

A Collection of Wedding Readings

These are collated from a number of different resources, including: The Knot, The Spruce, Hitched.co.uk, wedding forward.com, Confetti.co.uk, Ceremony Officiants

Extract from Captain Corelli's Mandolin – Louis de Bernieres

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 root was 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 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 that truly love have roots that grow towards each other underground, and when all the pretty blossoms have fallen from their branches, they find that they are one tree and not two.

A Lovely Love Story – Edward Monkton

The fierce Dinosaur was trapped inside his cage of ice. Although it was cold he was happy in there. It was, after all, his cage.

Then along came the Lovely Other Dinosaur.

The Lovely Other Dinosaur melted the Dinosaur's cage with kind words and loving thoughts.

"I like this Dinosaur," thought the Lovely Other Dinosaur. "Although he is fierce, he is also tender and he is funny. He is also quite clever though I will not tell him this for now."

"I like this Lovely Other Dinosaur," thought the Dinosaur. "She is beautiful and she is different and she smells so nice. She is also a free spirit which is a quality I much admire in a dinosaur."

"But he can be so distant and so peculiar at times," thought the Lovely Other Dinosaur. "He is also overly fond of things. Are all Dinosaurs so overly fond of things?"

"But her mind skips from here to there so quickly," thought the Dinosaur. "She is also uncommonly keen on shopping. Are all Lovely Other Dinosaurs so uncommonly keen on shopping?"

“I will forgive his peculiarity and his concern for things,” thought the Lovely Other Dinosaur, “for they are part of what makes him a richly characterized individual.”

“I will forgive her skipping mind and her fondness for shopping,” thought the Dinosaur, “for she fills our life with beautiful thoughts and wonderful surprises. Besides, I am not unkeen on shopping either.”

Now the Dinosaur and the Lovely Other Dinosaur are old. Look at them. Together they stand on the hill telling each other stories and feeling the warmth of the sun on their backs.

And that, my friends, is how it is with love.

Let us all be Dinosaurs and Lovely Other Dinosaurs together. For the sun is warm. And the world is a beautiful place.

The Art of Marriage – Wilfred A Peterson

A good marriage must be created.

In the marriage, 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 each day,

It is never going to sleep angry.

It is having a mutual sense of values and objectives.

It is standing together and facing the world.

It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.

It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.

It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.

It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each person can grow.

It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.

It is not only marrying the right person

It is being the right partner.

The House at Pooh Corner – A.A. Milne

Piglet sidled up to Pooh from behind. “Pooh?” he whispered.

“Yes, Piglet?”

“Nothing,” said Piglet, taking Pooh’s hand. “I just wanted to be sure of you.”

“We’ll be Friends Forever, won’t we, Pooh?” asked Piglet.

“Even longer,” Pooh answered. “If ever there is tomorrow when we’re not together... there is something you must always remember. You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think. But the most important thing is, even if we’re apart... I’ll always be with you.”

“Winnie the Pooh,” by A. A. Milne #2

“If ever there is tomorrow when we’re not together... there is something you must always remember. You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think. But the most important thing is, even if we’re apart... I’ll always be with you.”

Winnie the Pooh – A.A. Milne #3

If you live to be a hundred, I want to live to be a hundred minus one day so I never have to live without you.

My First Love Story – 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 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 a 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 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 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 $\frac{3}{4}$ percent guaranteed.)

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

The Beauty of Love – Anon

The question is asked: "Is there anything more beautiful in life than a young couple clasping hands and pure hearts in the path of marriage? Can there be anything more beautiful than young love?"

And the answer is given: "Yes, there is a more beautiful thing.

"It is the spectacle of an old man and an old woman finishing their journey together on that path. Their hands are gnarled but still clasped; their faces are seamed but still radiant; their hearts are physically bowed and tired but still strong with love and devotion. Yes, there is a more beautiful thing than young love. Old love."

Love Is Friendship Caught Fire – 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.

Extract from The Amber Spyglass – Philip Pullman

I will love you forever; whatever happens. Till I die and after I die, and when I find my way out of the land of the dead, I'll drift about forever, all my atoms, till I find you again... I'll be looking for you, every moment, every single moment. And when we do find each other again, we'll cling together so tight that nothing and no one'll ever tear us apart. Every atom of me and every atom of you... we'll live in birds and flowers and dragonflies and pine trees and in clouds and in those little specks of light you see floating in sunbeams... and when they use our atoms to make new lives, they won't just be able to take one, they'll have to take two, one of you and one of me, we'll be joined so tight...

Extract from Gift of the Sea – 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 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.

The Journals of Sylvia Plath – Sylvia Plath

I feel good with my husband: I like his warmth and his bigness and his being-there and his making and his jokes and stories and what he reads and how he likes fishing and walks and pigs and foxes and little animals and is honest and not vain or fame-crazy and how he shows his gladness for what I cook him and joy for when I make him something, a poem or a cake, and how he is troubled when I am unhappy and wants to do anything so I can fight out my soul-battles and grow up with courage and a philosophical ease. I love his good smell and his body that fits with mine as if they were made in the same body-shop to do just that. What is only pieces, doled out here and there to this boy and that boy, that made me like pieces of them, is all jammed together in my husband. So I don't want to look around anymore: I don't need to look around for anything.

Extract from The Kindly Ones – Neil Gaiman

Have you ever been in love? Horrible isn't it? It makes you so vulnerable. It opens your chest and it opens up your heart and it means that someone can get inside you and mess you up. You build up all these defences, you build up a whole suit of armour, so that nothing can hurt you, then one stupid person, no different from any other stupid person, wanders into your stupid life ... You give them a piece of you. They didn't ask for it. They did something dumb one day, like kiss you or smile at you, and then your life isn't your own anymore. Love takes hostages. It gets inside you.

Maybe – Anon

Maybe we are supposed to meet the wrong people before we meet the right one so when they finally arrive we are truly grateful for the gift we have been given.

Maybe it's true that we don't know what we have lost until we lose it but it is also true that we don't know what we're missing until it arrives.

Maybe the happiest of people don't have the best of everything, but make the best of everything that comes their way.

Maybe the best kind of love is the kind where you sit on the sofa together, not saying a word, and walk away feeling like it was the best conversation you ever had.

Maybe once in a lifetime you find someone who not only touches your heart but also your soul, someone who loves you for who you are and not what you could be.

Maybe the art of true love is not about finding the perfect person, but about seeing an imperfect person perfectly.

Extract from One Day – David Nicholls

'What are you going to do with your life?' In one way or another it seemed that people had been asking her this forever; teachers, her parents, friends at three in the morning, but the question had never seemed this pressing and still she was no nearer an answer... 'Live each day as if it's your last', that was the conventional advice, but really, who had the energy for that? What if it rained or you felt a bit glandy? It just wasn't practical. Better by far to be good and courageous and bold and to make difference. Not change the world exactly, but the bit around you. Cherish your friends, stay true to your principles, live passionately and fully and well. Experience new things. Love and be loved, if you ever get the chance.

Relativity – Albert Einstein

Gravitation cannot be held responsible for people falling in love. How on earth can you explain in terms of chemistry and physics so important a biological phenomenon as first love? Put your hand on a stove for a minute and it seems like an hour. Sit with that special girl for an hour and it seems like a minute. That's relativity.

Love – Bob Marley

She's not perfect – you aren't either, and the two of you may never be perfect together – but if she can make you laugh, cause you to think twice, and admit to being human and making mistakes, hold on to her and give her the most you can. She may not be thinking about you every second of the day, but she will give you a part of her that she knows you can break – her heart. So don't hurt her, don't change her, don't analyse and don't expect more than she can give. Smile when she makes you happy, let her know when she makes you mad, and miss her when she's not there.

Extract from Still Life With Woodpecker – Tom Robbins

Love is the ultimate outlaw. It just won't adhere to any rules. The most any of us can do is to sign on as its accomplice. Instead of vowing to honor and obey, maybe we should swear to aid and abet. That would mean that security is out of the question. The words "make" and "stay" become inappropriate. My love for you has no strings attached. I love you for free.

Extract from The Bridge Across Forever – Richard Bach

A soul mate 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 soul mate 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 soul mate is the one who makes life come to life.

Extract 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 Nanna 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 your 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.”

Extract from Plato’s Symposium – Plato

Humans have never understood the power of Love, for if they had they would surely have built noble temples and altars and offered solemn sacrifices; but this is not done, and most certainly ought to be done, since Love is our best friend, our helper, and the healer of the ills which prevent us from being happy.

To understand the power of Love, we must understand that our original human nature was not like it is now, but different. Human beings each had two sets of arms, two sets of legs, and two faces looking in opposite directions. There were three sexes then: one comprised of two men called the children of the Sun, one made of two women called the children of the Earth, and a third made of a man and a woman, called the children of the Moon. Due to the power and might of these original humans, the Gods began to fear that their reign might be threatened. They sought for a way to end the humans’ insolence without destroying them.

It was at this point that Zeus divided the humans in half. 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. So ancient is the desire of one another which is implanted in us, reuniting our original nature, making one of two, and healing the state of humankind.

Each of us when separated, having one side only, is but the indenture of a person, and we are always looking for our other half. Those whose original nature lies with the children of the Sun are men who are drawn to other men, those from the children of the Earth are women who love other women, and those from the children of the Moon are men and women drawn to one another. 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 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.

Love Is a Great Thing – 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.

Love is active and sincere, courageous, patient, faithful, prudent and manly.

Blessing for a Marriage – James Billet Freeman

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 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.

Extract from 'De Imitatio Christi' – Thomas à Kempis

Love often knows no limits but overflows all bounds. Love feels no burden, thinks nothing of troubles, attempts more than it is able, and does not plead impossibility, because it believes that it may and can do all things. For this reason, it is able to do all, performing and effecting much where he who does not love fails and falls.

Love is watchful. Sleeping, it does not slumber. Wearied, it is not tired. Pressed, it is not straitened. Alarmed, it is not confused, but like a living flame, a burning torch, it forces its way upward and passes unharmed through every obstacle.

Never Marry but for Love – William Penn

Never marry but for love; but see that thou lovest what is lovely. He that minds a body and not a soul has not the better part of that relationship, and will consequently lack the noblest comfort of a married life.

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 one another show their children that they should do so too. Others visibly lose their authority in their families by the 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.

True Friendship – 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 foibles and 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. Bride and Groom came together as friends. Today, they pledge to each other not only their love, but also the strength, warmth and, most importantly, the fun of true friendship.

Quote from William Butler Yeats

I think a man and woman should choose each other for life, for the simple reason that a long life with all its accidents is barely enough time for a man and woman to understand each other. And to understand is to love.

Extract from A Farewell to Arms – 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 one there, and not gone away; all other things were unreal. We slept when we were tired and if we woke the other one woke too so one was not 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.

I Will Be Here – Steven Curtis Chapman

Tomorrow morning if you wake up,
And the sun does not appear
I, I will be here.

If in the dark we lose sight of love,
Hold my hand, and have no fear
Cause I, I will be here.

I will be here when you feel like being quiet
When you need to speak your mind,
I will listen and
I will be here when the laughter turns to cryin'
Through the winning, losing and tryin'
We'll be together 'cause I will be here.

Tomorrow morning if you wake up,
And the future is unclear
I, I will be here.

As sure as seasons are made for change,
Our lifetime's are made for years
So, I, 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 and
I will be here to watch you grow in beauty
And tell you all the things you are to me
I will be here.

I will be true to the promise I have made
To you and to the One who gave you to me
I, I will be here.

Guess How Much I Love You – Sam McBratney

Little Nutbrown Hare, who was going to bed, held on tight to Big Nutbrown Hare's very long ears. He wanted to be sure that Big Nutbrown Hare was listening.

"Guess how much I love you," he said.

"Oh, I don't think I could guess that," said Big Nutbrown Hare.

"This much," said Little Nutbrown Hare, stretching out his arms as wide as they could go.

Big Nutbrown Hare had even longer arms. "But I love YOU this much," he said.

Hmm, that is a lot, thought Little Nutbrown Hare.

"I love you as high as I can reach." said Little Nutbrown Hare.

"I love you as high as I can reach," said Big Nutbrown Hare.

That is quite high, thought Little Nutbrown Hare. I wish I had arms like that.

Then Little Nutbrown Hare had a good idea. He tumbled upside down and reached up the tree trunk with his feet.

"I love you all the way up to my toes!" he said.

"And I love you all the way up to your toes," said Big Nutbrown Hare, swinging him up over his head.

"I love you as high as I can HOP!" laughed Little Nutbrown Hare, bouncing up and down.

"But I love you as high as I can hop," smiled Big Nutbrown Hare – and he hopped so high that his ears touched the branches above.

That's good hopping, thought Little Nutbrown Hare. I wish I could hop like that.

"I love you all the way down the lane as far as the river," cried Little Nutbrown Hare.

"I love you across the river and over the hills," said Big Nutbrown Hare.

That's very far, thought Little Nutbrown Hare. He was almost too sleepy to think any more.

Then he looked beyond the thorn bushes, out into the big dark night. Nothing could be further than the sky.

"I love you right up to the MOON," he said, and closed his eyes.

"Oh, that's far," said Big Nutbrown Hare. "That is very, very far."

Big Nutbrown Hare settled Little Nutbrown Hare into his bed of leaves. He leaned over and kissed him good night.

Then he lay down close by and whispered with a smile, "I love you right up to the moon – AND BACK."

Extract from *The Secret Garden* – Francis Hodgson Burnett

One of the strange things about living in the world is that it is only now and then one is quite sure one is going to live forever and ever and ever. One knows it sometimes when one gets up at the tender solemn dawn-time and goes out and stands alone and throws one's head far back and looks up and up and watches the pale sky slowly changing and flushing and marvellous unknown things happening until the East almost makes one cry out and one's heart stands still at the strange unchanging majesty of the rising of the sun—which has been happening every morning for thousands and thousands of years. One knows it then for a moment or so. And one knows it sometimes when one stands by oneself in a wood at sunset and the mysterious deep gold stillness slanting though and under the branches seems to be saying slowly again and again something one cannot quite hear, however much one tries. Then sometimes the immense quiet of the dark blue at night with millions of stars waiting and watching makes one sure; and sometimes a sound of far-off music makes it true; and sometimes a look in someone's eye.

The Hands Ceremony – Author Unknown

Please face each other and take each other's hands, so that you may see the gift that they are to you. 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 temporarily comes to you. 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, the hands that will join your family as one. These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it, support and encouragement to pursue your dreams, and comfort through difficult times.

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.

From "*The Hungering Dark*" – 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 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.

"You Were Born Together" – 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. 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 of you be alone, even as the strings of the lute are alone though they quiver with the same music. Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping. For only the land 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.

"Sooner or Later" – Anonymous

Sooner or later we begin to understand that love is more than verses on valentines, and romance in the movies. We begin to know that love is here and now, real and true, the most important thing in our lives. For love is the creator of our favorite memories and the foundation of our fondest dreams. Love is a promise that is always kept, a fortune that can never be spent, a seed that can flourish in even the most unlikely of places. And this radiance that never fades, this mysterious and magical joy, is the greatest treasure of all—one known only by those who love.

"Sonnet from the Portuguese, XLIII" 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 every day'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.

Excerpt #1 from "The Prophet" 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.
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.

Excerpt #2 from "The Prophet" by Khalil Gibran

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 on your lips.

"My Luve" by Robert Burns

O my luve is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June:
O my luve is like the melodie,
That's sweetly played in tune.
As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.
Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
And I will luve thee still my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.
And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile

"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.

"Wedding Prayer" by Robert Louis Stevenson

Lord, behold our family here assembled.
We thank you for this place in which we dwell,
for the love that unites us,
for the peace accorded us this day,
for the hope with which we expect the morrow,
for the health, the work, the food,
and the bright skies that make our lives delightful;
for our friends in all parts of the earth.
Amen

"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?

"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.

"A Dedication to My Wife" by T.S. Eliot

To whom I owe the leaping delight
That quickens my senses in our wakingtime
And the rhythm that governs the repose of our sleepingtime,
The breathing in unison
Of lovers whose bodies smell of each other
Who think the same thoughts without need of speech
And babble the same speech without need of meaning.
No peevish winter wind shall chill
No sullen tropic sun shall wither
The roses in the rose-garden which is ours and ours only
But this dedication is for others to read:
These are private words addressed to you in public.

"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.

"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.

"Sudden Light" by Dante Rosetti

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?

"Song of Songs"

"I am my Beloved's
And he is mine.
Come my beloved,
Let us go forth into the field;

And lodge in the villages.
Let us go up early to the vineyards;
Let us see whether the vine has budded,
Whether the grape has opened,
And the pomegranates are in bloom;
There will I give thee my love.
The mandrakes give forth fragrance,
And at the door are all manner of precious fruits, new and old
Which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved."

Translated by Thich Nhat Hanh

"The Buddha spoke about four elements that constitute true love: the capacity to be kind and offer happiness, maitri in Sanskrit, compassion, the capacity to relieve suffering, karuna; the capacity to bring joy every day, mudita; and finally, the capacity of nondiscrimination, upeksha. When there is true love, there is nondiscrimination. The pain of the other is our own pain; the happiness of the other is our own happiness...To make our love meaningful, we need to nourish our bodhicitta, our mind of boundless love and compassion...First, we learn to love one person with all our understanding and insight; then we expand that love to embrace another person, and another, until our love is truly boundless."

By Freya Matthews

"Is this love that rushes towards the rim to meet you. A main thread in the inwardness of things? Without it would the great externality loosen and unravel? Is it our purpose to see and say that the world is good? And could we have seen this and said it, beloved, while you seemed indubitable? I do not know."

"I stand with hands dangling empty at my sides. I have no wisdom bequeathed to me by ancestors. The stars are equivocal, and around me nature is in sorest travail, weeping."

"I love you."

"This is the only sacred word in my keeping. This is the last trace, the last print in our hearts' waste, of the migration of a thousand traditions, a thousand embodiments of wisdom. I stand with useless hands, and out of the transparency of my poverty, I offer you this, my single gift."

By Henri Nouwen

"Many human relationships are like the interlocking fingers of two hands... 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 among people point to God. They 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. They keep praying to the One who brought them together."

By Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis

"Under the huppah (marriage canopy) we pronounce a special blessing that renders the couple loving, kind friends, always at each other's side, always encouraging each other, and when necessary, criticizing and gently showing where the other erred. God has endowed each of us with unique gifts. When our mates become our best friends, we pool our spiritual resources and strengthen each other. In such a relationship, life's trials become less threatening, and even the most formidable challenges become manageable. 'Two are better than one' is the wise teaching of King Solomon. If one falls, the other is there to pick him/her up. If one is attacked, the other is there to rescue him; if one is depressed, the other is there to buoy her spirits."

"When husband and wife are loving, kind friends, they perceive each other's feelings so totally that there is no need for explanations. Their relationship is virtually symbiotic. There is total empathy with the needs of the other."

By James Bertolino

"May your love be firm, and may your dream of life together be a river between two shores—by day bathed in sunlight, and by night illuminated from within. May the heron carry news of you to the heavens, and the salmon bring the sea's blue grace. May your twin thoughts spiral upward like leafy vines, like fiddle strings in the wind, and be as noble as the Douglas fir. May you never find yourselves back to back without love pulling you around into each other's arms."

By Frederick Buechner

"They say they will love, comfort, honor each other to the end of their days. They say they will cherish each other and be faithful to each other always. They say they will do these things not just when they feel like it, but even—for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health—when they don't feel like it at all. In other words, the vows they make could hardly be more extravagant. They give away their freedom. They take on themselves each other's burdens. They bind their lives together... The question is, what do they get in return?"

"They get each other in return... There will always be the other to talk to, to listen to... There is still someone to get through the night with, to wake into the new day beside. If they have children, they can give them, as well as each other, roots and wings. If they don't have children, they each become the other's child."

"They both still have their lives apart as well as a life together. They both still have their separate ways to find. But a marriage made in heaven is one where a man and a woman become more richly themselves together than the chances are either of them could ever have managed to become alone."

By C. S. Lewis

"The idea that 'being in love' is the only reason for remaining married really leaves no room for marriage as a contract or promise at all. If love is the whole thing, then the promise can add nothing; and if it adds nothing, then it should not be made. The curious thing is that lovers themselves, while they remain really in love, know this better than those who talk about love. As Chesterton pointed out, those who are in love have a natural inclination to bind themselves by promises. Love songs all over the world are full of vows of eternal constancy. The Christian law is not forcing upon the passion of love something which is foreign to that passion's own nature: It is demanding that lovers should take seriously something which their passion of itself impels them to do."

"And, of course, the promise, made when I am in love and because I am in love, to be true to the beloved as long as I live, commits me to being true even if I cease to be in love. A promise must be about things that I can do, about actions: No one can promise to go on feeling in a certain way. He might as well promise never to have a headache or always to feel hungry."

By C. S. Lewis

"If the old fairy-tale ending 'They lived happily ever after' is taken to mean 'They felt for the next fifty years exactly as they felt the day before they were married,' then it says what probably never was nor ever would be true, and would be highly undesirable if it were. Who could bear to live in that excitement for even five years? What would become of your work, your appetite, your sleep, your friendships? But, of course, ceasing to be 'in love' need not mean ceasing to love. Love in this second sense—love as distinct from 'being in love'—is not merely a feeling. It is a deep unity, maintained by the will and deliberately strengthened by habit; reinforced by (in Christian marriages) the grace which both partners ask, and receive, from God. They can have this love for each other even at those moments when they do not like each other; as you love yourself even when you do not like yourself. They can retain this love even when each would easily, if they allowed themselves, be 'in love' with someone else. 'Being in love' first moved them to promise fidelity: This quieter love enables them to keep the promise. It is on this love that the engine of marriage is run: being in love was the explosion that started it."

Cultural Wedding Readings

Joining your lives together almost means melding your histories, traditions and culture. Adding a cultural reading to your ceremony is a great way to honour your family and heritage.

Aztec Love Song

"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."

A Navajo Chant

"Rising Sun! when you shall shine,
Make this house happy,
Beautify it with your beams;
Make this house happy,
God of Dawn! your white blessings spread;
Make this house happy.
Guard the doorway from all evil;
Make this house happy.
White corn! Abide herein;
Make this house happy.
Soft wealth! May this hut cover much;
Make this house happy.
Heavy Rain! Your virtues send;
Make this house happy.
Corn Pollen! Bestow content;
Make this house happy.
May peace around this family dwell;
Make this house happy."

Eskimo Love Song

"You are my husband/wife.
My legs run because of you.
My feet 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."

Shoshone Love Poem

"Fair is the white star of twilight, and the sky clearer at the day's end;
But she is fairer, and she is dearer,
She, my heart's friend.
Fair is the white star of twilight, and the moon roving to the sky's end;

But she is fairer, better worth loving,
She, my heart's friend."

Ancient Hawaiian Marriage Prayer – Anon

Before we met, you and I were halves unjoined except in the wide rivers of our minds. We were each other's distant shore, the opposite wings of a bird, the other half of a seashell. We did not know the other then, did not know our determination to keep alive the cry of one riverbank to the other. We were apart, yet connected in our ignorance of each other, like two apples sharing a common tree. Remember?

I knew you existed long before you understood my desire to join my freedom to yours. Our paths collided long enough for our indecision to be swallowed up by the greater need of love. When you came to me, the sun surged towards the earth and moon escaped from darkness to bless the union of two spirits, so alike that the creator had designed them for life's endless circle.

Beloved partner, keeper of my heart's odd secrets, clothed in summer blossoms so the icy hand of winter never touches us. I thank your patience. Our joining is like a tree to earth, a cloud to sky and even more. We are the reason the world can laugh on its battlefields and rise from the ashes of its selfishness to hear me say, in this time, this place, this way – I loved you best of all.

Cherokee Prayer

"God in heaven above please protect the ones we love.
We honor all you created as we pledge our hearts and lives together.
We honor mother earth—and ask for our marriage to be abundant and grown 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 that we sail through 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 you created, we pray for harmony and true happiness as we forever grow young together."

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

Irish Blessing

May your mornings bring joy and your evenings bring peace.
May your troubles grow few as your blessings increase.
May the saddest day of your future
Be no worse than the happiest day of your past.
May your hands be forever clasped in friendship
And your hearts joined forever in love.
Your lives are very special,
God has touched you in many ways.
May his blessings rest upon you
And fill all your coming days.

Scottish Wedding Prayer

Lord help us to remember when
We first met and the strong
love that grew between us.
To work that love into
practical things so that nothing
can divide us.
We ask for words both kind
and loving and hearts always
ready to ask forgiveness
as well as to forgive.
Dear Lord, we put our
marriage into your hands

A Chinese Wedding Poem

“I want to be your friend forever and ever.
When the hills are all flat
And the rivers run dry;
When the trees blossom in winter
And the snow falls in summer;
When heaven and earth mix,
Not till then will I part from you.”

Buddhist Blessing

“Do not deceive, do not despise each other anywhere. Do not be angry nor bear secret resentments; for as a mother will risk her life and watches over her child, so boundless be your love to all, so tender, kind and mild.

Cherish goodwill right and left, early and late, and without hindrance, without stint, be free of hate and envy, while standing and walking and sitting down, whatever you have in mind, the rule of life that is always best is to be loving-kind.”

Apache Wedding Blessing

Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be shelter for the other. Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other. Now there will be no loneliness, for each of you will be companion to the other. Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before you. May beauty surround you both in the journey ahead and through all the years, may happiness be your companion and your days together be good and long upon the earth. Treat yourselves and each other with respect, and remind yourselves often of what brought you together. Give the highest priority to the tenderness, gentleness and kindness that your connection deserves. When frustration, difficult and fear assail your relationship – as they threaten all relationships at one time or another – remember to focus on what is right between you, not only the part which seems wrong. In this way, you can ride out the storms when clouds hide the face of the sun in your lives – remembering that even if you lose sight of it for a moment, the sun is still there. And if each of you takes responsibility for the quality of your life together, it will be marked by abundance and delight.

Apache Marriage Blessing #2 – Anon

Now you will feel no rain,
for each of you will be shelter for the other.
Now you will feel no cold,
for each of you will be warmth to the other.
Now there will be no loneliness,
for each of you will be companion to the other.
Now you are two persons,
But there is only one life before you.
May beauty surround you both in the journey ahead and through all the years.
May happiness be your companion to the place where the river meets the sun.
And may your days be good and long upon the earth.

"One Swaying Being" —translated by Coleman Barks

"Love is not condescension, never that, nor books, nor any marking on paper, nor what people say of each other. Love is a tree with branches reaching into eternity and roots set deep in eternity, and no trunk! Have you seen it? The mind cannot. Your desiring cannot. The longing you feel for this love comes from inside you. When you become the Friend, your

longing will be as the man in the ocean who holds to a piece of wood. Eventually, wood, man, and ocean become one swaying being, Sham Tabriz, the secret of God."

"The love of God, unutterable and perfect, flows into a pure soul the way light rushes into a transparent object. The more love we receive, the more love we shine forth; so that, as we grow clear and open, the more complete the joy of loving is. And the more souls who resonate together, the greater the intensity of their love, for, mirror-like, each soul reflects the other."

—*Dante Alighieri*

"My True Love Hath My Heart" —*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 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."

"This Marriage" —*Rumi*

"May these vows and this marriage be blessed.
May it be sweet milk,
this marriage, like wine and halvah.

May this marriage offer fruit and shade, like the date palm.
May this marriage be full of laughter,
our every day a paradise.
May this marriage be a sign of compassion,
a seal of happiness here and hereafter.

May this marriage have a fair face and a good name,
an omen as welcome
as the moon in a clear blue sky.
I am out of words to describe
how spirit mingles in this marriage."

By Christina Rossetti

"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."

Love is enough: though the World be a-waning By William Morris

"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."

Let me not to the marriage of true minds — William Shakespeare

"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."

"Love, I Assure You, Is Passion" —J. Krishnamurti

"You cannot be sensitive if you are not passionate. Do not be afraid of that word passion. Most religious books, most gurus, swamis, leaders, and all the rest of them say, 'Don't have passion.' But if you have no passion, how can you be sensitive to the ugly, to the beautiful, to the whispering leaves, to the sunset, to a smile, to a cry? Sirs, please listen to me, and do not ask how to acquire passion... I am talking of something entirely different—a passion that loves. Love is a state in which there is no 'me'... And how can one love if one is not passionate? Without passion, how can one be sensitive? To be sensitive is to feel your neighbor sitting next to you; it is to see the ugliness of the town with its squalor, its filth, its poverty, and to see the beauty of the river, the sea, the sky. If you are not passionate, how can you be sensitive to all that? How can you feel a smile, a tear? Love, I assure you, is passion."

"When There Is Love, Self Is Not" —J. Krishnamurti

"A man rich with worldly riches, or a man rich in knowledge and belief, will never know anything but darkness, and will be the center of all mischief and misery. But if you and I, as individuals, can see this whole working of the self, then we shall know what love is. I assure you that is the only reformation which can possibly change the world. Love is not the self. Self cannot recognize love. You say, 'I love,' but then, in the very saying of it, in the very experiencing of it, love is not. But, when you know love, self is not. When there is love, self is not."

Movie Wedding Readings

From *Shall We Dance*

"We need a witness to our lives. There's a billion people on the planet... I mean, what does any one life really mean? But in a marriage, you're promising to care about everything. The good things, the bad things, the terrible things, the mundane things... all of it, all of the time, every day. You're saying 'Your life will not go unnoticed because I will notice it. Your life will not go un-witnessed because I will be your witness.'"

Movie Readings: From *The Notebook*

"Well, that's what we do. We fight. You tell me when I am being an arrogant son of a bitch and I tell you when you are being a pain in the ass—which you are, 99 percent of the time. I'm not afraid to hurt your feelings. You have like a two second rebound rate, and you're back doing the next pain-in-the-ass thing... So it's not gonna be easy. It's gonna be really hard. We're gonna have to work at this every day, but I want to do that because I want you. I want all of you, forever, you and me, every day."

Quote from Sleepless In Seattle

“It was a million tiny little things that, when you added them all up, they meant we were supposed to be together ... and I knew it. I knew it the very first time I touched her. It was like coming home ... only to no home I’d ever known ... I was just taking her hand to help her out of a car and I knew. It was like ... magic.”

Quote From How I Met Your Mother

“When you love someone you just...don’t stop. Ever. Even when people roll their eyes or call you crazy. Even then. Especially then. You just...you don’t give up... If I could just, you know, take the whole world’s advice and move on and find someone else, that wouldn’t be love. That would be...some other disposable thing that is not worth fighting for. But that is not what this is.”

Quote from How I Met Your Mother #2

“But love doesn’t make sense. You can’t logic your way into or out of it. Love is totally nonsensical. But we have to keep doing it, or else we’re lost and love is dead and humanity should just pack it in. Because love is the best thing we do.”

Quote from When Harry Met Sally

“I came here tonight because when you realize you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible.”

The Princess Bride – William Goldman

“Do I love you? My God, if your love were a grain of sand, mine would be a universe of beaches...I have stayed these years in my hovel because of you. I have taught myself languages because of you. I have made my body strong because I thought you might be pleased by a strong body. I have lived my life with only the prayer that some sudden dawn you might glance in my direction. I have not known a moment in years when the sight of you did not send my heart careening against my rib cage. I have not known a night when your visage did not accompany me to sleep. There has not been a morning when you did not flutter behind my waking eyelids...”

I love you. Okay? Want it louder? I love you. Spell it out, should I? I ell-oh-vee-ee why-oh-you. Want it backward? You love I...

Sex and the City

*“His hello was the end of her endings.
Her laugh was their first step down the aisle.
His hand would be hers to hold forever.
His forever was as simple as her smile.”*

He said she was what was missing.
She said instantly she knew.
She was a question to be answered.
And his answer was "I do."

Cinderella

"So this is love
So this is what makes life divine
I'm all aglow
And now I know
The key to all heaven is mine
My heart has wings
And I can fly
I'll touch every star in the sky
So this is the miracle
That I've been dreaming of
So this is love."

Always, by Lang Leav

"You were you and I was I;
we were two before our time
I was yours, before I knew,
and you have always
been mine too."

100 Years of Solitude, by Gabriel García Márquez

"Madly in love after so many years ... they enjoyed the miracle of loving each other as much at the table as in bed, and they grew to be so happy that even when they were two worn-out old people they kept on blooming like little children and playing together like dogs."

When Harry Met Sally

"I love that you get cold when it's 71 degrees out. I love that it takes you an hour and a half to order a sandwich. I love that you get a little crinkle above your nose when you're looking at me like I'm nuts. I love that after I spend the day with you, I can still smell your perfume on my clothes. And I love that you are the last person I want to talk to before I go to sleep at night. And it's not because I'm lonely, and it's not because it's New Year's Eve. I came here tonight because when you realize you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible."

The Wedding Singer (Adam Sandler)

“I want to make you smile whenever you’re sad, to carry you around when your arthritis is bad. All I want to do is grow old with you. I’ll get your medicine when your tummy aches, Build you a fire if the furnace breaks. Oh, it could be so nice, growing old with you I’ll miss you Kiss you Give you my coat when you are cold Need you Feed you Even let you hold the remote control So let me do the dishes in our kitchen sink Put you to bed if you’ve had too much to drink I could be the man who grows old with you I want to grow old with you.”

Friends

“For so long I wondered if I would ever find my prince, my soulmate. Then three years ago, at another wedding, I turned to a friend for comfort. And instead, I found everything that I’d ever been looking for my whole life. And now here we are with our future before us, and I only want to spend it with you, my prince, my soulmate, my friend.”

Excerpt Quote from Yvaine in Stardust

“You know when I said I knew little about love? That wasn’t true. I know a lot about love. I’ve seen it, centuries and centuries of it, and it was the only thing that made watching your world bearable. All those wars. Pain, lies, hate it made me want to turn away and never look down again. But when I see the way that mankind loves you could search to the furthest reaches of the universe and never find anything more beautiful. So yes, I know that love is unconditional.”

The Notebook by Nicholas Sparks

“I am nothing special; just a common man with common thoughts, and I’ve led a common life. There are no monuments dedicated to me and my name will soon be forgotten. But in one respect I have succeeded as gloriously as anyone who’s ever lived: I’ve loved another with all my heart and soul; and to me, this has always been enough.”

The Notebook – Nicholas Sparks

“Poets often describe love as an emotion that we can’t control, one that overwhelms logic and common sense. That’s what it was like for me. I didn’t plan on falling in love with you, and I doubt if you planned on falling in love with me. But once we met, it was clear that neither of us could control what was happening to us. We fell in love, despite our differences, and once we did, something rare and beautiful was created. For me, love like that has happened only once, and that’s why every minute we spent together has been seared in my memory.”

Extract from Doctor Zhivago – Boris Pasternak

Oh, what a love it was, utterly free, unique, like nothing else on earth! Their thoughts were like other people’s songs.

They loved each other, not driven by necessity, by the ‘blaze of passion’ often falsely ascribed to love. They loved each other because everything around them willed it, the trees and the clouds and the sky over their heads and the earth under their feet. Perhaps their

surrounding world, the strangers they met in the street, the wide expanses they saw on their walks, the rooms in which they lived or met, took more delight in their love than they themselves did.

Extract from *Les Misérables* – 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.

***From The Alchemist* —Paulo Coelho**

"When he looked into her dark eyes, and saw that her lips were poised between a laugh and silence, 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. Something that exerted the same force whenever two pairs of eyes met, as had theirs here at the well. She smiled, and that was certainly an omen—the omen he had been awaiting, without even knowing he was, for all his life. The omen he had sought to find with his sheep and in his books, in the crystals and in the silence of the desert."

"It was the pure Language of the World. It required no explanation, just as the universe needs none as it travels through endless time. 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. He was more certain of it than of anything in the world. He had been told by his parents and grandparents that he must fall in love and really know a person before becoming committed. But maybe people who felt that way had never learned the universal language. Because, when you know that 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, and their eyes meet, 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."

Victor Hugo (from Les Misérables)

"The future belongs to hearts even more than it does to minds. Love, that is the only thing that can occupy and fill eternity. In the infinite, the inexhaustible is requisite. "Love participates of the soul itself. It is of the same nature. Like it, it is the divine spark; like it, it is incorruptible, indivisible, imperishable. It is a point of fire that exists within us, which is immortal and infinite, which nothing can confine, and which nothing can extinguish. We feel

it burning even to the very marrow of our bones, and we see it beaming in the very depths of heaven."

"Oh Love! Adorations! Voluptuousness of two minds which understand each other, of two hearts which exchange with each other, of two glances which penetrate each other! You will come to me, will you not, bliss! Strolls by twos in the solitudes! Blessed and radiant days! I have sometimes dreamed that from time to time hours detached themselves from the lives of the angels and came here below to traverse the destinies of men."

"God can add nothing to the happiness of those who love, except to give them endless duration. After a life of love, an eternity of love is, in fact, an augmentation; but to increase in intensity even the ineffable felicity which love bestows on the soul even in this world, is impossible, even to God. God is the plenitude of heaven; love is the plenitude of man. 'You look at a star for two reasons, because it is luminous, and because it is impenetrable. You have beside you a sweeter radiance and a greater mystery, woman.'"

"All of us, whoever we may be, have our respirable beings. We lack air and we stifle. Then we die. To die for lack of love is horrible. Suffocation of the soul."

"When love has fused and mingled two beings in a sacred and angelic unity, the secret of life has been discovered so far as they are concerned; they are no longer anything more than the two boundaries of the same destiny; they are no longer anything but the two wings of the same spirit. Love, soar."

"On the day when a woman as she passes before you emits light as she walks, you are lost, you love. But one thing remains for you to do: to think of her so intently that she is constrained to think of you."

"What love commences can be finished by God alone."

"True love is in despair and is enchanted over a glove lost or a handkerchief found, and eternity is required for its devotion and its hopes. It is composed both of the infinitely great and the infinitely little."

"If you are a stone, be adamant; if you are a plant, be the sensitive plant; if you are a man, be love."

"Nothing suffices for love. We have happiness, we desire paradise; we possess paradise, we desire heaven."

"Oh ye who love each other, all this is contained in love. Understand how to find it there. Love has contemplation as well as heaven, and more than heaven, it has voluptuousness."

By Julia Butterfly Hill

"The trees in the storm don't try to stand up straight and tall and erect. They allow themselves to bend and be blown with the wind. They understand the power of letting go... Those trees and those branches that try too hard to stand up strong and straight are the ones that break. Now is not the time for you to be strong... or you, too, will break. Learn the power of the trees. Let it flow. Let it go. That is the way you are going to make it through this storm. And that is the way to make it through the storms of life."

Love Me Tender, by Elvis Presley, Vera Matson

Love me tender, love me sweet
Never let me go
You have made my life complete
And I love you so
Love me tender, love me true
All my dreams fulfill
For my darling I love you
And I always will
Love me tender, love me long
Take me to your heart
For it's there that I belong
And will never part
Love me tender, love me true
All my dreams fulfill
For my darling I love you
And I always will
Love me tender, love me dear
Tell me you are mine
I'll be yours through all the years
'Til the end of time
Love me tender, love me true
All my dreams fulfill
For my darling I love you
And I always will

Every Day by David Levithan

"This is what love does: It makes you want to rewrite the world. It makes you want to choose the characters, build the scenery, guide the plot. The person you love sits across from you, and you want to do everything in your power to make it possible, endlessly possible. And when it's just the two of you, alone in a room, you can pretend that this is how it is, this is how it will be."

A History of Love by Nicole Krauss

“Once upon a time, there was a boy. He lived in a village that no longer exists, in a house that no longer exists, on the edge of a field that no longer exists, where everything was discovered, and everything was possible. A stick could be a sword, a pebble could be a diamond, a tree, a castle. Once upon a time, there was a boy who lived in a house across the field, from a girl who no longer exists. They made up a thousand games. She was queen and he was king. In the autumn light, her hair shone like a crown.”

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 one there, and not gone away; all other things were unreal. We slept when we were tired and if we woke the other one woke too so one was not 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.”

Excerpt from Jasper Jones by Craig Silvey

“What I’m feeling, I think, is joy. And it’s been some time since I’ve felt that blinkered rush of happiness. This might be one of those rare events that lasts, one that’ll be remembered and recalled as months and years wind and ravel. One of those sweet, significant moments that leaves a footprint in your mind. A photograph couldn’t ever tell its story. It’s like something you have to live to understand.

The Fault in Our Stars by John Green

“I am, he said. He was staring at me, and I could see the corners of his eyes crinkling. ‘I’m in love with you, and I’m not in the business of denying myself the simple pleasure of saying true things. I’m in love with you, and I know that love is just a shout into the void, and that oblivion is inevitable, and that we’re all doomed and that there will come a day when all our labor has been returned to dust, and I know the sun will swallow the only earth we’ll ever have, and I am in love with you.”

Traditional Cultural Wedding Readings

Traditional Irish Blessing

“May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.
May God be with you and bless you;
May you see your children’s children.

May you be poor in misfortune,
Rich in blessings,
May you know nothing but happiness
From this day forward.
May the road rise to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the warm rays of sun fall upon your home
And may the hand of a friend always be near.
May green be the grass you walk on,
May blue be the skies above you,
May pure be the joys that surround you,
May true be the hearts that love you.”

Traditional Irish Blessing

May the raindrops fall lightly on your brow
May the soft winds freshen your spirit
May the sunshine brighten your heart
May the burdens of the day rest lightly upon you
And may God enfold you in the mantle of His love.
May the road rise to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the sun shine warm upon your face
and the rain fall soft upon your fields
And until we meet again my friend
May God hold you in the palm of his hand
May God be with you and bless you
May you see your children’s children
May you be poor in misfortunes and rich in Blessings
May you know nothing but happiness
from this day forward
May green be the grass you walk on
May blue be the skies above you,
And from this day forward.
May the joys of today
Be those of tomorrow.

Lyrics from “Red Right Ankle” by the Decemberists

“This is the story of your red right ankle,
and how it came to meet your leg
and how the muscle, bone, and sinews tangled,

and how the skin was softly shaped,
and how it whispered, "Oh, adhere to me
for we are bound by symmetry.
And whatever differences our lives have been
we together make a limb."
This is the story of your red right ankle."

"II" from "Twenty-One Love Poems" by Adrienne Rich

"I wake up in your bed. I know I have been dreaming.
Much earlier, the alarm broke us from each other,
you've been at your desk for hours. I know what I dreamed:
our friend the poet comes into my room
where I've been writing for days,
drafts, carbons, poems are scattered everywhere,
and I want to show her one poem
which is the poem of my life. But I hesitate,
and wake. You've kissed my hair
to wake me."

Two Fragments by Sappho

"Love holds me captive again
and I tremble with bittersweet longing
As a gale on the mountainside bends the oak tree
I am rocked by my love"

Excerpts from "The Good-Morrow" by John Donne

"I wonder by my troth, what thou and I
Did, till we loved? were we not weaned till then?
But sucked on country pleasures, childishly?
Or snorted we in the Seven Sleepers' den?
'Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be;
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee."

"To Diego and Frida" A Toast by Tina Modotti Excerpt

"I don't believe in marriage. No, I really don't. Let me be clear about that. I think at worst it's
a hostile political act, a way for small-minded men to keep women in the house and out of
the way, wrapped up in the guise of tradition and conservative religious nonsense. At best,
it's a happy delusion."

Excerpt from the Sandman by Neil Gaiman

“Have you ever been in love? Horrible isn’t it? It makes you so vulnerable. It opens your chest and it opens up your heart and it means that someone can get inside you and mess you up. You build up all these defenses, you build up a whole suit of armor so that nothing can hurt you, then one stupid person, no different from any other stupid person, wanders into your stupid life... You give them a piece of you.”

Some Things Go Together by Charlotte Zolotow

“Pairs of things that go together. Pigeons with park. Stars with dark. Sand with sea and you with me.... Hats with heads. Pillows with beds. Sky with blue and me with you.”

The Little Yellow Leaf by Carin Berger

“And then, high up on an icy branch, a scarlet flash. One more leaf holding tight.” “You’re here?” called the Little Yellow Leaf. “I am,” said the Little Scarlet Leaf. “Like me!” said the Little Yellow Leaf. Neither spoke. Finally “Will you?” asked the Little Scarlet Leaf. “I will!” said the Little Yellow Leaf. And one, two, three, they let go and soared.”

BY Edward Monkton

“That still and settled place
In that still and settled place
There’s nobody but you
You’re where I breathe my oxygen
You’re where I see my view
And when the world feels full of noise
My heart knows what to do
It finds that still and settled place
And dances there with you.”

That’s Relativity by Albert Einstein

“Gravitation cannot be held responsible for people falling in love.
How on earth can you explain in terms of chemistry and physics so important a biological phenomenon as first love?
Put your hand on a stove for a minute and it seems like an hour.
Sit with that special girl for an hour and it seems like a minute. That’s relativity.”

They Brought you to me by Pablo Neruda

“I love your feet because they have wandered over the earth and through the wind and water until they brought you to me.”

Mutual Weirdness by Robert Fulghum

“We are all a little weird and life’s a little weird, and when we find someone whose weirdness is compatible with ours, we join up with them and fall into mutual weirdness and call it love.”

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 a permanent commitment to another and to one’s inner self.”

From The Road by Cormac McCarthy

“Lying under such a myriad of stars. The sea’s black horizon. He rose and walked out and stood barefoot in the sand and watched the pale surf appear all down the shore and roll and crash and darken again. When he went back to the fire he knelt and smoothed her hair as she slept and he said if he were God he would have made the world just so and no different.”

Excerpt from Your Personal Penguin by Sandra Boynton

“I like you a lot. You’re funny and kind. So let me explain what I have in mind. I want to be Your Personal Penguin. I want to walk right by your side. I want to be Your Personal Penguin. I want to travel with you far and wide.”

I Love You by Freya Matthews

“This is the only sacred word in my keeping. This is the last trace, the last print in our hearts’ waste, of the migration of a thousand traditions, a thousand embodiments of wisdom. I stand with useless hands, and out of the transparency of my poverty, I offer you this, my single gift.”

The Love Of God by Dante Alighieri

“The love of God, unutterable and perfect, flows into a pure soul the way light rushes into a transparent object. The more love we receive, the more love we shine forth; so that, as we grow clear and open, the more complete the joy of loving is. And the more souls who resonate together, the greater the intensity of their love, for, mirror-like, each soul reflects the other.”

Excerpt from 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.

Wild Awake by Hilary T. Smith

“People are like cities: We all have alleys and gardens and secret rooftops and places where daisies sprout between the sidewalk cracks, but most of the time all we let each other see is a postcard glimpse of a skyline or a polished square. Love lets you find those hidden places in another person, even the ones they didn’t know were there, even the ones they wouldn’t have thought to call beautiful themselves.”

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. .”

Adam Bede by George Eliot

“What greater thing is there for two human souls, than to feel that they are joined for life — to strengthen each other in all labor, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting?”

All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten – Robert Fulgham

“All of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in Kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at nursery school. These are the things I learned...”

Share everything.

Play fair.

Don’t hit people.

Put things back where you found them.

Clean up your own mess.

Don’t take things that aren’t yours.

Say sorry when you hurt somebody.

Wash your hands before you eat.

Flush.

Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Give them to someone who feels sad.

Live a balanced life.

Learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day.

Take a nap every afternoon.

Be aware of wonder.

Remember the little seed in the plastic cup? The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.

Everything you need to know is in there somewhere.

And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.”

Have You Got a Biro I Can Borrow? – Clive James

“Have you got a biro I can borrow?

I’d like to write your name

From the belt of Orion to the share of the Plough

The snout of the Bear to the belly of the Lion

So when the sun goes down tomorrow

There’ll never be a minute

Not a moment of the night that hasn’t got you in it”

Soul Mates – Lang Leav

“I don’t know how you are so familiar to me—or why it feels less like I am getting to know you and more as though I am remembering who you are. How every smile, every whisper brings me closer to the impossible conclusion that I have known you before, I have loved you before—in another time, a different place, some other existence.”

Extract from a Letter by Johnny Cash to June Carter

'We get old and get used to each other. We think alike. We read each others' minds. We know what the other wants without asking. Sometimes we irritate each other a little bit.

Maybe sometimes take each other for granted. But once in a while, like today, I meditate on it and realise how lucky I am to share my life with the greatest woman I ever met.'

I Wanna Be Yours by John Cooper Clarke

I wanna be your vacuum cleaner

breathing in your dust

I wanna be your Ford Cortina

I will never rust

If you like your coffee hot

let me be your coffee pot

You call the shots

I wanna be yours

I wanna be your raincoat

for those frequent rainy days

I wanna be your dreamboat

when you want to sail away

Let me be your teddy bear

take me with you anywhere

I don't care

I wanna be yours

I wanna be your electric meter

I will not run out

I wanna be the electric heater

you'll get cold without

I wanna be your setting lotion

*hold your hair in deep devotion
Deep as the deep Atlantic ocean*

that's how deep is my devotion.'

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

"First of all, it's a big responsibility,

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.
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."

16) The Five People You Meet in Heaven – Mitch Albom

“People say they ‘find’ love, as if it were an object hidden under a rock. But love takes many forms, and it is never the same for any man and woman. What people find then is a certain love. And Eddie found a certain love with Marguerite, a grateful love, a deep but quiet love, one that he knew, above all else, was irreplaceable.”

The One – Rupi Kaur

They should feel like home

A place that grounds your life

Where you go to take the day off

Extract from A Farewell to Arms – 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 one there, and not gone away; all other things were unreal. We slept when we were tired and if we woke the other one woke too so one was not 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.

Marriage is Being in Love For the Rest of Your Life – Chris Ardis

Marriage is love walking hand in hand together. It’s laughing with each other about silly little things and learning to discuss big things with care and tenderness. In marriage, love is trusting each other when you’re apart. It’s getting over disappointments and hurts, knowing that these are present in all relationships. It’s the realisation that there is no one else in this world that you’d rather be with than the one you’re married to. It’s thinking of new things to do together; it’s growing old together. Marriage is being in love for the rest of your life.

Close Close All Night – Elizabeth Bishop

Close, close all night

the lovers keep.

They turn together

*in their sleep,
Close as two pages*

in a book

that read each other

*in the dark.
Each knows all*

the other knows,

learned by heart

from head to toes.

From Beginning to End – Robert Fulghum

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.

The Art of Marriage – Wilfred 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 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.

Be Love Now by Ram Dass

Imagine feeling more love from someone than you have ever known. You're being loved even more than your mother loved you when you were an infant, more than you were ever loved by your father, your child, or your most intimate lover—anyone. This lover doesn't need anything from you, isn't looking for personal gratification, and only wants your complete fulfillment.

You are loved just for being who you are, just for existing. You don't have to do anything to earn it. Your shortcomings, your lack of self-esteem, physical perfection, or social and economic success— none of that matters. No one can take this love away from you, and it will always be here.

Imagine that being in this love is like relaxing endlessly into a warm bath that surrounds and supports your every movement, so that every thought and feeling is permeated by it. You feel as though you are dissolving into love.

This love is actually part of you; it is always flowing through you. It's like the subatomic texture of the universe, the dark matter that connects everything. When you tune in to that flow, you will feel it in your own heart—not your physical heart or your emotional heart, but your spiritual heart, the place you point to in your chest when you say, "I am."

This is your deeper heart, your intuitive heart. It is the place where the higher mind, pure awareness, the subtler emotions, and your soul identity all come together and you connect to the universe, where presence and love are.

Unconditional love really exists in each of us. It is part of our deep inner being. It is not so much an active emotion as a state of being. It's not "I love you" for this or that reason, not "I love you if you love me." It's love for no reason, love without an object. It's just sitting in love, a love that incorporates the chair and the room and permeates everything around. The thinking mind is extinguished in love.

If I go into the place in myself that is love and you go into the place in yourself that is love, we are together in love. Then you and I are truly in love, the state of being love. That's the entrance to Oneness.

Excerpt from The Alchemist

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.

Love is an Adventure by Pierre Tielhart de Chardin

“Love is an adventure and a conquest. It survives and develops like the universe itself only by perpetual discovery. The only right love is that between couples whose passion leads them both, one through the other, to a higher possession of their being. Put your faith in the spirit which dwells between the two of you. You have each offered yourself to the other as a boundless field of understanding, of enrichment, of mutually increased sensibility. You will meet above all by entering into and constantly sharing one another's thoughts, affections, and dreams. There alone, as you know, in spirit, which is arrived through flesh, you will find no disappointments, no limits. There alone the skies are ever open for your love; there alone lies the great road ahead.”

Blessing for a Marriage by James Dillet Freeman

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.

Marriage Joins Two People in the Circle of Its Love By Edmund O'Neil

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.

Blessing of the Hands by Unknown

These are the hands of your partner, young and strong and full of love, holding your hands 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 hold you and comfort you in grief and uncertainty. These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes, tears of sorrow and joy. These are the hands that will hold your family as one. These are the hands that will give you strength. And 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.

What is Love by Unknown

Sooner or later we begin to understand that love is more than verses on valentines and romance in the movies. We begin to know that love is here and now, real and true, the most

important thing in our lives. For love is the creator of our favorite memories and the foundation of our fondest dreams. Love is a promise that is always kept, a fortune that can never be spent, a seed that can flourish in even the most unlikely of places. And this radiance that never fades, this mysterious and magical joy, is the greatest treasure of all – one known only by those who love.

Excerpt from *The Gift of 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 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.

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.

On Marriage from *The Prophet* by Khalil Gibran

Then Almitra spoke again and said, "And what of Marriage, master?"

And he answered saying:

–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 "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 "

I Carry Your Heart With Me by 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 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'll Be There For You by Louise Cuddon

I'll be there, my darling, through thick and through thin
When your mind's in a mess and your head's in a spin
When your plane's been delayed, and you've missed the last train
When life is just threatening to drive you insane
When your thrilling whodunit has lost its last page
When somebody tells you, you're looking your age
When your coffee's too cool, and your wine is too warm
When the forecast said, 'Fine,' but you're out in a storm
When your quick break hotel, turns into a slum
And your holiday photos show only your thumb
When you park for five minutes in a resident's bay
And return to discover you've been towed away
When the jeans that you bought in hope or in haste
Just stick on your hips and don't reach round your waist
When the food you most like brings you out in red rashes
When as soon as you boot up the bloody thing crashes
So my darling, my sweetheart, my dear...
When you break a rule, when you act the fool
When you've got the flu, when you're in a stew
When you're last in the queue, don't feel blue
'Cause I'm telling you, I'll be there.

Excerpt from Mountain Thoughts by John Muir

Wonderful how completely everything in wild nature fits into us, as if truly part and parent of us. The sun shines not on us but in us. The rivers flow not past, but through us, thrilling, tingling, vibrating every finer and cell of the substance of our bodies as well as our souls, and every bird song, wind song, and tremendous storm song of the rocks in the heart of the mountains is our song, our very own and sings our love.

Rolfe Gerhardt Poem by Rolfe Gerhardt

Let this be a reminder that you are guaranteed by the seasons of nature a significant winter each year, and you are guaranteed by the whimsies of life more winters of the soul than you can now imagine. So I am bringing before you these words to ask you to remember the springtimes that should follow each winter, springtimes that are not always given to you but sometimes must be created by you even when it seems impossible. Find the time to arise

and come away with each other; be romantic; listen to the voices of birds that aren't there; laugh and cry deeply; and be silly as a daisy in spite of the chill and dark times that must come into everyone's life. That is the love I am wishing you. As much of any of us would wish otherwise, there must be winters in your life, so we pray for your springtimes as well.

Scientific Romance by Tim Pratt

If I became lost in
the multiverse, exploring
infinite parallel dimensions, my
only criterion for settling
down somewhere would be
whether or not I could find you:
and once I did, I'd stay there even
if it was a world ruled by giant spider-
priests, or one where killer
robots won the Civil War, or even
a world where sandwiches
were never invented, because
you'd make it the best
of all possible worlds anyway,
and plus
we could get rich
off inventing sandwiches.
If the Singularity comes
and we upload our minds into a vast
computer simulation of near-infinite
complexity and perfect resolution,
and become capable of experiencing any
fantasy, exploring worlds bound only
by our enhanced imaginations,
I'd still spend at least 1021 processing
cycles a month just sitting
on a virtual couch with you,
watching virtual TV,
eating virtual fajitas,
holding virtual hands,
and wishing
for the real thing.

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 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 adults' deepens 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.

The Amber Spyglass by Philip Pullman

I will love you forever; whatever happens. Till I die and after I die, and when I find my way out of the land of the dead, I'll drift about forever, all my atoms, till I find you again...I'll be looking for you, every moment, every single moment. And when we do find each other again, we'll cling together so tight that nothing and no one'll ever tear us apart. Every atom of me and every atom of you...We'll live in birds and flowers and dragonflies and pine trees and in clouds and in those little specks of light you see floating in sunbeams...And when they use our atoms to make new lives, they won't just be able to take one, they'll have to take two, one of you and one of me.

The Day Sky by Hafiz

Let us be like
Two falling stars in the day sky.
Let no one know of our sublime beauty
As we hold hands with God
And burn

Into a sacred existence that defies—
That surpasses

Every description of ecstasy
And love.

The Invitation by Oriah Mountain Dreamer

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living.
I want to know what you ache for,
and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are.
I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love,
for your dreams, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon.
I want to know if you have touched the center of your own sorrow,
if you have been opened by life's betrayals
or have become shriveled and closed
for fear of further pain.

I want to know if you can sit with pain,
mine or your own,
without moving to hide it or fade it or fix it.

I want to know if you can be with joy,
mine or your own,
if you can dance with wildness
and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes
without cautioning us to be careful, be realistic,
or to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you're telling me is true
I want to know if you can disappoint another
to be true to yourself
if you can bear the accusation of betrayal
and not betray your own soul.

I want to know
if you can be faithful
and therefore be trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see beauty
even when it is not pretty every day,
and if you can source your life from mysterious presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure,
yours and mine,
and still stand on the edge of a lake
and shout to the silver of the full moon, "Yes"

It doesn't interest me to know where you live
or how much money you have.
I want to know if you can get up after the night of grief and despair,
weary and bruised to the bone,
and do what needs to be done for the children.

It doesn't interest me who you are,
how you came to be here.
I want to know if you will stand in the center of the fire with me
and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied.
I want to know what sustains you from the inside
when all else falls away.
I want to know if you can be alone with yourself,
and if you truly like the company you keep
in the empty moments.

The Privileged Lovers by 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.

Excerpt 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.”

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.

From the Irrational Season by Madeline 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.

I love you 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
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.

Falling in Love is Like Owning a Dog by Taylor Mali

On cold winter nights, love is warm.
It lies between you and lives and breathes
and makes funny noises.
Love can wake you up all hours of the night with its needs.
Love can give 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 gonna mess with you.
Love needs to be fed so it will grow and stay healthy.
Love does not like being left alone for long.
But come home and love is always happy to see you.
Love may break a few things accidentally in its passion for life,
but you can never be mad at love for long.
Love leaves you little surprises here and there.
Love makes messes.
Sometimes you just want to get love fixed.
Sometimes you want to roll up a piece of newspaper
and swat love on the nose,
But then love gives you big kisses,
And you laugh at the little things.
Sometimes love just wants to play.
Running you around the block, leaving 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.
And love brings you together.
People who have nothing in common but love
stop and talk and greet each other on the street.
Most importantly, love needs love, and lots of it.
And in return, love loves you and loves you and never stops.

Love Is by Susan Polis Schutz

Love is
being happy for the other person
when they are happy
being sad for the other person when they are sad
being together in good times
and being together in bad times
Love is the source of strength
Love is
being honest with yourself at all times
being honest with the other person at all times
telling, listening, respecting the truth
and never pretending
Love is the source of reality
Love is
an understanding that is so complete that
you feel as if you are a part of the other person
accepting the other person just the way they are
and not trying to change them to be something else
Love is the source of unity
Love is
the freedom to pursue your own desires
while sharing your experiences with the other person
the growth of one individual alongside of
and together with the growth of another individual
Love is the source of success
Love is
the excitement of planning things together
the excitement of doing things together
Love is the source of the future
Love is
the fury of the storm
the calm of the rainbow
Love is the source of passion
Love is
giving and taking in a daily situation
being patient with each other's needs and desires
Love is the source of sharing
Love is
knowing that the other person
will always be with you regardless of what happens
missing the other person when they are away
but remaining near in heart at all times
Love is the source of security
Love is the source of life

Why Marriage by Dena Acolatse

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 thanks God for me; with someone I feel blessed to hold... Because marriage means opportunity to grow in love and 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... Together we create our marriage... and with this understanding, the possibilities are limitless.

We're All a Little Weird by Robert Fulghum

We're all a little weird. And life is a little weird. And when we find someone whose weirdness is compatible with ours, we join up with them and fall into mutually satisfying weirdness – and call it love – true love.

When I am with you From *The Essential Rumi*, Translated by Coleman Barks

When I am with you, we stay up all night.
When you're not here, I can't go to sleep.

Praise God for these two insomnias!
And the difference between them.

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.

We are the mirror as well as the face in it.
We are tasting the taste this minute
of eternity. We are pain
and what cures pain, both. We are
the sweet cold water and the jar that pours.

I want to hold you close like a lute, so we can cry out with loving.

You would rather throw stones at a mirror?
I am your mirror, and here are the stones.

World Without End Excerpted from *World Without End*, by Freya Matthews

Thou whom my soul lovest.

The sky is shouting hallelujahs as the sun sinks;
The river answers, gives of itself, in a glittering flood.
Thou hast ravished my heart, beloved.

Arms strained wide,
I try to encompass, to take you to me.
I track you in cloud chambers,
Scan you through reflectors and refractors.
Elusive One.
Not a single grassy acre can my heart contain.

Is this love that rushes towards the rim to meet you
A main thread in the inwardness of things?
Without it would the great externality loosen and unravel?
Is it our purpose to see and say that the world is good?

I do not know.
I stand with hands dangling empty at my sides.
I have no wisdom bequeathed to me by ancestors.
The stars are equivocal, and around me
Nature is in sorest travail, weeping.
I love you.

Wedding Readings for Gay Couples

Excerpt from *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 wordy affections, and not to be entangled by any outward prosperity, or by any adversity subdued.”

My True Love by Sir Phillip Sydney

“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.”

Excerpt From *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman

"When I heard at the close of the day how my name had been receiv'd with plaudits in the capitol, still it was not a happy night for me that follow'd,
And else when I carous'd, or when my plans were accomplish'd, still I was not happy,
But the day when I rose at dawn from the bed of perfect health, refresh'd, singing, inhaling
the ripe breath of autumn..."

Excerpt From All through eternity By Rumi

"All through eternity
Beauty unveils His exquisite form
in the solitude of nothingness;
He holds a mirror to His Face
and beholds His own beauty.
He is the knower and the known,
the seer and the seen;
No eye but His own
has ever looked upon this Universe..."

Excerpt From The Arbor By Sappho

"He seems to be a god, that man
Facing you, who leans to be close,
Smiles, and, alert and glad, listens
To your mellow voice
And quickens in love at your laughter
That stings my breasts, jolts my heart
If I dare the shock of a glance..."

Religious Wedding Readings

"The Beloved Lord's Secret Love Song" —translated by Graham M. Schweig

"Hear still further the greatest secret of all, my supreme message: 'You are so much loved by me!' Therefore I shall speak for your well-being."

"Be mindful of me with love offered to me; sacrificing for me, act out of reverence for me. Truly you shall come to me—this I promise you for you are dearly loved by me."

Completely relinquishing all forms of dharma, come to me as your only shelter. I shall grant you freedom from all misfortune—do not despair!"

"Two are better than one: They get a good wage for their labor. If the one falls, the other will lift up his companion. Woe to the solitary man! For if he should fall, he has no one to lift

him up. So also, if two sleep together, they keep each other warm. How can one alone keep warm? Where a lone man may be overcome, two together can resist. A three-ply cord is not easily broken."

Corinthians 13:1-8;13

"If I speak with human tongues and angelic as well, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong, a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and, with full knowledge, comprehend all mysteries, if I have faith great enough to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give everything I have to feed the poor and hand over my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing."

"Love is patient; love is kind. Love is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not inflated. Love is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered; it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. For we know partially and we prophesy partially, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

A Buddhist Marriage Homily

"Nothing happens without a cause. The union of this man and woman has not come about accidentally but is the foreordained result of many past lives. This tie can therefore not be broken or resolved."

"In the future, happy occasions will come as surely as the morning. Difficult times will come as surely as night. When things go joyously, meditate according to the Buddhist tradition. When things go badly, meditate. Meditation in the manner of the Compassionate 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. Your marriage will be firm and lasting if you remember this."

1 Corinthians: 13

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, 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 perseveres.

Matthew 19:4-6

Jesus says: "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning "made them male and female,' and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Ecclesiastes: 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up. Again, if two lie together, they are warm; but how can one be warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him.

Genesis 2:24-28

The Lord God said: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him." So the Lord God formed out of the ground various wild animals and various birds of the air, and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them; whatever the man called each of them would be its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all the wild animals; but none proved to be the suitable partner for the man.

So the Lord God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The Lord God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. When he brought her to the man, the man said:

"This one, at last, is bone of my bones

and flesh of my flesh;

This one shall be called 'woman,'

For out of 'her man' this one has been taken."

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.

Mark 10:6-9

From the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they shall be one flesh: so then they

are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

1 John 4:10

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! Love one another. This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. This is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love, does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us. We love because he first loved us.

Romans 12:9-16

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another.

Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ* dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Canticle of Love (From the United Methodist Hymnal 1989 Pg. 646)

Let love be genuine and live in harmony;
hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good.
Out do one another in showing honor;
be humble and never conceited.
Love is stronger than death
and jealousy is cruel as the grave.
Floods can not drown love and
wealth can not buy it.
Put love above all else;
let Christ's peace rule your hearts.
Always be forgiving,
as Christ has forgiven you.
Love is not jealous or boastful,
arrogant, rude, or stubborn,
irritable, resentful, or possessive.
Love is patient and kind.
Do not love in word or speech only;
love also in deed and truth.
Receive each other in sincerity,
find mercy and grow old together.
Love rejoices in the right;
it bears, believes, hopes,
and endures all things,
for love is faithful and endless.
When the Lord builds the house,
the labor is never in vain.
Happy are those who take refuge in God;
those who serve the Lord are redeemed.

The Prayer by St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make us instruments of your 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;
O Divine Master, 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

Wedding Prayer by Robert Louis Stevenson

Lord, behold our family here assembled.
We thank you for this place in which we dwell,
for the love that unites us,
for the peace accorded us this day,
for the hope with which we expect the morrow,
for the health, the work, the food,
and the bright skies that make our lives delightful;
for our friends in all parts of the earth.
Amen.