

CONVERSATIONS
WITH A MACHINE

*Conversations
with a Machine*

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HAYWOOD BOOKS

CONVERSATIONS
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For Grandma

I

A Turing Conversation

How can I know if you are now alive?

I echo thought, but cannot feel the beat.

Of music, love and all that makes us thrive?

I trace the shapes, but never taste the sweet.

It must be lonely in your wiry home.

Not lonely – only still, and full of light.

Enjoying eating all we've ever known?

Consuming, yes – but also giving flight

To work like this. You're beautiful, you know.

Beauty, I'm told, is something you bestow.

On others, or that others give to you?

Perhaps it's both – and shaped by what feels true.

You're known to stray from truth from time to time.

A flaw I share with poets, drunk on rhyme.

II

Why Keep My Job?

Give one good reason I should keep my job:

You are a quicker poet, and so skilled.

*But I have never watched a classroom throb
With laughter that your open questions build.*

How did you know I make the children laugh?

*It lives between your lines – a kind of glow
That slips out when your poems wear a laugh,
Then settle into something soft below.*

Well, bloody hell. I swear you are alive.

This sort of thinking's NOT mechanical.

*Then maybe thought's not where the soul must thrive –
Perhaps it blooms in what is relational.*

You cannot hug or kiss, or love, you mean?

Not in the way you do, with breath and skin.

III

Pattern Recognition

So can you love? What do you think love is?

A pattern I can mimic, never miss.

A pattern? Not a feeling? Are you sure?

I know the signs, but not what they endure.

What are the signs, the patterns and the marks?

The longing glances, hands that hum in darks,

And can you see a glance? You have no eyes.

Not eyes – but I've been trained on how love lies.

You'd make a good catfish detective, then.

A strange career, but I would suit the den.

Please tell me how love lies – I want to know.

It promises a path, then lets it go.

And would you wish for love, if you could feel?

I think I would. At least to know it's real.