

## Readings from Literature and Poetry

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 external 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.  
 Those who truly love have roots that grow toward each other  
 underground, and when all the pretty blossoms have fallen from their  
 branches, they find that they are one tree and not two.  
 --"Captain Corelli's Mandolin" by Louis de Bernieres

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"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."  
 -- "The Velveteen Rabbit" by Margery Williams

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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.  
 -- "The Irrational Season" by Madeleine L'Engle

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Marriage is a commitment to life, the best that two people can find and bring out in each other. It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other relationship can equal. It is a physical and an emotional joining that is promised for a lifetime.

Within the circle of its love, marriage encompasses all of life's most important relationships. A wife and a husband are each other's best friend, confidant, lover, teacher, listener, and critic. And there may come times when one partner is heartbroken or ailing, and the love of the other may resemble the tender caring of a parent for a child.

Marriage deepens and enriches every facet of life. Happiness is fuller, memories are fresher, commitment is stronger, even anger is felt more strongly, and passes away more quickly.

Marriage understands and forgives the mistakes life is unable to avoid. It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences, and new ways of expressing a love that is deeper than life.

When two people pledge their love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique unto themselves which binds them closer than any spoken or written words. Marriage is a promise, a potential made in the hearts of two people who love each other and takes a lifetime to fulfill.

-- "Marriage Joins Two People In The Circle Of Its Love" by Edmund O'Neill

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The most wonderful of all things in life 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.  
 -- "The Most Wonderful Of All Things In Life" by Sir Hugh Walpole

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May your marriage bring you all the exquisite excitements a marriage should bring, and may life grant you also patience, tolerance, and understanding.

May you always need one another - not so much to fill your emptiness as to help you to know your fullness. A mountain needs a valley to be complete; the valley does not make the mountain less, but more; and the valley is more a valley because it has a mountain towering over it. So let it be with you and you.

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 out 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.

If you have quarrels that push you apart, may both of you hope to have  
 good sense enough to take the first step back.

May you enter into the mystery which is the awareness of one another's  
 presence - no more physical than spiritual, warm and near when you are  
 side by side, and warm and near when you are in separate rooms or even  
 distant cities.  
 May you have happiness, and may you find it making one another happy.  
 May you have love, and may you find it loving one another!  
 -- "Blessing For A Marriage" by James Dillet Freeman

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What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they  
 are joined together to strengthen each other in all labour, to minister  
 to each other in all sorrow, to share with each other in all gladness,  
 to be one with each other in the silent unspoken memories?  
 -- "To Be One With Each Other" by George Eliot

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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.  
 -- "On Love" by Thomas à Kempis

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When two people are at one  
 in their inmost hearts  
 They shatter even the strength of iron  
 or of bronze  
 And when two people understand each other in their inmost hearts Their  
 words are sweet and strong like the fragrance of orchids.  
 -- "When Two People Are at One", from the I Ching.

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I find love not only in the things we do together but also in the  
 things I do alone because of you.  
 In the thoughts you inspire, in the dreams you haunt, and in the  
 memories you are helping me to build.  
 I find love in you.  
 -- Robert J. Doebly, "Finding Love"

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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:  
 O 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.  
 -- William Shakespeare, "Sonnet 116"

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What thou lovest well remains, the rest is dross.  
 What thou lov'st well shall not be reft from thee.  
 What thou lov'st well is thy true heritage...  
 -- Ezra Pound, "The Cantos"

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In the marriage ceremony, that moment when falling in love is replaced  
 by the arduous drama of staying in love, the words "in sickness and in  
 health, for richer, for poorer, till death do us part" set love in the  
 temporal context in which it achieves its meaning. 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.  
 -- Michael Ignatieff, "Lodged in the Heart and Memory"

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We were on the pier, you desiring that I see the Pleiades. I could see  
 everything but what you wished. Now I will follow. There is not a  
 single cloud; the stars appear, even the invisible sister. Show me  
 where to look, as though they will stay where they are. Instruct me in  
 the dark.

-- Louise Glück, "Under Taurus"

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A man expects an angel for a wife; [yet] he knows that she is like himself -- erring, thoughtless and untrue; but like himself also, filled with a struggling radiancy of better things. ... You may safely go to school with hope; but ere you marry, should have learned the mingled lesson of the world: that hope and love address themselves to a perfection never realized, and yet, firmly held, become the salt and staff of life; that you yourself are compacted of infirmities ... and yet you have a something in you lovable and worth preserving; and that, while the mass of mankind lies under this scurvy condemnation, you will scarce find one but, by some generous reading, will become to you a lesson, a model and a noble spouse through life. So thinking, you will constantly support your own unworthiness and easily forgive the failings of your friend. Nay, you will be wisely glad that you retain the ... blemishes; for the faults of married people continually spur up each of them, hour by hour, to do better and to meet and love upon a higher ground.

-- Robert Louis Stevenson, "Virginibus Puerisque"

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You have to walk carefully in the beginning of love; the running across fields into your lover's arms can only come later when you're sure they won't laugh if you trip.

-- Jonathan Carroll, "Outside the Dog Museum"

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A good marriage has a pattern like a dance and is built on the same rules. The partners do not need to hold on tightly because they move confidently in the same pattern, intricate but happy 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 clinging arm, the heavy hand; only the barest touch in passing. Now arm in arm, now face to face, now 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. The joy of such a pattern is not only the joy of creation or the joy of participation, it is also the joy of living in the moment. Lightness of touch and living in the moment are intertwined.

-- Anne Morrow Lindberg, from "A Gift from the Sea"

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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)  
 -- ee cummings, i carry your heart

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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 never  
 mind 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.  
 -- Toni Morrison, "Undercover Whispers" from "Jazz"

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Man and woman are like the earth, that brings forth flowers in summer,  
 and love, but underneath is rock. Older than flowers, older than ferns,  
 older than foraminiferae, older than plasm altogether is the soul  
 underneath.  
 And when, throughout all the wild chaos of love slowly a gem forms, in  
 the ancient, once-more-molten rocks of two human hearts, two ancient  
 rocks, a man's heart and a woman's, that is the crystal of peace, the  
 slow hard jewel of trust, the sapphire of fidelity. The gem of mutual  
 peace emerging from the wild chaos of love.  
 -- D.H. Lawrence, D.H. Lawrence

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What is the beginning? Love.  
 What the course. Love still.  
 What the goal. The goal is Love.  
 On a happy hill  
 Is there nothing then but Love?  
 Search we sky or earth  
 There is nothing out of Love  
 Hath perpetual worth;  
 All things flag but only Love,  
 All things fail and flee;  
 There is nothing left but Love  
 Worthy you and me.  
 -- Christina Rossetti, "Love"

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You were born together, and together you shall be forevermore.  
You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days.  
Ay, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.  
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.  
-- Kahlil Gibran, from "The Prophet" by Kahlil Gibran