

**READINGS:** Note that this packet also contains toasts towards this end, which may come in handy for anyone who needs to give a speech at the reception.

Alice Walker

*To acknowledge our ancestors means we are aware that we did not make ourselves, that the line stretches all the way back...The grace with which we embrace life, in spite of the pain, the sorrows, is always a measure of what has gone before.*

Linda Hogan

*Walking, I am listening to a deeper way. Suddenly all of my ancestors are behind me. Be still, they say. Watch and listen. You are the result of the love of thousands.*

Justice Margaret H. Marshall

*(excerpt from MA ruling giving same-sex couples equal marriage rights)*

*Marriage bestows enormous private and social advantages on those who choose to marry. Civil marriage is at once a deeply personal commitment to another human being and a highly public celebration of the ideals of mutuality, companionship, intimacy, fidelity, and family...Because it fulfills yearnings for security, safe haven, and connection that express our common humanity, civil marriage is an esteemed institution, and the decision whether and whom to marry is among life's most momentous acts of self-definition.*

"Friendship" by Judy Bielicki

*It is often said that it is love that makes the world go round. However, without doubt, it is friendship which keeps our spinning existence on an even keel. True friendship provides so many of the essentials for a happy life-it is the foundation on which to build an enduring relationship, it is the mortar which bonds us together in harmony, and it is the calm, warm protection we sometimes need when the world outside seems cold and chaotic. True friendship holds a mirror to our failings, without destroying our sense of worthiness. True friendship nurtures our hopes, supports us in our disappointments, and encourages us to grow to our best potential, You came together as friends. Today, you pledge to each other not only their love, but also the strength, warmth and, most importantly, the fun of true friendship.*

Louis de Bernieres from Captain Corelli's Mandolin

*Love is a temporary madness; it erupts like volcanoes and then subsides. And when it subsides you have to make a decision. You have to work out whether your roots have so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part. Because this is what love is. Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of eternal passion. That is just being in love, which any fool can do. Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident. Love is the roots that grow towards each other underground, slowly and determined. And when all the pretty blossoms have fallen from their branches, you find you are no longer two, but one. One root, One tree, One Love.*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

*It is right and proper for a bride and bridegroom to welcome and celebrate their wedding day with a unique sense of triumph. When all the difficulties, obstacles, hindrances, doubts, and misgivings have been, not made light of, but honestly faced and overcome -- and it is certainly better not to*

take everything for granted -- then both parties have indeed achieved the most important triumph of their lives. With the "yes" that they have said to each other, they have, by their free choice, given a new direction to their lives; they have cheerfully and confidently defied all the uncertainties and hesitations with which, as they know, a lifelong partnership between two people is faced; and, by their own free and responsible action, they have conquered a new land to live in. Every wedding must be an occasion of joy that human beings can do such great things, that they have been given such immense freedom and power to take the helm in their life's journey.

From *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but Really loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get all loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

From the *I Ching*

When two people are at one in their inmost hearts, they shatter even the strength of iron or bronze. And when two people understand each other in their inmost hearts, their words are sweet and strong, like the fragrance of orchids.

Excerpt from *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway

At night, there was the feeling that we had come home, feeling no longer alone, waking in the night to find the other there, and not gone away; all other things were unreal. We slept when we were tired and if we woke the other woke too so no one was alone. Often a man wishes to be alone and a woman wishes to be alone too and if they love each other they are jealous of that in each other, but I can truly say we never felt that. We could feel alone when we were together, alone against the others. We were never lonely and never afraid when we were together.

From *The Dance Moving to the Deep Rhythms of Your Life* by Oriah

Take me to the places on the earth that teach you how to dance, the places where you can risk letting the world break your heart, and I will take you to the places where the earth beneath my feet and the stars overhead make my heart whole again and again.

*Show me how you take care of business without letting business determine who you are. When the children are fed but still the voices within and around us, shout that soul's desires have too high a price, let us remind each other that it is never about the money.*

*Show me how you offer to your people and the world the stories and the songs you want our children's children to remember, and I will show you how I struggle, not to change the world, but to love it.*

*Sit beside me in long moments of shared solitude, knowing both our absolute aloneness and our undeniable belonging. Dance with me in the silence and the sound of small daily words, holding neither against me at the end of the day.*

*And when the sound of all the declarations of our sincerest intentions has died away on the wind, dance with me in the infinite pause before the next great inhale of breath that is breathing us all into being, not filling the emptiness from the outside or from within.*

*Don't say, "Yes!" Just take my hand and dance with me.*

#### *From A Song for Hiawatha*

*Come join us in celebration, those who love sunshine on meadow, who love shadow of the forest, love the wind among the branches and the pine trees, and the thunder in the mountains whose innumerable echoes flap like eagles. Listen to this song of marriage. How, from another tribe and country came a young man, "give me as my wife this maiden, and our hands be clasped more closely, and our hearts be more united. Thus it is, our daughters leave us, those we love and those who love us. When a youth with flaunting feathers beckons to the fairest maiden. From the sky the sun benignant looked upon them through the branches, saying to them, "oh, my children life is checkered shade and sunshine." The two figures man and woman standing hand in hand together, with their hands so clasped together that they seem in one united. And the words thus represented are, "I see your heart within you." Sing them songs of love and longing. Now, let's feast and be more joyous.*

#### *Letters by Vincent van Gogh*

*I want to paint men and women with something of the eternal which the halo used to symbolize... To express the love of two lovers by a wedding of two complementary colors, their mingling and opposition, the mysterious vibration of kindred tones. To express the thought of a brow by the radiance of a light tone against a somber background. To express hope by some star, the eagerness of a soul by a sunset radiance.*

*and*

*It may well seem to you that the sun is shining more brightly and that everything has taken on a new charm. That, at any rate, is the inevitable consequence of true love, I believe, and it is a wonderful thing. And I also believe that those who hold that no one thinks clearly when in love are wrong, for it is at just that time that one thinks very clearly indeed and is more energetic than one was before. And love is something eternal, it may change in aspect but not in essence. And*

*there is the same difference between someone who is in love and what he was like before as there is between a lamp that is lit and one that is not. The lamp was there all the time and it was a good lamp, but now it is giving light as well and that is its true function. And one has more peace of mind about many things and so is more likely to do better work . . .*

Martin Weitz

*If life has meaning to us at all, it possesses it because of love. It is that which enshrines and ennobles our human experience. It is the basis for the peace of family and the peace of the peoples of the earth. The greatest gift bestowed upon humans is the gift not of demanding, but of giving love between [two people.]*

Henry David Thoreau

*Love is the wind, the tide, the waves, the sunshine. Its power is incalculable. It never ceases, it never slackens; it can move the globe without a resting place; it can warm without fire, it can feed without food: it can clothe without garments, it can shelter without roof: it can make a paradise within which will dispense with a paradise without. In love we impart, each to each, in subtlest immaterial form of thought or atmosphere, the best of ourselves – such as commonly vanishes or evaporate in aspirations – and mutually enrich each other. Love tends to purify and sublime itself. It triumphs over the flesh, and the bond of its union is holiness.*

Thoreau, "Wednesday"

*As surely as the sunset shall translate me to the ethereal world, and remind me of the ruddy morning of youth; as surely as the last strain of music which falls on my decaying ear shall make age to be forgotten, or the manifold influences of nature survive our natural life, so surely my Friend shall forever be my Friend, and reflect a ray of God to me, and time shall foster and adorn and consecrate our Friendship, no less than the ruins of temples. As I love nature, as I love singing birds, and gleaming dew, and flowing rivers, and morning and evening, and summer and winter, I love thee, my Friend.*

from Grist for the Mill by Ram Dass

*In India, when we meet and part we often say "Namaste," which means I honor the place in you where the entire universe resides. I honor the place in you of love, of light, of truth, of peace. I honor the place within you. Where if you are in that place in you and I am in that place in me, there is only one of us.*

"Blessing of the Hands"

*These are the hands of your best friend, young and strong and full of love for you, that are holding yours on your wedding day, as you promise to love each other today, tomorrow, and forever. These are the hands that will work alongside yours, as together you build your future. These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, and with the slightest touch, will comfort you like no other. These are the hands that will hold you when fear or grief fills your mind. These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes; tears of sorrow, and tears of joy. These are the hands that will tenderly hold your children. These are the hands that will help you to hold your family as one. These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it. And lastly, these are the hands that even when wrinkled and aged, will still be reaching for yours, still giving you the same unspoken tenderness with just a touch.*

### Khalil Gibran from The Prophet

*Love has no other desire but to fulfill itself. But if you love and must, needs have desires, let these be your desires: To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night. To know the pain of too much tenderness. To be wounded by your own understanding of love; And to bleed willingly and joyfully. To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving; To rest at the noon hour and meditate love's ecstasy; To return home at eventide with gratitude; And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise upon your lips.*

### "On Marriage" by Khalil Gibran

*You were born together, and together you shall be forevermore. You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days....But let there be spaces in your togetherness, and let the winds of heavens dance between you. Love one another, but make not a bond of love: Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls. Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup. Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf. Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone, even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music. Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping. For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts. And stand together yet not too near together: for the pillars of the temple stand apart, and the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.*

### Carter Heyward

*Loving involves commitment. We are not automatic lovers of self, others, world, or God. Love does not just happen. We are not love machines, puppets on the strings of a deity called "love". Love is a choice -- not simply, or necessarily, a rational choice, but rather a willingness to be present to others without pretence or guile. Love is a conversion to humanity -- a willingness to participate with others in the healing of a broken world and broken lives. Love is the choice to experience life as a member of the human family, a partner in the dance of life, rather than as an alien in the world or as a deity above the world, aloof and apart from human flesh.*

### from Memories of Childhood and Youth by Albert Schweitzer

*We are each a secret to the other. To know one another cannot mean to know everything about each other: it means to feel mutual affection and confidence, and, yes, to believe in one another. But we must not try to force our way into the personality of another. To analyze others is a rude commencement, for there is a modesty of the soul which we must recognize just as we do that of the body. No one has a right to say to another: "Because we belong to each other as we do, I have a right to know all your thoughts." All demands of this sort are foolish and unwholesome. In this matter, giving is the only valuable process: it is only giving that stimulates. Impart as much as you can of your spiritual being to those who are on the road with you, and accept as something precious what comes back to you from them.*

### Notes on Marriage by Charles Darwin

*Not Marry? Freedom to go where one liked choice of Society and little of it. Conversation of clever men at clubs Not forced to visit relatives, and to bend in every trifle to have the expense and anxiety of children – perhaps quarrelling – Loss of time – cannot read in the Evenings – fatness*

and idleness – anxiety and responsibility – less money for books if many children forced to gain one's bread (But then it is very bad for one's health to work too much). Perhaps my wife won't like London, then the sentence is banishment and degradation with indolent, idle fool. Marry? Children – (if it please God) – constant companion, who will feel interested in one (a friend in old age) – object to be beloved and played with – better than a dog anyhow Home, and someone to take care of house Charms of Music and female Chit Chat – These things good for ones health but terrible loss of time My God, it is unthinkable to think of spending one's whole life, like a neuter bee, working, working, and nothing after all No, no won't do Imagine living all one's days solitarily in smokydirty London House – Only picture to yourself a nice soft wife on a sofa with good fire, and books and music perhaps – compare this vision with dingy reality. Marry! Marry! Marry!

from On Lies, Secrets and Silence by Adrienne Rich

An honorable human relationship – that is, one in which two people have the right to use the word “love” – is a process; delicate, often terrifying to both personas involved, a process of refining the truths they can tell each other.

It is important to do this because it breaks down human self-delusion and isolation. It is important to do this because in doing so we do justice to our own complexity. It is important to do this because we can count on so few people to go that hard way with us. It isn't that to have an honorable relationship with you, I have to understand everything, or tell you everything at once, or that I can know, beforehand, everything I need to tell you.

It means that most of the time I am eager, longing for the possibility of telling you. That these possibilities may seem frightening, but not destructive to me. That I feel strong enough to hear your tentative and groping words. That we both know we are trying, all the time, to extend the possibility of truth between us. The possibility of life between us.

Reading adapted from Plato's Symposium

Once upon a time, human beings each had two sets of arms, two sets of legs, and two faces looking in opposite directions. Due to the power of these original humans, the gods began to fear that their reign might be threatened. So, in a manner not unlike the powers that be do so today, Zeus divided the humans in half. He split their power, so that he and the other gods may do what they wish.

But the gods are not completely efficient. After the division the two parts of each desiring their other half, came together, and throwing their arms about one another, entwined in mutual embraces, longing to grow into one.

This parable is meant to evoke how ancient is the desire of one another implanted in us, reuniting our original nature, making one of two, and healing the state of humankind.

When separated, having one side only, we are always looking for our other half. And when one of us meets our other half, we are lost in an amazement of love and friendship and intimacy, and would not be out of the other's sight even for a moment. We should pass our whole lives together, desiring that we should be melted into one, to spend our lives as one person instead of two, and so that after our death there will be one departed soul instead of two; this is the very expression of

our ancient need. And the reason is that human nature was originally one and we were a whole, and the desire and pursuit of the whole is called Love.

From Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom

...“There are a few rules I know to be true about love and marriage: If you don’t respect the other person, you’re gonna have a lot of trouble. If you don’t know how to compromise, you’re gonna have a lot of trouble. If you can’t talk openly about what goes on between you, you’re gonna have a lot of trouble. And if you don’t have a common set of values in life, you’re gonna have a lot of trouble. Your values must be alike.

“And the biggest one of those values, Mitch?”

Yes?

“Your belief in the importance of your marriage.” He sniffed, then closed his eyes for a moment.

“Personally,” he sighed, his eyes still closed, “I think marriage is a very important thing to do, and you’re missing a lot if you don’t try it.”

He ended the subject by quoting a poem he believed in like a prayer: “Love each other or perish.”

from The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupery, adapted

"Come and play with me," proposed the little prince.

"I cannot play with you," the fox said, "I am not tamed."

"What does that mean, tame?"

"It is an act too often neglected," said the fox. "It means to establish ties... if you tame me, then we shall need each other. To me, you shall be unique in all the world. To you, I shall be unique in all the world... One only understands the things that one tames... If you want a friend, tame me..."

"What must I do to tame you?" asked the little prince.

"You must be patient," replied the fox. "First you will sit down at a little distance from me--like that--in the grass. I shall look at you out of the corner of my eye, and will say nothing. Words are the source of misunderstandings. But you must sit a little closer to me, every day... {and you must} come back at the same hour. ...if you come at just any time, I shall never know at what hour my heart is to be ready to greet you.... One must observe the proper rites."

So the prince tamed the fox.... [It was then that the fox shared a secret with the little prince].

"And now here is my secret, {said the fox} a very simple secret: it is only with the heart that one can see rightly, what is essential is invisible to the eye."

Lost Letters between Abelard and Heloise

*Scientists often say that the moon does not shine without the sun, and that when deprived of this light, it is robbed of all benefit of heat and brightness and presents to humans a dark and ashen sphere. Surely the similarity of this phenomenon to you and me is very plain to see: for you are my sun, since you always illumine me with the most delightful brightness of your face and make me shine. I have no light that does not come from you and without you I am dull, dark, weak and dead. But to tell the truth, what you do for me is even greater than what the sun does for the sphere of the moon. For the moon becomes more obscure the closer it gets to the sun, whereas the nearer I am brought to you and the closer I get, the more on fire I become. So much do I burn for you, that, just as you yourself have often noted, when I am next to you I become completely on fire and am burned right down to the marrow.*

#### Lau Tzu (6th century BCE)

*Your love is a great mystery. It is like an eternal lake whose waters are always still and clear like glass. Looking into it you can see the truth about your life. It is like a deep well whose waters are cool and pure. Drinking from it and you can be reborn. You do not have to stir the waters or dig the well. Merely see yourself clearly. And drink deeply.*

*Your love requires space in which to grow. This space must be safe enough to allow your hearts to be revealed. It must offer refreshment for your spirits and renewal for your minds. It must be a space made sacred by the quality of your honesty, attention, love, and compassion. It may be anywhere, inside or out, but it must exist.*

*Your love contains the power of a thousand suns. It unfolds as naturally and effortlessly as does a flower, and graces the world with its blooming. Its beauty radiates a transforming energy that enlivens all who see it. Because of you, compassion and joy are added to the world. That is why the stars sing together...*

#### The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, selected verses

*A wife loves her husband not for his own sake, dear one, but because the Divine Beloved lives in him. A husband loves his wife not for her own sake, dear one, but because the Divine Beloved lives in her. Children are loved not for their own sake, dear one, but because the Divine Beloved lives in them... All things are loved not for their own sake, but because the Divine Beloved lives in them. The Divine Beloved must be realized. Hearing about and meditating upon the Divine Beloved, you will come to understand everything in life... As long as there is the sense of separateness, one sees another as separate from oneself... But when the Divine Beloved is realized as the indivisible unity of life, who can be seen by whom... who can be spoken to by whom, who can be thought of by whom, who can be known by whom?*

#### From the Gayan

*My thoughtful self, reproach no one; hold grudge against no one; take revenge against no one; bear malice against no one; be wise. Be kind to all; tolerate all; considerate to all; polite to all, oh my thoughtful self.*

#### Rumi

*From the beginning of my life I have been looking for your face, but today I have seen it. Today I have seen the charm, the beauty, the unfathomable grace of the face that I was looking for. Today I*

*have found you, and those who laughed and scorned me yesterday are sorry that they were not looking as I did. I am bewildered by the magnificence of your beauty, and wish to see you with a hundred eyes. My heart has burned with passion and has searched forever for this wondrous beauty that I now behold. I am ashamed to call this love human, and afraid of God to call it divine. Your fragrant breath, like the morning breeze, has come to the stillness of the garden. You have breathed new life into me. I have become your sunshine, and also your shadow. My soul is screaming in ecstasy. Every fiber of my being is in love with you. Your effulgence has lit a fire in my heart, and you have made radiant for me the earth and sky. My arrow of love has arrived at the target. I am in the house of mercy, and my heart is a place of prayer.*

Vardhamana (599-527 BCE), Indian Philosopher

*The five goals are to be free from injury, falsehood, thievery, unchastity, and worldly attachment. 7-1 The five steps towards the goal of freedom from injury are preservation of speech, preservation of mind, care in walking, care in lifting and laying down things, and properly preparing one's food and drink. 7-4 The five steps towards the goal of freedom from falsehood are giving up anger, greed, fear, and frivolity, and speaking in accordance with the injunctions or texts. 7-5 The five steps towards for the goal of freedom from thievery are residence in a solitary place, residence in a deserted place, residence in a place without prohibitions, purity of alms, and not disputing about "mine" and "yours". 7-6 The five steps towards for the goal of freedom from worldly attachment are giving up love and hatred towards pleasing and displeasing object of the five senses. 7-8*

*Meditate on the destructive or dangerous censurable character of injury, falsehood, theft, unchastity, and worldly attachment. 7-9 Meditate on benevolence for all living beings, delight at beings more advanced on the path to liberation, compassion for the afflicted, and on indifference to the uncivil or ill-behaved. 7-11*

Buddhist

*In the future, happy occasions will come as surely as the morning. Difficult times will come as surely as the night.*

*When things go joyously, meditate according to the Buddhist tradition. When things go badly, meditate.*

*Meditation in the manner of the Buddha will guide your life. To say the words 'love and compassion' is easy.*

*But to accept that love and compassion are built upon patience and perseverance is not easy.*

from Diane Ackerman's A Natural History of Love

*Love. What a small word we use for an idea so immense and powerful that it has altered the flow of history, calmed monsters, kindled works of art, cheered the forlorn, turned tough guys to mush, consoled the enslaved, driven strong women mad, glorified the humble, fueled national scandals, bankrupted robber barons, and made mincemeat of kings. How can love's spaciousness be conveyed in the narrow confines of one syllable?...Love is an ancient delirium, a desire older than civilization, with taproots stretching deep into dark and mysterious days.....The heart is a living museum. In each of its galleries, no matter how narrow or dimly lit, preserved forever like wondrous diatoms, are our moments of loving and being liked.*

William Penn (1644-1718) from Some Fruits of Solitude

*Never marry but for love; but see that thou lovest what is lovely. If love be not the chiefest motive, thou wilt soon grow weary of a married state and stray from thy promise, to search out thy pleasures in forbidden places...*

*Between a man and his wife nothing ought to rule but love ... As love ought to bring them together, so it is the best way to keep them well together.*

*A husband and wife that love and value one another show their children... that they should do so too. Others visibly lose authority in their families by their contempt of one another, and teach their children to be unnatural by their own examples.*

*Let not enjoyment lessen, but augment, affection; it being the basest of passions to like when we have not, what we slight when we possess.*

*Here it is we ought to search out our pleasure, where the field is large and full of variety, and of an enduring nature; sickness, poverty or disgrace being not able to shake it because it is not under the moving influences of worldly contingencies.*

*Nothing can be more entire and without reserve; nothing more zealous, affectionate and sincere; nothing more contented than such a couple, nor greater temporal felicity than to be one of them.*

*There can be no Friendship where there is no Freedom. Friendship loves a free Air, and will not be penned up in straight and narrow Enclosures. It will speak freely, and act so too; and take nothing ill where no ill is meant; nay, where it is, 'twill easily forgive, and forget too...Friends are Twins in Soul; they Sympathize in every thing....One is not happy without the other.*

*Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) from On the Passion of Love*

*We are born with an instinctive propensity for love, which develops itself in proportion as the mind acquires maturity; and prompts us to an admiration of what appears deserving of our regard, although we know not properly on what it is founded. Who then can doubt that we exist only to love?...*

*"Recipe for a Good Marriage," Author Unknown*

*4 lb. of love.*

*1 lb. butter of youth.*

*1/2 lb. of good looks.*

*1 lb. sweet temper.*

*1 lb. of blindness for faults.*

*1 lb. of self forgetfulness.*

*1 lb. of pounded wit.*

*1 lb. of good humour.*

*2 tablespoons of sweet argument.*

*1 pint of rippling laughter.*

*1 wine glass of common sense.*

*1 oz. modesty.*

*Put the love, good looks and sweet temper into a well-furnished house. Beat the butter of youth to a cream, and mix well together with the blindness of faults. Stir the pounded wit and good humour into the sweet argument, then add the rippling laughter and common sense. Work the whole together until everything is well mixed, and bake gently forever.*

"The Last Good Time" by Richard Bausch

*There was a lovely time, long ago, too private to tell anyone, or too ordinary. It had nothing to do with anything, really: it was almost embarrassingly humble. One December night, unable to sleep, he had glanced out the bedroom window to discover that it had snowed. He woke his wife and made her come to the window, and the surprise of it delighted her as it had delighted him.*

*They dressed and bundled the baby up and took a walk, and watched the dawn arrive, and when they returned to the house, he took the day off. They played with the baby, cooked dinner, and baked bread. They listened to the baby playing in his playpen, and they talked idly about anything that came into their minds, and that evening, late, they lay whispering to each other about what a beautiful day it had been.*

*He thought about all this on his way down to the grocery store. The memory of it came through him like a breath, and then he was savoring it, basking in its warmth. And he thought that this is what love really meant: this very ordinary memory. That love was easy and plentiful as grass, and as still, as calm somehow.*

William Hazlitt (1778-1830) from Liber Amoris

*Perfect love has this advantage in it: it leaves the possessor of it nothing further to desire. There is one object (at least) in which the soul finds absolute content, for which it seeks to live, or dares to die. The heart has as it were filled up the moulds of the imagination. The truth of passion keeps pace with and outvies the extravagance of mere language. There are not words so fine, no flattery so soft, that there is not a sentiment beyond them, that it is impossible to express, at the bottom of the heart where true love is. What idle sounds the common phrases, adorable creature, angel, divinity are! What a profound reflection it is to have a feeling answering to all these, rooted in the breast, unalterable, unutterable, to which all other feelings are light and vain! Perfect love reposes on the object of its choice, like the wave and the air of heaven is around it.*

Socrates, from Plato's Symposium

*Love is a great spirit intermediate between the divine and the mortal...He is neither mortal nor immortal but alive and flourishing at one moment when he is in plenty and dead at another moment and again alive...that which is always flowing in is always flowing out, and so he is never want and never in wealth...Wisdom is a most beautiful thing and Love is of the beautiful; and therefore Love is also a philosopher or lover of wisdom....love is the love of the everlasting possession of the good...love is of immortality...love begins with the desire of union.*

*...of this end human nature will not easily find a helper better than love. And therefore I say that every man ought to honor him, and walk in this ways and exhort others to do the same, and praise the power and spirit of love...now and ever.*

Andreas Capellanus from The Art of Courtly Love

Love gets its name (*amore*) from the world for hook (*amus*), which means “to capture” or “to be captured,” for he who is in love is captured in the chains of desire and wishes to capture someone else for his hook. Just as a skillful fisherman tries to attract fishes by his bait and to capture them on his crooked hook, so the man who is a captive of love tries to attract another person by his allurements and exerts all his efforts to unite two different hearts with an intangible bond, or if they are already united, he tries to keep them so forever.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) from *Passion and Order*

Love is a desire of the whole being to be united to some thing or some being, felt necessary to its completeness, by the most perfect means that nature permits, and reason dictates...Love is not, like hunger, a mere selfish appetite: it is an associative quality. The hungry savage is nothing but an animal, thinking only of the satisfaction of his stomach: what is the first effect of love, but to associate the feeling with every object in nature? The trees whisper, the roses exhale their perfumes, the nightingales sing, nay the very skies smile in unison with the feeling of true and pure love. It gives to every object in nature a power of the heart, without which it would indeed be spiritless.

Dalai Lama

Take into account that great love and great achievements involve great risk. And that a loving atmosphere in your home is the foundation for your life. Be gentle with the earth, be gentle with one another. When disagreements come remember always to protect the spirit of your union. When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it. Remember that the best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for each other. So love yourselves, love one another, love all that is your life together and all else will follow.

“Tao Te Ching” by Lao Tzu

Explore and discover that which is within. When we find ourselves, we are more easily found by others. Without words, without even understanding, lovers find each other. The moment of finding is always a surprise, like meeting an old friend never before known. Life and marriage are a wondrous journey, ever unfolding an opportunity to rediscover ourselves and our beloved again and again for even on a shared journey the only thing constant is change. Embrace it and let it lead you to many a glorious tomorrow.

from “Love” by Emerson

...we need not fear that we can lose any thing by the progress of the soul. The soul may be trusted to the end. That which is so beautiful and attractive as these relations must be succeeded and supplanted only by what is more beautiful, and so on for ever.

The meaning of marriage begins in the giving of words. We cannot join ourselves to one another without giving our word. And this must be an unconditional giving, for in joining ourselves to one another we join ourselves to the unknown....You do not know the road; you have committed your life to a way.

From *Taking Our Places* by Norman Fischer

Conversation is the culmination of listening. It includes everything ... -- self-confidence, receptivity, give-and-take, even disagreement and conflict. Conversation is dialogue, real communication and

communion through our words and our presence. Founded on deep listening, deep speech, and an honest self-awareness without too much fear or judgment, conversation is a way to connect with ourselves and with each other, to enter each other's lives and help each other heal.

Wendell Berry, from "Poetry and Marriage"

Because the condition of marriage is worldly and its meaning communal, no one party to it can be solely in charge. What you alone think it ought to be, it is not going to be. Where you alone think you want it to go, it is not going to go. It is going where the two of you—and marriage, time, life, history, and the world—will take it. You do not know the road; you have committed your life to a way.

Forms join us to time, to the consequences and fruitions of our own passing. The Zen student, the poet, the husband, the wife—none knows with certainty what he or she is staying for, but all know the likelihood that they will be staying "awhile": to find out what they are staying for. And it is the faith of all of these disciplines that they will not stay to find that they should not have stayed.

That faith has nothing to do with what is usually called optimism. As the traditional marriage ceremony insists, not everything that we stay to find out will make us happy. The faith, rather, is that by staying, and only by staying, we will learn something of the truth, that the truth is good to know, and that it is always both different and larger than we thought.

From The Awakened Heart by Gerald May

There is a desire within each of us, in the deep center of ourselves that we call our heart. We were born with it, it is never completely satisfied, and it never dies. We are often unaware of it, but it is always awake. It is the human desire for love. Every person in this earth yearns to love, to be loved, to know love. Our true identity, our reason for being, is to be found in this desire...love is the 'why' of life: why we are functioning at all, what we want to be efficient for... I am convinced [love] is the fundamental energy of the human spirit, the fuel on which we run, the wellspring of our vitality. And grace, which is the flowing, creative activity of love itself, is what makes all goodness possible. Love should come first; it should be the beginning of and the reason for everything."

From Bread for the Journey by Henri Nouwen

Human relationships are meant to be like two hands folded together. They can move away from each other while still touching with the fingertips. They can create space between themselves, a little tent, a home, a safe place to be...[True relationships] are like prayers in the world. Sometimes the hands that pray are fully touching, sometimes there is distance between them. They always move to and from each other, but they never lose touch....

Michael Ignatieff from Lodged in the Heart and Memory

In the marriage ceremony, that moment when falling in love is replaced by the arduous drama of staying in love...As time begins to elapse, one begins to love the other because they have shared the same experience... Selves may not intertwine; but lives do, and shared memory becomes as much of a bond as the bond of the flesh.

"Foundations of Marriage" by Regina Hill

*Love, trust, and forgiveness are the foundations of marriage. In marriage, many days will bring happiness, while other days may be sad. But together, two hearts can overcome everything...In marriage, all of the moments won't be exciting or romantic, and sometimes worries and anxiety will be overwhelming. But together, two hearts that accept will find comfort together. Recollections of past joys, pains, and shared feelings will be the glue that holds everything together during even the worst and most insecure moments. Reaching out to each other as a friend, and becoming the confidant and companion that the other one needs, is the true magic and beauty of any two people together. It's inspiring in each other a dream or a feeling, and having faith in each other and not giving up... even when all the odds say to quit. It's allowing each other to be vulnerable, to be himself or herself, even when the opinions or thoughts aren't in total agreement or exactly what you'd like them to be. It's getting involved and showing interest in each other, really listening and being available, the way any best friend should be. Exactly three things need to be remembered in a marriage if it is to be a mutual bond of sharing, caring, and loving throughout life: love, trust, and forgiveness.*

Max Erhmann, from "Desiderata" (1927)

*Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant, they too have their story.*

*Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let not this blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.*

*Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is as perennial as the grass. Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.*

*Therefore, be at peace with the divine, whatever you conceive it to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams; it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.*

Mari Nichols-Haining: {Why marriage, a stranger might ask?} Because to the depths of me, I long to love one person, with all my heart, my soul, my mind, my body...Because I need a forever friend to trust with the intimacies of me who won't hold them against me, who loves me when I'm unlikable, who sees the small child in me, and who looks for the divine potential of me...Because I need to cuddle in the warmth of the night with someone who is thankful for me, with someone I feel blessed to hold...Because marriage means opportunity to grow in love in friendship...Because marriage is a discipline to be added to a list of achievements...Because marriages do not fail,

people fail when they enter into marriage expecting another to make them whole...Because, knowing this, I promise myself to take full responsibility for my spiritual, mental and physical wholeness. I create me; I take half of the responsibility for my marriage Together we create our marriage...Because with this understanding, the possibilities are limitless.

“Some Thoughts on Marriage” by Margaret Ruhe

In a society in which egocentricity, self-gratification, narcissism, and selfishness are glorified, it has become more and more difficult to establish good relationships of any kind. People want desperately to find closeness and warmth, but they have forgotten the art of sharing, of communicating and cooperating, of adjusting. They have forgotten that lasting relationships require patience and forbearance. What is more, such relationships require concern and consideration, and even sacrifice. A good marriage is an intimate and loving relationship which gives both partners security, friendship, companionship, support, comfort, and deep love that penetrates every aspect of life. None of this can be achieved without work and sacrifice. Marriage may be compared to a plant that requires daily nurture, daily attention, daily care and cultivation. It will not develop of its own accord; only as effort and will are exerted will it grow and mature. For a marriage to succeed, both husband and wife must be committed to its success. They must build an enduring loving relationship that is centered in the heart of their consciousness. Their relationship must be nurtured with the water of loyalty and love.

Excerpt from Union by Robert Fulghum

You have known each other from the first glance of acquaintance to this point of commitment. At some point, you decided to marry. From that moment of yes to this moment of yes, indeed, you have been making promises and agreements in an informal way. All those conversations that were held riding in a car or over a meal or during long walks - all those sentences that began with “When we’re married” and continued with “I will and you will and we will”- those late night talks that included “someday” and “somehow” and “maybe”- and all those promises that are unspoken matters of the heart. All these common things, and more, are the real process of a wedding. The symbolic vows that you are about to make are a way of saying to one another, “You know all those things we’ve promised and hoped and dreamed- well, I meant it all, every word.” Look at one another and remember this moment in time. Before this moment you have been many things to one another- acquaintance, friend, companion, lover, dancing partner, and even teacher, for you have learned much from one another in these last few years. Now you shall say a few words that take you across a threshold of life, and things will never quite be the same between you. For after these vows, you shall say to the world, this- is my husband, this- is my wife.

“You You You You You” by Stephen Merritt

Even though I met you only recently, I find myself falling in love with you. I don't know quite how to put this decently, but what's the chance that you could love me too? Who, who, who, who, who has made my dreams come true and turned my grey skies blue? Why it's you you you you you. Woo, woo, woo, woo, woo like amorous lovebirds do. Who made my world seem new? 'Tis, tis you you you you you. You make me feel like I'm seventeen again. You make everything beautiful seem true. I can't wait to go to sleep and dream again, cause every dream I dream's a dream of dreamy little you...You make the world go round, the sun go up and down, the flowers bloom in May, the children laugh and play. Shall we choose the day? ...

Thomas a Kempis

*Scruples, temptations, and fears, and cutting perplexities of the heart, are often the lot of the most excellent persons... Endeavor to be always patient of the faults and imperfections of others for thou has many faults and imperfections of thine own that require forbearance. If thou are not able to make thyself that which thou wishest, how canst thou expect to mold another in conformity to thy will?*

From *The Hungering Dark* by Frederick Buechner

*Matrimony is called holy, because this brave and fateful promise of a man and a woman, to love and honor and serve each other through thick and thin, looks beyond itself to more fateful promises still, and speaks mightily of what human life at its most human and most alive and most holy must always be. Every wedding is a dream, and every word that is spoken there means more than it says, and every gesture - the clasping of hands, the giving of rings - is rich with mystery. And so it [is that] we hope with every bride and groom, that the love they bear one another, and the joy they take in one another, may help them grow in love for this whole world where their final joy lies.*

From *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte

*I have for the first time found what I can truly love—I have found you. You are my sympathy—my better self—my good angel—I am bound to you with a strong attachment. I think you good, gifted, lovely: a fervent, a solemn passion is conceived in my heart; it leans to you, draws you to my center and spring of life, wraps my existence about you—and, kindling in pure, powerful flame, fuses you and me in one.*

Herman Hesse (1877-1962) from *The Art of Indolence*

*It is a strange but simple secret, known to the wisdom of all epochs, that every act of selfless devotion, of sympathy and love, however slight, makes us richer, whereas every striving for possessions and power robs us and makes us poorer. The Indians knew this and taught it, then the wise Greeks, and then Jesus. It has been known and taught by thousands of wise men and poets, whose works have outlived their time, whereas the rich men and kings of their day are forgotten. Your preference may lie with Jesus or Plato, with Schiller or Spinoza; in all of them you will find the ultimate wisdom, the message that neither power nor possessions nor knowledge bring happiness, but love alone. In every act of selflessness, of loving sacrifice, of compassion, every renunciation of self, we seem to be giving something away, to be robbing ourselves. The truth is that such acts enrich us and makes us grow, this is the only way that leads forward and upward. It's an old song, and I am a poor singer and preacher, but truths do not grow old, they are true always and everywhere, whether preached in the desert, sung in a song, or printed in a newspaper.*

"The Hymn of the Universe" by Teilhard de Chardin

*Only love can bring individual beings to their perfect completion, as individuals, by uniting them one with another, because only love takes possession of them and unites them by what lies deepest within them. This is simply a fact of our everyday experience. For indeed at what moment do lovers come into the most complete possession of themselves if not when they say that they are lost in one another? And is not love all the time achieving - in couples, in teams, all around us - the magical and reputedly contradictory feat of personalizing through totalizing? And why should not*

*what is thus daily achieved on a small scale be repeated one day on world-wide dimensions?*

*Humanity, the spirit of the earth, the synthesis of individuals and peoples, the paradoxical conciliation of the element with the whole, of the one with the many: all these are regarded as utopian fantasies, yet they are biologically necessary; and if we would see them made flesh in the world what more need we do than imagine our power to love growing and broadening, till it can embrace the totality of human beings and of the earth?*

*William Penn to his wife, Gulielma*

*My Dear Wife, Remember thou was the love of my youth, and much the joy of my life – the most beloved as well as the most worthy of all my earthly comforts; and the reason of that love was more thy inward than thy outward excellencies, which yet are many. God knows and thou knowest I can say it was a match of His making; and God's image in us both was the first things, and the most amiable and engaging ornament in our eyes. Now I am to leave thee, and that without knowing whether I shall ever see thee more in this world. Take my counsel into thy bosom, and let it dwell with the in my stead while thou livest.*

*Excerpted from "...Tintern Abbey" by William Wordsworth (13 July 1789)*

*....For I have learned To look on nature, not as in the hour Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes The still, sad music of humanity, Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power To chasen and subdue. And I have felt A presence that disturbs me with the joy Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime Of something far more deeply interfused, Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, And round ocean and the living air; And the blue sky, and in the mind of man: A motion and a spirit that impels All thinking things, all objects of all thought, And rolls through all things. Therefore I am still A lover of the meadows and the woods, And mountains; and of all that we behold From this green earth; of all the mighty world Of eye, and ear,--both what they half create, And what perceive; well pleased to recognize In nature and the language of the sense, The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse, The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul Of all my moral being. ....For thou art with me here upon the banks Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend, My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch The language of my former heart, and read My former pleasures in the shooting lights Of thy wild eyes. Oh! Yet a little while May I behold in thee what I was once, My dear, dear Sister! And this prayer I make, Knowing that Nature never did betray The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege, Through all the years of this our life, to lead From joy to joy; for she can so inform The mind that is within us, so impress With quietness and beauty, and so feed With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues, Rash judgments; nor the sneers of selfish men, Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all The dreary intercourse of daily life, Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon Shine on thee in thy solitary walk; And let the misty mountain-winds be free To blow against thee; and in after years, When these wild ecstacies shall be matured Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms, Thy memory be as a dwelling-place For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! Then, If solititude, or fear, or pain, or grief, Should by they portion, with what healing thoughts Of tender joy wilt thou remember me, And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance-- If I should be where I no more can hear Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams Of past existence—wilt thou then forget That on the banks of this delightful stream We stood together; and that I, so long A worshipper of Nature,*

*hither came Unwearied in that service; rather say With warmer love—oh! With far deeper zeal Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget, That after many wanderings, many years Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs, And this green pastoral landscape, were to me More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!*

Benedict Spinoza

*Blessedness is not the reward of virtue: it is virtue itself. We do not find joy in virtue because we control our lusts: but, contrariwise, because we find joy in virtue we are able to control our lusts.*

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

*And in Life's noisiest hour, There whispers still the ceaseless Love of Thee, The heart's Self-solace and soliloquy. You mould my Hopes, you fashion me within; And to the leading Love-throb in the Heart Thro' all my Being, thro' my pulses beat; You lie in all my many Thoughts, like Light, Like the fair light of Dawn, or summer Eve On rippling Stream, or cloud-reflecting Lake. And looking to the Heaven, that bends above you, How oft! I bless the Lot, that made me love you.*

Wendell Berry

*Geese appear high over us, pass, and the sky closes. Abandon, as in love or sleep, holds them to their way, clear in the ancient faith: what we need is here. And we pray, not for new earth or heaven, but to be quiet in heart, and in eye, clear. What we need is here.*

Hadewijch (13th century)

*The madness of love is a blessed fate; And if we understood this we would seek no other: brings into unity what was divided, and this is the truth: Bitterness it makes sweet. It makes the stranger a neighbor, and what was lowly it raises on high.*

Revised "Blessing of the Hands"

*The hands you now hold are the hands of your best friend; unconditional love flows through these hands. These are the hands that will encourage you to realize every talent. They are the hands that will help heal tears of sorrow and joy. These are the hands that will never fail to touch you in compassion and curiosity; they will work thoughtfully to bring you smiles each day. These hands may double your difficulties, but they will also lighten burdens. Even as they age and a few wrinkles begin to appear, these hands will comfort you in tenderness; they will remain strong because they interlock with your own. (And these are the hands that will now offer you a ring as a sign of unwaivering, devoted affection.)*

Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850-1919)

*...How doth Love speak? In the proud spirit suddenly grown meek -The haughty heart grown humble; in the tender and unnamed light that floods the world with splendour, in the resemblance which the fond eyes trace; in all things to one beloved face; in the shy touch of hands that thrill*

and tremble; in looks and lips that can no more dissemble -Thus doth Love speak...

"Daffodils" by William Wordsworth

*I wandered lonely as a cloud That floats on high o'er vales and hills, When all at once I saw a crowd, A host, of golden daffodils; Beside the lake, beneath the trees, Fluttering and dancing in the breeze. Continuous as the stars that shine And twinkle on the Milky Way, They stretched in never-ending line Along the margin of a bay: Ten thousand saw I at a glance, Tossing their heads in sprightly dance. The waves beside them danced, but they Out-did the sparkling leaves in glee: A Poet could not but be gay, In such a jocund company: I gazed—and gazed—but little thought What wealth the show to me had brought: For oft, when on my couch I lie In vacant or in pensive mood, They flash upon that inward eye Which is the bliss of solitude; And then my heart with pleasure fills, And dances with the daffodils.*

"Poem of You" by Walt Whitman (1819-1882)

*...Even now your features, joys, speech, house, trade, manners, troubles, follies, costume, crimes, dissipate away from you, Your true soul and body appear before me. They stand forth out of affairs, out of commerce, shops, work, farms, clothes, the house, buying, selling, eating, drinking, suffering, dying. Whoever you are, now I place my hand upon you, that you be my poem, I whisper with my lips close to your ear. I have loved many women and men, but I love none better than you....None has understood you, but I understand you, None has done justice to you, you have not done justice to yourself, None but has found you imperfect, I only find no imperfection in you, None but would subordinate you, I only am he who will never consent to subordinate you, I only am he who places over you no... beyond what waits intrinsically in yourself. ...O I could sing such grandeurs and glories about you! You have not known what you are, you have slumber'd upon yourself all your life, ... The mockeries are not you, Underneath them and within them I see you lurk, I pursue you where none else has pursued you, Silence, the desk, the flippant expression, the night, the accustom'd routine, if these conceal you from others or from yourself, they do not conceal you from me, The shaved face, the unsteady eye, the impure complexion, if these balk others they do not balk me, The pert apparel, the deform'd attitude, drunkenness, greed, premature death, all these I part aside. There is no endowment in man or woman that is not tallied in you, There is no virtue, no beauty in man or woman, but as good is in you, No pluck, no endurance in others, but as good is in you, No pleasure waiting for others, but an equal pleasure waits for you. As for me, I give nothing to any one except I give the like carefully to you, I sing the songs of the glory of none... sooner than I sing the songs of the glory of you. Whoever you are! claim your own at any hazard! These shows of the East and West are tame compared to you, These immense meadows, these interminable rivers, you are immense and interminable as they...Old or young, male or female, rude, low, rejected by the rest, whatever you are promulgates itself, Through birth, life, death, burial, the means are provided, nothing is scant, Through angers, losses, ambition, ignorance, ennui, what you are picks its way.*

Raine Maria Rilke, "Letters to a Young Poet"

*It is...good to love: because love is difficult. For one human being to love another human being: that is perhaps the modest difficult task that has been entrusted to us, the ultimate task, the final test and proof, the work for which all other work is merely preparation...Loving does not at first*

*mean merging, surrendering, and uniting with another person...it is a high inducement for the individual to ripen, to become something in himself, to become world in himself for the sake of another person; it is a great demanding claim on him, something that chooses him and calls him to vast distances.*

*“Love Is Friendship Caught Fire” by Laura Hendricks*

*Love is friendship caught fire; it is quiet, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. It is loyalty through good and bad times. It settles for less than perfection, and makes allowances for human weaknesses. Love is content with the present, hopes for the future, and does not brood over the past. It is the day-in and day-out chronicles of irritations, problems, compromises, small disappointments, big victories, and working toward common goals. If you have love in your life, it can make up for a great many things you lack. If you do not have it, no matter what else there is, it is not enough.*

*Excerpt from The Bridge Across Forever by Richard Bach*

*A soulmate is someone who has locks that fit our keys, and keys to fit our locks. When we feel safe enough to open the locks, our truest selves step out and we can be completely and honestly who we are; we can be loved for who we are and not for who we're pretending to be. Each unveils the best part of the other. No matter what else goes wrong around us, with that one person we're safe in our own paradise. Our soulmate is someone who shares our deepest longings, our sense of direction. When we're two balloons, and together our direction is up, chances are we've found the right person. Our soulmate is the one who makes life come to life.*

*“Love Is A Great Thing” by Thomas à Kempis*

*Love is a great thing, yea, a great and thorough good. By itself it makes that is heavy light; and it bears evenly all that is uneven. It carries a burden which is no burden; it will not be kept back by anything low and mean; it desires to be free from all worldly affections, and not to be entangled by any outward prosperity, or by any adversity subdued.*

*Love feels no burden, thinks nothing of trouble, attempts what is above its strength, pleads no excuse of impossibility. It is therefore able to undertake all things, and it completes many things, and warrants them to take effect, where he who does not love would faint and lie down. Though weary, it is not tired; though pressed it is not straitened; though alarmed, it is not confounded; but as a living flame it forces itself upwards and securely passes through all.*

*Excerpt from Jazz by Toni Morrison*

*It's nice when grown people whisper to each other under the covers. Their ecstasy is more leaf-sigh than bray and the body is the vehicle, not the point. They reach, grown people, for something beyond, way beyond and way, way down underneath tissue. They are remembering while they whisper the carnival dolls they won and the Baltimore boats they never sailed on. The pears they let hang on the limb because if they plucked them, they would be gone from there and who else would see that ripeness if they took it away for themselves? How could anybody passing by see them and imagine for themselves what the flavor would be like? Breathing and murmuring under covers both of them have washed and hung out on the line, in a bed they chose together and kept together nevermind one leg was propped on a 1916 dictionary, and the mattress, curved like a preacher's palm asking for witnesses in His name's sake, enclosed them each and every night and*

*muffled their whispering, old-time love. They are under the covers because they don't have to look at themselves anymore; there is no stud's eye, no chippie glance to undo them. They are inward toward the other, bound and joined by carnival dolls and the steamers that sailed from ports they never saw. That is what is beneath their undercover whispers.*

*From The Irrational Season by Madeleine L'Engle*

*But ultimately there comes a moment when a decision must be made. Ultimately two people who love each other must ask themselves how much they hope for as their love grows and deepens, and how much risk they are willing to take...It is indeed a fearful gamble...Because it is the nature of love to create, a marriage itself is something which has to be created, so that, together we become a new creature.*

*To marry is the biggest risk in human relations that a person can take...If we commit ourselves to one person for life this is not, as many people think, a rejection of freedom; rather it demands the courage to move into all the risks of freedom, and the risk of love which is permanent; into that love which is not possession, but participation...It takes a lifetime to learn another person...When love is not possession, but participation, then it is part of that co-creation which is our human calling, and which implies such risk that it is often rejected.*

*Rumi*

*The moon has become a dancer at this festival of love. This dance of light. This sacred blessing. This divine love beckons us to a world beyond only lovers can see with their eyes of fiery passion. They are the chosen ones who have surrendered. Once they were particles of light. Now they are the radiant sun. They have left behind the world of deceitful games. They are the privileged lovers who create a new world with their eyes of fiery passion.*

*From Dharma Recitations*

*I offer to you my body, transformed into a celestial mansion, adorned by an ocean of understanding, wreathed about by flowers of virtue. In it shines the lamp of wisdom and there, too, lies a lake of faith's perfume. The food of meditative bliss I offer you with the sweet music of songs of praise; a canopy fashioned from my compassion for others; a banner that consists of discernment and a sign of courage held high. This I offer to you, who dwells always in the lotus of my heart. From the deep recesses of my mind I pray you will always be pleased with me.*

*From Gift From The Sea by Anne Morrow Lindbergh*

*When you love someone, you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is an impossibility. It is even a lie to pretend to. And yet this is exactly what most of us demand. We have so little faith in the ebb and flow of life, of love, of relationships. We leap at the flow of the tide and resist in terror its ebb. We are afraid it will never return. We insist on permanency, on duration, on continuity; when the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity - in freedom, in the sense that the dancers are free, barely touching as they pass, but partners in the same pattern.*

*The only real security is not in owning or possessing, not in demanding or expecting, not in hoping, even. Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what was in nostalgia, nor forward to what it might be in dread or anticipation, but living in the present relationship and*

*accepting it as it is now. Relationships must be like islands, one must accept them for what they are here and now, within their limits - islands, surrounded and interrupted by the sea, and continually visited and abandoned by the tides.....*

*A good relationship has a pattern like a dance and is built on some of the same rules. The partners do not need to hold on tightly, because they move confidently in the same pattern, intricate but gay and swift and free, like a country dance of Mozart's. To touch heavily would be to arrest the pattern and freeze the movement, to check the endlessly changing beauty of its unfolding. There is no place here for the possessive clutch, the heavy hand; only the barest touch in passing. Now arm in arm, not face to face, not back to back--it does not matter which. Because they know they are partners moving to the same rhythm, creating a pattern together, and being invisibly nourished by it.*

*From The Wisdom of Elders by Robert Fleming*

*The healing powers of love are legendary. When we feel we are deeply loved by those around us, we are transformed by that love. We are emboldened by that love to make deep, significant changes in our lives. We become more than just flesh and bone. Our internal wounds no longer bleed or fester. With love, healthy new tissue is formed and old emotional scars vanish.*

*Letter from Gustave Flaubert to his wife*

*Have you really not noticed, then, that here of all places, in this private, personal solitude that surrounds me, I have turned to you? All the memories of my youth speak to me as I walk, just as the sea shells crunch under my feet on the beach. The crash of every wave awakens far-distant reverberations within me. I hear the rumble of bygone days, and in my mind the whole endless series of old passions surges forward like the billows. I remember my spasms, my sorrows, gusts of desire that whistled like wind in the rigging, and vast vague longings that swirled in the dark like a flock of wild gulls in a storm cloud. On whom should I lean, if not on you? My weary mind turns for refreshment to the thought of you as a dusty traveler might sink onto a soft and grassy bank.*

*Honore de Balzac*

*Our love will bloom always fairer, fresher, more gracious, because it is a true love, and because genuine love is ever increasing. It is a beautiful plant growing from year to year in the heart, ever extending its palms and branches, doubling every season its glorious clusters and perfumes; and, my dear life, tell me, repeat to me always, that nothing will bruise its bark or its delicate leaves, that it will grow larger in both our hearts, loved, free, watched over, like a life within our life...*

*Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams*

*Should I draw you the picture of my heart it would be what I hope you would still love though it contained nothing new. The early possession you obtained there, and the absolute power you have obtained over it, leaves not the smallest space unoccupied. I look back to the early days of our acquaintance and friendship as to the days of love and innocence, and, with an indescribable pleasure, I have seen near a score of years roll over our heads with an affection heightened and improved by time, nor have the dreary years of absence in the smallest degree effaced from my mind the image of the dear untitled man to whom I gave my heart.*

### Mother Theresa

*Spread love everywhere you go: first of all in your own house. Give love to your children, to your wife or husband, to a next door neighbor... Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness; kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greeting.*

### Margaret A. Keip

*Marriage has certain qualities of contract, in which two people take on the housekeeping tasks of living, together, to enhance life's joy. However, marriage is more than a contract. Marriage is commitment to take that joy deep, deeper than happiness, deep into the discovery of who you most truly are. It is a commitment to a spiritual journey, to a life of becoming-in which joy can comprehend despair, running through rivers of pain into joy again. And thus marriage is even deeper than commitment. It is a covenant -- a covenant that says: I love you. I trust you. I will be here for you when you are hurting, and when I am hurting, I will not leave. It is a covenant intended not to provide haven from pain or from anger and sorrow. Life offers no such haven. Instead, marriage is intended to provide a sanctuary safe enough to risk loving, to risk living and sharing from the center of oneself. This is worth everything.*

### Quaker Faith & Practice, 1959

*Marriage is to be taken seriously, but not always in grim earnest; its problems take perspective from fun, adventure and fulfilment, and joy and sorrow are mingled together. We rejoice in success, but we must also be glad that we can console each other in failure. 'With my body I thee worship' is to many a blessed phrase: but while some find a perfect physical relationship easily, others reach it the hard way, and it is not less precious for that. It is wonderful never to quarrel, but it means missing the dear delight of making it up...For some, there is a monogamy so entire that no other love ever touches it; but others 'fall in love' time and time again, and must learn to make riches of their affection without destroying their marriage or their friends. Let us be thankful for what we share, which enables us to understand; and for the infinite variety in which each marriage stands alone.*

### "Perhaps Love" by John Denver

*"Perhaps love is like a resting place—a shelter from the storm. It exists to give you comfort. It is there to keep you warm. And in those times of trouble —when you are most alone—the memory of love will bring you home. Perhaps love is like a window—perhaps an open door. It invites you to come closer. It wants to show you more. And even if you lose yourself—and don't know what to do—the memory of love will see you through. Oh, love to some is like a cloud—to some as strong as steel—for some a way of living—for some a way to feel. And some say love is holding on. And some say letting go. And some say love is everything. And some say they don't know. Perhaps love is like the ocean—full of conflict, full of change—like a fire when it's cold outside. Or thunder when it rains. If I should live forever—and all my dreams come true—my memories of love will be of you."*

### Leo Marks

*The life that I have is all that I have. And the life that I have is yours. The love that I have of the life that I have is yours and yours. A sleep I shall have. A rest I shall have. Yet death will be but a*

pause. For the peace of my years in the long green grass will be yours and yours and yours.

"I Will Be Here" by Steven Curtis Chapman

*If in the morning when you wake, if the sun does not appear—I will be here. If in the dark we lose sight of love, hold my hand and have no fear—I will be here. I will be here when you feel like being quiet...when you need to speak your mind I will listen. Through the winning, losing, and trying, we'll be together. And I will be here. If in the morning when you wake, if the future is unclear—I will be here. As sure as seasons were made for change, our lifetimes were made for years—I will be here. I will be here, and you can cry on my shoulder, when the mirror tells us we're older. I will hold you, to watch you grow in beauty, and tell you all the things you are to me. We'll be together, and I will be here. I will be true to the promises I've made, to you and to the one who gave you to me. I will be here.*

Johnny Cash

*We're the best partners this world's ever seen, Together as close as can be. But sometimes it's hard to find time in between, To tell you what you mean to me. You are the rose of my heart, You are the love of my life. A flower not fading nor falling apart, If you're tired, rest your head on my arm. Rose of my heart. When sorrow holds you in its arms of clay, It's rain drops that fall from your eyes. Your smile's like the sun come to earth for a day, You brighten my blackest of skies. You are the rose of my heart, You are the love of my life. A flower not fading nor falling apart, If you're cold, let my love make you warm. Rose of my heart. So hard times or easy times, what do I care, There's nothing I'd change if I could. The tears and the laughter are things that we share, Your hand in mine makes it good. You are the rose of my heart, You are the love of my life. A flower not fading nor falling apart, If you're cold, let my love make you warm. Rose of my heart. You are the rose of my heart, You are the love of my life. A flower not fading nor falling apart, If you're cold, let my love make you warm. Rose of my heart.*

"A Parable" by Maynard James Keenan

*We barely remember who or what came before this precious moment. We are choosing to be here right now, hold on, stay inside this holy reality, this holy experience. Twirling round with this familiar parable, spinning, weaving round each new experience. Recognize this as a holy union and celebrate this chance to be alive and breathing. This body holding me reminds me of my own mortality. Choosing to be here in this body, this body holding me, be my reminder here that I am not alone.*

"A Fireman's Wife"

*When you are gone, I feel alone-When you're away, I want you home. I miss you here, right next to me-But that's the way it has to be. When duty calls, it seems unfair-You should be here, but you are there. Helping people, saving lives-I am one of many wives. God, keep him safe, watch over him-When the work is hard, when the times are dim. Late at night or the early morn'. When he is tired; When his spirit's worn. Give him strength, be his guide-Let him know you're at his side. I love this man, he's one of a kind-He's one of the Bravest-The best you'll find. So this is what I ask*

*of thee-Just know how special he is to me. Protecting the helpless, a defender of life-I am proud to be A Fireman's Wife.*

"Roads Go Ever Ever On" from The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

*Roads go ever ever on, Over rock and under tree, By caves where never sun has shone, By streams that never find the sea; Over snow by winter sown, And through the merry flowers of June, Over grass and over stone, And under mountains in the moon. Roads go ever ever on—Under cloud and under star, Yet feet that wandering have gone—Turn at last to home afar. Eyes that fire and sword have seen—And horror in the halls of stone—Look at last on meadows green—And trees and hills they long have known.*

**Quotes**

William Shakespeare

*"Love sought is good, but given unsought is better."*

*"O it is excellent to have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant."*

*"The quality of mercy is not strained; it droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed; it blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."*

*"The better part of valor-discretion."*

*"Oh, be my friend, and teach me to be thine!"*

*"A friend should bear a friend's infirmities."*

*"What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving, how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a God."*

*"Assume a virtue, if you have it not."*

*"Happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending."*

*"Heaven has no rage like a love turned to hatred, nor hell a fury like a woman scorned."*

*"There are bonds of all sorts in this world of ours—fettters of friendship and ties of flowers and true-lovers' knots I ween; the girl and they boy are bound by a kiss, but there's never a bond, old friend like this, we have drunk from the same canteen."*

Voltaire (1694-1778): *"Sensual pleasure passes and vanishes in the twinkling of an eye, but the friendship between us, the mutual confidence, the delights of the heart, the enchantment of the soul...these things do not perish and can never be destroyed. I shall love you until I die."*

Francis Quarles (1592-1644): *"Be wisely worldly, but not worldly wise."*

Matthew Prior (1664-1721): “Be to her virtues very kind; be to her faults very blind.”

Edward Everett: “Home is the resort of love, of joy, of peace and plenty where, supporting and supported, polish’d friends and dear relations mingle into bliss.”

Robert Dodsley (1703-1764): “One kind kiss before we part, drop a tear and bid adieu; though we sever, my fond heart till we meet shall pant for you.”

Thomas A Kempis (1380-1471): “Man proposes, but God disposes.”

Chaucer (1625): “Give every man thin ear, but few thy voice; take each man’s censure, but reserve thy judgment.”

Dryden: “A thing of beauty is a joy forever: its loveliness increases; it will never pass into nothingness; but still will keep a bower quiet for us, and a sleep full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.”

Crabbe: “Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know, are a substantial world both pure and good; round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood our pastime and our happiness will grow.”

Robert Louis Stevenson: “How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a naughty world.”

Joseph Rodman Drake: “He is the freeman whom truth makes free.”

Addison: “Two friends, two bodies with one soul inspir’d.”

Cowper: “Ignorance is the curse of God; knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to heaven.”

Thomson: “Absence of occupation is not rest—a mind quite vacant is a mind distress’d.”

John Milton: “Some feelings are to mortals given with less of earth in them than heaven.”

Milton: “When liberty is gone life grows insipid and has lost its relish.”

Alexander Pope: *"The child is the father of the man."*

Pope: *"They who forgive most shall be most forgiven."*

Pope: *"Who'er excels in what we prize appears a hero in our eyes."*

Byron: *"True fortitude is seen in great exploits that justice warrants and wisdom guides; all else is tow'ring frenzy and distraction."*

Wordsworth: *"Children are the key to paradise. They alone are good and wise, because their thoughts, their very lives, are prayers."*

Rudyard Kipling: *"Good nature and good reason must ever join; to err is human, to forgive divine."*

Nathaniel Hawthorne: *"Tradition—which sometimes brings down truth that history has let slip, but is oftener the wild babble of the time..."*

*From The Happy Marriage: "Time still, as he flies, adds increase to her truth. And gives to her mind what he steals from her youth."*

*"Good, the more communicated, more abundantly grows."*

*"For pity melts the mind to love."*

*" 'Tis Divinity that stirs within us; 'Tis Heaven itself that points out a hereafter and intimates Eternity to man."*

*"The best portion of a good man's life — his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love. That blessed mood, in which the burden of the mystery in which the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world is lightened."*

*"Love. All thoughts, all passions, all delights. Whatever stirs this mortal frame, all are but ministers of love, and feeds his sacred flame."*

*"True love's the gift which God has given to man alone beneath the heaven. It is the secret sympathy, the silver link, the silken tie, which heart to heart and mind to mind in body and in soul can bind."*

*“He did make of necessity virtue.”*

*“Dost thou love life, then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.”*

*“Loveliness needs not the foreign aid of ornament, but is when unadorn’d, adorn’d the most.”*

Nisargadatta

*In marriage you are neither the husband nor the wife; you are the love between the two.*

Rilke

*Love consists in this: That two solitudes protect, and touch, and greet each other.*

Marcel Proust

*Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.*

Voltaire

*Love is a canvas furnished by Nature and embroidered by imagination.*

Zora Neale Hurston

*Love makes your soul crawl out from its hiding place.*

Robert Sexton

*In a time when nothing is more certain than change, the commitment of two people to one another has become difficult and rare. Yet, by its scarcity, the beauty and value of this exchange have only been enhanced.*

Joseph Campbell

*Marriage is not a simple love affair; it’s an ordeal, and the ordeal is the sacrifice of ego to a relationship in which two have become one.*

Maya Angelou

*We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.*

Abdu’l-baha, Paris Talks

*Love gives life to the lifeless. Love lights a flame in the heart that is cold. Love brings hope to the hopeless and gladdens the hearts of the sorrowful.*

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz

*To love is to place our happiness in the happiness of another.*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

*The sum which two married people owe to one another defies calculation. It is an infinite debt, which can only be discharged through all eternity.*

Amy Tan

*I am like a falling star who has finally found her place next to another in a lovely constellation, where we will sparkle in the heavens forever.*

Anais Nin

*Love never dies a natural death. It dies because we don't know how to replenish its source. It dies of blindness and errors and betrayals. It dies of illness and wounds; it dies of weariness, of witherings, of tarnishings.*

Allan K. Chalmers

*The Grand essentials of happiness are: something to do, something to love, and something to hope for.*

Felix Adler

*Love is the expansion of two natures in such fashion that each include the other, each is enriched by the other.*

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg

*Love is blind, but marriage restores its sight.*

Nikki Giovanni

*We love because it's the only true adventure.*

Leo Tolstoy

*All, everything that I understand, I understand only because I love.*

*The goal of life should not be to find joy in marriage, but to bring more love and truth into the world. We marry each other to assist in this task.*

Erica Jong

*Love is everything it's cracked up to be. That's why people are so cynical about it. It really is worth fight for, being brave for, risking everything for. And trouble is, if you don't risk anything, you risk even more.*

C. Simmons

*A person's character is but half formed till after wedlock.*

Rafael Ortiz

*Love is not finding someone to live with; it's finding someone you can't live without.*

Malagasy Proverb

*Let your love be like the misty rains, coming softly, but flooding the river.*

bell hooks

*The capacity to love is tied to being able to be awake, to being able to move out of yourself and be with someone else in a manner that is not about your desire to possess them, but to be with them, to be in union and communion.*

Ursula LeGuin

*Love doesn't sit there like a stone, it has to be made, like bread; remade all of the time, made new.*

Ancient Egyptian

*Your embraces alone give life to my heart.*

Thomas Merton

*Love is our true destiny. We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone....We find it with another.*

Sophocles

*One word frees us of all the weight and pain of life; that word is love.*

Willa Cathar

*Where there is great love there are always miracles.*

Lau Tzu

*To love someone deeply gives you strength. Being loved by someone deeply gives you courage.*

William Butler Yeats

*True love is a discipline in which each divines the secret self of the other and refuses to believe in the mere daily self.*

Percy Bysshe Shelley

*Love withers under constraints: its very essence is liberty: it is compatible neither with obedience, jealousy, nor fear: it is there most pure, perfect, and unlimited where its votaries live in confidence, equality and unreserve.*

James Weldon Johnson

*The world, for me, and all the world can hold  
Is circled by your arms: for me there lies,  
Within the lights and shadows of your eyes,  
The only beauty that is never old.*

George Santayana

*Knowledge of what is possible is the beginning of happiness.*

Peter Ustinov

*Love is an act of endless forgiveness, a tender look which becomes a habit.*

Baruch Spinoza

*All happiness or unhappiness solely depends on the quality of the object to which we are attached by love. Love for an object eternal and infinite feeds the mind with joy alone, a joy that is free from sorrow.*

St. Augustine (354-430)

*What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has the eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.*

Hassidic Saying

*When passion burns within you, remember that it was given to you for good purpose.*

Flora Davis

*Almost all married people fight, although many are ashamed to admit it. Actually a marriage in which no quarreling at all takes place may well be one that is dead or dying from emotional undernourishment. If you care, you probably fight.*

Albert Einstein

*Strange is our situation here upon the Earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to a divine purpose. However, there is one thing that we do know: that we are here for the sake of others. Above all, for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends.*

Robert Browning

*Take away love, and our earth is a tomb.*

Robert Heinlein

*Love is that condition in which the happiness of another person is essential to your own.*

Victor Hugo

*Love is knowing that even when you are alone, you will never be lonely again. And great happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved. Loved for ourselves. And even loved in spite of ourselves.*

Letter from Victor Hugo

*When two souls, which have sought each other for, however long in the throng, have finally found each other ... a union, fiery and pure as they themselves are... begins on earth and continues forever in heaven.*

*This union is love, true love, ... a religion, which deifies the loved one, whose life comes from devotion and passion, and for which the greatest sacrifices are the sweetest delights.*

Lord Byron

*The bravest are the tenderest and the loving are the daring.*

Passages by John O'Donohue

*“One of the tasks of true friendship is to listen compassionately and creatively to the hidden silences. Often secrets are not revealed in words, they lie concealed in the silence between the words or in the depth of what is unsayable between two people.”*

*“If you send out goodness from yourself, or if you share that which is happy or good within you, it will all come back to you multiplied ten thousand times. In the kingdom of love there is no competition; there is no possessiveness or control. The more love you give away, the more love you will have.”*

*“For Equilibrium, a Blessing: Like the joy of the sea coming home to shore, may the relief of laughter rinse through your soul. As the wind loves to call things to dance, may your gravity be lightened by grace. Like the dignity of moonlight restoring the earth, may your thoughts incline with reverence and respect. As water takes whatever shape it is in, so free may you be about who you become. As silence smiles on the other side of what’s said, may your sense of irony bring perspective. As time remains free of all that it frames, may your mind stay clear of all its names. May your prayer of listening deepen enough to hear in the depths the laughter of god.”*

*“When love awakens in your life, in the night of your heart, it is like the dawn breaking within you. Where before there was anonymity, now there is intimacy; where before there was fear, now there is courage; where before in your life there was awkwardness, now there is a rhythm of grace and gracefulness; where before you used to be jagged, now you are elegant and in rhythm with your self. When love awakens in your life, it is like a rebirth, a new beginning.”*

*“Your noble friend will not accept pretension but will gently and very firmly confront you with your own blindness. Such friendship is creative and critical; it is willing to negotiate awkward and uneven territories of contradiction and woundedness.”*

*“It could be a meeting on the street, or a party or a lecture, or just a simple, banal introduction, then suddenly there is a flash of recognition and the embers of kinship glow. There is an awakening between you, a sense of ancient knowing.”*

*“No one else has access to the world you carry around within yourself; you are its custodian and entrance. No one else can see the world the way you see it. No one else can feel your life the way you feel it. Thus it is impossible to ever compare two people because each stands on such different ground. When you compare yourself to others, you are inviting envy into your consciousness; it can be a dangerous and destructive guest.”*

*“Behind your image, below your words, above your thoughts, the silence of another world waits.”*

*“One of the deepest longings of the human soul is to be seen.”*

*“We do not need to grieve for the dead. Why should we grieve for them? They are now in a place where there is no more shadow, darkness, loneliness, isolation, or pain. They are home.”*

*“The eternal world and the mortal world are not parallel, rather they are fused.”*

*May the light of your soul guide you. May the light of your soul bless the work you do with the secret love and warmth of your heart. May you see in what you do the beauty of your own soul. May the sacredness of your work bring healing, light and renewal to those who work with you and to those who see and receive your work. May your work never weary you. May it release within you wellsprings of refreshment, inspiration and excitement. May you be present in what you do. May you never become lost in the bland absences. May the day never burden you. May*

dawn find you awake and alert, approaching your new day with dreams, possibilities and promises. May evening find you gracious and fulfilled. May you go into the night blessed, sheltered and protected. May your soul calm, console and renew you.

## Wedding Poems

Isaac Penington (Quaker, 1667)

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness:  
and bearing one with another,  
and forgiving one another,  
and not laying accusations one against another;  
but praying one for another,  
and helping one another up with a tender hand.

from "Rabbi Ben Ezra" by Robert Browning

Grow old along with me!  
The best is yet to be.....

Frau Ava (circa 1160), translated by Willis Barnstone

In your eyes, I have found my home.  
In your heart, I have found my love.  
In your soul, I have found my mate.  
With you, I am whole, full, alive.  
You make me laugh. You let me cry.  
You are my breath, my every heartbeat.  
I am yours.  
You are mine.  
Of this we are certain.  
You are lodged in my heart.  
The small key is lost.  
You must stay there forever.  
You are my inspiration and my soul's fire.  
You are the magic of my days.  
You help me laugh, you teach me love.  
You provide a safe place for me, unlike I've ever known.  
You free me to sing my own song.  
You are more of an amazement to me,  
each day I rediscover you.  
You are my greatest boon.  
I am yours.  
You are mine.  
Of this we are certain.  
You are lodged in my heart.  
The small key is lost.  
You must stay there forever.

*from The Country of Marriage by Wendell Berry*

*...our life reminds me  
of a forest in which there is a graceful clearing  
and in that opening a house,  
an orchard and garden,  
comfortable shades, and flowers...  
The forest is mostly dark, its ways  
to be made anew day after day, the dark  
richer than the light and more blessed,  
provided we stay brave  
enough to keep on going in.*

*"The Master Speed" by Robert Frost*

*No speed of wind or water rushing by  
But you have speed far greater. You can climb  
Back up a stream of radiance to the sky,  
And back through history up the stream of time.  
And you were given this swiftness, not for haste,  
Nor chiefly that you may go where you will,  
But in the rush of everything to waste,  
That you may have the power of standing still ?  
Off any still or moving thing you say.  
Two such as you with such a master speed  
Cannot be parted nor be swept away  
From one another once you are agreed  
That life is only life forevermore  
Together wing to wing and oar to oar.*

*Nikki Giovanni*

*Some people forget that love is  
tucking you in and kissing you "Good Night"  
no matter how young or old you are*

*Some people don't remember that love is  
listening and laughing and asking questions  
no matter what your age*

*Few recognize that love is  
commitment  
responsibility  
no fun at all  
unless  
Love is  
you and me*

Rain has drops      Sun has shine  
Moon has beams      That make you mine  
Rivers have banks      Sands for shores  
Hearts have heartbeats      That makes me yours  
Needles have eyes      Though pins may prick  
Elmer has glue      To make things stick  
Winter has Spring      Stockings feet  
Pepper has mint      To make it sweet  
Teachers have lessons      soups du jour  
Lawyers sue bad folks      doctors cure  
All and all this much is true  
You have me and I have you

I love you  
because the Earth turns around the sun  
because the North wind blows north  
sometimes  
because the Pope is Catholic  
and most Rabbis Jewish  
because winters flow into springs  
and the air clears after a storm  
because only my love for you  
despite the charms of gravity  
keeps me from falling off this Earth  
into another dimension  
I love you because it is the natural order of things

"He Wishes For Cloths of Heaven" by W. B. Yeats

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,  
Enwrought with golden and silver light,  
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths  
Of night and light and the half-light,  
I would spread the cloths under your feet:  
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;  
I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

Emily Dickinson

It's all I have to bring to-day,  
This, and my heart beside,  
This, and my heart, and all the fields,  
And all the meadows wide.  
Be sure you count, should I forget, --  
Someone the sum could tell, --  
This, and my heart,  
and all the bees

Which in the clover dwell.

Of all the Souls that stand create—I have elected—One—When Sense from Spirit—files away—  
And Subterfuge—is done—When that which is—and that which was—Apart—intrinsic—stand—  
And this brief Drama in the flesh—Is shifted—like a Sand—When Figures show their royal Front  
—And Mists—are carved away, Behold the Atom—I preferred—To all the lists of Clay!

From the Turin Papyrus, in the Ramesside period, circa 1100 BCE, Egypt.

Let my love love me best  
and I shall ordain  
Her hands full of lotus blossoms and flowers  
Full of buds and perfumes, strong ale  
And beer of every brewable kind  
Then she'll give me, her love, a day to remember  
Make me drink down this day to its last shadow

Eunice Tietjens

Lo, I have opened unto you the wide gates  
of my being,  
And like a tide you have flowed into me.  
The innermost recesses of my spirit are full of you,  
and all the  
channels of my soul are grown sweet with your presence.  
For you have brought me peace:  
The peace of great tranquil waters,  
and the quiet of the summer sea.  
Your hands are filled with peace  
as the noon tide is filled with light;  
about your head is bound the eternal quiet of the stars,  
and in your heart dwells the calm miracle of twilight.  
I am utterly content.  
In all my spirit is no ripple of unrest,  
For I have opened unto you the wide gates  
of my being  
And like the tide you have flowed into me.

Jane Hirshfield

Today when persimmons ripen  
Today when fox-kits come out of their den into snow  
Today when the spotted egg releases its wren song  
Today when the maple sets down its red leaves  
Today when windows keep their promise to open  
Today when fire keeps its promise to warm  
Today when someone you love has died  
or someone you never met has died  
Today when someone you love has been born

or someone you will not meet has been born  
Today when rain leaps to the waiting of roots in their dryness  
Today when starlight bends to the roofs of the hungry and tired  
Today when someone sits long inside his last sorrow  
Today when someone steps into the heat of her first embrace  
Today, let this light bless you  
With these friends let it bless you  
With snow-scent and lavender bless you  
Let the vow of this day keep itself wildly and wholly  
Spoken and silent, surprise you inside your ears  
Sleeping and waking, unfold itself inside your eyes  
Let its fierceness and tenderness hold you  
Let its vastness be undisguised in all your days

"Sudden Light" by Dante Rossetti

I have been here before,  
But when or how I cannot tell:  
I know the grass beyond the door,  
The sweet keen smell,  
The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.

You have been mine before,  
How long ago I may not know:  
But just when at that swallow's soar  
Your neck turned so,  
Some veil did fall---I knew it all of yore.

Has this been thus before?  
And shall not thus time's eddying flight  
Still with our lives our love restore  
In death's despite,  
And day and night yield one delight once more?

William Carlos Williams

I have eaten  
the plums  
that were in  
the icebox  
  
and which  
you were probably  
saving  
for breakfast.

Forgive me  
they were delicious

so sweet  
and so cold.

"To Love is Not to Possess" by James Kavanaugh

To love is not to possess,  
To own or imprison,  
Nor to lose one's self in another.  
Love is to join and separate,  
To walk alone and together,  
To find a laughing freedom  
That lonely isolation does not permit.  
It is finally to be able  
To be who we really are  
No longer clinging in childish dependency  
Nor docilely living separate lives in silence,  
It is to be perfectly one's self  
And perfectly joined in permanent commitment  
To another--and to one's inner self.  
Love only endures when it moves like waves,  
Receding and returning gently or passionately,  
Or moving lovingly like the tide  
In the moon's own predictable harmony,  
Because finally, despite a child's scars  
Or an adult's deepest wounds,  
They are openly free to be  
Who they really are--and always secretly were,  
In the very core of their being  
Where true and lasting love can alone abide.

"Love and Friendship" by Emily Bronte

Love is like the wild rose-briar  
Friendship like the holly tree  
The holly is dark when the rose-briar blooms  
But which will bloom most constantly?

The wild rose-briar is sweet in spring,  
Its summer blossoms scent the air  
Yet wait till winter comes again  
And who will call the wild-briar fair?

Then, scorn the silly rose-wreath now  
And deck with thee the holly's sheen,  
Then when December blights thy brow  
He still may leave thy garland green.

Dwight Lynn Moody

*Joy is love exalted;  
peace is love in repose;  
long-suffering is love enduring;  
gentleness is love in society;  
goodness is love in action;  
faith is love on the battlefield;  
meekness is love in school;  
and temperance is love in training.*

Rilke

*Understand, I'll slip quietly  
Away from the noisy crowd  
When I see the pale  
Stars rising, blooming over the oaks  
I'll pursue solitary pathways  
Through the pale twilit meadows,  
With only this one dream:  
You come too.*

Janet Miles - "Two Trees"

*A portion of your soul has been  
entwined with mine  
A gentle kind of togetherness, while  
separately we stand.  
As two trees deeply rooted in  
separate plots of ground,  
While their topmost branches  
come together,  
Forming a miracle of lace  
against the heavens.*

Raymond Baughan

*Here in the space between us and the world  
lies human meaning.  
Into the vast uncertainty we call.  
The echoes make our music,  
sharp equations which can hold the stars,  
and marvelous mythologies we trust.  
This may be all we need  
to lift our love against indifference and pain.  
Here in the space between us and each other  
lies all the future  
of the fragment of the universe*

"Dover Beach" by Matthew Arnold  
*The sea is calm to-night.*

*The tide is full, the moon lies fair  
Upon the straits; on the French coast the light  
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand;  
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.  
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!  
Only, from the long line of spray  
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,  
Listen! you hear the grating roar  
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,  
At their return, up the high strand,  
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,  
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring  
The eternal note of sadness in.*

*Sophocles long ago  
Heard it on the Agæan, and it brought  
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow  
Of human misery; we  
Find also in the sound a thought,  
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.*

*The Sea of Faith  
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore  
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.  
But now I only hear  
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,  
Retreating, to the breath  
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear  
And naked shingles of the world.*

*Ah, love, let us be true  
To one another! for the world, which seems  
To lie before us like a land of dreams,  
So various, so beautiful, so new,  
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;  
And we are here as on a darkling plain  
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,  
Where ignorant armies clash by night.*

*“The Love in her eyes lay sleeping” by William Forster*

*The love in her eyes lay sleeping,  
As stars that unconscious shine,  
Till, under the pink lids peeping,  
I wakened it up with mine;  
And we pledged our troth to a brimming oath*

*In a bumper of blood-red wine.  
Alas! too well I know  
That it happened long ago;  
Those memories yet remain,  
And sting, like throbs of pain,  
And I'm alone below,  
But still the red wine warms, and the rosy goblets glow;  
If love be the heart's enslaver,  
'Tis wine that subdues the head.  
But which has the fairest flavour,  
And whose is the soonest shed?  
Wine waxes in power in that desolate hour  
When the glory of love is dead.  
Love lives on beauty's ray,  
But night comes after day,  
And when the exhausted sun  
His high career has run,  
The stars behind him stay,  
And then the light that lasts consoles our darkening way.  
When beauty and love are over,  
And passion has spent its rage,  
And the spectres of memory hover,  
And glare on life's lonely stage,  
'Tis wine that remains to kindle the veins  
And strengthen the steps of age.  
Love takes the taint of years,  
And beauty disappears,  
But wine in worth matures  
The longer it endures,  
And more divinely cheers,  
And ripens with the suns and mellows with the spheres.*

*Rima XXIV, Gustavo Adolfo Becquer*

*Two red tongues of fire  
entwined to the same trunk  
they draw near and, when they kiss,  
they are one flame;*

*two notes that the hand  
plays on the lute at the same time,  
they meet in the air  
and harmoniously embrace;*

*two waves that together  
come to die on a beach  
and when they break are crowned*

*by a plume of silver;*

*two banks of mist  
rising from the lake  
when they meet up there in the sky  
they become one white cloud;*

*two ideas that are shaped together;  
two kisses that mingle together;  
two echoes that resound as one:  
these are our two souls.*

William Blake

*Love to faults is always blind, always is to joy inclined.  
Lawless, winged, and unconfined,  
and breaks all chains from every mind.  
To see a world in a grain of sand,  
and a heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,  
and eternity in an hour*

*Love seeketh not itself to please,  
nor itself hath any care;  
But for another gives its ease,  
and builds a heaven in Hells despair.*

"The Passionate Shepherd to His Love"

by Christopher Marlowe

*Come live with me, and be my love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove  
That valleys, groves, hills and fields,  
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.*

*And we will sit upon the rocks,  
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks  
By shallow rivers, to whose falls  
Melodious birds sing madrigals.*

*And I will make thee beds of roses,  
And a thousand fragrant posies,  
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle,  
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle.*

*A gown made of the finest wool  
Which from our pretty lambs we pull,  
Fair lined slippers for the cold,*

*With buckles of the purest gold.*

*A belt of straw and ivy buds,  
With coral clasps and amber studs,  
And if these pleasures may thee move,  
Come live with me, and be my love.*

*The shepherds' swains shall dance and sing  
For thy delight each May-morning;  
If these delights thy mind may move,  
Then live with me, and be my love.*

"To My Dear and Loving Husband" by Anne Bradstreet

*If ever two were one, then surely we.  
If ever man were loved by wife, then thee;  
If ever wife was happy in a man,  
Compare with me ye women if you can.  
I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold,  
Or all the riches that the East doth hold.  
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,  
Nor ought but love from thee give recompense.  
Thy love is such I can no way repay,  
The heavens reward thee manifold I pray.  
Then while we live, in love let's so persevere,  
That when we live no more, we may live ever.*

"Hug-o-War" by Shel Silverstein

*I will not play at tug o' war.  
I'd rather play at hug o' war,  
where everyone hugs instead of tugs,  
where everyone giggles,  
and rolls on the rug,  
where everyone kisses,  
and everyone grins,  
and everyone cuddles,  
and everyone wins.*

"The Bargain" by Sir Philip Sidney

*My true love hath my heart, and I have his,  
By just exchange one for another given:  
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,  
There never was a better bargain driven:  
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.  
His heart in me keeps him and me in one,  
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides:  
He loves my heart, for once it was his own,*

*I cherish his because in me it bides:  
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.*

"Song of the Open Road" by Walt Whitman

*Allons! the road is before us!*

*It is safe--I have tried it--my own feet have tried it well--be not detain'd!*

*Let the paper remain on the desk unwritten,  
and the book on the shelf unopen'd!*

*Let the tools remain in the workshop!*

*let the money remain unearn'd!*

*Let the school stand! mind not the cry of the teacher!*

*Let the preacher preach in his pulpit!*

*let the lawyer plead in the*

*court, and the judge expound the law.*

*Camerado, I give you my hand!*

*I give you my love more precious than money,*

*I give you myself before preaching or law;*

*Will you give me yourself?*

*will you come travel with me?*

*Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?*

"We Two, How Long We Were Fool'd"

Walt Whitman

*We two, how long we were fool'd,*

*Now transmuted, we swiftly escape as Nature escapes,*

*We are Nature, long have we been absent,*

*but now we return,*

*We become plants, trunks, foliage, roots, bark,*

*We are bedded in the ground, we are rocks,*

*We are oaks, we grow in the openings side by side,*

*We browse, we are two among the wild herds spontaneous as any,*

*We are two fishes swimming in the sea together,*

*We are what locust blossoms are,*

*we drop scent around lanes mornings and evenings,*

*We are also the coarse smut*

*of beasts, vegetables, minerals,*

*We are two predatory hawks,*

*we soar above and look down,*

*We are two resplendent suns,*

*we it is who balance ourselves orbic and stellar,*

*we are as two comets,*

*We prowl fang'd and four-footed in the woods,*

*we spring on prey,*

*We are two clouds forenoons and afternoons driving overhead,*

*We are seas mingling, we are two of those cheerful waves rolling over each other*

and interwetting each other,  
We are what the atmosphere is,  
transparent, receptive, pervious, impervious,  
We are snow, rain, cold, darkness,  
we are each product and influence of the globe,  
We have circled and circled  
till we have arrived home again, we two,  
We have voided all but freedom and all but our own joy.

"To a Stranger" by Walt Whitman

Passing stranger!  
you do not know how longingly I look upon you,  
You must be he I was seeking, or she I was seeking,  
(it comes to me as of a dream,)  
I have somewhere surely lived a life of joy with you,  
All is recall'd as we flit by each other,  
fluid, affectionate, chaste, matured,  
You grew up with me,  
were a boy with me or a girl with me,  
I ate with you and slept with you,  
your body has become not yours only  
nor left my body mine only,  
You give me the pleasure of your eyes, face, flesh,  
as we pass, you take of my beard, breast, hands,  
in return, I am not to speak to you,  
I am to think of you when I sit alone  
or wake at night alone,  
I am to wait,  
I do not doubt I am to meet you again,  
I am to see to it that I do not lose you.

"Beyond What" by Alice Walker

We reach for destinies beyond  
what we have come to know  
and in the romantic hush  
of promises  
perceive each  
the other's life  
as known mystery.  
Shared. But inviolate.  
No melting. No squeezing  
into One.  
We swing our eyes around  
as well as side to side  
to see the world.  
To choose, renounce,

*this, or that --  
call it a council between equals  
call it love.*

"Sonnets from the Portuguese, XIV"

by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

*If thou must love me, let it be for nought  
Except for love's sake only. Do not say  
'I love her for her smile--her look--her way  
Of speaking gently,--for a trick of thought  
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought  
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day'--  
For these things in themselves, Beloved, may  
Be changed, or change for thee,--and love, so wrought,  
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for  
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry,--  
A creature might forget to weep, who bore  
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!  
But love me for love's sake, that evermore  
Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.*

"Sonnet from the Portuguese"

by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

*How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.  
I love thee to the level of everyday's  
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.  
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;  
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.  
I love thee with the passion put to use  
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.  
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
With my lost saints, - I love thee with the breath,  
Smiles, tears, of all my life! - and, if God choose,  
I shall but love thee better after death.*

"To a Butterfly" by William Wordsworth

*I've watched you now a full half-hour;  
Self-poised upon that yellow flower  
And, little Butterfly! Indeed  
I know not if you sleep or feed.  
How motionless! - not frozen seas  
More motionless! and then  
What joy awaits you, when the breeze*

*Hath found you out among the trees,  
And calls you forth again!*

*from The Merchant of Venice*

*One half of me is yours, the other half yours---  
Mine own, I should say; but if mine, then yours, and so all yours.*

*From 100 Love Sonnets by Pablo Neruda*

*I do not love you as if you were salt-rose, or topaz,  
or the arrow of carnations the fire shoots off.  
I love you as certain dark things are to be loved, in secret,  
between the shadow and the soul.*

*I love you as the plant that never blooms  
but carries in itself the light of hidden flowers;  
thanks to your love a certain solid fragrance,  
risen from the earth, lives darkly in my body.*

*I love you  
without knowing how, or when, or from where.  
I love you straightforwardly,  
without complexities or pride;  
so I love you because I know no other way than this: Where "I" does not exist, nor "You",  
so close that your hand on my chest is my hand,  
so close that your eyes close as I fall asleep.*

*Sonnet LXIX by Pablo Neruda*

*Maybe nothingness is to be without your presence,  
without you moving, slicing the noon  
like a blue flower; without you walk  
later through the fog and the cobbles,*

*without the light you carry in your hand,  
golden, which maybe others will not see,  
which maybe no one knew was growing  
like the red beginnings of a rose.*

*In short, without your presence, without our coming  
suddenly, incitingly, to know my life,  
gust of a rosebush, wheat of wind:*

*since then I am because you are,  
since then you are, I am, we are,  
and through love I will be, you will be, we'll be.*

*e. e. cummings*

*the great advantage of being alive  
(instead of undying) is not so much  
that mind no more can disprove than prove  
what heart may feel and soul may touch  
–the great(my darling)happens to be  
that love are in we,that love are in we  
and here is a secret they never will share  
for whom create is less than have  
or one times one than when times where–  
that we are in love,that we are in love:  
with us they’ve nothing times nothing to do  
(for love are in we am in i are in you)  
this world(as timorous itsters all  
to call their cowardice quite agree)  
shall never discover our touch and feel  
–for love are in we are in love are in we;  
for you are and i am and we are(above  
and under all possible worlds)in love  
a billion brains may coax undeath  
from fancied fact and spaceful time–  
no heart can leap,no soul can breathe  
but by the sizeless truth of a dream  
whose sleep is the sky and the earth and the sea.  
For love are in you am in i are in we*

“Love” by Roy Croft

*I love you,  
Not only for what you are,  
But for what I am  
When I am with you.*

*I love you,  
Not only for what  
You have made of yourself,  
But for what  
You are making of me.*

*I love you  
For the part of me  
That you bring out;  
I love you  
For putting your hand  
Into my heaped-up heart  
And passing over*

*All the foolish, weak things  
That you can't help  
Dimly seeing there,  
And for drawing out  
Into the light  
All the beautiful belongings  
That no one else had looked  
Quite far enough to find.*

*I love you because you  
Are helping me to make  
Of the lumber of my life  
Not a tavern  
But a temple;  
Out of the works  
Of my every day  
Not a reproach  
But a song.*

*I love you  
Because you have done  
More than any creed  
Could have done  
To make me good,  
And more than any fate  
To make me happy.*

*You have done it  
Without a touch,  
Without a word,  
Without a sign.  
You have done it  
By being yourself.*

*"In Love Made Visible" By Mary Swenson*

*In love are we made visible  
As in a magic bath  
are unpeeled  
to the sharp pit  
so long concealed*

*With love's alertness  
we recognize  
the soundless whimper  
of the soul  
behind the eyes*

*A shaft opens  
and the timid thing  
at last leaps to surface  
with full-spread wing*

*The fingertips of love discover  
more than the body's smoothness  
They uncover a hidden conduit  
for the transfusion  
of empathies that circumvent  
the mind's intrusion*

*In love we are set free  
Objective bone  
and flesh no longer insulate us  
to ourselves alone  
We are released  
and flow into each other's cup  
Our two frail vials pierce*

Mark Twain

*A Marriage...*

*Makes of two fractional lives a whole;  
It gives to two purposeless lives a work  
And doubles the strength of each to perform it  
It gives to two questioning natures a reason for living,  
And something to live for;  
It will give a new gladness to the sunshine,  
A new fragrance to the flowers,  
A new beauty to the earth,  
And a new mystery to life.*

Kurt Vonnegut/Mario Beneditti

*Your hands are my caress  
my daily reminders  
I love you because your hands  
work for justice  
if I love you it's because you are  
my love my accomplice and my everything  
and in the street arm in arm  
we are many more than two  
  
your eyes are my spell  
against a cursed day  
I love you for your gaze  
that looks and plants the future*

*your mouth that is yours and mine  
your mouth doesn't lie  
I love you because your mouth  
knows how to calm rebellion  
if I love you it's because you are  
my love my accomplice and my everything  
and in the street arm in arm  
we are many more than two  
and for your open face  
and your wanderer's footstep  
and your weeping for the world  
because you are of the people I love you.  
and because love is not a halo  
nor morality tale  
and because we are a couple  
that knows it is not alone  
I love you in my paradise  
which is to say that in my ideal country  
people live happily  
in our nation of two  
if I love you it's because you are  
my love my accomplice and my everything  
and in the street arm in arm  
we are many more than two*

*Jalal Al-Din Rumi, Persian Love Poem*

*Tonight is a night of union  
and also of scattering of the stars,  
for a bride is coming from the sky: the full moon.  
The sky is an astrolabe, and the Law is love.*

*"The Art of Marriage" by Wilferd A. Peterson*

*The little things are the big things.  
It is never being too old to hold hands.  
It is remembering to say "I love you" at least once a day.*

*It is never going to sleep angry.  
It is at no time taking the other for granted;  
the courtship should not end with the honeymoon,  
it should continue through all the years.*

*It is having a mutual sense of values  
and common objectives.  
It is standing together facing the world.*

*It is forming a circle of love  
that gathers in the whole family.  
It is doing things for each other,  
not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice,  
but in the spirit of joy.*

*It is speaking words of appreciation  
and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.  
It is not expecting the husband to wear a halo  
or the wife to have wings of an angel.  
It is not looking for perfection in each other.*

*It is cultivating  
flexibility, patience, understanding and a sense of humor.  
It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.  
It is giving each other an atmosphere  
in which each can grow.*

*It is finding room for the things of the spirit.  
It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.  
It is establishing a relationship  
in which the independence is equal,  
dependence is mutual and the obligation is reciprocal.  
It is not only marrying the right partner;  
it is being the right partner.*

*"The Chuppah" by Marge Piercy  
The chuppah stands on four poles.  
The home has its four corners.  
The chuppah stands on four poles.  
The marriage stands on four legs.  
Four points loose the winds  
that blow on the walls of the house,  
the south wind that brings the warm rain,  
the east wind that brings the cold rain,  
the north wind that brings the cold sun  
and the snow, the long west wind  
bringing the weather off the far plains.*

*Here we live open to the seasons.  
Here the winds caress and cuff us  
contrary and fierce as bears.  
Here the winds are caught and snarling  
in the pines, a cat in a net clawing  
breaking twigs to fight loose.  
Here the winds brush our faces*

*soft in the morning as feathers  
that float down from a dove's breast.*

*Here the moon sails up out of the ocean  
dripping like a just washed apple.  
Here the sun wakes us like a baby.  
Therefore the chuppah has no sides.*

*It is not a box.  
It is not a coffin.  
It is not a dead end.  
Therefore the chuppah has no walls.  
We have made a home together  
open to the weather of our time.  
We are mills that turn in the winds of struggle  
converting fierce energy into bread.*

*The canopy is the cloth of our table  
where we share fruit and vegetables  
of our labor, where our care for the earth  
comes back and we take its body in ours.*

*The canopy is the cover of our bed  
where our bodies open their portals wide,  
where we eat and drink the blood  
of our love, where the skin shines red  
as a swallowed sunrise and we burn  
in one furnace of joy molten as steel  
and the dream is flesh and flower.*

*O my love O my love we dance  
under the chuppah standing over us  
like an animal on its four legs,  
like a table on which we set our love  
as a feast, like a tent  
under which we work  
not safe but no longer solitary  
in the searing heat of our time.*

*"My Dream" by Ogden Nash  
This is my dream, It is my own dream, I dreamt it.  
I dreamt that my hair was kempt.  
Then I dreamt that my true love unkempt it.*

*Edna St Vincent Millay  
Not in the summer casket cool with pearls*

Or rich with red corundum or with blue  
Locked, and key withheld, as other girls  
Have given their loves, I give my love to you  
Not in a lovers'-know, not in a ring  
Worked in such fashion, and the legend plain —  
Semper fidelis, where a secret spring  
Kennels a drop of mischief for the brain:  
Love in the open hand, no thing but that,  
Ungemmed, unhidden, wishing not to hurt,  
As one should bring you cowslips in a hat  
Swung from the hand, or apples in her skirt,  
I bring to you, calling out as children do:  
"Look what I have! — And these are all for you."

from A Woman in Two Worlds by Robert Bly

A man and a woman sit near each other,  
and they do not long  
At this moment to be older, or younger,  
nor born  
In any other nation, or time or place.  
They are content to be where they are,  
talking or not talking.  
Their breaths together feed someone whom  
we do not know.  
The man sees the way his fingers move;  
he sees her hands close around a book she  
hands to him.  
They obey a third body that they share  
in common.  
They have made a promise to love that body.  
Age may come, parting may come, death will come.  
A man and a woman sit near each other;  
as they breathe they feed someone we do  
not know,  
someone we know of, whom we have never seen.

"since feeling is first..." by e.e. cummings

since feeling is first who pays any attention to the syntax of things will never wholly kiss you;  
wholly be a fool while Spring is in the world  
my blood approves, and kisses are a far better fate than wisdom lady i swear by all flowers. Don't  
cry--the best gesture of my brain is less than your eyelids' flutter  
which says  
we are for each other: then laugh, leaning back in my arms for life's not a paragraph  
and death i think is no parenthesis

"somewhere i have never traveled" by e.e. cummings

*somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond  
any experience, your eyes have their silence:  
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,  
or which i cannot touch because they are too near*

*your slightest look easily will uncloset me  
though i have closed myself as fingers,  
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens  
(touching skillfully, mysteriously) her first rose*

*or if your wish be to close me, i and  
my life will shut very beautifully, suddenly,  
as when the heart of this flower imagines  
the snow carefully everywhere descending;*

*nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals  
the power of your intense fragility: whose texture  
compels me with the colour of its countries,  
rendering death and forever with each breathing*

*(i do not know what it is about you that closes  
and opens; only something in me understands  
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)  
nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands*

"love is a place..." by e.e. cummings

*love is a place  
& through this place of  
love moves  
(with brightness of peace)  
all places*

*yes is a world  
& in this world of  
yes live  
(skillfully curled)  
all worlds*

"i carry your heart..." by e.e. cummings (1894-1962)

*i carry your heart with me (i carry it in  
my heart) i am never without it (anywhere  
i go you go, my dear; and whatever is done  
by only me is your doing, my darling)  
i fear  
no fate (for you are my fate, my sweet) i want  
no world (for beautiful you are my world, my true)*

*and it's you are whatever a moon has always meant  
and whatever a sun will always sing is you*

*here is the deepest secret nobody knows  
(here is the root of the rot and the bud of the bud  
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life; which grows  
higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)  
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart  
i carry your heart (i carry it in my heart)*

*"love is the voice..." by e.e. cummings*

*love is the voice under all silences;  
the hope which has no opposite in fear;  
the strength so strong mere force is febleness;  
the truth more first than sun more last than star.*

*"love is more thicker than forget..." by e.e. cummings*

*love is more thicker than forget  
more thinner than recall  
more seldom than a wave is wet  
more frequent than to fail*

*it is most mad and moonly  
and less it shall unbecome  
than all the sea which only  
is deeper than the sea*

*love is less always than to win  
less never than alive  
less bigger than the least begin  
less littler than forgive  
it is most sane and sunly  
and more it cannot die  
than all the sky which only  
is higher than the sky*

*"sweet spring is your time..." by e.e. cummings*

*"sweet spring is your time  
is my time is our time  
for springtime is lovetime  
and viva sweet love"*

*(all the merry little birds are  
flying in the floating in the  
very spirits singing in  
are winging in the blossoming)*

lovers go and lovers come  
awandering, awondering  
but any two are perfectly alone  
there's nobody else alive.

(such a sky and such a sun  
I never knew (and neither did you)  
and everybody never breathed  
quite so many kinds of yes)

not a tree can count his leaves  
each herself by opening  
but shining who by thousands mean  
only one amazing thing

(secretly adoring shyly  
tiny winging darting floating  
merry in the blossoming  
always joyful selves are singing)

“sweet spring is your time  
is my time  
is our time  
for springtime is lovetime  
and viva sweet love”

Rumi, “This Marriage”  
This marriage be wine and halvah,  
honey dissolving in milk.  
This marriage be the leaves and fruit of a date tree.  
This marriage be women laughing  
together for days on end.  
This marriage, a sign for us study.  
This marriage, beauty.  
This marriage, a moon in a light blue sky.  
This marriage, this silence full mixed with spirit.

"A moment of happiness..." by Rumi  
A moment of happiness,  
you and I sitting on the verandah,  
apparently two, but one in soul, you and I.  
We feel the flowing water of life here,  
you and I, with the garden's beauty  
and the birds singing.  
The stars will be watching us,

and we will show them  
what it is to be a thin crescent moon.  
You and I unselfed, will be together,  
indifferent to idle speculation, you and I.  
The parrots of heaven will be cracking sugar  
as we laugh together, you and I.  
In one form upon this earth,  
and in another form in a timeless sweet land.

"No I'll not take the half..." by Yevgeny Yevtushenko

No, I'll not take the half of anything!  
Give me the whole sky! The far-flung earth!  
Seas and rivers and mountain avalanches -  
All these are mine! I'll accept no less!

No, life, you cannot woo me with a part.  
Let it be all or nothing! I can shoulder that!  
I don't want happiness by halves.  
Nor is half of sorrow what I want.

Yet there's a pillow I would share,  
Where gently pressed against a cheek,  
Like a helpless star, a falling star,  
A ring glimmers on a finger of your hand.

"Variations on the Word Sleep" by Margaret Atwood

I would like to watch you sleeping,  
which may not happen.  
I would like to watch you,  
sleeping. I would like to sleep  
with you, to enter  
your sleep as its smooth dark wave  
slides over my head

and walk with you through that lucent  
wavering forest of bluegreen leaves  
with its watery sun & three moons  
towards the cave where you must descend,  
towards your worst fear

I would like to give you the silver  
branch, the small white flower, the one  
word that will protect you  
from the grief at the center  
of your dream, from the grief  
at the center. I would like to follow

you up the long stairway  
again & become  
the boat that would row you back  
carefully, a flame  
in two cupped hands  
to where your body lies  
beside me, and you enter  
it as easily as breathing in

I would like to be the air  
that inhabits you for a moment  
only. I would like to be that unnoticed  
& that necessary.

"Oh promise me"

by Reginald DeKoven & Clement W. Scott

(song lyric)

Oh promise me that someday you and I,  
Will take our love together to some sky.  
Where we can be alone and faith renew,  
And find the hollows where those flowers grew.  
Those first sweet violets of early spring,  
Which come in whispers thrill us both and sing  
Of love unspeakable that is to be,  
Oh promise me, oh promise me.  
Oh promise me that you will take my hand,  
The most unworthy in this lonely land.  
And let me sit beside you in your eyes,  
Seeing the vision of our paradise.  
Hearing God's message while the voices roll,  
They're mighty music to our very souls.  
No love less perfect than a life with thee,  
Oh promise me, oh promise me.

Langston Hughes—a "Dream" Trilogy

Bring me all of your dreams,  
You dreamers,  
Bring me all of your  
Heart melodies  
That I may wrap them  
In a blue cloud-cloth  
Away from the too-rough fingers  
Of the world.

I dream a world where man  
No other man will scorn,

Where love will bless the earth  
And peace its paths adorn  
I dream a world where all  
Will know sweet freedom's way,  
Where greed no longer saps the soul  
Nor avarice blights our day.  
A world I dream where black or white,  
Whatever race you be,  
Will share the bounties of the earth  
And every man is free,  
Where wretchedness will hang its head  
And joy, like a pearl,  
Attends the needs of all mankind-  
Of such I dream, my world!

Hold fast to dreams  
For if dreams die  
Life is a broken-winged bird  
That cannot fly.  
Hold fast to dreams  
For when dreams go  
Life is a barren field  
Frozen with snow.

"Ithaka" by C. P. Cavafy  
As you set out for Ithaka  
hope the voyage is a long one,  
full of adventure, full of discovery.  
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,  
angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:  
you'll never find things like that on your way  
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,  
as long as a rare excitement  
stirs your spirit and your body.  
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,  
wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them  
unless you bring them along inside your soul,  
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope the voyage is a long one.  
May there be many a summer morning when,  
with what pleasure, what joy,  
you come into harbors seen for the first time;  
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations  
to buy fine things,  
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,

*sensual perfume of every kind—  
as many sensual perfumes as you can;  
and may you visit many Egyptian cities  
to gather stores of knowledge from their scholars.*

*Keep Ithaka always in your mind.  
Arriving there is what you are destined for.  
But do not hurry the journey at all.  
Better if it lasts for years,  
so you are old by the time you reach the island,  
wealthy with all you have gained on the way,  
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.*

*Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.  
Without her you would not have set out.  
She has nothing left to give you now.*

*And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.  
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,  
you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.  
Translated by Edmund Keeley/Philip Sherrard*

Rumi, Sufi

*The tender words you have said to one another  
are stored in the secret heart of heaven.  
One day like rain they will fall and spread,  
and your mystery will grow green over the world.*

Arthur Davison Ficke

*Love is the simplest of all earthly things.  
It needs no grandeur of celestial trust  
In more than what it is, no holy wings:  
It stands with honest feet in honest dust.  
And is the body's blossoming in clear air  
Of truthfulness and joyance when alone;  
Two mortals pass beyond the hour's despair  
And claim that Paradise which is their own.  
Amid a universe of sweat and blood,  
Beyond the glooms of all the nations' hate,  
Lovers, forgetful of the poisoned mood  
Of the loud world, in secret ere too late  
A gentle sacrament may celebrate  
Before their private altar of the good.*

Paul L'Herrou

*If your love is to grow and deepen,*

*You must find a way to move  
With each other;  
Perhaps in a slow and graceful dance  
(bare feet firmly feeling the ground).  
A dance that circles and tests  
And learns  
As it gradually moves closer  
To that place  
Where you can each  
Pass through the other  
And turn and embrace  
Without breaking  
Or losing any part of yourselves  
But only to learn more of who you each are  
By your touching  
To find that you are each whole  
And individuals and separate  
Yet in the same instant,  
One, joined as a whole  
That does not blur the two individuals  
As you dance.*

*“Touched by an Angel” by Maya Angelou*

*We, unaccustomed to courage  
exiles from delight  
live coiled in shells of loneliness  
until love leaves its high holy temple  
and comes into our sight  
to liberate us into life.*

*Love arrives  
and in its train come ecstasies  
old memories of pleasure  
ancient histories of pain.  
Yet if we are bold,  
love strikes away the chains of fear  
from our souls.*

*We are weaned from our timidity  
In the flush of love's light  
we dare be brave  
And suddenly we see  
that love costs all we are  
and will ever be.  
Yet it is only love  
which sets us free.*

"Many and More" by Maya Angelou

There are many and more  
who would kiss my hand,  
taste my lips,  
to my loneliness lend  
Their bodies' warmth.

I have want of a friend.

There are few, some few,  
who would give their names  
and fortunes rich  
or send first sons  
to my ailing bed.

I have need of a friend.

There is one and only one  
who will give the air  
from his failing lungs  
for my body's mend.

And that one is my love.

"Love Songs" by Sara Teasdale

I have remembered beauty in the night,  
Against black silences I waked to see  
A shower of sunlight over Italy  
And green Ravello dreaming on her height;  
I have remembered music in the dark,  
The clean swift brightness of a fugue of Bach's,  
And running water singing on the rocks  
When once in English woods I heard a lark.

But all remembered beauty is no more  
Than a vague prelude to the thought of you -  
You are the rarest soul I ever knew,  
Lover of beauty, knightliest and best;  
My thoughts seek you as waves that seek the shore,  
And when I think of you, I am at rest.

"The Magic of Love" by Helen Steiner Rice

Love is like magic, and it always will be,  
For love still remains life's sweet mystery.  
Love works in ways that are wondrous and strange,

*And there's nothing in life that love cannot change!  
Love can transform the most commonplace  
Into beauty and splendor and sweetness and grace.  
Love is unselfish, understanding and kind,  
For it sees with its heart, and not with its mind.  
Love is the answer that everyone seeks;  
Love is the language that every heart speaks.  
Love can't be bought, it is priceless and free.  
Love, like pure magic, is life's sweet mystery!!*

William Jay Smith

*Now touch the air softly, step gently, one, two ...  
I'll love you 'til roses are robin's egg blue;  
I'll love you 'til gravel is eaten for bread,  
And lemons are orange, and lavender's red.*

*Now touch the air softly, swing gently the broom.  
I'll love you 'til windows are all of a room;  
And the table is laid, And the table is bare,  
And the ceiling reposes on bottomless air.*

*I'll love you 'til heaven rips the stars from his coat,  
And the moon rows away in a glass-bottomed boat;  
And Orion steps down like a river below,  
And earth is ablaze, and oceans aglow.*

*So touch the air softly, and swing the broom high.  
We will dust the grey mountains, and sweep the blue sky:  
And I'll love you as long as the furrow the plough,  
As however is ever, and ever is now.*

Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850-1919)

*Love much. Earth has enough of bitter in it.  
Cast sweets into its cup whene'er you can.  
No heart so hard, but love at last may win it.  
Love is the great primæval cause of man.  
All hate is foreign to the first great plan.*

*Love much. Your heart will be led out to slaughter,  
On altars built of envy and deciet.  
Love on, love on! 'tis bread upon the water;  
It shall be cast in loaves yet at your feet,  
Unleavened manna, most divinely sweet.*

*Love much. Your faith will be dethroned and shaken,  
Your trust betrayed by many a fair, false lure.*

*Remount your faith, and let new trusts awaken.  
Though clouds obscure them, yet the stars are pure;  
Love is a vital force and must endure.*

*Love much. Men's souls contract with cold suspicion;  
Shine on them with warm love, and they expand.  
'Tis love, not creeds, that from a low condition  
Leads mankind up to heights supreme and grand.  
Oh that the world could see and understand!*

*Love much. There is no waste in freely giving;  
More blessed is it, even, than to receive.  
He who loves much alone finds life worth living:  
Love on, through doubt and darkness; and believe  
There is no thing which Love may not achieve.*

*"I Like You" by Sandol Stoddard Warburg*

*I like you and I know why  
I like you because you are a good person to like  
I like you because when I tell you something special, you know it's special  
And you remember it a long, long time  
You say, Remember when you told me something special  
And both of us remember*

*When I think something is important you think it's important too  
We have good ideas  
When I say something funny, you laugh  
I think I'm funny and you think I'm funny too  
Hah-hah!*

*I like you because you know where I'm ticklish  
And you don't tickle me there except just a little tiny bit sometimes  
But if you do, then I know where to tickle you too  
You know how to be silly – that's why I like you  
If I am getting ready to pop a paper bag,  
then you are getting ready to jump  
HOORAY!*

*I like you because when I am feeling sad  
You don't always cheer me up right away  
Sometimes it is better to be sad  
You can't stand the others being so googly and gaggly every single minute  
You want to think about things  
It takes time*

*I like you because if I am mad at you  
Then you are mad at me too  
It's awful when the other person isn't  
They are so nice and oooh you could just about punch them on the nose*

*I can't remember when I didn't like you  
It must have been lonesome then  
Even if it was the 999th of July  
Even if it was August  
Even if it was way down at the bottom of November  
I would go on choosing you  
And you would go on choosing me  
Over and over again  
And that's how it would happen every time.*

*Author Unknown*

*They both thought that a sudden feeling had united them  
This certainty is beautiful,  
even more beautiful than uncertainty.  
They thought they didn't know each other,  
nothing had ever happened between them,  
These streets, these stairs, this corridor,  
Where they could have met so long ago?  
I would like to ask them, if they can remember –  
perhaps in a revolving door, face to face one day?  
A "sorry" in the crowd? "Wrong number" on the 'phone?  
-but I know the answer.  
No, they don't remember.  
How surprised they would be  
For such a long time already  
Fate has been playing with them.  
Not quite yet ready to change into destiny,  
which brings them nearer and yet further,  
cutting their path  
and stifling a laugh,  
escaping ever further;  
There were sings, indications, undecipherable,  
what does it matter.  
Three years ago, perhaps, or even last Tuesday,  
this leaf flying from one shoulder to another?  
Something lost and gathered.  
Who knows, perhaps a ball already in the bushes,  
in childhood?  
There were handles, door bells, where, on the trace of a hand,*

another hand was placed;  
suitcases next to one another in the left luggage.  
And maybe one night the same dream  
forgotten on waking;  
But every beginning is only a continuation  
and the book of fate is  
always open in the middle.

Shel Silverstein –

“My Rules” from *Where the Sidewalk Ends*

If you want to marry me, here’s what you’ll have to do:  
You must learn how to make  
a perfect chicken-dumpling stew.  
And you must sew my holey socks,  
And soothe my troubled mind,  
And develop a knack for scratching my back,  
And keep my shoes spotlessly shined.  
And while I rest you must rake up the leaves,  
And when it is hailing and snowing  
You must shovel the walk... and be still when I talk,  
And—hey—where are you going?

“Litany” by Billy Collins

You are the bread and the knife,  
the crystal goblet and the wine.  
You are the dew on the morning grass  
and the burning wheel of the sun.  
You are the white apron of the baker  
and the marsh birds suddenly in flight.

However, you are not the wind in the orchard,  
the plums on the counter,  
or the house of cards.  
And you are certainly not the pine-scented air.  
There is just no way you are the pine-scented air.

It is possible that you are the fish under the bridge,  
maybe even the pigeon on the general's head,  
but you are not even close  
to being the field of cornflowers at dusk.

And a quick look in the mirror will show  
that you are neither the boots in the corner  
nor the boat asleep in its boathouse.

It might interest you to know,

*speaking of the plentiful imagery of the world,  
that I am the sound of rain on the roof.*

*I also happen to be the shooting star,  
the evening paper blowing down an alley,  
and the basket of chestnuts on the kitchen table.*

*I am also the moon in the trees  
and the blind woman's tea cup.  
But don't worry, I am not the bread and the knife.  
You are still the bread and the knife.  
You will always be the bread and the knife,  
not to mention the crystal goblet  
and—somehow—the wine.*

*“On the Lemur” by Lisa Jarnot*

*That they loved to go on unmistaken, that they loved  
to not to be gratuitous or cry, that they loved the  
fortitude of yaks, that suddenly they loved the whiskey  
and the sunlight and the key, that they loved the corn  
cow and the cow corn that it ate, that they loved the cat  
food as it rolled across the floor, that they liked and  
loved the coffee that was warm inside the day, that  
they loved the sound of hail and what it broke, that  
they knew they loved the river that was made where  
people dream, that they loved the loins of lions and of  
lambs, that they loved confusion and the tools,  
that they loved the whistle of the evening train, that they  
loved the drugs they dreamt they loved and took inside of  
dreams, that they loved their pictures taken and the  
sides of barns, that they loved all outer space.*

*“Give all to Love” by Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*Give all to love;  
Obey they heart;  
Friends, kindred, days  
Estate, good-fame,  
Plans, credit and the Muse,  
Nothing refuse.*

*‘Tis a brave master;  
Let it have scope:  
Follow it utterly,  
Hope beyond hope:  
High and more high  
It dives into noon,*

*With wing unspent,  
Untold intent;  
But it is a god,  
Know its own path  
And the outlets of the sky.....*

*From The Good Life: Truths That Last in Times of Need by Peter Gome*

*Duty without love breeds weariness;  
duty with love breeds constancy.  
Responsibility without love breeds unconcern;  
responsibility with love breeds concern.  
Righteousness without love breeds hardness;  
righteousness with love breeds reliability.  
Education without love breeds contrariness;  
education with love breeds patience.  
Wisdom without love breeds rifts;  
wisdom with love breeds understanding.  
Friendliness without love breeds hypocrisy;  
friendliness with love breeds grace.  
Order without love breeds pettiness;  
order with love breeds generosity.  
Knowledge without love breeds dogmatism;  
knowledge with love breeds trustworthiness.  
Power without love breeds violence;  
power with love breeds readiness to help.  
Honour without love breeds arrogance;  
honour with love breeds modesty.  
Possessions without love breed avarice;  
possessions with love breed generosity.  
Faith without love breeds fanaticism;  
faith with love breeds peacemaking."*

*The Owl and the Pussycat by Edward Lear*

*The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea  
In a beautiful pea green boat,  
They took some honey, and plenty of money,  
Wrapped up in a five pound note.  
The Owl looked up to the stars above,  
And sang to a small guitar,  
'O lovely Pussy! O Pussy my love,  
What a beautiful Pussy you are,  
You are,  
You are!  
What a beautiful Pussy you are!*

*Pussy said to the Owl, 'You elegant fowl!*

*How charmingly sweet you sing!  
O let us be married! too long we have tarried:  
But what shall we do for a ring?  
They sailed away, for a year and a day,  
To the land where the Bong-tree grows  
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood  
With a ring at the end of his nose,  
His nose,  
His nose,  
With a ring at the end of his nose.*

*'Dear pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling  
Your ring?' Said the Piggy, 'I will.'  
So they took it away, and were married next day  
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.  
They dined on mince, and slices of quince,  
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;  
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,  
They danced by the light of the moon,  
The moon,  
The moon,  
They danced by the light of the moon.*

*Reading adapted from T.S. Eliot's "To My Wife" (1959)*  
*Be to whom each owes the leaping delight  
That quickens the senses in your waking time  
And the rhythm that governs the repose of sleeping time,  
The breathing in unison*

*Of lives whose bodies smell of each other  
Who think the same thoughts without need of speech  
And babble the same speech without the need of meaning*

*No peevish winter wind shall chill  
No sullen tropic sun shall wither  
The roses in the rose-garden which is yours and yours only...*

*"Glaucoma" by Rives*

*When you and I  
are old and grey...*

*I'll have a belly,  
a hound dog named Shakespeare  
and a pickup truck.*

*You will have  
a pretty cotton dress*

and glaucoma,  
which will steal your sight.  
And you'll stand on our porch in the morning  
with your face to the sky,  
and I'll come outside  
with the birdseed or something, going:  
"Whoa, whoa, baby—don't stare  
right into the sun like that!"

And you'll say:  
"Oh, you old poop!  
I may be blind, but I'm not a dope...  
I'm a heliotrope.  
That's a fancy word for sunflower,  
if you don't remember!"

And I'll go:  
"Awwwww—I know heliotrope, hell...  
I invented it!"

And then I'll whisper: "Hey.  
The yonder is just as wild and blue  
as people say it is today.  
And you can't see, but...  
I haven't done yard work for weeks.  
The crabgrass is practically piggyback  
on the buttercups, Buttercup,  
but I love you. I love you.  
And I'm gonna keep you mine  
like a crow loved to hold  
an old telephone line, remember those?"

And you'll say:  
"What, crows?"

And I'll go:  
"Nahhh—telephone lines.  
Remember? Back in the days  
when the bedding was yours  
but the bed was mine.  
You remember that, Sunshine?"

And then I'll shuffle back indoors,  
bent but still feisty,  
and I'll do what I always do.

I'll lie on the floor  
with a scrap, and a pen,  
I'll write a poem,  
describe the rest of the day for you

you blind, old...

"The Promise" by Eileen Rafter

The sun danced on the snow with a sparkling smile,  
As two lovers sat quietly, alone for a while.  
Then he turned and said, with a casual air  
(Though he blushed from his chin to the tips of his hair),  
"I think I might like to get married to you"

"Well then, she said, "Well there's a thought,  
But what if we can't promise to be all that we ought,  
If I'm late yet again, when we plan to go out.  
For I know I can't promise, I'll learn to ignore  
Dirty socks and damp towels strewn all over the floor.

So if we can't vow to be all that we should  
I'm not sure what to do, though the idea's quite good".  
But he gently smiled and tilted his head  
Till his lips met her ear and softly he said

"I promise, to weave my dreams into your own,  
That wherever you breathe will be my hearts home.  
I promise, that whether with rags or with gold I am blessed  
Your smile is the jewel I will treasure the best.

Do you think then, my love, we should marry - do you?"  
"Yes" she said smiling "I do".

"True Love" by ?

True love is a sacred flame  
That burns eternally,  
And none can dim its special glow  
Or change its destiny.  
True love speaks in tender tones  
And hears with gentle ear,  
True love gives with open heart  
And true love conquers fear.  
True love makes no harsh demands  
It neither rules nor binds,  
And true love holds with gentle hands  
The hearts that it entwines.

Shakespeare's Sonnet 116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
admit impediments. Love is not love  
which alters when it alteration finds,

*or bends with the remover to remove:  
Oh, no! It is an ever-fixed mark.  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
it is the star to every wandering bark,  
whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
within his bending sickle's compass come;  
love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
but bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
If this be error and upon me proved,  
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.*

Sonnet 18

*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;  
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.*

Sonnet 76

*Why is my verse so barren of new pride?  
So far from variation or quick change?  
Why with the time do I not glance aside  
To new-found methods and compounds strange?  
Why write I still all one, ever the same,  
And keep invention in a noted weed,  
That every word doth almost tell my name,  
Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?  
O, know, sweet love, I always write of you,  
And you and love are still my argument;  
So all my best is dressing old words new,  
Spending again what is already spent:  
For as the sun is daily new and old,  
So is my love still telling what is told.*

From "Hamlet"

*Doubt thou the stars are fire;*

*Doubt that the sun doth move;  
Doubt truth to be a liar;  
But never doubt I love.*

Caroline Gilman

*To repress a harsh answer,  
to confess a fault,  
and to stop (right or wrong)  
in the midst of self-defense,  
in gentle submission,  
sometime requires  
a struggle like life and death  
but these three efforts  
are the golden threads with which  
domestic happiness is woven.*

"To Chloe" by William Cartwright (1611-1643)

*Here are two births; the one when light  
First strikes the new awaken'd sense;  
The other when two souls unite,  
And we must count our life from thence:  
When you loved me and I loved you  
Then both of us were born anew.*

*Love then to us new souls did give  
And in those souls did plant new powers;  
Since when another life we live,  
The breath we breathe is his, not ours:  
Love makes those young whom age doth chill*

"A Red, Red Rose" by Robert Burns (1759-1796)

*O my Luve's like a red, red rose  
That's newly sprung in June;  
O my Luve's like the melodie  
That's sweetly played in tune.*

*As fair art, my bonnie lass,  
So deep in luve am I;  
And I will luve still, my dear,  
Till a' the seas gang dry:*

*Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;  
I will luve still, my dear,  
While the sands o' time shall run.*

"A Birthday" by Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

My heart is like a singing bird  
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;  
My heart is like an apple tree  
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;  
My heart is like a rainbow shell  
That paddles in a halcyon sea;  
My heart is gladder than all these  
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;  
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;  
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,  
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;  
Work it in gold and silver grapes,  
In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;  
Because the birthday of my life  
Is come, my love is come to me.

Corliss Lamont Poems

Selection A

*I believe in the creative and redeeming power of love....*

*I believe in the uplifting of the spirit through the  
radiant wonder of loving and being loved.*

*I believe in the comradeship of shared ideals, in the  
gaiety of shared laughter, in the enjoyment together of  
Nature's beauty and man's unending genius.*

*I believe in the graceful rhythms of the dance,  
the swaying*

*of bodies in perfect harmony, the magic of agile feet,  
and the dreamy drifting to slow music.*

*I believe in the companionship o  
f outdoor life—in hiking,  
skiing, swimming, and enjoying sports together in the  
exhilaration of the open air.*

*I believe in the open fire's invitation to romance,  
with red flames dancing and logs crackling  
and two voices murmuring low.*

*I believe in the eyes of desire looking into the eyes of  
longing till the depths of one's being are stirred.*

*I believe in the dear delight of tender words—of dearest,  
darling, beloved, sweetheart, angel, my love.*

*I believe in the witchery of summer nights and the thrill  
of holding each other close beneath the shining moon  
and stars in all their splendor.*

*And I believe in the frank and full-hearted celebration of  
sex love and of the exquisite sensitivity  
between two bodies and minds.*

*I believe in love as an unceasing fountain of tenderness,  
overflowing from inner springs of joy and growing more  
abundant with the giving.*

*I believe in the tranquil pleasure of hands holding hands  
in every secret way—of fingers interlocked with  
fingers and gently moving.*

*I believe in love as an antidote to loneliness and as the  
way to happiness through the sharing of experience with  
my beloved.*

*I believe in the rapture of unrestrained kisses and the  
wanderlust of searching hands—lingering, encircling,  
straying—over the delicate smooth skin.*

*I believe in the beauty of the ultimate embrace,  
the crescendo  
and ecstasy of fulfillment, the marvelous serenity after  
all passion spent.*

*I believe in the languorous ease of lying side by side on  
the soft and fragrant grass, or on the sandy beach with  
the soothing sound of waves breaking.*

*I believe in the happy art of writing love-letters, in the  
indiscretion of the pen and the leaping wildness of  
uninhibited thought.*

*I believe in ardent greetings after long absence,  
in devouring  
kisses and tears in the eye and the tight clasp  
of body to body.*

*I believe in love as the creator of spiritual strength and  
as the joyous way in which we reproduce.*

*And I believe in love as a supreme glory,  
with the exultant  
heart soaring free and the flow of passion between lovers  
now and evermore.*

Selection B

*You are an inlet of the roaming sea  
That winds among the many-colored rocks  
And past the pleasant meadows green or tawny,  
Your ever-cooling and alluring waters  
Refreshing everything that feels or sees  
The soft and shimmering texture of your being.  
Now, with tide at ebb, your ledges lie  
Bare and defenseless in the high sun's heat,  
The fish marooned in lovely shallow pools,*

*And rivulets reduced to their last trickle.  
Again you yearn for pulsing sea's return  
And for the rhythms of the turning tide.  
I am that ever-surgings sea and tide,  
Caressing you, possessing you, once more  
In the wonderful ways of water flowing;  
Into your every recess now I come,  
The flooding sea, and swirl deliciously  
Through narrow channels, rushing and rejoicing,  
To rest at last in full tide's moving quiet,  
The cycle done and consummation wrought.  
You are a bay, by rolling hills encircled,  
Your tempting shores a tangle of verdant growth,  
Your waves and whitecaps glistening in the sun.  
I am the passionate, upsurging ocean  
That daily freshens, replenishes, and sustains  
Your beauteous being with far-ranging waters  
From all the continents and seven seas.  
Into and through you I in rapture flow,  
Past your protecting islets, infiltrating  
Through dark and sunless subterranean channels  
Where wavy sea-weeds soft caress the currents.  
O shining bay, you are my lovely bride;  
And in our intimate intermingling  
We fully, constantly possess each other,  
By day, by night, in storm, in soothing calm,  
Beneath the sun, beneath the starry sky,  
And merge as one in Nature's harmony.*

Selection C

*So often on this isle we love so well  
I've heard the rippling music of your laugh,  
Caught from your eyes the swift deep flash of wit;  
Then parried thrusts from your gay, nimble mind,  
And parted from you most unwillingly.  
I would go home—O why did I go home?—  
And think and think until my thoughts of you  
Dissolved into the dreams of gracious sleep;  
And always I heard the ripple of your laugh  
Which has not sounded here for many a day.  
I can see you now, see your blue eyes  
And hold you closely (in the dance of course!),  
But still I can hear you best—can hear  
The echoing ripple of your happy laugh  
And the laughing ripple of your voice.*

Selection D

No joy, no beauty, no adventure  
For me can be complete and rounded  
Till I've recounted it to you;  
Till I have seen your eyes light up,  
Your smile reach to the story's essence;  
Until I've heard your searching comment  
Or sensed from the look upon your face  
Appreciation or genial scorn.  
Only then can anything  
For me be finished or assessed.  
As with events from day to day,  
So with my life from year to year;  
Without you it is incomplete,  
A heart-ache and a dismal waste.  
Do you see, now, what love can mean?

Selection E

I have something very precious, friend,  
Something whose worth can never fluctuate,  
Something that ever will stand me in good stead  
In all the many crises of my life,  
And even in my daily humdrum ways;  
Something that strengthens, that makes light the task,  
Releases all my hidden energies,  
And fills my mind with boundless thoughts of beauty;  
Something inspiring me to better work,  
Since you, perchance, will judge the worth of it  
And say perhaps, "Yes, this is rather good."  
So you can see the value of my treasure;  
I mean, my dear, the love you give to me.

"La Vita Nuova" by Dante Alighieri (1265 - 1321)

In that book which is  
My memory . . .  
On the first page  
That is the chapter when  
I first met you  
Appear the words . . .  
Here begins a new life

"Beautiful Dreamer" by Stephen Foster (19<sup>th</sup> C. song)

Beautiful dreamer, wake unto me,  
Starlight and dewdrops are waiting for thee;  
Sounds of the rude world, heard in the day,  
Lull'd by the moonlight have all pass'd away!

*Beautiful dreamer, queen of my song,  
List while I woo thee with soft melody;  
Gone are the cares of life's busy throng,  
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!  
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!  
Beautiful dreamer, out on the sea  
Mermaids are chanting the wild lorelie;  
Over the streamlet vapors are borne,  
Waiting to fade at the bright coming morn.  
Beautiful dreamer, beam on my heart,  
E'en as the morn on the streamlet and sea;  
Then will all clouds of sorrow depart,  
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!  
Beautiful dreamer, awake unto me!*

"Marriage Morning" by Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

*Light, so low upon earth,  
You send a flash to the sun.  
Here is the golden close of love,  
All my wooing is done.  
Oh, the woods and the meadows,  
Woods where we hid from the wet,  
Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,  
Meadows in which we met!*

*Light, so low in the vale  
You flash and lighten afar,  
For this is the golden morning of love,  
And you are his morning star.  
Flash, I am coming, I come,  
By meadow and stile and wood,  
Oh, lighten into my eyes and heart,  
Into my heart and my blood!*

*Heart, are you great enough  
For a love that never tires?  
O heart, are you great enough for love?  
I have heard of thorns and briers.  
Over the thorns and briers,  
Over the meadows and stiles,  
Over the world to the end of it  
Flash for a million miles.*

Inuit Love Song/Wedding Vow

*You are my husband/wife  
My feet shall run because of you*

*My feet shall dance because of you  
My heart shall beat because of you  
My eyes see because of you  
My mind thinks because of you  
And I shall love because of you.*

Edmund Spenser

*My love is like to ice, and I to fire:  
How come it then that this her cold is so great  
Is not dissolved through my so hot desire,  
But harder grows the more I her entreat?  
Or how comes it that my exceeding heat  
Is not allayed by her heart-frozen cold,  
But that I burn much more in boiling sweat,  
And feel my flames augmented manifold?  
What more miraculous thing may be told,  
That fire, which is congealed with senseless cold,  
Should kindle fire by wonderful device?  
Such is the power of love in gentle mind,  
That it can alter all the course of kind.*

Li Young Lee

*From blossoms comes  
this brown paper bag of peaches  
we bought from the joy  
at the bend in the road where we turned toward  
signs painted Peaches.  
From laden boughs, from hands,  
from sweet fellowship in the bins,  
comes nectar at the roadside, succulent  
peaches we devour, dusty skin and all,  
comes the familiar dust of summer, dust we eat.  
O, to take what we love inside,  
to carry within us an orchard, to eat  
not only the skin, but the shade,  
not only the sugar, but the days, to hold  
the fruit in our hands, adore it, then bite into  
the round jubilation of peach.  
There are days we live  
as if death were nowhere  
in the background; from joy  
to joy to joy, from wing to wing,  
from blossom to blossom  
to impossible blossom, to sweet impossible blossom.*

Alexander Pushkin

*The wondrous moment of our meeting . . .*

*I well remember you appear  
Before me like a vision fleeting,  
A beauty's angel pure and clear.  
In hopeless ennui surrounding  
The worldly bustle, to my ear  
For long your tender voice kept sounding,  
For long in dreams came features dear.  
Time passed.*

*Unruly storms confounded  
Old dreams, and I from year to year  
Forgot how tender you had sounded,  
Your heavenly features once so dear.  
My backwoods days dragged slow and quiet-  
Dull fence around, dark vault above-  
Devoid of God and uninspired,  
Devoid of tears, of fire, of love.  
Sleep from my soul began retreating,  
And here you once again appear  
Before me like a vision fleeting,  
A beauty's angel pure and clear.  
In ecstasy the heart is beating,  
Old joys for it anew revive;  
Inspired and God-filled, it is greeting  
The fire, and tears, and love alive.*

*Elizabeth Akers Allen*

*At last, when all the summer shine  
That warmed life's early hours is past,  
Your loving fingers seek for mine  
And hold them close at last at last!  
Not oft the robin comes to build  
Its nest upon the leafless bough  
By autumn robbed, by winter chilled,  
But you, dear heart, you love me now.  
Though there are shadows on my brow  
And furrows on my cheek, in truth,  
The marks where Time's remorseless plough  
Broke up the blooming sward of Youth,  
Though fled is every girlish grace  
Might win or hold a lover's vow,  
Despite my sad and faded face,  
And darkened heart, you love me now!  
I count no more my wasted tears;  
They left no echo of their fall;  
I mourn no more my lonesome years;*

*This blessed hour atones for all.  
I fear not all that Time or Fate  
May bring to burden heart or brow,  
Strong in the love that came so late,  
Our souls shall keep it always now!*

Christopher Brennan

*If questioning would make us wise  
No eyes would ever gaze in eyes;  
If all our tale were told in speech  
No mouths would wander each to each.  
Were spirits free from mortal mesh  
And love not bound in hearts of flesh  
No aching breasts would yearn to meet  
And find their ecstasy complete.  
For who is there that lives and knows  
The secret powers by which he grows?  
Were knowledge all, what were our need  
To thrill and faint and sweetly bleed?  
Then seek not, sweet, the "If" and "Why"  
I love you now until I die.  
For I must love because I live  
And life in me is what you give.*

"Love Song" by Williams Carlos Williams

*SWEEP the house clean,  
hang fresh curtains  
in the windows  
put on a new dress  
and come with me!  
The elm is scattering  
its little loaves  
of sweet smells  
from a white sky!  
Who shall hear of us  
in the time to come?  
Let him say there was  
a burst of fragrance  
from black branches.*

Aztec Wedding Poem

*I know not whether thou has been absent:  
I lie down with thee, I rise up with thee,  
In my dreams thou art with me.  
If my eardrops tremble in my ears,  
I know it is thou moving within my heart.*

Kuan Ta-sheng (13th c)

*You and I*

*Have so much love,  
that is burns like a fire,  
In which we bake a lump of clay  
Molded into a figure of you  
And a figure of me.  
then we take both of them.  
and break them into pieces,  
And mix the pieces with water.  
and mold again a figure of you  
And a figure of me.  
I am in your clay.  
You are in my clay.  
In life we share a single quilt,  
In death we will share one coffin.*

Hindu Marriage Poems

*Let the earth of my body be mixed  
with the earth my beloved walks on.  
Let the fire of my body be the brightness  
in the mirror that reflects the face.  
Let the water of my body join the waters  
of the lotus pool s/he baths in.  
Let the breath of my body be air  
lapping his/her tired limbs.  
Let me be sky, and moving through me, my beloved.*

*You have become mine forever.  
Yes, we have become partners.  
I have become yours.  
Hereafter, I cannot live without you.  
Do not live without me.  
Let us share the joys.  
We are word and meaning, unite.  
You are thought and I am sound.*

*May the nights be honey-sweet for us.  
May the mornings be honey-sweet for us.  
May the plants be honey-sweet for us.  
May the earth be honey-sweet for us.*

Anonymous., China, 1st Century B

*I want to be your friend  
Forever and ever without break or decay.*

When the hills are all flat  
And the rivers are all dry,  
When it lightens and thunders in winter,  
When it rains and snows in summer,  
When Heaven and Earth mingle  
Not til then will I part from you.

from the Jesus Sutras (Christian monks living in China)

Love leads to truth; perfect love to perfect truth.  
Truth is like the moon reflected in the water;  
when the water is stirred up and muddy,  
the image is blurred and indistinct,  
so it is with us when our spirit is clouded.  
Let our love be a pure compassion,  
one for another, and without seeking our own glory,  
be true to our own hearts.  
So our spirits will guide us  
to what is right and true and just.  
So love leads us along the way of peace and joy to Truth.

"Oh the comfort..." by George Eliot

Oh the comfort, the inexpressible comfort,  
Of feeling safe with a person  
Having neither to weight thoughts  
Nor measure words,  
but pour them all out just as they are,  
Chaff and grain together,  
And a faithful hand will take and sift  
Them, keep what is worth keeping,  
And with a breath of kindness blow the rest away.

"What greater thing..." by George Eliot

What greater thing is there for  
two human souls than to feel that  
they are joined . . . to strengthen  
each other . . . to be at one with  
each other in silent unspeakable memories.

"Delphiniums in a Window Box" by Dean Young

Every sunrise, even strangers' eyes.  
Not necessarily swans, even crows,  
even the evening fusillade of bats.  
That place where the creek goes underground,  
how many weeks before I see you again?  
Stacks of books, every page, characters'  
rages and poets' strange contraptions

of syntax and song, every song  
even when there isn't one.  
Every thistle, splinter, butterfly  
over the drainage ditches. Every stray.  
Did you see the meteor shower?  
Did it feel like something swallowed?  
Every question, conversation  
even with almost nothing, cricket, cloud,  
because of you I'm talking to crickets, clouds,  
confiding in a cat. Everyone says,  
Come to your senses, and I do, of you.  
Every touch electric, every taste you,  
every smell, even burning sugar, every  
cry and laugh. Toothpicked samples  
at the farmers' market, every melon,  
plum, I come undone, undone.

"Love Me" by Walter Rinder

Love me because I try to touch life  
within the framework of uncertainty.  
Love in me the shadows of my indecision  
as I strive to gain knowledge.  
Love in me the silence of my hurts  
and the noise of my confusions.  
Love me for the feeling of my heart  
not the fears of my mind.  
Love me in my search for the truth  
though I may stumble upon fallacy.  
Love me as I pursue my dreams  
sometimes hampered by illusions.  
Love me as I grow to know myself  
even during times of stagnation.  
Love me because I seek harmony not discord.  
Love me for my body that I wish to share with affection,  
wrapping you in warmth.  
Love me because we are different, as we are the same.  
Love me that our time together will be spent in growing,  
kindling the world with understanding.  
Love me not with expectations but with hope.  
I will love you the same.

Ancient Egyptian

This love is as good  
as oil and honey to the throat,  
as linen to the body.  
It is like a ripe pear

in the hand,  
it is like the seeds  
the baker adds to bread.  
You will be together  
even when old age comes.  
And the days in between  
will be food set before you,  
honey, bread and wine.

"Falling in Love is Like Owning a Dog" by Taylor Mali

First of all, it's a big responsibility,  
especially in a city like New York.  
So think long and hard before deciding on love.  
On the other hand, love gives you a sense of security:  
when you're walking down the street late at night  
and you have a leash on love  
ain't no one going to mess with you.  
Because crooks and muggers think love is unpredictable.  
Who knows what love could do in its own defense?  
On cold winter nights, love is warm.  
It lies between you and lives and breathes  
and makes funny noises.  
Love wakes you up all hours of the night with its needs.  
It needs to be fed so it will grow and stay healthy.  
Love doesn't like being left alone for long.  
But come home and love is always happy to see you.  
It may break a few things accidentally  
in its passion for life,  
but you can never be mad at love for long.  
Is love good all the time? No! No!  
Love can be bad. Bad, love, bad! Very bad love.  
Love makes messes.  
Love leaves you little surprises here and there.  
Love needs lots of cleaning up after.  
Sometimes you just want to get love fixed.  
Sometimes you want to roll up a piece of newspaper  
and swat love on the nose,  
not so much to cause pain,  
just to let love know Don't you ever do that again!  
Sometimes love just wants to go for a nice long walk.  
Because love loves exercise.  
It runs you around the block and leaves you panting.  
It pulls you in several different directions at once,  
or winds around and around you  
until you're all wound up and can't move.

Sonnet 48, Neruda

Two lucky lovers bake a single loaf,  
a single drop of the moon in the grass.  
They lead two shadows walking as one,  
leave in bed a single empty sun.

Of all the truths, they chose the day.  
They were not bound by threads, but by an aroma.  
They tore to pieces neither words nor peace.  
Good fortune is a transparent tower.

Air and wine go well with these two.  
Night regales them with happy petals.  
They have a right to each carnation.

Two lucky lovers who have no end, no death,  
they are often born and often die as they live.  
They have nature's eternity.

"A Marriage" by Michael Blumenthal

You are holding up a ceiling  
with both arms. It is very heavy,  
but you must hold it up, or else  
it will fall down on you. Your arms  
are tired, terribly tired,  
and, as the day goes on, it feels  
as if either your arms or the ceiling  
will soon collapse.

But then,  
unexpectedly,  
something wonderful happens:  
Someone,  
a man or a woman,  
walks into the room  
and holds their arms up  
to the ceiling beside you.

So you finally get  
to take down your arms.  
You feel the relief of respite,  
the blood flowing back  
to your fingers and arms.  
And when your partner's arms tire,  
you hold up your own  
to relieve him again.

*And it can go on like this  
for many years  
without the house falling.*

*Allen Ginsberg*

*I've always liked this:  
The weight of the world  
is love.*

*Under the burden  
of solitude,  
under the burden  
of dissatisfaction  
the weight,  
the weight we carry  
is love.*

*Who can deny?*

*In dreams*

*it touches*

*the body,*

*in thought*

*constructs*

*a miracle,*

*in imagination*

*anguishes*

*till born*

*in human--*

*looks out of the heart*

*burning with purity--*

*for the burden of life*

*is love,*

*but we carry the weight*

*wearily,*

*and so must rest*

*in the arms of love*

*at last,*

*must rest in the arms*

*of love.*

*No rest*

*without love,*

*no sleep*

*without dreams*

*of love--*

*be mad or chill*

*obsessed with angels*

*or machines,*

*the final wish  
is love  
--cannot be bitter,  
cannot deny,  
cannot withhold  
if denied:  
the weight is too heavy  
--must give  
for no return  
as thought  
is given  
in solitude  
in all the excellence  
of its excess.  
The warm bodies  
shine together  
in the darkness,  
the hand moves  
to the center  
of the flesh,  
the skin trembles  
in happiness  
and the soul comes  
joyful to the eye--  
yes, yes,  
that's what  
I wanted,  
I always wanted,  
I always wanted,  
to return  
to the body  
where I was born.*

"Us Two" by A.A. Milne

*Wherever I am, there's always Pooh,  
There's always Pooh and Me.  
Whatever I do, he wants to do,  
"Where are you going today?" says Pooh:  
"Well, that's very odd 'cos I was too.  
Let's go together," says Pooh, says he.  
"Let's go together," says Pooh.*

*"Let's look for dragons," I said to Pooh.  
"Yes, let's," said Pooh to Me.  
We crossed the river and found a few-  
"Yes, those are dragons all right," said Pooh.*

"As soon as I saw their beaks I knew.  
That's what they are," said Pooh, said he.  
"That's what they are," said Pooh.

"Let's frighten the dragons," I said to Pooh.  
"That's right," said Pooh to Me.  
"I'm not afraid," I said to Pooh,  
And I held his paw and I shouted "Shoo!  
Silly old dragons!"- and off they flew.  
"I wasn't afraid," said Pooh, said he,  
"I'm never afraid with you."

So wherever I am, there's always Pooh,  
There's always Pooh and Me.  
"What would I do?" I said to Pooh,  
"If it wasn't for you," and Pooh said: "True,  
It isn't much fun for One, but Two,  
Can stick together; says Pooh, says he.  
"That's how it is," says Pooh.

e. e. cummings

i am so glad and very  
merely my fourth will cure  
the laziest self of weary  
the hugest sea of shore  
so far your nearness reaches  
a lucky fifth of you  
turns people into eachs  
and cowards into grow  
our can'ts were born to happen  
our mosts have died in more  
our twentieth will open  
wide a wide open door  
we are so both and oneful  
night cannot be so sky  
sky cannot be so sunful  
i am through you so I

Stanza IV, "To Althea, From Prison"

by Richard Lovelace

Stone Walls do not a Prison make,  
Nor Iron bars a Cage ;  
Mindes innocent and quiet take

*That for an Hermitage ;  
If I have freedom in my Love,  
And in my soule am free ;  
Angels alone that sore above,  
Injoy such Liberty.*

Rumi

*The minute I heard my first love story  
I started looking for you,  
not knowing how blind that was...  
Lovers don't finally meet somewhere.  
They're in each other all along.*

"Tree Marriage" by William Meredith

*In Chota Nagpur and Bengal  
the betrothed are tied with threads to  
mango trees, they marry the trees  
as well as one another, and  
the two trees marry each other.  
Could we do that some time with oaks  
or beeches? This gossamer we  
hold each other with, this web  
of love and habit is not enough.  
In mistrust of heavier ties,  
I would like tree-siblings for us,  
standing together somewhere, two  
trees married with us, lightly, their  
fingers barely touching in sleep,  
our threads invisible but holding.*

"The Ivory Crown" by William Carlos Williams

*The whole process is a lie,  
unless,  
crowned by excess,  
It break forcefully,  
one way or another,  
from its confinement—  
or find a deeper well.  
Antony and Cleopatra  
were right;  
they have shown*

*the way. I love you  
or I do not live  
at all.*

*Daffodil time  
is past. This is  
summer, summer!  
the heart says,  
and not even the full of it.*

*No doubts  
are permitted—  
though they will come  
and may  
before our time  
overwhelm us.*

*We are only mortal  
but being mortal  
can defy our fate.*

*We may  
by an outside chance  
even win! We do not  
look to see  
jonquils and violets  
come again  
but there are,  
still,  
the roses!*

*Romance has no part in it.*

*The business of love is  
cruelty which,  
by our wills,  
we transform  
to live together.*

*It has its seasons,  
for and against,  
whatever the heart  
fumbles in the dark  
to assert*

*toward the end of May.*

*Just as the nature of briars  
is to tear flesh,  
I have proceeded  
through them.*

*Keep  
the briars out,  
they say.*

*You cannot live  
and keep free of  
briars.*

*Children pick flowers.  
Let them.  
Though having them  
in hand  
they have no further use for them  
but leave them crumpled  
at the curb's edge.*

*At our age the imagination  
across the sorry facts  
lifts us  
to make roses  
stand before thorns.  
Sure  
love is cruel  
and selfish  
and totally obtuse—  
at least, blinded by the light,  
young love is.  
But we are older,  
I to love  
and you to be loved,  
we have,  
no matter how,  
by our wills survived  
to keep  
the jeweled prize  
always  
at our finger tips.  
We will it so  
and so it is  
past all accident.*

*Sonnet XLVIII by Pablo Neruda*

*Two happy lovers make one single bread, on single drop of moonlight in the grass.  
When they walk, they leave two shadows that merge, and they leave one single sun blazing in  
their bed.*

*"The Blind Leading the Blind" by Lisel Mueller*

*Take my hand. There are two of us in this cave.*

*The sound you hear is water; you will hear it forever.  
The ground you walk on is rock. I have been here before.  
People come here to be born, to discover, to kiss,  
to dream, and to dig and to kill. Watch for the mud.  
Summer blows in with scent of horses and roses;  
fall with the sound of sound breaking; winter shoves  
its empty sleeve down the dark of your throat.  
You will learn toads from diamonds, the fist from palm,  
love from the sweat of love, falling from flying.  
There are a thousand turnoffs. I have been here before.  
Once I fell off a precipice. Once I found gold.  
Once I stumbled on murder, the thin parts of a girl.  
Walk on, keep walking, there are axes above us.  
Watch for the occasional bits and bubbles of light —  
Birthdays for you, recognitions: yourself, another.  
Watch for the mud. Listen for bells, for beggars.  
Something with wings went crazy against my chest once.  
There are two of us here. Touch me.*

"Epithalamion" by Stephen Dunn

*If you, X, take this woman, Y,  
and if you, Y, take this man, X,  
you two who have taken each other  
many times before, then this  
is something to be trusted,  
  
two separate folks not becoming halves,  
as younger people do, but becoming  
neither more nor less than yourselves,  
separate and together, and if  
this means a different kind of love,  
  
as it must, if it means different  
conveniences and inconveniences, as it must,  
then let this good luck  
from a friend act like grease  
for what may bet be difficult, undefined,  
and when the ordinary days of marriage  
stretch out like prairie,  
here's to the wisdom which understands  
that if the heart's right  
and the mind at ease with it  
  
the prairie is a liveable place, a place  
for withstanding all kinds of weather,  
and here's to the little hills*

*the ones that take you by surprise,  
and the ones you'll need to invent.*

Seuss: "Oh, the Places You'll Go."

*Congratulations!  
Today is your day.  
You're off to Great Places!  
You're off and away!*

*You have brains in your head.  
You have feet in your shoes  
You can steer yourself  
any direction you choose.  
You're on your own. And you know what you know.  
And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.*

*You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with care.  
About some you will say, "I don't choose to go there."  
With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet,  
you're too smart to go down any not-so-good street.*

*And you may not find any  
you'll want to go down.  
In that case, of course,  
you'll head straight out of town.*

*It's opener there  
in the wide open air.*

*Out there things can happen  
and frequently do  
to people as brainy  
and footsy as you.*

*And when things start to happen,  
don't worry. Don't stew.  
Just go right along.  
You'll start happening too.*

*OH!  
THE PLACES YOU'LL GO!*

*You'll be on your way up!  
You'll be seeing great sights!  
You'll join the high fliers  
who soar to high heights.*

*You won't lag behind, because you'll have the speed.  
You'll pass the whole gang and you'll soon take the lead.  
Wherever you fly, you'll be the best of the best.  
Wherever you go, you will top all the rest.*

*Except when you don't  
Because, sometimes, you won't.*

*I'm sorry to say so  
but, sadly, it's true  
and Hang-ups  
can happen to you.*

*You can get all hung up  
in a prickly perch.  
And your gang will fly on.  
You'll be left in a Lurch.*

*You'll come down from the Lurch  
with an unpleasant bump.  
And the chances are, then,  
that you'll be in a Slump.*

*And when you're in a Slump,  
you're not in for much fun.  
Un-slumping yourself  
is not easily done.*

*You will come to a place where the streets are not marked.  
Some windows are lighted. But mostly they're darked.  
A place you could sprain both your elbow and chin!  
Do you dare to stay out? Do you dare to go in?  
How much can you lose? How much can you win?*

*And IF you go in, should you turn left or right...  
or right-and-three-quarters? Or, maybe, not quite?  
Or go around back and sneak in from behind?  
Simple it's not, I'm afraid you will find,  
for a mind-maker-upper to make up his mind.*

*You can get so confused  
that you'll start in to race  
down long wiggled roads at a break-necking pace  
and grind on for miles across weirdish wild space,  
headed, I fear, toward a most useless place.*

*The Waiting Place...*

*...for people just waiting.  
Waiting for a train to go  
or a bus to come, or a plane to go  
or the mail to come, or the rain to go  
or the phone to ring, or the snow to snow  
or waiting around for a Yes or a No  
or waiting for their hair to grow.  
Everyone is just waiting.*

*Waiting for the fish to bite  
or waiting for wind to fly a kite  
or waiting around for Friday night  
or waiting, perhaps, for their Uncle Jake  
or a pot to boil, or a Better Break  
or a string of pearls, or a pair of pants  
or a wig with curls, or Another Chance.  
Everyone is just waiting.*

*NO!  
That's not for you!*

*Somehow you'll escape  
all that waiting and staying.  
You'll find the bright places  
where Boom Bands are playing.*

*With banner flip-flapping,  
once more you'll ride high!  
Ready for anything under the sky.  
Ready because you're that kind of a guy!*

*Oh, the places you'll go! There is fun to be done!  
There are points to be scored. there are games to be won.  
And the magical things you can do with that ball  
will make you the winning-est winner of all.  
Fame! You'll be famous as famous can be,  
with the whole wide world watching you win on TV.*

*Except when they don't.  
Because, sometimes, they won't.*

*I'm afraid that some times  
you'll play lonely games too.  
Games you can't win*

*'cause you'll play against you.*

*All Alone!  
Whether you like it or not,  
Alone will be something  
you'll be quite a lot.*

*And when you're alone, there's a very good chance  
you'll meet things that scare you right out of your pants.  
There are some, down the road between hither and yon,  
that can scare you so much you won't want to go on.*

*But on you will go  
though the weather be foul  
On you will go  
though your enemies prowl  
On you will go  
though the Hakken-Kraks howl  
Onward up many  
a frightening creek,  
though your arms may get sore  
and your sneakers may leak.*

*On and on you will hike  
and I know you'll hike far  
and face up to your problems  
whatever they are.*

*You'll get mixed up, of course,  
as you already know.  
You'll get mixed up  
with many strange birds as you go.  
So be sure when you step.  
Step with care and great tact  
and remember that Life's  
a Great Balancing Act.  
Just never forget to be dexterous and deft.  
And never mix up your right foot with your left.*

*And will you succeed?  
Yes! You will, indeed!  
(98 and 3/4 percent guaranteed.)*

*KID, YOU'LL MOVE MOUNTAINS!*

*So...*

*be your name Buxbaum or Bixby or Bray  
or Mordecai Ali Van Allen O'Shea,  
you're off to Great Places!  
Today is your day!  
Your mountain is waiting.  
So...get on your way!*

### **Secular and Spiritual Blessings**

#### An Irish Wedding Blessing

*You are the star of each night,  
You are the brightness of every morning,  
You are the story of each guest,  
You are the report of every land.  
No evil shall befall you, on hill nor bank,  
In field or valley, on mountain or in glen.  
Neither above, nor below, neither in sea,  
Nor on shore, in skies above,  
Nor in the depths.  
You are the kernel of my heart,  
You are the face of my sun,  
You are the harp of my music,  
You are the crown of my company.*

#### from "Song for a Country Wedding" by William Jay Smith

*We have come in the winter  
To this warm country room,  
The family and friends  
Of the bride and the groom,  
To bring them our blessing,  
To share their joy,  
And to hope that years passing the best measures employ  
To protect their small clearing,  
And their love be enduring*

#### Prayer for Kindness by the Bahá'u'lláh

*Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be a lamp unto those who walk in darkness, and a home to the stranger. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be a breath of life to the body of humankind, a dew to the soil of the human heart, and a fruit upon the tree of humility.*

#### Oral Celtic Tradition

*You are the peace of all things calm.  
You are the place to hide from harm.  
You are the light that shines in dark.  
You are the heart's eternal spark.*

*You are the door that's open wide.  
You are the guest who waits inside.  
You are the stranger at the door.  
You are the calling of the poor.  
You are with me still.  
You are my love, keep me from ill.  
You are the light, the truth, the way.*

#### *Adapted Irish Blessing*

*May you be poor in misfortune and rich in blessings.  
May the hand of your lover always be near.  
May pure be the joys that surround you,  
May true be the hearts that love you.*

#### *A Celtic Benediction*

*The peace of the running water to you,  
The peace of the flowing air to you,  
The peace of the quiet earth to you,  
The peace of the shining star to you,  
And the love and the care of all of us to you.*

#### *Apache Blessings*

*Please note that this very popular blessing is not indigenous to the Native Americans; it actually originates from a movie entitled "Broken Arrow" (1950)!*

*Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be the shelter for each other. Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be the warmth for the other. Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before. Go now to your dwelling place to enter into the days of your life together. And may your days be good and long upon the earth.*

*May the sun bring you new energy by day,  
May the moon softly restore you by night,  
May the rain wash away your worries  
And the breeze blow new strength into your being,  
And all the days of your life may you walk  
Gently through the world and know its beauty.*

#### *Salish Indian Prayer*

*Now for you there is no rain  
For one is shelter to the other  
Now for you there is no sun  
For one is shelter to the other.  
Now for you nothing is hard or bad,  
For the hardness and the badness is taken,  
by one for the other.  
Now there is no night,*

*For one is light to the other.  
Now for you the snow has ended always,  
For one is protection for the other.  
It is that way, from now on, from now on,  
Now it is good and there is always food,  
and now there is always drink.  
And now there is comfort,  
Now there is no loneliness,  
Now forever, there is no loneliness.*

*“The Promise” by Heather Berry*

*Within this blessed union of souls, where two hearts intertwine to become one, there lies a promise. Perfectly born, divinely created, and intimately shared, it is a place where the hope and majesty of beginnings reside. Where all things are made possible by the astounding love shared by two spirits. As you hold each others’ hands in this promise, and eagerly look into the future in each others eyes, may your unconditional love and devotion take you to places were you’ve both only dreamed. Where you’ll dwell for a lifetime of happiness, sheltered in the warmth of each others arms.*

*“Black Elk Speaks”*

*Everything the power of the world does  
Is one in a circle.  
The sky is round, and I have heard that  
The earth is round like a bell,  
And so are the stars.  
The wind, at its greatest power, whirls.  
Birds make their nests in circles,  
For theirs is the same religion as ours.  
The sun comes forth and goes down again  
In a circle.  
Even the seasons form a great circle  
In their changing, and always come  
Back again to where they were.  
The life of a man or a woman is a circle  
From childhood to childhood,  
And so it is in everything where power moves.*

*Blessing Engraved on Saint Patrick's Breastplate*

*May you be blessed with  
the strength of heaven,  
the light of the sun  
and the radiance of the moon,  
the splendor of fire,  
the speed of lightning,  
the swiftness of wind,  
the depth of the sea,*

*the stability of earth,  
and the firmness of rock.*

Emily Dickinson

*Hope is the thing with feathers  
That perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words,  
And never stops at all,  
And sweetest in the gale is heard;  
And sore must be the storm  
That could abash the little bird  
That kept so many warm.  
I've heard it in the chillest land,  
And on the strangest sea;  
Yet, never, in extremity,  
It asked a crumb of me.*

*Wild nights! Wild nights!  
Were I with thee,  
Wild nights should be  
Our luxury!  
Futile the winds  
To a heart in port-  
Done with the compass,  
Done with the chart.  
Rowing in Eden!  
Ah! the sea!  
Might I but moor  
Tonight in thee!*

Navajo Wedding Ceremony

*Now you have lit a fire and that fire should not go out. The two of you now have a fire that represents love, understanding and a philosophy of life. It will give you heat, food, warmth and happiness. The new fire represents a new beginning - a new life and a new family. The fire should keep burning; you should stay together. You have lit the fire for life, until old age separates you.*

Neo-Pagan Blessing

*As times passes, remember that...Like a star should your love be constant. Like a stone should your love be firm. Be close, but not too close. Possess one another, but be understanding. Have patience each with the other, for storms will come, but they will go quickly. Be free in the giving of affection and warmth. Make love often, and be sensuous with one another. Have no fear and let not the ways or words. of the unenlightened give you unease.*

Prayer for Peace, Lao-Tse (Taoist)

*If there is to be peace in the world,  
There must be peace in the nations.*

*If there is to be peace in the nations,  
There must be peace in the cities.  
If there is to be peace in the cities,  
There must be peace between neighbors.  
If there is to be peace between neighbors,  
There must be peace in the home.  
If there is to be peace in the home,  
There must be peace in the heart.*

*Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu*

*What is well planted will not be torn up.  
What is well kept will not escape.  
Whosoever leaves their memory to their children will not fade away.  
Whosoever moulds their person, their life becomes true.  
Whosoever moulds their family, their life becomes complete.  
Whosoever moulds their community, their life will grow.*

*Native American, Chief Yellow Lark (1887)*

*Oh, Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds and whose breath gives life to all the world, hear me. I am small and weak. I need your strength and wisdom. Let me walk in beauty and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset. Make my hands respect the things you have made and my ears sharp to hear your voice. Make me wise so that I may understand the things you have taught my people. Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock. I seek strength, not to be superior to my brother, but to fight my greatest enemy - myself. Make me always ready to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes, so when life fades, as the fading sunset, my spirit will come to you without shame.*

*Iroquois Thanksgiving Address (dates back 1000 years)*

*Today we have gathered and we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as a people. We are all thankful to our Mother, the Earth, for she gives us all that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk about upon her. It gives us joy that she continues to care for us as she has from the beginning of time. We give thanks to all the Waters of the world for quenching our thirst and providing us with strength. Water is life. As far as the eye can see, the Plants grow, working many wonders. They sustain many life forms. We give thanks and look forward to seeing Plant life for many generations to come. We send greetings and thanks to all the Animal life in the world. They have many things to teach us. We are honored by them when they give up their lives so we may use their bodies as food for our people. We see them near our homes and in the deep forests. We are glad they are still here and we hope that it will always be so.  
We are all thankful to the powers we know as the Four Winds. We hear their voices in the moving air as they refresh us and purify the air we breathe. They help us to bring the change of seasons. From the four directions they come, bringing us messages and giving us strength. We now send greetings and thanks to our eldest Brother, the Sun. Each day without fail he travels the sky from east to west, bringing the light of a new day. He is the source of all the fires of life. We give thanks to our oldest Grandmother, the Moon, who lights the night-time sky. She is the leader of woman*

*all over the world, and she governs the movement of the ocean tides. By her changing face we measure time, and it is the Moon who watches over the arrival of children here on Earth. We give thanks to the Stars who are spread across the sky like jewelry. We see them in the night, helping the Moon to light the darkness and bringing dew to the gardens and growing things. When we travel at night, they guide us home. We gather our minds to greet and thank the enlightened Teachers who have come to help throughout the ages. When we forget how to live in harmony, they remind us of the way we were instructed to live as people. Now we turn our thoughts to the gifts of Creation. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth. For all the love that is still around us, we gather our minds together as one and send our choicest words of greetings and thanks to the Creator, our Great Spirit. Now our minds are one.*

Adapted Serenity Poem

*Grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Let us live one day at a time, enjoy one moment at a time, and accept hardships as pathways to growth and peace.*

John Ford

*Comforts lasting, loves increasing,  
Like soft hours never ceasing:  
Plenty's pleasure, peace complying,  
Without jars, or tongues envying;  
Hearts by holy union wedded,  
More than theirs by custom bedded;  
Fruitful issues; life so graced,  
Not by age to be defaced,  
Budding, as the year ensu'th,  
Every spring another youth:  
All what thought can add beside  
Crown this bridegroom and this bride!*

Rig Veda (final verse?)

*United your resolve.  
United your hearts.  
May your spirits be at one.  
And may you long together dwell in unity and concord.*

Vedas

*May all the beings in all the worlds be happy.  
May all the beings in all the worlds be happy.  
May all the beings in all the worlds be happy.  
Om Om Om // Peace, Peace, Peace.*

Cherokee Prayer

*We honor mother earth--and ask for our marriage to be abundant and grow stronger through the seasons; We honor fire--and ask that our union be warm and glowing with love in our hearts; We honor wind--and ask we sail trough life safe and calm as in our father's arms; We honor water--to*

*clean and soothe our relationship, that it may never thirst for love; With all the forces of the universe created, we pray for harmony and true happiness as we forever grow young together.*

James Dillet Freeman

*May you need one another, but not out of weakness. May you want one another, but not out of lack. May you entice one another, but not compel one another. May you embrace one another, but not encircle one another. May you succeed in all important ways with one another, and not fail in the little graces. May you look for things to praise, often say, "I love you!" and take no notice of small faults. May you have happiness, and may you find it making one another happy. If you have quarrels that push you apart, may both of you hope to have enough good sense to take the first step back. May your marriage bring you all the excitements a marriage should bring, and may life grant you also patience, tolerance, and understanding.*

D. H. Lawrence

*Go deeper than love, for the soul has greater depth, love is like the grass, but the heart is deep wild rock, molten, yet dense and permanent.*

Prayer by St. Francis of Assisi

*May we be instruments of peace.  
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is discord, union;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy;  
...Grant that we may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.*

"Look to this Day" from the ancient Sanskrit

*Look to this day for it is life the very life of life. In its brief course lie all the realities and truths of existence, the joy of growth, the splendor of action, the glory of power. For yesterday is but a memory and tomorrow is only a vision. But today well lived makes every yesterday a memory of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope. Look well, therefore, to this day....*

Rabbi Harold Kushner

*Let the rain come and wash away ancient grudges, the bitterness held and nurtured over generations. Let the rain wash away the memory of the hurt, the neglect. Then let the sun come out and fill the sky with rainbows. Let the warmth of the sun heal us wherever we are broken. Let it burn away the fog so that we can see each other clearly. So that we can see beyond labels, beyond accents, gender or skin color. Let the warmth and brightness of the sun melt our*

*selfishness. So that we can share the joys and feel the sorrows of our neighbors. And let the light of the sun be so strong that we will see all people as our neighbors. Let the earth, nourished by rain, bring forth flowers to surround us with beauty. And let the mountains teach our hearts to reach upward to heaven. Amen.*

## **Toasts**

### Dr. Karl Menninger

*Love cures people, both the ones who give it and the ones who receive it.*

### Shakespeare

*A heaven on earth I have won by wooing thee.*

### John Milton

*Our state cannot be severed; we are one,  
One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself.*

### Hawaiian

*May you never thirst again.*

### Armenian

*May you grow old on one pillow.*

### English Proverb

*When the husband drinks to the wife, all would be well; when the wife drinks to the husband, all is.*

### Eugene Kennedy

*The real test of friendship is: Can you literally do nothing with the other person? Can you enjoy together those moments of life that are utterly simple? They are the moments people look back on at the end of life and number as their most sacred experiences.*

### Jamaican Proverb

*Marriage has teeth, and him bit very hot.*

### French Proverb

*Try to reason about love and you will lose your reason.*

### Traditional Toasts

*Here's to the husband and here's to the wife; may they remain lovers for life.*

*Let us toast the health of the bride. Let us toast the health of the groom. Let us toast the person that tied. Let us toast every guest in the room.*

*Here is a toast to lying, cheating, stealing, and drinking:  
If you lie, lie in each other's arms;*

*If you cheat, cheat death;  
If you steal, steal each other's kisses;  
If you drink, drink deeply of the joy of your new life together.*

Greek Proverb

*The heart that loves is always young.*

Euripides

*Love distills desire upon eyes...love brings bewitching grace into the heart.*

Baronness Edith Summerskill

*Nagging is the repetition of unpalatable truths.*

Jean Rostand, French Essayist

*A married couple are well suited when both partners usually feel the need for a quarrel at the same time.*

St. Augustine

*Insomuch as love grows in you, so beauty grows. For love is the beauty of the soul.*

Irish

*May you look back on the past with as much pleasure as you look forward to the future.*

*May there always be work for your hands to do. May your purse always hold a coin or two. May the sun always shine on your windowpane. May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain. May the hand of a friend always be near you. May your heart fill with gladness to cheer you.*

*May the road rise to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warmly upon your faces. And may the rains fall softly upon your home.*

Ogden Nash

*To keep you marriage brimming, with love in the wedding cup, whenever you're wrong, admit it; whenever you're right, shut up.*

Sidney Smith

*Here's to marriage, that happy estate that resembles a pair of scissors: so joined that they cannot be separated, often moving in opposite directions, yet punishing anyone who comes between them.*

John Cennick

*Be present at our table, Lord.  
Be here and everywhere adored.  
Those mercies bless, and grant that we  
May feast in Paradise and with thee.*

Adapted Masai Prayer

*Receive this holy fire.*

*Make your lives like this fire.  
A holy fire that is seen.  
A life of hopeful faith that is seen.  
Light a fire that is worthy of your heads.  
Light a fire that is worthy of your children.  
Light a fire that is worthy of your fathers.  
Light a fire that is worthy of your mothers.  
Light a fire that is worthy of the beauty of the truth.*

*Ba'al Shem Tov, founder of spiritual Hasidism*

*From every human being there rises a light that reaches straight to heaven. And when two souls who are destined for one another find one another, there streams of light flow together and a single brighter light goes forth from their united being.*

*Amma/Southeast Asian*

*When someone is full of Love and Compassion, they cannot draw a line between two countries, two faiths, or two religions.*

*The sun shines down, and its image reflects a thousand different pots filled with water. The reflections are many, but they are each reflecting the same sun. Similarly, when we come to know who we truly are, we will see ourselves in all people.*

*Prayer of Navajo Girl*

*Creator of Heaven and Earth, you are me, and I am you.*

*Ghandi*

*You must be the change you wish to see in the world.*

*I will be truthful. I will suffer no injustice. I will be free from fear. I will not use force. I will be of good will to all men.*

*The seven deadly sins:*

*Wealth without work,*

*Pleasure without conscience,*

*Knowledge without character,*

*Commerce without morality,*

*Science without humanity,*

*Worship without sacrifice,*

*And Politics without principle.*

***Biblical Scripture***

*Please note that every version of the Bible has its own translation.*

*Blessed are the poor in spirit; for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed are the gentle: for they shall have the earth as inheritance. Blessed are those who mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for uprightness: for they shall have their fill. Blessed are*

*the merciful: for they shall have mercy shown them. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see the divine. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be truly blessed. (Matthew 5: 1)*

*Greet one another with kisses of love. (Peter 5: 14)*

*Go in peace now to love and carry each other's burdens. (Galatians 6: 2)*

*And above all preserve an intense love for each other, since love covers many ills. Indeed, it is someone who has forgiven little who shows little love. Thusly the final goal at which this instruction aims is love, issuing from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and sincere faith. (1 Peter 3: 20)*

*Accept one another, then, for the sake of love. (Luke 7: 47)*

*Wherever you go, I shall go. Wherever you live, I shall live. Where you die, I shall die and there I shall be buried. Your people shall be my people now. (Ruth 1: 16)*

*Better two than one alone, since thus their work is really rewarding. If one should fall, the other helps him up. If two sleep together they keep warm. Where one alone would be overcome, two will put up resistance; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (Ecclesiastes 4: 9)*

*And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight. (Phillipians 1: 9)*

*The husband must give to his wife what she has the right to expect, and so too the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; The husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. You must not deprive each other, except by mutual consent for a limited time... (I Corinthians 7: 3)*

*As you two will become one flesh... (Matthew 9: 6)*

*Let your words flow out of what fills your hearts. (Luke 6: 45)*

*For although I command languages both human and angelic, if I speak without love, I am no more than a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. And though I have the power of prophecy, to penetrate all mysterious and knowledge, and though I have all the faith necessary to move mountains, if I am without love, I am nothing. Though I should give away to the poor all that I possess, and even give up my body to be burned, if I am without love, it will do me no good whatever. Love is patient and kind; love is never jealous; love is not boastful or conceited, it is never rude and never seeks its own advantage; it does not take offense or store up grievances. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth. It is always ready to make allowances, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes. Love never comes to an end. (Corinthians 13: 1)*

*So make your joy complete by being of a single mind, one in love, one in heart and one in mind. Nothing is to be done out of jealousy or vanity; instead, out of humility of mind everyone should give preference to others, everyone pursuing not selfish interests but those of others. (Phillipians 2: 2)*

*Let your feelings of deep affection for one another now come to expression. (Romans 12: 10)*

*I shall betroth you to myself forever. I shall betroth you in uprightness and justice, and faithful love and tenderness. I shall betroth you to myself in loyalty. (Hosea 2: 21)*

*Desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul. (Proverbs 13: 19)*

*Wisdom is brilliant; she never fades. By those who love her, she is readily seen, By those who seek her, she is readily found. Meditating on her is understanding in its perfect form, and anyone keeping awake for her will soon be free from care. (Wisdom 6: 12)*

*Wisdom is essentially something pure. It is also peaceable, kindly, and considerate; It is full of mercy and shows itself by doing good. The peace of the peacemakers brings a harvest of justice. (James 17: 3)*

*By wisdom a house is built. By understanding it is made strong. By knowledge its storerooms are filled with riches of every kind, rare and desirable. For wherever your treasure is, there will your heart be too. (Proverbs 24: 3)*

*Set your greatest treasure, love, like a seal on your hearts, like a seal on your arms. For love is strong as death, its passion is relentless. The flash of it is a flash of fire, a flame of the divine itself. (Song of Songs 8: 6)*

*All I have is yours and all you have is mine. (John 17: 10)*

*I belong to my love, and my love to me. (Song of Songs 6: 3; 5: 16)*

*May hope fill you with joy and peace in your union, so that you may be rich in hope. (Romans 15: 13)*

*... the only thing you should owe to anyone is love for one another, for to love the other person is to fulfill the law (Romans 12: 17).*

*So be clothed in heartfelt compassion, in generosity and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; Forgive each other if one of you has a complaint against the other. Over all these clothes, put on love, the perfect bond. May peace reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together in one body. And always be thankful [for each other]. (Collossians 3: 12.)*

*Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, but be fervent in*

*spirit, and serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, and persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, and exercise hospitality. Bless those who persecute you--bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation. Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, on your part, live at peace with all. (Romans 12: 9-18)*

*For there is no happiness for a person except in pleasure and enjoyment through life. (Ecclesiastes 3: 12)*