

## Victor Henry

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### Conditional Love

“What a piece of work is a man!”  
Shakespeare

They met on a blind date,  
Her girlfriend setting her up  
With a "good guy" at the office.

He seemed nice at first,  
But after a year of living together  
He insisted on making decisions for her,

Ignored her feelings,  
Attacked her self-esteem,  
Humiliated her in front of her friends,

Set rigid rules she couldn't live up to.  
He called her at work, left text messages  
Wanting to know where she was,

Cross-examined her constantly,  
Continually harped on her.  
But it was when he hit her the first time,

A sickening smack.  
She realized the honeymoon was over.  
Realized she was his possession.

## Trust

“I put a spell on you because you're mine”  
Screamin' Jay Hawkins

He'd hit her with a vicious closed-fist  
Punch to the face, busting her lip open,  
Blood gushing from her broken nose,

Her head throbbing, pulsating  
In heartbreaking pain.  
She'd been foolish enough

To turn her power over to him,  
Convinced she couldn't live without him,  
She'd hoped for a gentle breakup.

But now, needing something to believe in  
She resorted to magic, to witchcraft,  
Choosing a white magic love spell.

She placed a white rose in water  
Next to a white candle and a picture  
Of her ex-husband to be,

Looked deeply into the picture.  
Then after thirty minutes of meditation,  
Released the bond between them.

Released their relationship.  
Released the unwanted abuse,  
Asked that her pain, her grief, her sadness

Be easily healed.  
And with the spell she had cast  
Sent it out into the universe.

## **Succumbing**

“The brain is wider than the sky”  
Emily Dickinson

Too impatient for the white magic spell to work,  
She convinces herself he needs her  
That he can't live without her.

In the dark moment of his soul  
He threatens to commit suicide  
Of kill her if she leaves him.

Feeling drained and empty,  
Guilty because her first attempt  
To leave failed,

She returns for more abuse  
Believing he'll truly change.

## Loyalty

“A new love drives out the old.”  
Andreas Capellanus

Like a drunk, addicted to Everclear,  
190 Proof Grain Alcohol,  
Claiming he'll never drink again,

He spills her blood,  
Bruises her body  
Buries her soul.

Like a screaming, mewling child  
He cries and begs her to forgive him,  
Manipulates her with false hopes.

Brings her chocolates and flowers,  
Claims everyone else in his life  
Has let him down.

That she is all he has.  
Pleads with her to save him.  
She breaks the news to him in throaty

I-don't-give-a-shit syllabic tones  
I'm not your whore, your wench,  
Your working girl.

## Trading Up

"It's better to be looked over than overlooked"  
Mae West

She breaks free from his abusive grip,  
A grip that leaves her black and blue,

Red around the eyes.  
She would like a knight in shining armor

To rescue her,  
But instinctively she knows

She must own her own power.  
Deal with the fear,

Knows she should trust her instincts,  
Listen to her inner voice,

Discover the truth.  
Her new partner encourages her

To find her own passion,  
Supports her dreams,

Develop her gifts.  
Gives her his wallet, his paycheck

His hard-earned love.

**Victor Henry's** poetry and prose poems have appeared in small press magazines, anthologies, and e-zines, such as *Slipstream*, *The Paterson Literary Review*, *Nobody Gets Off The Bus: The Viet Nam Generation Big Book*, *Vietnam War Poetry*, *The Homestead Review*, *Red River Review*, *Dead Snakes*, *Misfitmagazine*, *I am not a Silent Poet*, *Your one Phone Call*, and *In Between Hangovers*, among others. His book *What They Wanted* was published by Future Cycle Press in 2015.