

# **BALLADE AT THIRTY-FIVE**

DOROTHY PARKER



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This, no song of an ingenue,  
    This, no ballad of innocence;  
This, the rhyme of a lady who  
    Followed ever her natural bents.  
    This, a solo of sapience,  
This, a chantey of sophistry,  
    This, the sum of experiments, —  
I loved them until they loved me.

Decked in garments of sable hue,  
    Daubed with ashes of myriad Lents,  
Wearing shower bouquets of rue,  
    Walk I ever in penitence.  
    Oft I roam, as my heart repents,  
Through God's acre of memory,  
    Marking stones, in my reverence,  
"I loved them until they loved me."

Pictures pass me in long review, —  
    Marching columns of dead events.  
I was tender, and, often, true;  
    Ever a prey to coincidence.  
    Always knew I the consequence;  
Always saw what the end would be.  
    We're as Nature has made us — hence  
I loved them until they loved me.

L'ENVOI

Princes, never I'd give offense,  
    Won't you think of me tenderly?  
Here's my strength and my weakness, gents, —  
    I loved them until they loved me.