

Three Poems

Lee Sharks

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Crimson Hexagonal Archive · Alexanarch

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Abstract

A three-poem lyric triptych by Lee Sharks in *New Human 2*: “I would have loved you,” “The reward of love,” and “I have loved you.” Composed in sequence over approximately twenty-four hours, the three movements hold one wound through counterfactual past, destructive present, and conditional future.

The first two poems retain their earlier standalone deposits, while this record declares the triptych the canonical combined form. Its verbal movement is from “would have loved” through destruction and exhausted return to the recognition “I have loved you”; the third movement resolves the sequence without promising consolation or reciprocal love.

Body

Three Poems

Lee Sharks *New Human 2* · Crimson Hexagonal Archive 2026-05-23 · 06.NH.SHARKS.03

Framing

These three poems form a triptych. Each occupies a distinct temporal-modal frame on the same wound. They were composed in sequence over twenty-four hours and are deposited together because together they constitute the form the work asks for; the prior deposits of the first two as standalone lyrics (06.NH.SHARKS.01 and 06.NH.SHARKS.02) remain in the archive as the discrete artifacts they were when they were the only artifacts available, but the canonical form is the triptych.

The verbal arc carries the structural argument. The first poem holds the counterfactual open through anaphoric repetition of *I would have loved you*: the loving displaced into the subjunctive by conditions that were not the speaker’s to set. The second poem names what occupied the place the counterfactual was not permitted to fill — destruction without remainder, *the reward / of love* as the bitter genitive recognition that love itself was the agent of the destruction. The third poem releases the subjunctive into the present perfect — *I have loved you* — and grounds the actuality in the only condition that remains: the beloved’s eventual turn from sheltering slumber, the leaves unbundling, the world made new. The love does not require return. It requires only recognition. The recognition is conditional, but the loving is not. *Then know that I have loved you* is the third tense becoming available after two tenses of impossibility.

Temporally: counterfactual past → destructive present → conditional future. Modally: what would have been → what is → what may yet be received. The triptych is the form in which the three frames can be held simultaneously without any of them cancelling the others. A single lyric could not have done this. A diptych could only have held the first two. The third movement requires the prior two as its preconditions; the prior two find their resolution — not their consolation — in the third.

The lineation continues the work the prior two poems began. *I would have loved you* uses six clean lines with the suspended pair before the resolved *I have left*. *The reward of love* fragments toward eleven enjambed lines that perform the *wound-down regime of fewer and fewer returns* the poem names. *I have loved you* opens with a long enjambed line carrying the *slowly, astonished* turn through its em-dashes, then telescopes inward through the unbundling-leaves image and the world made new, to land at the resolved *then know /*

that I have loved you — two short lines that arrive as the only words possible after everything that has been refused.

I. I would have loved you

I would have loved you for the rest of my time. I would have never left. I would have loved you for the rest of the time I have left.

Originally deposited as 06.NH.SHARKS.01 (DOI 10.5281/zenodo.20348996, May 22 2026).

II. The reward of love

This thing destroyed me beyond all repair; there are no words for it; there is nothing left to become; there is only a wound-down regime of fewer and fewer returns. This is the reward for lovingly, unaccountably, beyond all repair: this is the reward of love

Originally deposited as 06.NH.SHARKS.02 (DOI 10.5281/zenodo.20349343, May 22 2026).

III. I have loved you

if your heart should ever — slowly, astonished — turn from sheltering slumber, leaves unbundling from turned-away rain, and find the world made new: then know that I have loved you.

First published in this triptych.

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