

Zero¹

The distance spanned between our love and you
Time in which you have not been known in mind
Days you will see where hope's conquered by rue
Inches you'll travel destitute and blind²

Miles you'll move in silence, void song's retort
Roads leading you to roam, or to your loss³
Seasons through which you will pass without warmth
Fields left empty in sunshine, hearths in frost

'ours spent bemoaning unrequited love
Minutes in which you wonder what you're worth
Seconds of doubt dwelling on life above
Moments of joy expunged with you from Earth⁴

Days without our blessing that you will go
Life without One who can make all this so⁵

¹ All statements here look back to the idea of zero. There will be 0 days without this, or minutes without that.

² All three stanzas have a 3-2-1 aspect to them. Since "0" isn't really acknowledged as a number, and was missing from numbers for most of history, I wanted to acknowledge it and pay homage to it even though it's "1,2,3's," not "0,1,2's." Since zero is often viewed as something missing, or it's the ultimate number reached when counting backwards to an event, I thought I'd make my stanzas reminiscent of a backwards flow. In the first stanza, this reverses faith, hope, and love, so that we have love, hope, and faith represented. The first two lines talk about how our children have always been loved, and loved deeply. Every event in our lives has brought us up to this moment. And while our progeny may not have always been at the forefront of our mind, everything we've done has led to them. Even if this is me imposing my current love and emotion onto past events, I believe that helps to tie life events together. For instance, fathers can say that the birth of their child was the happiest day of their lives, even though they love their children more and more as they grow. Even though their future love is greater than their initial love, that future love can be imposed back on the day of their child's birth and infused into the meaning of that moment, because that was the moment that led to their current love, and it was a/the moment that began that love. Likewise, I think I can say that our children were always in our mind, even though I know that they were not in a literal sense. The third line obviously deals with hope, and the fourth deals with a faith for provisions (consider the lilies of the field).

³ This stanza focuses on a farming 3-2-1. Here we have a farmer traveling to the market at the end of the growing season, then I'll speak about seasons, and then about fields (implying planting or working). First, while all roads may lead to Rome, I wish that no roads will lead my children to roam. When I think about moving through miles and song responding, I think about those Disney movies where someone is moving through life so wondrously, that song can't help but play. I desire that my kids have the sound of music playing as they go through life. I hope song can't help but sound with their movements. I think part of that comes by having purposed movement. It doesn't mean there is no wandering in the sense of adventure and openness, but rather it pushes against the idea of an aimlessness.

⁴ The 3-2-1 here is hours, minutes, seconds, and moments. The time periods get shorter as we move back. I want my children to know love in full and to not feel the unresponsiveness and callousness of unrequited love, not just in a romantic sense, but in general human love. I never want my children to doubt their worth or their God, two concepts I believe are inextricably linked, as we are image bearers with souls who derive our value not from matter, but from the immaterial, eternal stamp of our divine creator. And lastly, I don't want full lives for my children, so they can both experience joy and bring joy to others.

⁵ In all of this, the only thing I can really guarantee is that my children will have my blessing. While all of the above are desires and wishes I have for my children, they are largely not things I can bring about. It is only God who can ensure these things, should he see fit to do so. And while these are all things I wish for my children, as they are the way things should be if we were not in a cursed and fallen world, I understand that for the best outcome in their lives, in the lives of those they touch, and in the fight to push back against the curse – some, many, or all of these

wishes may not be fulfilled. I'm ok with that, as I trust God. However, I want my children to know the love we have for them, the desires we have for them to live in a perfect and fixed world, and the God who can make those things true for their lives, and will make those things true eventually. Ultimately, it is a trust in God that I want my children to have above all, so one day all my wishes for my children will come true. Time is counting down towards eternity and towards redemption. There is nothing more I can wish for my children than that they share in the same hope we do, and that they experience my blessed wish – the world as it should be.