What to Say Upon Being Asked to Be Friends

By Julian Talamantez Brolaski

Why speak of hate, when I do bleed for love?
Not hate, my love, but Love doth bite my tongue
Till I taste stuff that makes my rhyming rough
So flatter I my fever for the one
For whom I inly mourn, though seem to shun.
A rose is arrows is eros, so what
If I confuse the shade that I’ve become
With winedark substance in a lover’s cup?
But stop my tongue’s wound, I’ve bled enough.
If I be fair, or false, or freaked with fear
If I my tongue in lockèd box immure
Blame not me, for I am sick with love.
   Yet would I be your friend most willingly
   Since friendship would infect me killingly.


Source: Advice for Lovers (City Lights Books, 2012)