

Love

for B.R.

## Michael O'Keefe



Ignoring prescriptions, we self-medicated settling easily into disease.

We were punk with kisses, lips eliciting caresses from murky depths.

Wooing you left a trail sick with flowers, calls,

and the omens we took as verification of just how ill we were.

The morning your cats came back together,

after one had been away for months,

meant we were on the right track.

We both succumbed to the spinning cauldron of lust and longing

in which a meme spread, a virus infecting you and me with an "us."

After suffering unlimited cycles of cynicism this meme eradicated

what hung over instilling us with the conviction

that we could be together and be happy about it.

We became bedridden and though a cure was possible, it was not wanted.

One day I walked across the Commons to Washington St.

and found a jeweler by the name of Lerner.

I bought three rings, one to engage you, two to marry you and me.

Yours were a puzzle of gold and polished rock.

Mine, hammered onto my hand, the date we were to marry on the skin side.

But, it was the day I proposed by the cliff in a coastal winter breeze

that we took as the strongest sign, making the diagnosis of "us" and apt one.

After your knees buckled, I held your hands, the light changed,

and a way home revealed itself from the shore to our door.

It was an alteration of the soul that made trees greener, skies clearer,

and us happy. Imagine not being sad for just a minute.

Now "love," that word's been bandied about so often

it's the iceberg lettuce of the vocabulary. No caloric value.

As soon as we called it that, you got well, and over us.

I refuse to call it that but it did call to me.

As an actor, Michael O'Keefe has garnered both Golden Globe and Academy Award nominations. He's appeared in the films *Michael Clayton*, *Frozen River*, *The Pledge*, *Ironweed*, *The Great Santini* and *Caddyshack*. Television audiences will remember him as "Fred" on *Roseanne*. Other TV appearances also include *The West Wing*, *Law and Order*, *House M.D.*, *The Closer* and *Brothers and Sisters*. He's appeared on Broadway in *Reckless*, *Side Man*, *The Fifth of July* and *Mass Appeal*, for which he received a Theater World Award. As a writer his lyrics were in the Grammy winning song, *Longing in their Hearts*, which was composed and sung by Bonnie Raitt. He's also written with Irish singer songwriter Paul Brady and numerous other composers. His writing has appeared in *BOMB*, *Lake Affect* and *Chaparral*. He holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Bennington College.