

Contemporary Wedding Readings

Saying I Do Means Saying I Will

Author Unknown

1. I will love you even on the days i don't like you
2. I will think less of what I want and more about what you want
3. I will laugh with you, not at you
4. I will support you
5. I will respect you
6. I will stand by you no matter what
7. I will love growing old with you

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 hearts longing.

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

It doesn't interest me what planets are square in 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 down from fear of further pain.

I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own, without moving, to hide it, 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 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 are telling me is true.

I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true 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 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 on the edge of the lake and shout to the silver of the moon in God's presence.

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 a 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 know, or how you came 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 empty moments.

"Why Marriage?"

by Mari Nichols-Haining

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 in friendship...
Because marriage is a discipline
To be added to a list of achievements...
Because marriages do not fail, people fail
When they enter into marriage
Expecting another to make them whole...
Because, knowing this,
I promise myself to take full responsibility
For my spiritual, mental and physical wholeness
I create me, I take half of the responsibility for my marriage
Together we create our marriage...
Because of this understanding
The possibilities are limitless.

Togetherness

Author Unknown

Love is a feeling of beautiful warmth
One person can bring to your heart,
A feeling of loneliness deep down inside
Whenever you must be apart.
Love is a feeling of gladness that comes
From the sight of that one happy smile,
A feeling of comfort you have when you know
There's someone there all the while.
Love is a feeling of such special caring,
A feeling of magic and fun,
A feeling of wonderful closeness you share
with only that one certain one.

What is marriage?

Author Unknown

It's a dream filled with meaning that starts coming true
Because you have someone to share life with you.
It's a loved one beside you whenever you go
Two hearts joined together, by words whispered low.
It's a wonderful blending of laughter and tears.
A warm understanding that deepens with years.
It's saying 'I love you' with words or a glance,
It's caring, it's sharing a lifelong romance.

Always love each other

Larry S Changes

If you can always be as close and happy as today
Yet be secure enough to grow and change along the way;
If you can keep for you alone your love as man and wife
Yet find the time to share your joy with others in your life;
If you can be as one and walk through marriage hand in hand
Yet still support the goals and dreams that each of you has planned;
If you can dare to always go your separate ways together
Then all the wonder of today will stay with you forever.

"Love Is The Most Incredible Of All The Experiences That Touch Our Lives"

Author Unknown

"It creates for us the world that we want to live in.
From the beginning of our lives,
we know that love is the power that comforts and protects us;
It is the one feeling that we can depend upon
to help us through life's ups and downs.
Love is the understanding and security that never changes;
It allows us to be ourselves and feel self confident.
Today, as the two of you join together and commit your love to each other,
remember the lessons of love that you have always known.
Let your love comfort, support and encourage you.
Let your love be the best part of your lives;
Always know that it will make everything better
and it will make your world a place of happiness.

'Love'

Author Unknown

A word that promises so many happy tomorrows,
That gives meaning to everyday moments of sharing ..
That strengthens and supports in difficult time..
That makes a commitment that never ends.
Today is the beginning of a whole new life together
A life of special moments, shared with love.
Today is the beginning of countless bright tomorrows..
Filled with all the special dreams you are dreaming of.
May the happiness you have found together be yours
throughout a lifetime of love."

"If You Can Always Be As Close"

by Larry S. Chengges

"And as happy as today,
Yet be secure enough to grow
And change along the way.
If you can keep for you alone
Your love as man and wife,
Yet find the time to share your joy
With others in your life.
If you can be as one
And walk through marriage hand in hand,
Yet still support the goals and dreams
That each of you have planned.
If you can dare to always go
Your separate ways together,
Then all the wonder of today
Will stay with you forever. "

"Marriage is"

by Anon, 1st century China

" Marriage is a dynamic process of discovery
Marriage is a journey, not an arrival.
In marriage, being the right person is as important
as finding the right person.

Marriage is starting to love, over and over again.
Marriage is a life's work.
Marriage is an art... and like any creative process,
It requires active thought and effort.
We have to learn how to share on many different levels.
We need to practice talking from the heart,
And understanding attitudes as well as words.
Giving generously and receiving graciously
are talents that are available to anyone.
But all these skills need to be developed,
if the marriage picture that we paint is to be anything
approaching the masterpiece intended.

"The Magic Of Love"
by Helen Steiner Rice

"Love is like magic
And it always will be,
For love still remains
Life's sweet mystery!
Love works in ways
That are wondrous and strange
And there's nothing in life
That love cannot change!
Love can transform
The most commonplace
Into beauty and splendour
And sweetness and grace!
Love is unselfish,
Understanding and kind,
For it sees with its heart
And not with its mind!
Love is the answer
That everyone seeks...
Love is the language
That every heart speaks...
Love can't be bought
It is priceless and free,
Love, like pure magic,
Is a sweet mystery!"

Apache Song

Now you will feel no rain,
for each of you will be shelter to the other.

Now you will feel no cold,
for each of you will be warmth to the other.

Now there is no loneliness for you;
now there is no more loneliness.

Now you are two bodies,
but there is only one life before you.

Go now to your dwelling place,
and enter into your days together.

And may your days be good
and long upon the earth.

The Couple's Tao Te Ching: "See Clearly"

Your love is a great mystery.
It is like an eternal lake
whose waters are always still and clear like glass.
Looking into it you can see
the truth about your life.

It is like a deep well
whose waters are cool and pure.
Drinking from it you can be reborn.

You do not have to stir the waters
or dig the well.
Merely see yourself clearly
and drink deeply.

From Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte

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

Quote: Ralph Waldo Emerson

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

Hindu Love Poem

Let the earth of my body be mixed with the earth my beloved walks on.
Let the fire of my body be the brightness in the mirror that reflects his face.
Let the water of my body join the waters of the lotus pool he bathes in.
Let the breath of my body be air lapping his tired limbs.
Let me be sky, and moving through me the cloud-dark Shyama, my beloved.

"When I Am With You" by Rumi

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.

True Love

Author Unknown

Love is generous without need. It is fulfilling in itself. It is courageous.
Love offers kindness with no requirement for return.

True Love is trustworthy.
No matter what happens, we can still love.

From I Corinthians 13:4-7.

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,
does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a
wrong suffered,
does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

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

"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.

"Sudden Light" by Dante Rossetti

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

You have been mine before,
How long ago I may not know:
But just when at that swallow's soar
Your neck turned so,

Some veil did fall---I knew it all of yore.

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

An excerpt from Jazz by Toni Morrison

It's nice when grown people whisper to each other under the covers. Their ecstasy is more leaf-sigh than bray and the body is the vehicle, not the point. They reach, grown people, for something beyond, way beyond and way, way down underneath tissue. They are remembering while they whisper the carnival dolls they won and the Baltimore boats they never sailed on. The pears they let hang on the limb because if they plucked them, they would be gone from there and who else would see that ripeness if they took it away for themselves? How could anybody passing by see them and imagine for themselves what the flavor would be like? Breathing and murmuring under covers both of them have washed and hung out on the line, in a bed they chose together and kept together nevermind one leg was propped on a 1916 dictionary, and the mattress, curved like a preacher's palm asking for witnesses in His name's sake, enclosed them each and every night and muffled their whispering, old-time love. They are under the covers because they don't have to look at themselves anymore; there is no stud's eye, no chippie glance to undo them. They are inward toward the other, bound and joined by carnival dolls and the steamers that sailed from ports they never saw. That is what is beneath their undercover whispers.

From "The Irrational Season" by Madeleine L'Engle

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

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

From "Gift From The Sea" by Anne Morrow Lindbergh

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

The only real security is not in owning or possessing, not in demanding or expecting, not in hoping, even. Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what was in nostalgia, nor forward to what it might be in dread or anticipation, but living in the present relationship and accepting it as it is now. Relationships must be like islands, one must accept them for what they are here and now, within their limits - islands, surrounded and interrupted by the sea, and continually visited and abandoned by the tides.

An excerpt from "A Farewell to Arms" by Ernest Hemingway

At night, there was the feeling that we had come home, feeling no longer alone, waking in the night to find the other 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.

An excerpt from "Plato's Symposium"

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.

"She Walks in Beauty" by Lord Byron

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

"To Be One With Each Other" by George Eliot

What greater thing is there for two human souls
than to feel that they are joined together to strengthen
each other in all labor, to minister to each other in all sorrow,
to share with each other in all gladness,
to be one with each other in the
silent unspoken memories?

"A White Rose" by JB O'Reilly

The red rose whispers of passion,
And the white rose breathes of love;
O, the red rose is a falcon,
And the white rose is a dove.
But I send you a cream-white rosebud
With a flush on its petal tips;
For the love that is purest and sweetest
Has a kiss of desire on the lips

"I Love You" (also called "The Mother's Day Poem") by Carl Sandberg

I love you for what you are, but I love you yet more for what you are going to be.
I love you not so much for your realities as for your ideals. I pray for your desires that they may be
great, rather than for your satisfactions, which may be so hazardously little.
A satisfied flower is one whose petals are about to fall. The most beautiful rose is one hardly more
than a bud wherein the pangs and ecstasies of desire are working for a larger and finer growth.
Not always shall you be what you are now. You are going forward toward something great. I am on
the way with you and therefore I love you.

"I Love You" by Roy Croft

I love you
Not only for who 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 heart
And passing over all the foolish, weak things that you can't help.
Dimly seeing there and drawing out, into the light all the beautiful belongings
That no one else had looked quite far enough to find.
You have done it without a touch, without a word, without a sign.

"Superbly Situated" by Robert Hershon

you politely ask me not to die and i promise not to
right from the beginning—a relationship based on
good sense and thoughtfulness in little things

i would like to be loved for such simple attainments
as breathing regularly and not falling down too often
or because my eyes are brown or my father left-handed

and to be on the safe side i wouldn't mind if somehow
i became entangled in your perception of admirable objects
so you might say to yourself: i have recently noticed

how superbly situated the empire state building is
how it looms up suddenly behind cemeteries and rivers
so far away you could touch it—therefore i love you

part of me fears that some moron is already plotting
to tear down the empire state building and replace it
with a block of staten island mother/daughter houses

just as part of me fears that if you love me for my cleanliness
i will grow filthy if you admire my elegant clothes
i'll start wearing shirts with sailboats on them

but i have decided to become a public beach an opera house
a regularly scheduled flight—something that can't help being
in the right place at the right time—come take your seat

we'll raise the curtain fill the house start the engines
fly off into the sunrise, the spire of the empire state
the last sight on the horizon as the earth begins to curve
You have done it by being yourself.

"A Journey" by Nikki Giovanni
from her book Those Who Ride the Night Winds

It's a journey...that I propose...I am not the guide...nor technical assistant...I will be your fellow
passenger...

Though the rail has been ridden...winter clouds cover...autumn's exuberant quilt...we must
provide our own guide-posts...

I have heard...from previous visitors...the road washes out sometimes...and passengers are
compelled...to continue groping...or turn back...I am not afraid...

I am not afraid...of rough spots...or lonely times...I don't fear...the success of this endeavor...I am
Ra...in a space...not to be discovered...but invented...

I promise you nothing...I accept your promise...of the same we are simply riding...a wave...that
may carry...or crash...

It's a journey...and I want...to go...

"You Came, Too" by Nikki Giovanni
I came to the crowd seeking friends
I came to the crowd seeking love
I came to the crowd for understanding

I found you
I came to the crowd to weep
I came to the crowd to laugh
You dried my tears
You shared my happiness
I went from the crowd seeking you
I went from the crowd seeking me
I went from the crowd forever
You came, too

"Wild Geese" by Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting--
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

"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.

"Falling Stars" By Rainer Maria Rilke

Do you remember still the falling stars
that like swift horses through the heavens raced
and suddenly leaped across the hurdles
of our wishes--do you recall? And we
did make so many! For there were countless numbers
of stars: each time we looked above we were
astounded by the swiftness of their daring play,
while in our hearts we felt safe and secure
watching these brilliant bodies disintegrate,
knowing somehow we had survived their fall.

"Fidelity" by D.H. Lawrence

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

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

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 or 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, 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.

"To Be One With Each Other" by George Eliot

What greater thing is there for two human souls
than to feel that they are joined together to strengthen
each other in all labor, to minister to each other in all sorrow,
to share with each other in all gladness,
to be one with each other in the
silent unspoken memories?

"A White Rose" by JB O'Reilly

The red rose whispers of passion,
And the white rose breathes of love;
O, the red rose is a falcon,
And the white rose is a dove.
But I send you a cream-white rosebud
With a flush on its petal tips;
For the love that is purest and sweetest
Has a kiss of desire on the lips

"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 wordly 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.

"La Reina" (The Queen) by Pablo Neruda

I have named you queen.

There are taller than you, taller.
There are purer than you, purer.
There are lovelier than you, lovelier.
But you are the queen.

When you go through the streets
No one recognizes you.
No one sees your crystal crown, no one looks
At the carpet of red gold
That you tread as you pass,
The nonexistent carpet.

And when you appear
All the rivers sound
In my body, bells
Shake the sky,
And a hymn fills the world.

Only you and I,
Only you and I, my love,
Listen to me.

"To Love is Not to Possess" by James Kavanaugh

To love is not to possess,
To own or imprison,
Nor to lose one's self in another.
Love is to join and separate,
To walk alone and together,
To find a laughing freedom
That lonely isolation does not permit.
It is finally to be able
To be who we really are
No longer clinging in childish dependency
Nor docilely living separate lives in silence,
It is to be perfectly one's self
And perfectly joined in permanent commitment
To another--and to one's inner self.
Love only endures when it moves like waves,

Receding and returning gently or passionately,
Or moving lovingly like the tide
In the moon's own predictable harmony,
Because finally, despite a child's scars
Or an adult's deepest wounds,
They are openly free to be
Who they really are--and always secretly were,
In the very core of their being
Where true and lasting love can alone abide.

"21 Love Poems" by Adrienne Rich

Whenever in this city, screens flicker
with pornography, with science-fiction vampires,
victimized hirelings bending to the lash,
we also have to walk...if simply as we walk
through the rainsoaked garbage, the tabloid cruelties
of our own neighborhoods.
We need to grasp our lives inseparable
from those rancid dreams, that blurt of metal, those disgraces,
and the red begonia perilously flashing
from a tenement sill six stories high,
or the long-legged young girls playing ball
in the junior highschool playground.
No one has imagined us. We want to live like trees,
sycamores blazing through the sulfuric air,
dappled with scars, still exuberantly budding,
our animal passion rooted in the city.

"Coming Home" by Mary Oliver

When we're driving, in the dark,
on the long road
to Provincetown, which lies empty
for miles, when we're weary,
when the buildings
and the scrub pines lose
their familiar look,
I imagine us rising
from the speeding car,
I imagine us seeing
everything from another place — the top
of one of the pale dunes
or the deep and nameless
fields of the sea —
and what we see is the world
that cannot cherish us
but which we cherish,
and what we see is our life
moving like that,
along the dark edges
of everything — the headlights
like lanterns
sweeping the blackness —
believing in a thousand
fragile and unprovable things,
looking out for sorrow,
slowing down for happiness,
making all the right turns
right down to the thumping

barriers to the sea,
the swirling waves,
the narrow streets, the houses,
the past, the future,
the doorway that belongs
to you and me.

Today by Ruth Van Gramberg

Today is very special to me!

It is a day on which I witness two people, as wonderful as you both, become one in marriage.

I am certain you will laugh more often than be miserable as you believe in magic and miracles.

I know you will courageously endure any setbacks or failures as you have an amazing quality of resilience.

I know you to be adventurous, always seeking new opportunities, and encouraging each other, to reach one stride beyond.

I feel you will always find time to smile and cherish life's little pleasures, as you have the ability to spread warmth and kindness.

Thus you will succeed to grow tall trees from little seedlings.

My wish for you today is to build on all of your dreams and together you can achieve anything, as you have been blessed with the united power of your love!

"The Art of a Good Marriage "

by Wilferd Arlan 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 never taking the other for granted;
the courtship should not end with the honeymoon,
it should continue through all the years.

It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.

It is standing together facing the world

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

It is doing things for each other,
not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice,
but in the spirit of joy.

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

It is not looking for perfection in each other.
It is cultivating flexibility, patience,
understanding and a sense of humor.

It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.
It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.
It is finding room for the things of the spirit.
It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.

It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal,

dependence is mutual and the obligation is reciprocal.
It is not only marrying the right partner,
it is being the right partner."

"The Key to Love"

by Anon, 1st century China

"The key to love is understanding ...
The ability to comprehend not only the spoken word,
but those unspoken gestures,
the little things that say so much by themselves.

The key to love is forgiveness
to accept each others faults and pardon mistakes,
without forgetting, but with remembering
what you learn from them.

The key to love is sharing ...
Facing your good fortunes as well as the bad, together;
both conquering problems, forever searching for ways
to intensify your happiness.

The key to love is giving ...
with out thought of return,
but with the hope of just a simple smile,
and by giving in but never giving up.

The key to love is respect ...
realizing that you are two separate people, with different ideas;
that you don't belong to each other,
that you belong with each other, and share a mutual bond.

The key to love is inside us all ...
It takes time and patience to unlock all the ingredients
that will take you to its threshold;
it is the continual learning process that demands a lot of work ...
but the rewards are more than worth the effort ...
and that is the key to love."

"Sooner or Later"

author 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 favourite 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."

"True Love"

Author Unknown

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

"I Will Be Here"

by Steven Curtis Chapman

"If in the morning when you wake,
If the sun does not appear,
I will be here.
If in the dark we lose sight of love,
Hold my hand and have no fear,
I will be here.

I will be here,
When you feel like being quiet,
When you need to speak your mind I will listen.
Through the winning, losing, and trying we'll be together,
And I will be here.
If in the morning when you wake,
If the future is unclear,
I will be here.
As sure as seasons were made for change,
Our lifetimes were made for years,
I will be here.

I will be here,
And you can cry on my shoulder,
When the mirror tells us we're older.
I will hold you, to watch you grow in beauty,
And tell you all the things you are to me.
We'll be together and I will be here.
I will be true to the promises I've made,
To you and to the one who gave you to me.
I will be here."

"The Promises of Marriage"

by Bettie Meeks

"Marriage is a promise of companionship,
Of having someone to share
All of life's experiences.

Marriage does not promise that there will
Not be any rough times,
Just the assurance that there will

Always be someone
Who cares and will help you through
To better times.

Marriage does not promise eternal romance,
Just eternal love and commitment.
Marriage cannot prevent disappointments,
Disillusionment, or grief,
But it can offer hope, acceptance,
And comfort.

Marriage can't protect you from making
Individual choices
Or shelter you from the world,
But it will help to reassure you
That there is some by your side
Who truly cares,
When the world hurts you
And makes you feel vulnerable,
Marriage offers the promise that there will
Be someone waiting to listen,
To console, to inspire.

Marriage is the joining of two people
Who share the promise
That only marriage can make ...
To share the sunshine and the shadows,
And to experience a richer, more fulfilling life
Because of it."

"Reprise"

by Ogden Nash (1902-1971)

"Geniuses of countless nations
Have told their love for generations
Till all their memorable phrases
Are common as goldenrod or daisies.
Their girls have glimmered like the moon,
Or shimmered like a summer moon,
Stood like a lily, fled like a fawn,
Now the sunset, now the dawn,
Here the princess in the tower
There the sweet forbidden flower.
Darling, when I look at you
Every aged phrase is new,
And there are moments when it seems
I've married one of Shakespeare's dreams."

"In An Instant"

by Rev. Melissa L Straub

"Our soulmates exist
In this well charted life
When we find them we know
In an instant it's right
And although to some
It seems far too fast
Who are we to judge

When their hearts meet at last
For they have known all along
To whom they belong
Their souls come together
Like a well rehearsed song
Let us support and nurture
The love these two know
So that through their lives together
This love shall continue to glow."

"All Things Are Ours"
by Barbara Burrow

"All things are ours because we love
The earth below, the sky above,
The mountains, meadow, sand, and sea.
All things surrounding you and me
Are but a sweet reflection of
The gentle wonder of our love."

"Love is..."
by Andrea Hill

"More beautiful than roses
Much deeper than the seas
Stronger than a hurricane
But timid like a breeze

Real as in a picture
But yet it can't be seen
More beautiful than anything
As vivid as a dream

Precious as rare jewels
A bond between two hearts
A symphony of feelings
When time is spent apart

Sharing common interests
Working through all fears
Looking at yourself
As if two were in the mirror

Finding common ground
On issues not agreed
Giving into arguments
Tending all your needs

Being there for always
Is all I want to do
Holding you forever
Because our love is true"

"The Colour Of My Love"

by David Foster and Arthur Janov

"I'll paint a sun to warm your heart
Knowing that we'll never part.
I'll draw the years all passing by
So much to learn, so much to try.

I'll paint my mood in shadow blue,
Paint my soul to be with you.
I'll sketch your lips in shaded tones,
Draw your mouth to my own.

I'll trace a hand to wipe your tears
And trace a look to calm your fears.
A silhouette of dark and light
To hold each other oh so tight.

I'll paint the stars in the evening sky,
Draw the light into your eyes,
A touch of love, a touch of grace,
To softly fall on your moonlit face.

And with this ring our lives will start,
Let nothing keep our love apart.
I'll take your hand to hold in mine,
And be together through all time."

"From This Day Forward"

Author Unknown

"From this day forward,
You shall not walk alone.
My heart will be your shelter,
And my arms will be your home".

"Love Is"

by Laura Philips

"Love is
Knowing my imperfection yet having the grace to accept them
Love is
The undying belief that I will be better
Love is
The kind heart that treats me as though I were already better
Love summarily is
The perfection I feel when you are with an imperfect me "

"All I Want"

Author Unknown

All I want is to love you
For the rest of my life....
To wake up every morning
With you by my side,
Knowing that no matter what happens
I'll be able to come home

To your loving arms.
All I want is to share everything with you....
To talk to you about our ideas, our dreams,
The little everyday things that make us laugh,
And the not-so-little things
That we can't help worrying about.
All I want is to give you my love....
As a place you can always come to for acceptance
Or the simple comfort that silence brings
When things left unspoken can still be understood.
All I want is to grow old with you...
To watch our life unfold,
Our dreams, one by one, come true.
All I want is to love you forever.

"Love"

by Roy Croft

"I love you,
Not only for what you are,
But for what I am when I am with you.

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

I love you for
the part of me that you bring out;
I love you for
putting your hand into my heaped-up heart
And passing over all the foolish, weak things
that you can't help dimly seeing there,
And for drawing out into the light
All the beautiful belongings
that no one else had looked
Quite far enough to find.

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

I love you because you have done
More than any creed
Could have done
To make me good,
And more than any fate
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."

"May Our Friendship Last Forever"

Author Unknown

May our friendship last forever;
May I sail upon your sea.
May we go through life together;
May there always be a "we."

May I be your endless sky;
May you breathe my gentle air.
May you never wonder why
Each time you look for me, I'm there.

May we be for each a smile
Like the warm, life-giving sun;
Yet when we're in pain awhile,
May our suffering be one.

May we share our special days,
The happiness of one for two;
And if we must go separate ways,
Let my love remain with you.

"Marriage Means Being In Love for the Rest of Your Life"

by 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 realization 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.

"The Promise"

by Eileen Rafter

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

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

I'm not sure what to do, though the idea's quite good."

But he gently smiled and tilted his head
Till his lips met her ear, then softly he said,
"I promise, to weave my dreams into your own.
That wherever you breathe shall be my heart's home.
I promise, that whether with rags or with gold I am blessed,
Your smile is the jewel I shall treasure the best.
Do you think then, my love, we should marry, do you?"

"Yes," she said smiling "I do."

"On Your Wedding Day"

Author Unknown

"Today is a day you will always remember
The greatest in anyone's life
You'll start off the day just two people in love
And end it as Husband and Wife

It's a brand new beginning the start of a journey
With moments to cherish and treasure
And although there'll be times when you both disagree
These will surely be outweighed by pleasure

You'll have heard many words of advice in the past
When the secrets of marriage were spoken
But you know that the answers lie hidden inside
Where the bond of true love lies unbroken

So live happy forever as lovers and friends
It's the dawn of a new life for you
As you stand there together with love in your eyes
From the moment you whisper 'I do'

And with luck, all your hopes, and your dreams can be real
May success find it's way to your hearts
Tomorrow can bring you the greatest of joys
But today is the day it all starts."

"Love"

Author Unknown

Love is a friendship that has caught fire.
It is quiet understanding, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving.
It is loyalty through good and bad.
It settles for less than perfection,
and makes allowances for human weakness.
Love is content with the present.
It hopes for the future and it doesn't brood over the past.
It's the day-in and day-out chronicle 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 don't have it, no matter what else there is,
it is not enough, so search for it, ask God for it, and share it!

"Best Friends"

by Katie Fuller

You brighten up my day,
You help me make it through the night,
You hold my hand when I begin to slip,
You're never mad when I make a mistake,
You cry when I cry,
You laugh when I laugh,
Without you in my life I would have many regrets,
Today I am most appreciative of you,
Not because you did something special,
Not because you bought me something,
Just because you're here with me,
Friends forever I didn't believe until you came along,
Whenever I am hurt,
Whenever I am wrong,
Whenever I am right,
You're there and you don't judge,
That's what makes you my best friend!

"Beyond the Reflection"

by Thomas Merton

"The beginning of love is to let those we love be perfectly themselves, and not to twist them to fit our own image. Otherwise we love only the reflection of ourselves we see in them."

"This Bridge"

by Shel Silverstein

"This bridge will only take you halfway there
To those mysterious lands you long to see:
Through gypsy camps and swirling Arab fairs
And moonlit woods where unicorns run free.
So come and stay awhile with me and share
The twisting trails and wondrous worlds I've known.
But this bridge will only take you halfway there...
The last few steps you'll have to take alone."

REAL LOVE

Author Unknown

Real love is identifiable by the way it makes us feel. Love should feel good. There is a peaceful quality to an authentic experience of love that penetrates to our core, touching a part of ourselves that has always been there. True love activates this inner being, filling us with warmth and light. An authentic experience of love does not ask us to look a certain way, drive a certain car, or have a certain job. It takes us as we are, no changes required. When someone truly loves us, their love for us awakens our love for ourselves. They remind us that what we seek outside of ourselves is a mirror image of the lover within. In this way, true love never makes us feel needy or lacking or anxious. Instead, true love empowers us with its implicit message that we are, always have been, and always will be, made of love.

Marriage Box
Author Unknown

Most people get married believing a myth that marriage is beautiful box full of all the things they have longed for; Companionship, intimacy, friendship etc ... The truth is, that marriage at the start is an empty box, you must put something in before you can take anything out. There is no love in marriage, love is in people, and people put love in marriage. There is no romance in marriage, you have to infuse it into your marriage. A couple must learn the art, and form the habit of giving, loving, serving, praising, of keeping the box full. If you take out more than you put in, the box will be empty.

Love isn't Practical

It isn't meant to be easy. It doesn't appear on command. It doesn't let you fall for whomever you'd like. It surfaces neither at the most opportune moment nor in the most convenient, it'll pair you with someone you might never have expected. It'll put you face to face with endless obstacles. But in the end, none of that will matter because it's how you overcome its obstacles that will define your love. It may not be practical, but love is ultimately the best thing that will ever happen to you.

By 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 roots have so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part. Because this is what love is. Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of eternal passion. That is just being in love, which any fool can do. Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident. Those that truly love have roots that grow towards each other underground, and when all the pretty blossom have fallen from their branches, they find that they are one tree and not two.

"Of Shared Love in Marriage" by (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. A great happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved. Loved for ourselves. And even loved in spite of ourselves.

TO LOVE 2
Author Unknown

To love is to remember and keep alive forever all those unique qualities that drew you to one another in the beginning.... Those first halting phrase...the thrill of discovery.... That wonderful feeling of oneness when your eyes met.

To love is to constantly search for new ways to bring each other to happiness, to make the most of every moment you share together, and marvel at how your feelings for one another keep rising to new dimensions.

To love is to create an oasis of tranquility for one another and a quiet place, apart from others, where you need not pretend...where you can be yourselves.... And know within your hearts, you will be accepted by one another. To love is to greet each day with anticipation...Always eager for another opportunity to share new adventures...And gather up new memories TOGETHER!

To love is to follow the rainbow through the rain, to be able to laugh at yourselves and be willing to say...."I was wrong, I'm sorry" ...To forgive, and more importantly, to FORGET, and to always believe and trust in one another.

To love is to watch with wonder all the miracles of creation, to find beauty in all the simple things of life, and to find, within ourselves, a deeper appreciation and a new awareness of how wonderful it is to be alive...To be happy...To be...TOGETHER.

To love is to come together from the pathways of our past and then move forward...Hand in hand, along the uncharted roads of our future, ready to risk, to dream, and to dare.... And always believe that all things are possible with faith and love.

This is a passage from "Gift from the Sea" by Anne Morrow Lindbergh:

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

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 it was in nostalgia, nor forward to what it might be in dread or anticipation, but living in the present relationship and accepting as it is now. For relationships, too, 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. One must accept the security of the winged life, of the ebb and flow of intermittency."

The Art of Marriage by Wilferd A. Peterson (long version)

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens.

A good marriage must be created.

In the art of 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 a day.

It is never going to sleep angry.

It is at no time taking the other for granted;

the courtship should not end with the honeymoon,

it should continue through all the years.

It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.

It is standing together facing the world.

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

It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude

of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy.

It is speaking words of appreciation

and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.

It is not looking for perfection in each other.

It is cultivating flexibility, patience,

understanding and a sense of humour.

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.

It is discovering what marriage can be, at its best.

Your Friend, Your Love

Author Unknown

Today each of you marry your friend;
The one you have laughed with and cried with,
The one you have learned from and shared with,
The one you have chosen to support, encourage and give yourself to,
through all the day given you to share;
Today you each marry the one you 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.

"Beach Chairs" by Joyce Ebrecht

Sitting on the beach chairs
watching the setting sun
holding hands and reminiscing
how it all begun
Sitting on the beach chairs
watching the ships out on the sea
holding hands and smiling
together we're meant to be
Sitting on the beach chairs
watching people walking past
holding hands and knowing
that our love will always last
Sitting on the beach chairs
watching the waves along the shore
holding hands we realize
our love is stronger than before
Sitting on the beach chairs
watching the changing tide
holding hands with happiness
to be by each others side
Sitting on the beach chairs
watching the sunrise
holding hands with tears of joy
there are no more good-byes

Poem by Victoria Erickson

I'd like to meet you in a place neither of us has been
with sunlight and white buildings and blue seas and golden hills.
I'd like to hike and stretch and swim
and then find music so good it melts our shoulders, ears and eyes.
I'd like to share vibrant food and care for you,
be calm with you, learn your rhythms, your mannerisms, dive into your mind.
I'd like to know you, yet not worry about knowing you,
and realise that all we have is now, and that in the now, there's no such thing as time.

THE LITTLE PRINCE -- Antoine De Saint Exupery

"Are you looking for chickens?"

"No," said the little prince. "I am looking for friends. What does that mean--'tame'?"

"It is an act too often neglected," said the fox. "It means to establish ties."

"To establish ties'?"

"Just that," said the fox. "To me, you are still nothing more than a little boy who is just like a hundred thousand other little boys. And I have no need of you. And you, on your part, have no need of me. To you, I am nothing more than a fox like a hundred thousand other foxes. But if you tame me, then we shall need each other. To me, you will be unique in all the world. To you, I shall be unique in all the world..."

"My life is very monotonous," the fox said. "I hunt chickens; men hunt me. All the chickens are just alike, and all the men are just alike..."

But if you tame me, it will be as if the sun came to shine on my life.

I shall know the sound of a step that will be different from all the others. Other steps send me hurrying back underneath the ground. Yours will call me, like music, out of my burrow. And then look: you see the grain-fields down yonder? I do not eat bread. Wheat is of no use to me. The wheat fields have nothing to say to me. And that is sad. But you have hair that is the color of gold. Think how wonderful that will be when you have tamed me! The grain, which is also golden, will bring me back the thought of you. And I shall love to listen to the wind in the wheat."

MOBY DICK

He seemed to take to me quite as naturally and unbiddenly as I to him; and when our smoke was over, he pressed his forehead against mine, clasped me round the waist, and said that henceforth we were married; meaning in his country's phrase, that we were bosom friends; he would gladly die for me, if need should be...

After supper, and another social chat and smoke, we went to our room together. He made me a present of his embalmed head; took out his enormous tobacco wallet, and groping under the tobacco, drew out some thirty dollars in silver; then spreading them on the table, and mechanically dividing them into two equal portions, pushed one towards me, and said it was mine.

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."

From Captain Corelli's Mandolin

Love is a temporary madness. It erupts like an earthquake and then subsides. And when it subsides you have to make a decision. You have to work out whether your roots have become so entwined together that it is inconceivable that you should ever part. Because this is what love is. Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of promises of eternal passion. That is just being "in love" which any of us can convince ourselves we are.

Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away, and this is both an art and a fortunate accident. Your mother and I had it, we had roots that grew towards each other underground, and when all the pretty blossom had fallen from our branches we found that we were one tree and not two.

"I Rely on You," by Hovis Presley

I rely on you
like a camera needs a shutter
like a gambler needs a flutter
like a golfer needs a putter
like a buttered scone involves some butter
I rely on you
like an acrobat needs ice cool nerve
like a hairpin needs a drastic curve
like an HGV needs endless derv
like an outside left needs a body swerve
I rely on you
like a handyman needs pliers
like an auctioneer needs buyers
like a laundromat needs driers
like The Good Life needed Richard Briers
I rely on you.

"Falling in love is like owning a dog," by Taylor Mali

First of all, it's a big responsibility,
especially in a city like New York.
So think long and hard before deciding on love.
On the other hand, love gives you a sense of security:
when you're walking down the street late at night
and you have a leash on love
ain't no one going to mess with you.
Because crooks and muggers think love is unpredictable.
Who knows what love could do in its own defense?
On cold winter nights, love is warm.
It lies between you and lives and breathes
and makes funny noises.
Love wakes you up all hours of the night with its needs.
It needs to be fed so it will grow and stay healthy.
Love doesn't like being left alone for long.
But come home and love is always happy to see you.

It may break a few things accidentally in its passion for life,
but you can never be mad at love for long.
Is love good all the time? No! No!
Love can be bad. Bad, love, bad! Very bad love.
Love makes messes.
Love leaves you little surprises here and there.
Love needs lots of cleaning up after.
Sometimes you just want to get love fixed.
Sometimes you want to roll up a piece of newspaper
and swat love on the nose,
not so much to cause pain,
just to let love know Don't you ever do that again!
Sometimes love just wants to go for a nice long walk.
Because love loves exercise.
It runs you around the block and leaves you panting.
It pulls you in several different directions at once,
or winds around and around you
until you're all wound up and can't move.
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.

"Foxtrot From a Play," by W H Auden

The soldier loves his rifle,
The scholar loves his books,
The farmer loves his horses,
The film star loves her looks.
There's love the whole world over
Wherever you may be;
Some lose their rest for gay Mae West,
But you're my cup of tea.
Some talk of Alexander
And some of Fred Astaire

Some like their heroes hairy
Some like them debonair,
Some prefer a curate
And some an A.D.C.,
Some like a tough to treat'em rough,
But you're my cup of tea.
Some are mad on Airedales
And some on Pekinese,
On tabby cats or parrots
Or guinea pigs or geese.
There are patients in asylums
Who think that they're a tree;
I had an ant who loved a plant,
But you're my cup of tea.
Some have sagging waistlines

And some a bulbous nose
And some a floating kidney
And some have hammer toes,
Some have tennis elbow
And some have housemaid's knee,
And some I know have got B.O.,
But you're my cup of tea.
The blackbird loves the earthworm,
The adder loves the sun,
The polar bear an iceberg,
The elephant a bun,
The trout enjoys the river,
The whale enjoys the sea,
And dogs love most an old lamp-post,
But you're my cup of tea.

I Like You by Sandol Stoddard

The many reasons for liking someone.
I like you because
If you find two four-leaf clovers
You give me one
If I find four
I give you two
If we only find three
We keep on looking.
... I like you because if I am mad at you
Then you are mad at me too
It's awful when the other person isn't
They are so nice and hoo-hoo you could
just about punch them in the nose.
... I would go on choosing you
And you would
go on choosing me
Over and over again.

What goes with what - From "Appetite" by Nigel Slater:

Some flavours work together. Other's don't. You can't really argue with the theory that if you like something then it works, but to experiment with marrying flavours, in a trial and error situation like a mad scientist, will not only take forever but will probably lead to some really horrid meals. The easy way is to respect a few basic principles about flavours that work especially well together - what belongs with what - which will at least give you the chance of a decent supper. You can then experiment as and when you feel like it. To put it another way, someone has done some of the work for you. Be thankful. You didn't really want to be the one to find out that anchovies are disgusting with bacon, did you?

Some flavours have a natural affinity for each other. In other words, they flatter each other and make for better eating. Much of what is accepted as being a sound partnership makes good sense but there is also a lot of rubbish talked about what goes with what. I have never agreed, for instance, with the well-known accompaniment for oysters, which some foodies reckon is Tabasco sauce. To my taste buds this is an abomination. The chilli sauce does nothing for the pure, intense seawater flavour of the shellfish. Yet I am convinced that lemon really brings out the flavour of steak, with which many would just as fiercely disagree. Likewise I put Dijon mustard on my lamb yet fail to be moved by the age-old marriage of cherries with duck.

Yet there are certain combinations of ingredients that seem as if they were made for one another. Think tomato and basil, think sausage and mustard, think Parma ham and melon. There are logical explanations for some of these natural pairings, such as the salt in the ham intensifying the flavour of the melon, but others are beyond analysis. It is simply that there is something intrinsically right about them, and there are some flavours and textures that work together so naturally that they defy the meddlings of any creative cook. There are flavours and textures that work together in perfect harmony. A roll-call of all that is good about eating: beef and mustard; lamb and garlic; liver and onions; toast and Marmite; steak and bearnaise sauce; duck and five-spice; chicken and tarragon; strawberries and cream. Then there are those successful contrasts of textures that seem like gifts from God - gravy and mashed potato; egg and chips; ripe Brie and crisp white bread; cold vanilla ice-cream and hot chocolate sauce. Some things are simply meant to be.

Union, from the Beginning to End 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.

"All I Ever Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten," by 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.