CONTENTS

Acknowledgements  xxi

Introduction  xxiii
  Poems Between Women  xxiii
  Innocent Love? Seventeenth-century Beginnings  xxv
  Romantic Friendship: Eighteenth-century Contradictions  xxvii
  Private Moments: Nineteenth-century Visions  xxxi
  Telling Secrets: The Transitional Generations  xxxiv
  Waking Up Together: Modern Love  xxxix
  Dancing in the Dangerous World: Contemporary
    Questions  xlii
  Further Reading  xlv

Katherine Philips  1
  To Mrs M. A., Upon Absence  1
  To Rosania (now Mrs Mountague)  2
  To My Excellent Lucasia, On Our Friendship  3

Aphra Behn  4
  To the Fair Clarinda, Who Made Love to Me  4
  To My Lady Morland at Tunbridge  5
  Verses design'd by Mrs A. Behn to be sent to a
    fair Lady  7

Mary Mollineux  8
  Another Letter to a Friend  8

Jane Barker  9
  On the Death of my Dear Friend and Play-fellow,
    Mrs E. D.  9
Anne KUligrew 11
On the Soft and Gentle Motions of Eudora 11

Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea 12
Friendship between Ephelia and Ardelia 12
The White Mouses Petition 13

Elizabeth Singer Rowe 14
Parthenea, an Elegy 14
To Cleone 15

Anonymous 16
Cloe to Artimesa 16

Elizabeth Thomas 17
To Clemena 17

Mary Masters 18
To the Same; Enquiring Why I Wept 18

Elizabeth Teft 19
On a Friend's taking a Journey 19

Charlotte MacCarthy 20
Contentment, to a Friend 20
To the Same 21

Susanna Highmore Duncombe 22
To Aspasia 22

Charlotte Lennox 25
Ardelia to Flavia, an Epistle 25

Anna Seward 26
Sonnet X 26
Sonnet XXXI 27
Contents

Elizabeth Hands 28
    An Epistle 28

Anne Grant 29
    The Nymph of the Fountain to Charlotte 29

Sarah Ponsonby 32
    Song 32

Georgiana Spencer, Duchess of Devonshire 32
    To Lady Elizabeth Foster 32

Eliza Cobbe, Lady Tuite 33
    To a Friend, Fearful of being Forgotten in Absence 33

Eliza Robertson 34
    from A Poetical Epistle to an Absent Friend 34

Margaretta Faugeres 35
    Friendship 35

Elizabeth Moody 37
    To a Lady, Who was a great Talker 37
    To a Friend, Who gave the Author a Reading Glass 37

Dorothy Wordsworth 38
    Irregular Verses 38

Mary Matilda Betham 41
    In a Letter to A. R. C. on Her Wishing to be Called Anna 41

Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan 42
    Fragment III 42
Mary Russell Mitford 44
  Written in a Blank-Paper Book Given to the Author by a Friend 44

Dorothea Primrose Campbell 45
  To Miss Sophia Headle 45

Caroline Clive 46
  The Mosel 46

Elizabeth Barrett Browning 49
  To George Sand 49

Frances Kemble 50
  A Noonday Vision 50
  Parting 51

Margaret Fuller 52
  To A. H. B. 52

Frances Osgood 53
  The Garden of Friendship 53

Isa Blagden 54
  Alice 54

Emily Brontë 56
  Love and Friendship 56

Alice Cary 57
  The Window Just Over the Street 57

Dora Greenwell 60
  To Elizabeth Barrett Browning, in 1851 60
  To Elizabeth Barrett Browning, in 1861 60
  Reconciliation 61
Contents

Bessie Rayner Parkes 63
   Dream Fears 63

Christina Rossetti 65
   Gone Before 65
   Echo 66

Emily Dickinson 67
   'Baffled for just a day or two' 67
   'Her breast is fit for pearls' 67
   'Wild Nights – Wild Nights!' 68
   '“Heaven” – is what I cannot reach!' 68
   'I showed her Heights she never saw' 69
   'Her face was in a bed of hair' 69

Helen Hunt Jackson 70
   Friends 70
   Her Eyes 70

Annie Fields 71
   Ephemeron 71
   To —, Sleeping 72

Adah Isaacs Menken 72
   Answer Me 72

Mathilde Blind 75
   A Fantasy 75

Rosa Mulholland, Lady Gilbert 77
   A Stolen Visit 77

‘Violet Fane’ 78
   At Her Feet 78
Contents

Emily Hickey 79
‘For Richer, For Poorer’ 79
I Think of You as of a Good Life-boat 80

‘Michael Field’ 81
‘Atthis, my darling, thou did’st stray’ 81
‘Nought to me! So I choose to say’ 82
‘Beloved, now I love God first’ 83
Lovers 83
‘I am thy charge, thy care!’ 84

Annie Hindle 84
Her Gift 84

Edith Thomas 86
The Deep-Sea Pearl 86

Lizette Woodworth Reese 86
Nocturne 86
To a Dead Friend 87

A. Mary F. Robinson 87
Rosa Rosarum 87

Edith Nesbit 89
‘To Vera, Who Asked a Song’ 89

Katharine Lee Bates 90
‘Even as this globe shall gleam and disappear’ 90

Mary Coleridge 90
The Witch 90
Mistaken 91
Marriage 92
Not Yet 92
Gone 93
Regina 93
‘O let me be in loving nice’ 94
Hush 95
‘Only a little shall we speak of thee’ 95

Sophie Jewett 96
A Letter 96
For a Birthday 97

Louise Guiney 98
Private Theatricals 98

Amy Levy 99
London in July 99
To Lallie 100
At a Dinner Party 102

Charlotte Mew 102
On the Road to the Sea 102
Rooms 104

Eva Gore-Booth 105
The Vision of Niamh 105
The Travellers 106

Florence Converse 107
Friendship 107

Amy Lowell 108
The Letter 108
A Shower 109
April 109
Decade 110
Contents

Ursula Bethell 110
   Discipline 110
   Fortune 111

Gertrude Stein 112
   from Lifting Belly (II) 112

Isabel Ecclestone Mackay 113
   The Meeting 113

Helen Hay Whitney 113
   XXII: To a Woman 113

Natalie Barney 114
   Habit 114

Angelina Weld Grimké 115
   Rosabel 115
   Caprichosa 116

Marjorie Pickthall 118
   The Lost Friend 118

Sara Teasdale 119
   Song 119

H. D. (Hilda Doolittle) 119
   At Baia 119
   Fragment Thirty-Six 120

Elizabeth Daryush 123
   Forbidden Love 123

Katherine Mansfield 124
   Friendship 124
Dorothy Wellesley, Duchess of Wellington 125
Maiden Castle 125

Lesbia Harford 126
'I count the days until I see you, dear' 126
'I can't feel the sunshine' 126

Edna St Vincent Millay 127
Evening on Lesbos 127

Vita Sackville-West 128
No Obligation 128

Sylvia Townsend Warner and Valentine Ackland 129
'The clock plods on –' 129
'The eyes of the body, being blindfold by night' 130
'Since the first toss of gale that blew' 130

Ruth Pitter 132
If You Came 132
Old, Childless, Husbandless 132

Antoinette Scudder 133
Tea making 133

Elsa Gidlow 134
Relinquishment 134
Constancy 135
Philosophy 135

Alice V. Stuart 136
The Plait of Hair 136

Thelma Tyfield 137
Gifts 137
Dorothy Livesay 138
Arms And the Woman 138

May Sarton 138
from The Autumn Sonnets 138
After All These Years 139
Love 139

May Swenson 140
Poet to Tiger 140

Naomi Replansky 144
The Dangerous World 144

Adrienne Rich 144
from Twenty-One Love Poems (XVII) 144

Maureen Duffy 145
Eureka 145

Audre Lorde 146
Love Poem 146

Jane Chambers 147
To Beth On Her Forty-Second Birthday 147

Judy Grahn 148
‘Ah, Love, you smell of petroleum’ 148

Suniti Namjoshi and Gillian Hanscombe 149
‘Well, then let slip the masks’ 149

Marilyn Hacker 150
Coming Downtown 150
Daphne Marlatt 151
  Coming to you 151

Pat Parker 152
  For Willyce 152

Minnie Bruce Pratt 152
  Bury and Dig 152

Cheryl Clarke 153
  Nothing 153

Olga Broumas 154
  Song / for Sanna 154

Michèle Roberts 156
  Magnificat 156

Mary Dorcey 157
  Night 157

Brenda Brooks 158
  Anything 158

Dionne Brand 160
  from hard against the soul (X) 160

Carol Ann Duffy 161
  Warming Her Pearls 161

Jackie Kay 162
  Pounding Rain 162

Ali Smith 163
  Genesis 163
Contents

Biographical Notes  165
Permissions  195
Index of Poets  201
Index of Titles and First Lines  203