw you at the summers' end; we rode across the mountains,
the only one to smile, it rained till streams turned into fountains.
Stirling's mountain ash gave way to misty snow gums bowed with sleet,
at Craig's hut for icy lunch you laughed despite your freezing feet.
Glistening bridles dripped with oilskins through an air so cool and clean,
and you sang the green King Valley down as our track became a stream.
It was you that passed the hot soup round to counter the evening damp,
and asked me for a poem, by our fire, at the cattlemen's camp.

I saw you in the autumn, when I jumped and didn't fall,
you were standing by the practice ring, you hardly moved at all.
You had that same look on your face, but this time out the words had flown,
and spoke out my good fortune, told me you're now on your own.
I looked into your eyes and saw you scared as never before,
and realised the courage it took, I felt in a kind of awe.
My mind was slow my lips all dumb like a boxer after a bout
I took a mighty breath of air and finally, asked you out.

Now I've seen you on a hundred rides and smiling in our shed,
we've watched the sunsets, swam at dawn, left not a word unsaid,
your children now can ride to school, my daughters are your friend,
we've built a home together where Meander makes its bend.
And looking back it dawns on me, my good fortune, I was slow,
to see you were always looking after me, and only now, I know,
and I rejoice at all the things we share and love as one through life,
and this Autumn, with our friends around, I'll see you as my wife.

