

LOVE:

REFLECTIONS ON THE ULTIMATE REASON FOR GETTING MARRIED

WHAT THIS HANDOUT IS ABOUT

The following includes both well-known and some lesser known reflections on what it means to be in love. You might like to add any of your own that you find or feel you want to express yourself, and see which most speak to you about how you feel for your partner.

Please note that some of these poems are subject to copyright, and may require attribution or reproduction permission if being printed on a service sheet.

1. POEMS ABOUT LOVE

Love is enough though the world be a- waning
And the woods have no voice but the voice of complaining,
Though the sky be too dark for dim eyes to discover
The gold-cups and daisies fair blooming thereunder,
Though the hills be held shadows, and the sea a dark wonder,
And this day draw a veil over all deeds pass'd over,
Yet their hands shall not tremble, their feet shall not falter;
The void shall not weary. The fear shall not alter
These lips and these eyes of the loved and the lover.

– Love is Enough, William Morris
(Arthur Quiller-Couch, ed. 1919. The Oxford Book of English Verse: 1250–1900)

I love thee – I love thee!
'Tis all that I can say;
It is my vision in the night,
My dreaming in the day;
The very echo of my heart.
The blessing when I pray:
I love thee – I love thee, Is all that I can say.

I love thee – I love thee!
Is ever on my tongue;
In all my proudest poesy
That chorus still is sung;
It is the verdict of my eyes,
Amidst the gay and young:
I love thee – I love thee,
A thousand maids among.

I love thee - I love thee!
Thy bright and hazel glance,
The mellow lute upon those lips,
Whose tender tone entrance;
But most, dear heart of hearts, thy proofs
That still these words enhance,
I love thee - I love thee;
Whatever be thy chance.

- I love Thee, Thomas Hood
The Poetical Works of Thomas Hood by Thomas Hood

What strange and lovely harmony
of such different beauties! How dark is Floria,
this ardent love of mine.
And you, mysterious beauty, long blonde and flowing tresses,
how your eyes are sky blue, Tosca's eyes are black-night.
Art, too, with it's many mysteries,
blends all together such different beauties.
But though I paint another,
my only thought is you,
oh, my only thought is you,
Tosca, is you, is you!

- Recondita Armonia, from Puccini's Tosca [English translation of Italian lyrics: What Strange And Lovely Harmony]

This is love: to fly toward a secret sky,
to cause a hundred veils to fall each moment.
First, to let go of live.
In the end, to take a step without feet;
to regard this world as invisible,
and to disregard what appears to be the self.

Heart, I said, what a gift it has been
to enter this circle of lovers,
to see beyond seeing itself,
to reach and feel within the breast.

- Rumi, The Divani Shamsi Tabriz, XIII (translated by Kabir Heminski)

You were born together, and together you shall be forevermore.
You shall be together when white wings of death scatter your days.
Aye, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the 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.

- From The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran

Dear Human: You've got it all wrong.
You didn't come here to master unconditional love.
That is where you came from and where you'll return.
You came here to learn personal love.
Universal love. Messy love. Sweaty love.
Crazy love. Broken love. Whole love.
Infused with divinity. Lived through the grace of stumbling.
Demonstrated through the beauty of... messing up. Often.
You didn't come here to be perfect. You already are.
You came here to be gorgeously human. Flawed and fabulous.
And then to rise again into remembering.
But unconditional love? Stop telling that story.
Love, in truth, doesn't need ANY other adjectives.
It doesn't require modifiers.
It doesn't require the condition of perfection.
It only asks that you show up. And do your best.
That you stay present and feel fully.
That you shine and fly and laugh and cry
and hurt and heal and fall and get back up
and play and work and live and die as YOU.
It's enough. It's Plenty.

- Dear Human by Courtney Walsh
<http://soul-lit.com/poems/v4/Walsh/index.html>

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 root 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)
– I Carry Your Heart by E.E Cummings

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.

– Pablo Neruda , Love Sonnet 17
One Hundred Love Sonnets: XVII by Pablo Neruda, Translated by Mark Eisner

Oh Beloved,
take me.
Liberate my soul.
Fill me with your love and
release me from the two worlds.
If I set my heart on anything but you
let fire burn me from inside.
Oh Beloved,
take away what I want.
Take away what I do.
Take away what I need.
Take away everything

– Sufi song of Rumi

Today I become me.
Strange as it may seem
I haven't always been this way.
Or perhaps I have, but my
Shy, distracting, busy self has
Often led me astray

Today I sing a new song to the gift of life,
To becoming whole with God's sure presence,
Feeling the safety of solid ground.
I am ready to look inside,
To uncover, to learn, to see,
And to open my eyes and my heart to what will be found.

Today I step forward bravely,
A traveller and a soul in progress,
Freely asking the mysteries within me to speed up their dance.
Today I know that I am strong,
Having all that I need to carry along,

Welcoming every friend who will my life enhance.
- Clive Johnson

Alternate verses spoken by one partner to the other:

Dear friend, you open the door to my heart.
Your kind eyes and generous smile enliven my being.
You are my waking beauty, my morning light.

Dear friend, you are awesome to me, yet you are my great comforter.
Your warm touch, your patient ear, connect me to you deeply.
You are my precious companion, my sure support.

Dear friend, together we are as one.
We breathe the same breath, our hearts beat in time with each other.
We are two lives flowing ever nearer to perfect harmony.

Dear friend, may we be not just best friends.
May our lives intertwine, may we tightly embrace.
We are as one, yes, we are as one.

Dear friend, we offer our vows for each other this day.
May we cherish the wonder of finding each other.
I give you my promise to be the best for you that I can.

Dear friend, we share our vows with unbridled loyalty.
May we wonder at the majesty of our growing together.
I give you my promise, to be your unfaltering right hand.

- Clive Johnson

As spring unfolds the dream of earth,
May you bring each others hearts to birth.

As the ocean finds calm in view of land,
May you love the gaze of each other's mind.
As the wind arises free and wild,
May nothing negative control your lives.

As kindly as moonlight might search the dark,
So gentle may you be when light grows scarce.

As surprised as the silence that music opens,
May your words for each other be touched with reverence.

As warmly as the air draws in the light,
May you welcome each other's every gift.

As elegant as dream absorbing the night,
May sleep find you clear of anger and hurt.

As twilight harvest all the day's color,
May love bring you home to each other.

– For Marriage, John O'Donohue
From To Bless the Space Between Us by John O'Donohue

When the one whose hand you're holding
Is the one one who holds your heart
When the one whose eyes you gaze into
Gives your hopes and dreams their start,
When the one you think of first and last
Is the one who holds you tight,
And the things you plan together
Make the whole world seem just right,
When the one whom you believe in
puts their faith and trust in you,
You've found the one and only love
You'll share your whole life through.

– When one who's hand you're holding is the one who holds you heart, Anon
(cited at hitched.co.uk)

You're my sun on a cloudy day
You're my umbrella on a rainy day
You're my everything what can I say
You're in my mind each and everyday
I think about you when I lay down to bed
I think about you while I am taking a test
You're my Number one and you're the best
You're like a tattoo in my mind that will never be erased
I'll Love you forever because this isn't a phase
It's just that I love you in my Unique way

– You're My... © Neftali Rosales Published: June 2008
Source: <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/what-girlfriend-means-to-me>

I hold our love in the palm of my hand as one would a newborn: with awe and delicacy, with softness and protection, with the promise to nurture

I hold our love in the palm of my hand as one would a stone found on a sunny ocean shore, with respect for its strength, with wonder for its resiliency, with deference for its journey to the shore

I hold our love in the palm of my hand as one would a diamond, with humility of its beauty, with amazement at its density, with humbleness of its potential to withstand harshness

I hold our love in the palm of my hand as I would my own, accepting its fragility, acknowledging its power, respecting its potency and most of all, understanding its need to be cherished

I recognize that the love I feel for you is a gift to be appreciated, and in so doing, it may have the chance to grow and flourish

- Your Love In The Palm Of My Hand © Rosa Livingstone Published: June 2013

Source: <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/your-love-in-the-palm-of-my-hand>

Love is a temporary madness. It erupts like an earthquake and then subsides. And when it subsides you have to make a decision. You have to work out whether your roots have become 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 promises of eternal passion. That is just being "in love" which any of us can convince ourselves we are. Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident.

- Haydn Hammond

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always preserves.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled: where there is knowledge, it will pass. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three things remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

- 1 Corinthians Chapter 13, Verse 4 (New International Version)