

Ballade at Thirty-Five

Carla Bruni

This, no song of ingénue,
This, no ballad of innocence;
This, the rhyme of a lady who
Followed ever the 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.

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.