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After a while you learn the subtle difference between holding a hand and chaining a soul, and you learn that love doesn’t mean leaning and company doesn’t mean security, and you begin to learn that kisses aren’t contracts.
and presents aren't promises,
and you begin to accept your defeats
with your head and your eyes open,
with the grace of a woman, not the grief of a child.
and learn to build all your roads
on today because tomorrow’s ground
is too uncertain for plans, and futures have
a way of falling down in mid-flight.
After awhile you learn that even sunshine
burns if you get too much.
So you plant your own garden and decorate your own soul, instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers. And you learn that you really can endure that you really are strong and you really have worth and you learn and learn... with every good-bye you learn.

--Veronica A. Shoffstall