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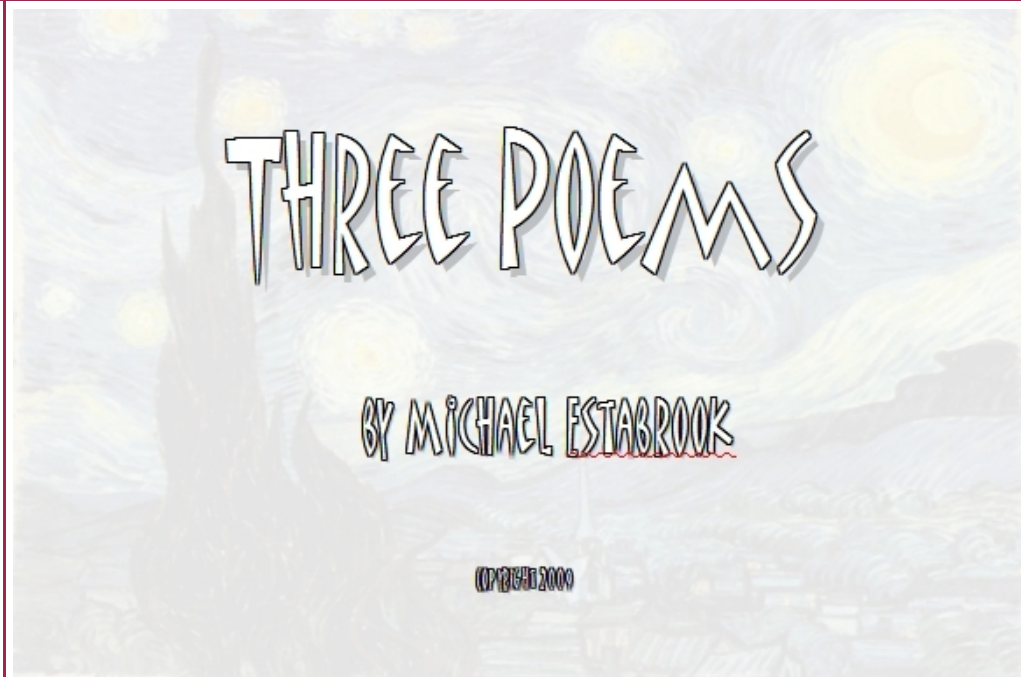
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I could have lost you

I could have lost you
at the outset in high school
when you returned my ring to me
because I was moving too fast.

I could have lost you
when we first went off to college
and you decided you needed
to date other boys
for the freedom, for the experience.

I could have lost you
because we were apart, at different colleges
and you did date another guy
and you did have plenty of boyfriends
trailing along behind you all over the campus.

But, for whatever the reasons
I did not lose you,
you never left me like you could have
for another guy, you remained mine,
mine, blessing my life
with your beautiful, superlative self
when certainly you could have done better.

Yes, I could have lost you but I didn't,
and I don't know why
you are still mine.
If I live 1000 years, I'll never be able
to figure that one out.

How could I not?

If I didn't know you yet saw you today,
on the street or in a store,
in a classroom or on the dance floor,
I would fall in love with you all over again,
I know I would.

I'd fall in love with you as I did
all those many years ago.

How could I not?

How could any man not? Just look at you!

I'd fall in love with your smile
and your shining mink-coat brown eyes.

I'd fall in love with your laugh
and your legs, your delicate hands
and precious feet. I'd fall in love
with you, with all of you.

How in the world could I not?

And more than anything in the whole world

I would want you to be mine,
would want you to let me love you,
to have and to hold you,
to pamper and to worship you,
until the breath left my body for good.

My heart is so full

I see your pretty face,
hear your so familiar voice,
watch your precious movements across the room,
and my heart is so full.

I turn to the photos of you before I came along,
15 years old, so innocent and sweet
lying on the blanket at Dallenbach's beach,
acting with your friends in a summer stock play,
and my heart is so full.

I recall our first dance,
holding you so tenderly against me,
our first kiss, so tentative, yet sure,
our very first date when I asked you to be mine,
and my heart is so full.

I replay the scene
of my proposing to you in the dark,
fumbling with the ring,
and you saying yes and crying,
my world exploding with happiness and relief,
and my heart is so full.

I think again of kissing you,
feeling your warm mouth on mine,
feeling your slender fingers laced between mine,
stare as your perfect smile
shines on me still,
and my heart is so full
I fear it will burst.

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Michael Estabrook is a baby boomer educated first in the sciences, later studying literature and languages earning two Master's degrees in Comparative Literature, and more recently a PhD in History and Genealogy from Warnborough University in London. He has written poetry all his life, first getting published in the late 1980s. Over the years he has published 15 poetry chapbooks, his most recent entitled *They Didn't Leave Notes*. Other interests include art, music, theatre, opera, and his wife who just happens to be the most beautiful woman he has ever known.