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A History of Love

~ Diane Ackerman ~

Love. What a small word we use for an idea so immense and powerful 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 loved.**

Transforming Power

~ Lau Tzu ~

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
Because of your love.

On Love

~ Thomas a Kempis ~

Love is a mighty power, a great and complete good.

Love alone lightens every burden, and makes rough places smooth.

It bears every hardship as though it were nothing, and renders all bitterness sweet and acceptable.

Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven or earth; for love is born of God.

Love flies, runs and leaps for joy. It is free and unrestrained. Love knows no limits, but ardently transcends all bounds.

Love feels no burden, takes no account of toil, attempts things beyond its strength.

Love sees nothing as impossible, for it feels able to achieve all things.

It is strange and effective, while those who lack love faint and fail. Love is not fickle and sentimental, nor is it intent on vanities.

Like a living flame and a burning torch,

it surges upward and surely surmounts every obstacle.

Letters by Rainer Maria Rilke

Marriage is in many ways a simplification of life, and it naturally combines the strengths and wills of two people so that, together, they seem to reach farther into the future than they did before. Above all, marriage is a new task and a new seriousness, a new demand on the strength and generosity of each partner, and a great new danger for both.

The point of marriage is not to create a quick commonality by tearing down all boundaries; on the contrary, a good marriage is one in which each partner appoints the other to be the guardian of their solitude, and thus they show each other the greatest possible trust. A merging of two people is an impossibility, and where it seems to exist, it is a hemming-in, a mutual consent that robs one party or both parties of their fullest freedom and development. But once the realization is accepted that even between the closest people infinite distances exist, a marvelous living side by side can grow up for them, if they succeed in loving the expanse between them, which gives them the possibility of always seeing each other as a whole and before an immense sky.

For the more we are, the richer everything we experience is. And those who want to have a deep love in their lives must collect and save for it, and gather honey.

The Life That I Have

~ 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 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 carry your heart with me

~ e.e. cummings ~

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 the 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)

Untitled

~ *Robert Ingersoll* ~

Love is the only bow on life's dark cloud.
It is the morning and the evening star.
It shines upon the cradle of the babe,
and sheds its radiance upon the quiet tomb.
It is the mother of art,
inspirer of poet, patriot, and philosopher.
It is the air and light of every heart, builder of every home,
kindler of every fire on every hearth.
It was the first to dream of immortality.
It fills the world with melody,
for music is the voice of love.
Love is the magician, the enchanter,
that changes worthless things to joy,
and makes right royal kings and queens of common clay.
It is the perfume of the wondrous flower -- the heart.
And without that sacred passion, that divine swoon,
we are less than beasts;
but with it, Earth is heaven
and we are gods.

Sonnet XLVIII

~ Pablo Neruda ~

Two happy lovers

Make one single bed,

One 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.

Touched By an Angel

~ 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.

These I Can Promise

~ Unknown ~

I cannot promise you a life of sunshine;

I cannot promise riches, wealth, or gold;

I cannot promise you an easy pathway

That leads away from change or growing old.

But I can promise all my heart's devotion;

A smile to chase away your tears of sorrow;

A love that's ever true and ever growing;

A hand to hold in yours through each tomorrow

Patagonia

~ *Kate Clanchy* ~

I said perhaps Patagonia, and pictured

a peninsula, wide enough

for a couple of ladderback chairs

to wobble on at high tide.

I thought of us in breathless cold, facing

a horizon round as a coin, looped

in a cat's cradle strung by gulls

from sea to sun.

I planned to wait till the waves had bored

themselves to sleep, till the last clinging barnacles,

growing worried in the hush, had paddled off in tiny coracles,

till those restless birds, your actor's hands,

had dropped slack into your lap,

until you'd turned, at last, to me.

When I spoke of Patagonia, I meant

skies all empty aching blue.

I meant years. I meant all of them with you.

From Letters to a Young Poet

~ Rainer Maria Rilke ~

For one human being to love another human being: that is perhaps the most 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, 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 distance.

Once the realization is accepted that even between the closest people infinite distance exists, a marvelous living side-by-side can grow up for them, if they succeed in loving the expanse between them, which gives them the possibility of seeing each other as a whole before an immense sky.

From The Whalestoe Letters

~ Mark Z. Danielewski ~

Remember: I shall be your roots and I will be your shade though the sun burns my leaves. I shall quench your thirst and I will feed you fruit though time takes my seed. And when you are lost and can tell nothing of this earth I will give you hope. And my voice you will always hear and my heart you will always share, for I will shelter you and I will comfort you. And even when I am nothing left, not even in death, I will remember you. And I will love you.

True Love

~ Unknown ~

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.

My Love

~ Linda Lee Elrod ~

When I met you, I had no idea
how much my life
was about to be changed...
but then, how could I have known?

A love like ours happens
once in a lifetime.
You were a miracle to me,
the one who was everything
I had ever dreamed of,
the one I thought existed
only in my imagination.

And when you came into my life,
I realized that what I
had always thought
was happiness
couldn't compare to the joy
loving you brought me.

You are a part of everything
I think and do and feel,
and with you by my side,
I believe that anything is possible.
(this day) gives me a chance
to thank you for the miracle of you...
you are, and always will be,
the love of my life.

Union

~ *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 commitments in an informal way. All of those conversations that were held in a car, or over a meal, or during long walks – all those conversations that began with, “When we’re married”, and continued with “I will” and “you will” and “we will” – all 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 that 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, even teacher, for you have learned much from one another these past few years. Shortly you shall say a few words that will take you across a threshold of life, and things between you will never quite be the same.

For after today you shall say to the world –

This is my husband. This is my wife.

Falling In Love Is Like Owning a Dog

~ Taylor Mali ~

On cold winter nights, love is warm.

It lies between you and lives and breathes
and makes funny noises.

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.

But love makes you meet people wherever you go.

People who have nothing in common but love
stop and talk to each other on the street.

Throw things away and love will bring them back,
again, and again, and again.

But most of all, love needs love, lots of it.

And in return, love loves you and never stops.

"The Alchemist"

~ *Paulo Coelho* ~

When he looked into her eyes, he learned the most important part of the language that all the world spoke – the language that everyone on earth was capable of understanding in their heart. It was love. Something older than humanity, more ancient than the desert. What the boy felt at that moment was that he was in the presence of the only woman in his life, and that, with no need for words, she recognized the same thing. Because when you know the language, it's easy to understand that someone in the world awaits you, whether it's in the middle of the desert or in some great city. And when two such people encounter each other, the past and the future become unimportant. There is only that moment, and the incredible certainty that everything under the sun has been written by one hand only. It is the hand that evokes love, and creates a twin soul for every person in the world. Without such love, one's dreams would have no meaning.

The Art Of Marriage

~ Roy Croft ~

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.

Untitled

~ 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
Could have done
To make me happy.

You have done it
Without a touch,
Without a word,
Without a sign.

You have done it
By being yourself.
Perhaps that is what
Being a friend means,
After all.

The Buried Life

~ *Matthew Arnold* ~

Only—but this is rare—

When a beloved hand is laid in ours

When, jaded with the rush and glare

Of the interminable hours,

Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear

When our world deafened ear

Is by the tones of a loved voice caressed—

A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast

And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again;

The eye sinks inward,

And the heart lies plain,

And what we mean, we say, and

What we would, we know,

A man, a woman, becomes aware of life's flow.

From: The Book Of Love

~ 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.

Oh The Places You'll Go

~ *Dr. Seuss* ~

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 couple who'll decide where to go.

You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with care.

About some you will say, "We don't choose to go there."

With your heads 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 great heights!
You won't lag behind, because you'll have all the speed.
You'll pass the whole gang, and you'll soon take the lead.
Wherever you fly you'll be best of the best.
Wherever you go, you will top all the rest.
Except when you don't.
Because sometimes, you won't.

You'll get mixed up of course,
as you already know.

You'll get mixed up
with so many strange birds as you go.

So be sure when you step.

Step with great 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 $\frac{3}{4}$ percent guaranteed.)

KIDS, YOU'LL MOVE MOUNTAINS!

So, be your name Buxbaum or Dowrie or Bass

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!

From: The Velveteen Rabbit

~ 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 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 Irrational Season

~ 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.

Look To This Day

~ Kalidasa ~

Look to this day

For it is life, the very life of life.

In its brief course

Lie all the verities and realities of your existence.

The bliss of growth,

The glory of action,

The splendour of achievement

Are but experiences of time.

For yesterday is but a dream

And tomorrow is only a vision;

And today well-lived, makes

Yesterday a dream of happiness

And every tomorrow a vision of hope.

Look well therefore to this day;

Such is the salutation to the ever-new dawn!

On Marriage

~ Kahil Gibran ~

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.

Love for the Better Half

~ Hong-Zing Dong ~

Hold hands for a whole life, weaving a dream of love.

Two souls walk together, never will be frightened.

Together holding hand in hand, it will last forever.

The days you treasure me are the best in living.

The days you nag me never hinder anything.

Tying a knot is god's blessing.

Togetherness is happiness.

No matter how rough winds and rains are,

The journey for holding hands hereafter is still far and long.

The time for our love also is long and lasting.

Together hand in hand we keep walking,

Perpetuate names of husband and wife generation after generation.

The most wonderful of all things in life, I believe, is the discovery of another human being with whom one's relationship has a growing depth, beauty, and joy as the years increase. This inner progressiveness of love between two human beings is a most marvelous thing; it cannot be found by looking for it or by passionately wishing for it. It is a sort of divine accident, and the most wonderful of all things in life.

~ Hugh Walpole ~

Of Shared Love In Marriage

~ Victor Hugo ~

You can give without loving, but you can never love without giving. The great acts of love are done by those who are habitually performing small acts of kindness. We pardon to the extent that we love. 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.

PSALM 1

Blessed are the man and the woman
who have grown beyond themselves
and have seen through their separations.

They delight in the way things are
and keep their hearts open, day and night.

They are like trees planted near flowing rivers,
which bear fruit when they are ready.

Their leaves will not fall or wither.

Everything they do will succeed.

Song of Solomon 2

Listen! My lover! Look! Here he comes, leaping across the mountains, bounding over the hills.

My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look! There he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattice.

My lover spoke and said to me, "Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come with me. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me."

My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.

My lover is mine and I am his; he browses among the lilies.

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