Jennie Hermolle
WEDDING CELEBRANT

WEDDING READINGS AND POEMS

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1. Light-hearted poems & Readings

RAIN SOMETIMES

lyrics from a song, by ARTHUR HAMILTON

Rain sometimes,
Money down the drain sometimes,
Reason to complain sometimes,
That's how it will be.
But there'll be champagne sometimes,
Lobster flown from Maine sometimes,
We'll ride the gravy-train sometimes,
Just you wait and see.

We may be stranded in the rain sometimes,
Dream our dreams in vain sometimes,
Lose more than we gain sometimes,
But this I guarantee:
Love is not for sometimes,
Love is for all times,
For all times,
For you and me.

****

OH TELL ME THE TRUTH ABOUT LOVE

by W.H. AUDEN XII - Twelve Songs

Some say that love's a little boy,
And some say it's a bird,
Some say it makes the world go round,
And some say that's absurd,
And when I asked the man next-door,
Who looked as if he knew,
His wife got very cross indeed,
And said it wouldn't do.

Does it look like a pair of pyjamas,
Or the ham in a temperance hotel?
Does it odour remind one of llamas,
Or has it a comforting smell?
Is it prickly to touch as a hedge is,
Or soft as eiderdown fluff?
Is it sharp or quite smooth at the edges?
O tell me the truth about love.

Our history books refer to it
In cryptic little notes,
It's quite a common topic on
The Transatlantic boats;
I've found the subject mentioned in
Accounts of suicides,
And even seen it scribbled on
The backs of railway-guides.

Does it howl like a hungry Alsation,
Or boom like a military band?
Could one give a first-rate imitation
On a saw or a Steinway Grand?
Is its sing at parties a riot?
Does it only like Classical stuff?
Will it stop when one wants to be quiet?
O tell me the truth about love.

I looked inside the summer-house;
It wasn't ever there:
I tried the Thames at Maidenhead,
And Brighton's bracing air.
I don't know what the blackbird sang,
Or what the tulip said;
But it wasn't in the chicken-run,
Or underneath the bed.

Can it pull extraordinary faces?
Is it usually sick on a swing?
Does it spend all its time at the races,
Or fiddling with pieces of string?
Has it views of its own about money?
Does it think Patriotism enough?
Are its stories vulgar but funny?
O tell me the truth about love.

When it comes, will come without warning
Just as I'm picking my nose?
Will it knock on my door in the morning,
Or tread in the bus on my toes?
Will it come like a change in the weather?
Will its greeting be courteous or rough?
Will it alter my life altogether?
O tell me the truth about love.

****

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.

****

YES I'LL MARRY YOU MY DEAR

by PAM AYRES

Yes, I'll marry you, my dear,
And here's the reason why:
So I can push you out of bed when
The baby starts to cry,
And if we hear a knocking
And it's creepy and it's late,
I hand **you** the torch you see,
And **you** investigate.

Yes, I'll marry you my dear,
You may not apprehend it,
But when the tumble-drier goes
It's you that has to mend it.
You have to face the neighbour,
Should our Labrador attack him,
And if a drunkard fondles me,
It's you that has to whack him!

Yes, I'll marry you, my dear,
You're virile and you're lean.
My house is like a pigsty,
You can help to keep it clean.
That little sexy dinner
Which you served by candlelight,
As I just do chipolatas,
You can cook it every night.

It's you who has to work the drill
And put up curtain track.
And when I've got the PMT
It's you who gets the flak.
I do see great advantages,
But none of them for you,
And so, before you see the light,
"I do, I do, I do".

****

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.

****

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, no one is going to 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 LIKE A LARGE WHITE CAT

By AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Love is like a large white cat sitting on its paws.
You may pet it all you like; it lives by its own laws.
It comes and goes as it decides no matter what you say.
It seems the more you want it near, the more it goes away.
And then when you are quite content to sit out in the sun alone
with just your thoughts and dreams, not needing anyone.
Out it comes, as if in fear that somehow you'll forget,
and jumps up purring in your lap, demanding to be pet.

****

LOVE IS A COMBINATION OF ELEMENTS

From Stark Trek Voyager

Commander, I don't think you can analyse love.
It's the greatest mystery of all.
No one knows why it happens or doesn't.
Love is a chance combination of elements.
Any one thing might be enough to keep it from igniting - a mood, a glance… A remark.
And if we could define love… predict it… it would probably lose its power..

****

THE PROMISE

by EILEEN RAFTER

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

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

So if we can't vow 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 and softly he said

"I promise, to weave my dreams into your own,
That wherever you breathe will be my hearts home.
I promise, that whether with rags or with gold I am blessed
Your smile is the jewel I will treasure the best.

Do you think then, my love, we should marry - do you?"
"Yes" she said smiling "I do".

****

LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT

lyrics by Edith Lindeman.

Blow me a kiss from across the room
Say I look nice when I'm not
Touch my hair as you pass my chair
Little things mean a lot

Give me your arm as we cross the street
Call me at six on the dot
A line a day when you're far away
Little things mean a lot

Don't have to buy me diamonds and pearls
Champagne, sables and such
I never cared much for diamonds and pearls
But honestly honey, they just cost money

Give me your hand when I've lost the way
Give me your shoulder to cry on
Whether the day is bright or grey
give me your heart to rely on

Send me the warmth of a secret smile
To show me you haven't forgot
always and ever that's Now and forever
Little things mean a lot

****

I LIKE YOU

by Sandol Stoddard

I like you and I know why.
I like you because you are a good person to like.

I like you because when I tell you something special, you know it's special
And you remember it a long, long time.

You say, 'Remember when you told me something special?'
And both of us remember.

When I think something is important
you think it's important too
We have good ideas
When I say something funny, you laugh
I think I'm funny and you think I'm funny too
Hah-hah!

…And I like you because when I am feeling sad
You don't always cheer me up right away
Sometimes it is better to be sad…
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…

I like you because I don't know why but
Everything that happens is nicer with you
I can't remember when I didn't like you
It must have been lonesome then.

I like you because because because
I forget why I like you, but I do

****

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.

****

I WANNA BE YOURS

Lyrics 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

****

TIN WHISTLE WEDDING

Ogden Nash

Though you know it anyhow
Listen to me, darling, now,
Proving what I need not prove
How I know I love you, love.

Near and far, near and far,
I am happy where you are;
Likewise I have never larnt
How to be it where you aren't.
Far and wide, far and wide,
I can walk with you beside;
Furthermore, I tell you what,
I sit and sulk where you are not.
Visitors remark my frown
Where you're upstairs and I am down,
Yes, and I'm afraid I pout
When I'm indoors and you are out;
But how contentedly I view
Any room containing you.
In fact I care not where you be,
Just as long as it's with me.
In all your absences I glimpse
Fire and flood and trolls and imps.
Is your train a minute slothful?
I goad the stationmaster wrothful.
When with friends to bridge you drive
I never know if you're alive,
And when you linger late in shops
I long to telephone the cops.
Yet how worth the waiting for,
To see you coming through the door.
Somehow, I can be complacent
Never but with you adjacent.
Near and far, near and far,
I am happy where you are;
Likewise I have never larnt
How to be it where you aren't.
Then grudge me not my fond endeavor,
To hold you in my sight forever;
Let none, not even you, disparage
Such a valid reason for a marriage.

****

THE ORANGE

by WENDY COPE

At lunchtime I bought a huge orange -
The size of it made us all laugh.
I peeled it and shared it with Robert and Dave -
They got quarters and I had a half.

And the orange, it made me so happy,
As ordinary things often do
Just lately. The shopping. A walk in the park.
This is peace and contentment. It's new.

The rest of the day was quite easy.
I did all the jobs on my list
And enjoyed them and had some time over.
I love you. I'm glad I exist.

****

VALENTINE

by WENDY COPE

My heart has made its mind up,
And I'm afraid it's you.
Whatever you've got lined up,
My heart has made its mind up
And if you can't be signed up
This year, next year will do.
My heart has made its mind up
And I'm afraid it's you.

****

A VOW

by WENDY COPE

I cannot promise never to be angry;
I cannot promise always to be kind.
You know what you are taking on, my darling –
It's only at the start that love is blind.
And yet I'm still the one you want to be with
And you're the one for me – of that, I'm sure.
You are my closest friend, my favourite person,
The lover and the home I've waited for.
I cannot promise that I will deserve you.
From this day on. I hope to pass that test.
I love you and I want to make you happy.
I promise I will do my very best.

****

Extra from "SO LONG AND THANKS FOR ALL THE FISH"

by DOUGLAS ADAMS

There was a sort of gallery structure in the roof space which held a bed and also a bathroom which, Fenchurch explained, you could actually swing a cat in, "But," she added, "only if it was a reasonably patient cat and didn't mind a few nasty cracks about the head. So. Here you are."

"Yes."

They looked at each other for a moment.

The moment became a longer moment, and suddenly it was a very long moment, so long one could hardly tell where all the time was coming from.

For Arthur, who could usually contrive to feel self-conscious if left alone long enough with a Swiss cheese plant, the moment was one of sustained revelation. He felt on the sudden like a cramped and zoo-born animal who wakes one morning to find the door of his cage hanging quietly open and the

savanna stretching gray and pink to the distant rising sun, while all around new sounds are waking.

He wondered what the new sounds were as he gazed at her openly wondering face and her eyes that smiled with a shared surprise.

He hadn't realized that life speaks with a voice to you, a voice that brings you answers to the questions you continually ask of it, had never consciously detected it or recognized its tones until it now said something it had never said to him before, which was,

“yes.”

****

THIS IS FOR YOU

by Neile Gaiman

This for you, for both of you,
a small poem of happiness,
filled with small glories and little triumphs
a fragile, short cheerful song
filled with hope and all sorts of futures
Because at weddings we imagine the future
Because it’s all about “what happened next?”
all the work and negotiation and building and talk
that makes even the tiniest happily ever after
something to be proud of for a wee forever
This is a small thought for both of you
like a feather or a prayer,
a wish of trust and love and hope
and fine brave hearts and true.
Like a tower, or a house made all of bones and dreams
and tomorrows and tomorrows and tomorrows

****

A LOVELY LOVE STORY

by 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 charactered 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.

****

LOVE MONKEY

by Edward Monkton

It was once the custom that every monkey would carve for himself a wooden heart. And the heart that Love Monkey carved was the most beautiful of all. Its contours were soft and rounded, like an ancient pebble sculpted by the oceans. Its surface was smooth and shiny like liquid silk, and it shone as bright as a ruby in the desert sun. “Take your hearts with you wherever you go,” said their teacher. “Nurture them as a mother nurtures her new-born baby. For when you want to give of yourself fully, your heart is the only true gift you will have.”

That night, Love Monkey had a dream. He dreamt of a monkey whose smile lit up his soul like sunshine. He held out his heart to her, so radiant, so splendid and so new. She took him in her arms and he felt truly, perfectly, at peace. When Love Monkey awoke he resolved that, from that day forward, he would search for his Dream Monkey until he could stand before her and give to her his perfect heart.

He travelled through deserts…and climbed over mountains. He trekked across forests…and sailed many oceans. Love Monkey looked after his heart as best he could, but the storms that he endured on his travels chipped away at its surface and each new adventure reshaped it. By the time he arrived on the last distant shore, his heart was so changed by the patina of time that it barely resembled his old heart at all.

And then, he saw her. Standing before him, as radiant and as beautiful as the sunshine, was his Dream Monkey.
At first, he could not speak. But then, from somewhere deep inside himself, he found a voice. “I have travelled the world over to find you, and to give you my heart,” he said. “But now that I am finally with you, I see how foolish I have been. You are so beautiful, so perfect. And my heart that was once so smooth, so bright and so new is now not something that I could even bring myself to show you,” and he turned to go.

“Let me see it,” said Dream Monkey. She took his heart and held it up to the light. “Nothing to me is more beautiful. Every fissure tells a story. Every blemish makes you more real. All my life I have been waiting for a heart like this; a heart that speaks the truth.” “Come here,” she said. “I have something for you too.” In her hand was a tiny golden heart. It was as worn and as scratched as Love Monkey’s own…and it was the most precious thing that he had ever seen.

Love Monkey put his arms around her and they held each other for a long, long time. “I shall treasure this heart for as long as I live,” said Dream Monkey, running her fingers over its ridged and dimpled surface. Then they looked into each other’s eyes and, feeling the joy of truth in their souls for the first

time, they began to laugh. And often they sit together still, holding each other's hearts in their warm hands, lifting them to the light…and laughing. Always laughing.

2. Love Poems and Romantic Readings

DUST

by HARRY BAKER

It's not the flowers, it's the weeding in the mud with you
It's not the champagne it's that cuppa in that favourite mug you use
It's not the chocolates, ok yes it is but not just one or two
It is becoming Bruce Bogtrotter or Augustus Gloop.

It's voting frozen pizza over fancy grub with you
because some nights nothing can beat a slice of comfort food.
It's knowing anything I eat will include some for you
because you're not hungry but you might just have a couple of spoons.
It's not the dreaming, it's the waking up with you;
I want to be here long enough to gather dust with you.

It's us agreeing that romantic baths need bubbles too
Yet now I see maybe the snorkel was too much for you
And yes the submarine and rubber duck came out a touch too soon
And yet the fundamental truth is I have fun with you
Its watching crappy films because that's what you want to do
Then on the nights you're gone finding I want to watch them too.
Its knowing if it came to it and I had option to
I would not change a single thing of what I've got with you
It's not the dreaming, it's the waking up with you,
I want to be here long enough to gather dust with you

For us love isn't in the air, that is just where we found it
All this is built upon what we have done to ground it
It's not the spark when we first met
It is the lifetime built around it
It's by small amounts, that mounds amount to mountains
I need not justify adjust, or fear I'm judged by you
Such is the glorious consistency of loving you
My hearts not skipped a beat
It just constantly thuds for you
Such is the everyday magnificence of loving you
It's not something we fell into, so much as stumbled through
It's the spectacular normality of loving you

It's not the dreaming
It's the waking up with you
I want to be here long enough to gather dust with you.

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(NB Can be edited down to suit)

Extract from THE AMBER SPY GLASS

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 will 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…”

****

THE CONFIRMATION

by EDWIN MUIR - from the Collected Poems

Yes, yours my love, is the right human face.
I in my mind had waited for this long,
Seeing the false and searching for the true,
Then found you as a traveller finds a place
Of welcome suddenly amid the wrong
Valleys and rocks and twisting roads. But you,
What shall I call you? A fountain in a waste,
A well of water in a country dry,
Or anything that's honest and good, an eye
That makes the whole world bright. Your open heart,
Simple with giving, gives the primal deed,
The first good world, the blossom, the blowing seed,
The hearth, the steadfast land, the wandering sea,
Not beautiful or rare in every part,
But like yourself, as they were meant to be.

****

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 tell 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.
I will be here.

****

STARS MAY FALL IN ONE'S HAND

by ASJ TESSIMOND - from 'Morning Meeting'

When you are with me, I who am all too sane, am a little mad.
Through you I see colours where yesterday were grey, black,
white, and tomorrow perhaps grey, black, white will be again.
Your eyes reflect impossible towns, trees, flowers,
inconceivable lights and faces.

Your voice holds incredible echoes of unlikely words.
Your time has no days, hours, minutes;
And all things are possible;
And stars, like snow, may fall in one's hand.

****

FIRST MEETING

by ASJ Tessimond

When I first met you,
I knew I had come at last home,
Home after wandering,
Home after long puzzled searching.
Home, after long being wind-borne,
Wave-tossed, night-caught, long being lost.

And being with you was normal and needful
And natural as sleeping or waking.
And I was myself,
Who had never been wholly myself.
I was walking and talking
And laughing easily at last.

And the air was softer,
And sounds were sharper,

And colours were brighter.
And sky was higher,
And length was not measured by milestones,
And time was not measured by clocks.
And this end was a beginning,
And these words are the beginning –
Of my thanks.

****

WEDDING POEM

by Whitney Hanson

They say that sometimes
love starts with a spark.

And that might be true,
but if I were to wish you a love,
I wouldn't wish fire for you.

You see, fire is powerful.
It burns bright and then it's gone.
It's beautiful and warm,
but it doesn't last long.

So instead of wishing you a love that burns,
I wish you a love like a river twists and turns.
It changes and it flows,
It is powerful and free.
But it consistently finds its way back to the sea.

And so like the water,
I hope your love is ever growing, ever changing.
I hope your love is powerful and free,
And may you always find each other,

Like a river finds the sea.

****

YOU ARE PART OF ME

by FRANK YERBY

You are part of me. I do not know
By what slow chemistry you first became
A vital fibre of my being. Go
Beyond the rim of time or space, the same
Inflections of your voice will sing their way
Into the depths of my mind still. Your hair
Will gleam as bright, the artless play
Of word and glance, gesture and the fair
Young fingers waving have too deeply etched
The pattern of your soul on mine. Forget

Me quickly as a laughing picture sketched
On water, I shall never know regret
Knowing no magic ever can set free
That part of you that is a part of me.

****

ALL MY HEART

by Donna Ashworth

We are not, and never will be PERFECT. Thank goodness.
But when I met you, and let you inside my walls, little pieces of me I had forgotten about came back.
As though they recognised you before I did. As though they saw a safe place to breathe, at last.
And little by little, I started to feel more whole. It's not that you completed me,
it's that you loved me enough that I could complete myself.
So when I say I love you with all my heart, I mean it.
Because it is ALL, again. And I think - no I know - that you saved it back to life.

****

I'D CHOOSE YOU

Excerpt from The Chaos of Stars by Kiersten White

I didn't fall in love with you.
I walked into love with you,
with my eyes wide open,
choosing to take every step along the way.

I do believe in fate and destiny,
but I also believe we are only fated to do the things that we'd choose anyway.

And I'd choose you;
in a hundred lifetimes, in a hundred worlds,
in any version of reality,
I'd find you
and I'd choose you.

****

HOW DO I LOVE THEE? (Sonnet 43)

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 candle-light.
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.

****

SONNET 116

by 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 barque,
Whose worth's unknown, although its 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.

****

Excerpt from 'SONG OF THE ROAD'

by WALT WHITMAN

A foot and light-hearted I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me leading wherever I choose.
Henceforth I ask not good-fortune, I myself am good-fortune,
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
Done with indoor complaints, libraries, querulous criticisms,
strong and content I travel the open road.
I inhale great draughts of space,
The east and the west are mine, and the north and the south are mine.
I am larger, better than I thought,
I did not know I held so much goodness.
Comrade, 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?

****

THE BARGAIN

by SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

My true love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange, one for the other given.
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,
There never was a better bargain driven.
His heart in me keeps me and him in one,
My love 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.
His heart his wound received from sight,
My heart was wounded with his wounded heart;
For as from me on him his hurt did light,
So still me thought in me his hurt did smart.
Both equal hurt, in this change sought our bliss:
My true love hath my heart and I have his.

****

EVERYONE SANG

by SEIFRIED SASSON

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight
As prison'd birds must find in freedom,
Winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark-green fields; on - on - and out
of sight.

Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted;
And beauty came like the setting sun:
My heart was shaken with tears; and horror
Drifted away...O, but Everyone
Was a bird; and the song was wordless; the singing
will never be done

****

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 it's you are whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

Here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life; which grows
higher than soul can hope or mind can hide)
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars apart
I carry your heart (I carry it in my heart)

****

NOTES ON LOVE AND COURAGE

by HUGY PRATHER

the quiet thoughts
of two people a long time in love
touch lightly
like birds nesting in each other's warmth
you will know them by their laughter
but to each other
they speak mostly through their solitude
if they find themselves apart
they may dream of sitting undisturbed
in each other's presence
of wrapping themselves warmly
in each other's ease

****

COME WITH ME, GO WITH ME

by FRAN LANDESMAN

Come with me, go with me
Burn with me, glow with me
Write me a sonnet or two;
Sleep with me, wake with me,
Give with me, take with me,
Love me the way I love you.
Let me get high with you,
Laugh with you, cry with you,
Be with you when I am blue;
Rest with you, fight with you
Day with you, night with you
Love me whatever I do.
Work with me, play with me
Run with me, stay with me
Make me your partner in crime;
Handle me, fondle me,
Cradle me tenderly
Say I'm your reason and rhyme.
Pray with me, sin with me,
Lose with me, win with me,
Love me with all of my scars;
Rise with me, fall with me

Hide from it all with me
Nothing's is mine now - it's ours.

****

SONNET XVII

by PABLO NERUDA, translated by MARK EISNER

I don’t love you as if you were a rose of salt, topaz,
or arrow of carnations that propagate fire:
I love you as one loves certain obscure things,
secretly, between the shadow and the soul.

I love you as the plant that doesn’t bloom but carries
the light of those flowers, hidden, within itself,
and thanks to your love the tight aroma that arose
from the earth lives dimly in my body.

I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where,
I love you directly without problems or pride:
I love you like this because I don’t know any other way to love,
except in this form in which I am not nor are you,
so close that your hand upon my chest is mine,
so close that your eyes close with my dreams.

****

PATHS AND JOURNEYS Adapted from FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

by THOMAS HARDY

We are all on our own paths, all on our own journeys. Sometimes the paths cross, and people arrive at the crossing points at the same time and meet each other. There are greetings, pleasantries are exchanged, and then they move on.
But then once in a while the pleasantries become more, friendship grows, deeper links are made, hands are joined and love flies. The friendship has turned into love. Paths are joined.
One path with two people walking it, both going in the same direction, and sharing each other's journeys.

****

THE BEAUTY OF UNION

By GEORGE MPANGA

There’s an indescribable beauty in union
In two beings forming one new being
Entering each other’s world
Surrendering each other’s selves
Accepting the invitation to be everything to someone else
There’s an unparalleled bravery in union

In telling the one you love:
“The only way that we can truly win
Is if I think of you in everything I do
And honour every decision you faithfully include me in.”
Love gives union true meaning
It illuminates the path
It wants us to compromise, communicate and laugh
It wants us to elevate, appreciate without pride
Love is oblivious to the outside
Even with an audience of millions
Even when that love bears immortal significance
All of this is met with cordial indifference
By the two people at the heart of it
Two individuals when they started it
Becoming two halves of one partnership
Such is the beauty of union
Such is the beauty of union

****

Excerpt from ‘A FAREWELL TO ARMS’

By EARNEST HEMMINGWAY

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.

****

CARRIE’S POEM

From SEX IN 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.

.

****

TO BE IN LOVE

By GWENDOLYN BROOKS

To be in love
Is to touch with a lighter hand.
In yourself you stretch, you are well.
You look at things
Through his eyes.
A cardinal is red.
A sky is blue.
Suddenly you know he knows too.
He is not there but
You know you are tasting together
The winter, or a light spring weather.
His hand to take your hand is overmuch.
Too much to bear.
You cannot look in his eyes
Because your pulse must not say
What must not be said.
When he
Shuts a door-
Is not there_
Your arms are water.
And you are free
With a ghastly freedom.
You are the beautiful half
Of a golden hurt.
You remember and covet his mouth
To touch, to whisper on.
Oh when to declare
Is certain Death!
Oh when to apprize
Is to mesmerize,
To see fall down, the Column of Gold,
Into the commonest ash.

****

Excerpt from 'MOAB IS MY WASHPOT'

By STEPHEN FRY

And then I saw him and nothing was ever the same again.

The sky was never the same colour, the moon never the same shape: the air never smelt the same, food never tasted the same. Every word I knew changed its meaning, everything that once was stable and firm became as insubstantial as a puff of wind, and every puff of wind became a solid thing I could feel and touch.

****

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.

****

TOUCH THE AIR SOFTLY

By William Jay Smith

Now touch the air softly, step gently, one, two …
I'll love you 'til roses are robin's egg blue;
I'll love you 'til gravel is eaten for bread,
And lemons are orange, and lavender's red.

Now touch the air softly, swing gently the broom.
I'll love you 'til windows are all of a room;
And the table is laid, And the table is bare,
And the ceiling reposes on bottomless air.

I'll love you 'til heaven rips the stars from his coat,
And the moon rows away in a glass-bottomed boat;
And Orion steps down like a river below,

And earth is ablaze, and oceans aglow.

So touch the air softly, and swing the broom high.
We will dust the grey mountains, and sweep the blue sky:
And I'll love you as long as the furrow the plough,
As however is ever, and ever is now.

****

WITH NO NEED FOR WORDS

From The Alchamist, by Paulo Coelho

When he looked into her eyes, he learned the most important part of the language that all the world spoke — the language that everyone on earth was capable of understanding in their heart. It was love.

Something older than humanity, more ancient than the desert. What the boy felt at that moment was that he was in the presence of the only woman in his life, and that, with no need for words, she recognized the same thing. Because when you know the language, it's easy to understand that someone in the world awaits you, whether it's in the middle of the desert or in some great city.

And when two such people encounter each other, the past and the future become unimportant. There is only that moment, and the incredible certainty that everything under the sun has been written by one hand only. It is the hand that evokes love, and creates a twin soul for every person in the world. Without such love, one's dreams would have no meaning.
.

****

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

****

From JASPER JONES

by CRAID 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. One of those freak collisions of fizzing meteors and looming celestial bodies and floating debris and one single beautiful red ball that bursts into your life and through your body like an enormous firework. Where things shift into focus for a moment, and everything makes sense. And it becomes one of those things inside you, a pearl among sludge, one of those big, exaggerated memories you can invoke at any moment to peel away a little layer of how you felt, like a lick of ice cream. The flavour of grace.

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.

****

From The Essential Rumi

By 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..

****

MOUTHFUL OF FOREVERS

By Clementine Von Radics

I am not the first person you loved.
You are not the first person I looked at with a mouthful of "forevers".
We have both known loss like the sharp edges of a knife.
We have both lived with lips more scar tissue than skin.
Our love came unannounced in the middle of the night.
Our love came when we'd given up on asking love to come.
I think that has to be part of its miracle. This is how we heal.

I will kiss you like forgiveness. You will hold me like I'm hope.
Are arms will bandage and we will press promises between us like flowers in a book.
I will write sonnets to the salt of sweat on your skin.
I will write novels to the scar of your nose.
I will write a dictionary of all the worlds I have used trying to describe the way it feels to have finally, finally found you.
And I will not be afraid of your scars.

I know sometimes it' still hard to let me see you in all your cracked perfection, but please know:
Whether it's the days you burn more brilliant than the sun or the nights you collapse into my lap,
Your body broken into a thousand questions,
You are the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.
I will love you when you are a still day.
I will love you when you are a hurricane.

Maybe... we are supposed to meet the wrong person before meeting the right one,
So that when we finally meet the right person, we will know how to be grateful for that gift.
Maybe... it is true that we don't know what we've got until we lose it.
But it's also true that we don't know what we've be missing until it arrives.
Maybe... the happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything that comes along their way.
Maybe... the best kind of love is the kind you can sit on a sofa together and never say a word,
And then walk away feeling like it was the best conversation you've ever hand.

Maybe... you shouldn't go for looks. They can deceive.
Don't go for wealth. Even that fades away.
Go for someone who makes you smile;
Because it takes only a smile to make a dark day seem bright.
Maybe... you should hope for enough happiness to make you sweet,
Enough trials to make you strong
Enough sorrow to keep you human
And enough hope to make you happy.

Maybe...
Love is not about finding the perfect person.
It's about learning to see an imperfect person perfectly.

****

SONNET

by CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

I wish I could remember that first day,
First hour, first moment of your meeting me,
If bright or dim the season, it might be
Summer or Winter for aught I can say;
So unrecorded did it slip away,
So blind was I to see and to foresee,
So dull to mark the budding of my tree
That would not blossom yet for many a May.
If only I could recollect it, such
A day of days! I let it come and go
As traceless as a thaw of bygone snow;
It seemed to mean so little, meant so much;
If only now I could recall that touch,
First touch of hand in hand - Did one but know!

****

THE BIRTHDAY

by CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple tree
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me

Raise me a dais of silk down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lis;
Because the birthday of my life,
Is come, my love is come to me.

****

MY LOVE IS LIKE A RED, RED ROSE

By Robert Burns

My love is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June:
My love is like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.

So fair art thou, my bonny lass,
So deep in love am I:
And I will love 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 love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o'life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only love,
And fare thee weel a shile!
And I will come again, my love,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

****

"UNTITLED"

By R.M. DRAKE

You will be the clouds
and I will be the sky.
you will be the ocean
and I will be the shore.
you will be the trees
and I will be the wind.

whatever we are, you and I
will always collide.

****

WE ARE MADE ONE WITH WHAT WE TOUCH AND SEE

By Oscar Wild

We are resolved into the supreme air,
We are made one with what we touch and see,
With our heart's blood each crimson sun is fair,
With our young lives each spring-impassioned tree
Flames into green, the wildest beasts that range
The moor our kinsmen are, all life is one, and all is change.

With beat of systole and of diastole
One grand great life throbs through earth's giant heart,
And mighty waves of single Being roll
From nerve-less germ to man, for we are part
Of every rock and bird and beast and hill,
One with the things that prey on us, and one with what we kill. . . .

Not we alone hath passions hymeneal,
The yellow buttercups that shake for mirth
At daybreak know a pleasure not less real
Than we do, when in some fresh-blossoming wood
We draw the spring into our hearts, and feel that life is good. . . .

Is the light vanished from our golden sun,
Or is this daedal-fashioned earth less fair,
That we are nature's heritors, and one
With every pulse of life that beats the air?
Rather new suns across the sky shall pass,
New splendour come unto the flower, new glory to the grass.

And we two lovers shall not sit afar,
Critics of nature, but the joyous sea
Shall be our raiment, and the bearded star
Shoot arrows at our pleasure! We shall be
Part of the mighty universal whole,
And through all Aeons mix and mingle with the Kosmic Soul!

We shall be notes in that great Symphony
Whose cadence circles through the rhythmic spheres,
And all the live World's throbbing heart shall be

One with our heart, the stealthy creeping years
Have lost their terrors now, we shall not die,
The Universe itself shall be our Immortality!

****

THIS PULSE

By Jeanette Winterson, from WRITTEN ON THE BODY

In the heat of her hands I thought, This is the campfire that mocks the sun. This place will warm me, feed me and care for me. I will hold on to this pulse against other rhythms. The world will come and go in the tide of a day but here is her hand with my future in its palm.

****

3. Readings from Children's Books

US TWO

by A.A. MILNE

Wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
There's always Pooh and Me.
Whatever I do, he wants to do,
"Where are you going today?" says Pooh…
"Well, that's very odd 'cos I was too.
"Let's go together," says Pooh, says he.
"Let's go together," says Pooh.
"What's twice eleven?" I said to Pooh,
"Twice what?" said Pooh to Me.
"I think it ought to be twenty two."
"Just what I think myself," said Pooh.
"It wasn't an easy sum to do,
But that's what it is," said Pooh, said he.
"That's what it is," said Pooh.
"Let's look for dragons," I said to Pooh.
"Yes, let's," said Pooh to Me.
We crossed the river and found a few…
"Yes, those are dragons all right," said Pooh.
"As soon as I saw their beaks I knew.
That's what they are," said Pooh, said he.
"That's what they are," said Pooh.
"Let's frighten the dragons," I said to Pooh.
"That's right," said Pooh to Me.
"I'm not afraid," I said to Pooh,
And I held his paw and I shouted "Shoo!
Silly old dragons!"… and off they flew.
"I wasn't afraid," said Pooh, said he,
"I'm never afraid with you."
So wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
There's always Pooh and Me.
"What would I do?" I said to Pooh,
"If it wasn't for you," and Pooh said… "True,
It isn't much fun for One, but Two
Can stick together," says Pooh, says he.
"That's how it is," says Pooh.

****

An extract 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 someone 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.’

‘I suppose you are real?’ said the Rabbit. And then he wished he had not said it, for he thought the Skin Horse only smiled.
‘Someone made me Real,’ he said. ‘That was a great many years ago; but once you are Real you can’t become unreal again. It lasts for always.

****

THE OWL AND THE PUSSY CAT

by EDWARD LEAR

The Owl and the Pussy cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat,
They took some honey,
and plenty of money
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.

The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar,
"O lovely Pussy!
O Pussy, my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are, you are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!"

Pussy said to the Owl,
"You elegant fowl!
How charmingly sweet you sing!
O let us be married!
too long we have tarried:
But what shall we do for a ring?"

They sailed away, for a year and a day,
To the land where the Bong Tree grows,
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood
With a ring at the end of his nose,
His nose, his nose,
With a ring
at the end of his nose.

"Dear Pig, are you willing

to sell for one shilling
Your ring?"
Said Piggy, "I will."
So they took it away,
and were married next day
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.

They dined on mince,
and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
They danced
By the light of the moon,
The moon, the moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

****

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.
Wherever you go, I'll go there too
Here and there and ev'rywhere
And always with you.

I want to be Your Personal Penguin
From now on.
Now lots of other penguins seem to do fine
In a universe of nothing but ice
But if I could be yours and you could be mine
A cozy little world would be twice as nice.
I want to be Your Personal Penguin
I want to talk with you night and day
I want to be Your Personal Penguin
I want to listen to whatever you say.
Look at these wings, so perfect to hold you
I'd like to say again
What I have already told you

Let me be Your Personal Penguin
From now on.
Now lots of other penguins seem to do fine
In a universe of nothing but ice
But if I could be yours and you could be mine
A cozy little world would be twice as nice.
I want to be (want to be) Your Personal Penguin

I want to walk right by your side
I want to be (want to be) Your Personal Penguin
I want to travel with you far and wide.
Wherever you go, I'll go there too
Here and there and ev'rywhere
And always with you.

I want to be Your Personal Penguin
Imagine me, Your Personal Penguin
I want to be Your Personal Penguin
From now on.

****

GUESS HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU

by SAM McBATNEY

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.”

****

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

****

OH THE PLACES YOU’LL GO

by Dr. SEUSS (can be edited down)

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 ¾ 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!

****

4. Marriage and Partnership –thoughts and advice

A MARRIAGE

By MARK TWAIN

A marriage makes of two fractional halves a whole.
It gives two purposeless lives a work,
And doubles the strength of each to perform it.
It gives to two questioning natures a reason for living and
Something to live for.
It will give a new gladness to the sunshine,
A new fragrance to the flowers,
A new beauty to the earth and a new mystery to life.

****

'TO BE ONE WITH EACH OTHER'

By GEORGE ELLIOT

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

****

ALL I KNOW ABOUT LOVE

By Neil Gaimon

This is everything I have to tell you about love: nothing.
This is everything I've learned about marriage: nothing.
Only that the world out there is complicated,
and there are beasts in the night, and delight and pain,
and the only thing that makes it okay, sometimes,
is to reach out a hand in the darkness and find another hand to squeeze,
and not to be alone.

It's not the kisses, or never just the kisses: it's what they mean.
Somebody's got your back.
Somebody knows your worst self and somehow doesn't want to rescue you
or send for the army to rescue them.
It's not two broken halves becoming one.
It's the light from a distant lighthouse bringing you both safely home
because home is wherever you are both together.

So this is everything I have to tell you about love and marriage: nothing,
like a book without pages or a forest without trees.
Because there are things you cannot know before you experience them.
Because no study can prepare you for the joys or the trials.
Because nobody else's love, nobody else's marriage, is like yours,
and it's a road you can only learn by walking it,

a dance you cannot be taught,
a song that did not exist before you began, together, to sing.

And because in the darkness you will reach out a hand,
not knowing for certain if someone else is even there.
And your hands will meet,
and then neither of you will ever need to be alone again.
And that's all I know about love.

****

A GOOD WEDDING CAKE

By Author Unknown

4lb of love.
1lb butter of youth.
½lb of good looks.
1lb sweet temper.
1lb of blindness of faults.
1lb of self forgetfulness.
1lb of pounded wit.
1lb of good humour.
2 tablespoons of sweet argument.
1 pint of rippling laughter.
1 wine glass of common sense.
1oz modesty.

Put the love, good looks and sweet temper into a well furnished house. Beat the butter of youth to a cream, and mix well together with the blindness of faults. Stir the pounded wit and good humour into the sweet argument, then add the rippling laughter and common sense. Work the whole together until everything is well mixed, and bake gently for ever.

****

DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

Author Unknown

Did you hear my definition of marriage?
It is that it resembles a pair of shears -
So joined that they cannot be separated;
Often moving in opposite directions,
Yet always punishing anyone who comes between them.

****

Extract from THE PROPHET

by KAHLIL GIBRAN

You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days.
Aye, you shall be together even in the silent memory of us.
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 cypress grow not in each other's shadow.

****

A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE

by PAUL KURTZ

A successful marriage is one where each partner discovers that it is better to give love than to receive it. To truly love another person is to wish that person to develop and flourish in his or her own terms.

In a long marriage there will be joy and laughter, but also sadness and sorrow, harmony and discord, as you strive to overcome adversity and fulfil your dreams.

The key value of wedlock is that it allows for intimacy between a woman and a man, who can enjoy each other's company, share ideals and expectations, confess failures and admit defeats to each other, and yet realise in union the qualities of the good life.

As you build your home, embark upon careers, and raise a family, your marriage can become a work of art in which both of you together give it line and form, colour and tone. You will be challenged every day and in every way to make your marriage work. If you do, it can become a thing of beauty, a joint creation of aesthetic splendour and enduring value.

****

MARRIAGE IS

by UNKNOWN

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 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 ART OF MARRIAGE

by WILFRED A PETERSON

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 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 speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.
It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.
It is giving in each other an atmosphere in which each can grow. It is finding room for the things of spirit. It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.
It is not only marrying the right partner. It is being the right partner.

****

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 the 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.

****

IF

Author Unknown

If you treat each other kindly with compassion and with trust
And always let your feelings show,
If you laugh together often and enjoy the time you share,
But give each other space to learn and grow,
If you understand your differences, respecting who you are,
And put each other first in all you do -
Your marriage will be wonderful, a reason to feel proud,
And a special source of love, your whole lives through.

****

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, 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 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 – I meant it all, every word." Look at one another and remember this moment. Before this moment you have been many things to one another – acquaintance, friend, companion, lover and even teacher. Now you shall say a few words that take you across a threshold of life, for after these vows, you shall say to the world, this is my [husband/wife], this is my [husband/wife].

****

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.

****

MARRIAGE IS THE CLOSEST KIND OF FRIENDSHIP

Author Unknown

Marriage is the closest kind of friendship.
Years of traffic wear away the lines
Between two souls with similar designs,
Ending more in unity than kinship.
Separate actors must play separate parts:
They must alone be riveted by need.
Far beneath that soil a single seed
Roots itself, tenacious in their hearts.
In love there is a trust beyond the word.

Each finds peace in each, as though the light
Needed the tranquility of night,
Deeper than what silence can be heard.

****

MARRY YOUR BEST FRIEND

Author Unknown

Marry your best friend. I do not say that lightly. Really, truly find the strongest, happiest friendship in the person you fall in love with. Someone who speaks highly of you. Someone you can laugh with. The kind of laughs that make your belly ache, and your nose snort. The embarrassing, earnest, healing kind of laughs. Wit is important. Life is too short not to love someone who lets you be a fool with them. Make sure they are somebody who lets you cry, too. Despair will come. Find someone that you want to be there with you through those times. Most importantly, marry the one that makes passion, love, and madness combine and course through you. A love that will never dilute - even when the waters get deep, and dark."

****

Excerpt from "THE GIFT FROM THE SEA"

by ANNE MORROW LINDBERGH

A good relationship has a pattern like a dance and is built on the same rules. The partners do not need to hold on tightly, as they move confidently in the same pattern, intricate, light, swift and free. There is no place for the possessive clutch, the clinging hand and the heavy hand - only the barest touch in passing. Arm in arm, now face to face, now back to back, it does not matter which, because they know they are partners, moving to the same rhythm, creating a pattern together and being invisibly nourished by it. The joy of such a pattern is not only the joy of creation or the joy of participation, it is also the joy of life. Lightness of touch and the joy of life are intertwined.

Go forward in your life together with the good wishes of those who love you ringing in your ears. Go forward to a life of joy and fulfilment, of tolerance and peace, giving and receiving from those who share your concerns and ideals. Remember this day, those who came to wish you well, the words you have spoken, the emotions you feel and everything that symbolises all the meaning of this occasion. Above all else be happy together.

As you build your home, embark upon careers, raise a family, your marriage can become a work of art in which both of you, together, give it line and form, colour and tone. You will be challenged from time to time, and in every way to make your marriage work. If you do, it can become a thing of beauty and a joint creation of splendour and enduring value.

****

Excerpt 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.

****

A WALLED GARDEN

Author unknown

Your marriage should have within it,
A secret and protected place, open to you alone.
Imagine it to be a walled garden,
Entered by a door to which only you
Hold the key.

Within this garden you will cease to be
A mother, father, employee, homemaker
Or any other of the roles which you fulfil in daily life.
Here you are yourselves –
Two people who love each other.
Here you can concentrate on one another's needs.
So take my hand and let us go back to our garden.
The time we spend together is not wasted but invested.
Invested in our future
And the nurture of our love.

****

MARRIAGE ADVICE

Jane Wells (1886)

Let your love be stronger than your hate or anger.
Learn the wisdom of compromise,
for it is better to bend a little than to break.
Believe the best rather than the worst.
People have a way of living up or down to your opinion of them.
Remember that true friendship is the basis for any lasting relationship.

****

5. What is love?

SO WHAT IS LOVE?

by ANON. - Translated by Maria Lovell

So what is Love? If thou wouldst know
The heart alone can tell:
Two minds with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one.

And whence comes Love? Like morning bright
Love comes without thy call.
And how dies Love? A spirit bright,
Love never dies at all.

****

Extract from 1 CORINTHIANS

The Bible

Love is patient and kind;
Love is not jealous or conceited,
or proud, or provoked;
Love does not keep a record of wrongs;
Love is not happy with evil,
but is pleased with the truth.
Love never gives up;
Its faith, hope and patience never fail.

****

THE COMFORT

Author Unknown

Oh, the comfort,
The inexpressible comfort;
Of feeling safe with a person;
Having neither to weigh thoughts
Nor measure words,
But pour them all out, just as they are,
Chaff and grain together,
Knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them,
Keep what is worth keeping and then - with the breath of
Kindness - blow the rest away.

****

BE LOVERS, BUT ABOVE ALL BE FRIENDS

by 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 strong 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.

****

From WILD AWAKE

by HILLARY 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 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 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.

****

From LETTERS TO A YOUNG POET

by RAINER MARIA RILKE

For one human being to love another human being: that is perhaps the most difficult task that has been entrusted to us, the ultimate task, the final test and proof, the work for which all other work is merely preparation. Loving does not at first mean merging, surrendering, and uniting with another person - it is a high inducement for the individual to ripen, to become something in himself, to become a world, to become a world in himself for the sake of another person; it is a great demanding claim on him, something that chooses him and calls him to vast distances.

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

****

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.

****

EXTRACT FROM CAPTAIN CORRELLI'S MANDOLIN

by LOUIS DE BERNIERES

'And another thing. 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 promises of eternal passion, it is not the desire to mate every second minute of the day, it is not lying awake at night imagining that he is kissing every cranny of your body. No, don't blush, I am telling you some truths. 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. 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.

****

ALL THINGS ARE CONTAINED IN LOVE

by VICTOR HUGO, (freely translated from) LES MISERABLES

The future belongs to hearts even more than it does to minds. Love, that is the only thing that can occupy and fill eternity.
Love is part of the soul itself - it is of the same nature.
Like the soul, it is a divine spark; like the soul, 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 shining in the very depths of heaven.
All things are contained in love, and those who love will understand how to find them there.
Without love, the sun itself would falter and grow dark.

****

YOU CAN GIVE WITHOUT LOVING

by VICTOR HUGO, from LES MISERABLES

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 truly alone again. And great happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved. Loved for ourselves. And even loved in spite of ourselves.

****

WHAT IS LOVE?

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.

****

IF I SAY I LOVE YOU

Ellen Everett

Love hurts because it can be lost
And because it can be forged to begin with.

"I love you" is too effortlessly slipped from lips.
It is undemanding.
It is simple to say, but challenging to mean.
It glides off crooked tongues
and anchors itself onto honest ones.
It is painless to say with deceit
And strenuous to say with sincerity.

I want to say "I love you: but only if I can say it wholly.
If I say, "I love you,", I want it to be unrelated to time,
and measured only by the joining of your heart and mine,
the moment when two lives become one.

****

LOVE IS FRIENDSHIP CAUGHT FIRE

by 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.

****

LOVE WELL

by ANATOLE FRANCE

It is not enough to love passionately: you must also love well.
A passionate love is good doubtless, but a beautiful love is better.
If compassion does not enter into the feelings you have for one another,
these feelings will not always befit all the circumstances of your life together;
they will be like festive robes that will not shield you from wind and rain.
We love truly only those we love even in their weakness and their poverty.
To forbear, to forgive, to console – that is the science of love.

****

MAYBE

By Author Unknown

Maybe…We are supposed to meet the wrong people before meeting the Right one, so that when we finally meet the right person, we will know how to be grateful for that gift.
Maybe...it is true that we don't know what we have got until we lose it, but it is also true that we don't know what we have been missing until it arrives
Maybe...the happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of
Everything; they just make the most of everything that comes along their Way.
Maybe...the best kind of love is the kind you where you can sit on a sofa
Together never say a word, and then walk away feeling like it was the best Conversation you've ever had
Maybe...you shouldn't go for looks; they can deceive. Don't go for wealth; even that fades away. Go for someone who makes you smile, because it takes only a smile to make a dark day seem bright.
Maybe...you should hope for enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep you human, and enough hope to make you happy.
Maybe Love is not about finding the perfect person; it's about learning to see an imperfect person perfectly. When you do what you can, love will do what you can't

****

LOVE IS VIVID

By JEANETTE WINTERSON

Love is vivid. I never wanted the pale version. Love is full strength. I never wanted the diluted version. I never shied away from love's hugeness but I had no idea that love could be as reliable as the sun. The daily rising of love.

****

A NATURAL HISTORY OF LOVE

By DIANE ACKERMAN

Love. What a small word we use for an idea so immense and powerful. It has altered the flow of history, calmed monsters, kindled works of art, cheered the forlorn, turned tough guys to mush, consoled the enslaved, driven strong women mad, glorified the humble, fueled national scandals, bankrupted robber barons, and made mincemeat of kings. How can love's spaciousness be conveyed in the narrow confines of one syllable? Love is an ancient delirium, a desire older than civilization, with taproots spreading into deep and mysterious days. The heart is a living museum. In each of its galleries, no matter how narrow or dimly lit, preserved forever like wondrous diatoms, are our moments of loving, and being loved.

****

THE FOUR LOVES

by C.S. LEWIS

To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable.

****

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.

****

VULNERABLE LOVE

by BRENE BROWN

We cultivate love when we allow our most vulnerable and powerful selves to be deeply seen and known, and when we honour the spiritual connection that grows from that offering with trust, respect, kindness and affection.
Love is not something we give or get; it is something that we nurture and grow, a connection that can only be cultivated between two people when it exists within each one of them – we can only love others as much as we love ourselves.

****

THE BOOK OF LOVE

Lyrics by Stephen Merrit

The book of love is long and boring
No one can lift the damn thing
It's full of charts and facts and figures
and instructions for dancing

But I, I love it when you read to me
And you, you can read me anything

The book of love has music in it
In fact that's where music comes from
Some of it is just transcendental
Some of it is just really dumb

But I, I love it when you sing to me
And you you can sing me anything

The book of love is long and boring
And written very long ago
It's full of flowers and heart-shaped boxes
And things we're all too young to know

But I, I love it when you give me things
And you, you ought to give me wedding rings

I, I love it when you give me things
And you, you ought to give me wedding rings.

****

Excerpts (adapted from) from EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT LOVE (Option A)-

By Dolly Alderton

Maybe you think you should be looking for an extraordinary kind of love, but do you really want to be loved in an extraordinary way?
You can be loved plainly and quietly, without spectacle or anxiety, just like a best friend loves you. It might be fun to set off all sort of bombs in your life but one day, life will be dramatic enough.
There will be sickness, breakdowns, and bankruptcy: and pain and trauma everywhere. When the world feels like a warzone, you want the person you love to feel like peace. Someone who will listen to you and make you laugh, do the crossword with you at breakfast.
Love may happen under the splendour of moon and stars and fireworks and sunsets but it also happens when you're lying on blow-up airbeds in a childhood bedroom, sitting in A&E or in the queue for a passport, or in a traffic jam.
Love is a quiet, reassuring, relaxing, pottering, pedantic, harmonious hum of a thing; something you can easily forget is there, even though its palms are outstretched beneath you in case you fall.

****

Excerpts (adapted from) from EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT LOVE (Option B)-

By Dolly Alderton

I know that love can be loud and jubilant…It can be dancing in the swampy mud and the pouring rain at a festival and shouting "YOU ARE AMAZING" over the band. It's introducing them to your colleagues at a work event and basking in pride as they make people laugh and make you look lovable just by dint of being loved by them.
It's laughing until you wheeze.
It's waking up in a country neither of you have been in before.
It's skinny-dipping at dawn. It's walking along the street together on a Saturday night and feeling an entire city is yours.
It's a big, beautiful, ebullient force of nature.

I also know that love is a pretty quiet thing.
It's lying on the sofa together drinking coffee, talking about where you're going to go that morning to drink more coffee. It's folding down pages of books you think they'd find interesting.

It’s hanging up their laundry when they leave the house having moronically forgotten to take it out of the washing machine.
It’s saying ‘You’re safer here than in a car’ as they hyperventilate on an EasyJet flight to Dublin.
It’s the texts: ‘Hope your day goes well’, ‘How did today go?’, ‘Thinking of you today’ and ‘Picked up loo roll’.
I know that love happens under the splendour of moon and stars and fireworks and sunsets but it also happens when you’re lying on blow-up airbeds in a childhood bedroom, sitting in A&E or in the queue for a passport, or in a traffic jam.
Love is a quiet, reassuring, relaxing, pottering, pedantic, harmonious hum of a thing; something you can easily forget is there, even though its palms are outstretched beneath you in case you fall.

****

LOVE IS

Adapted from a poem By ADRIAN HENRI

Love is...

Love is feeling cold in the back of vans
Love is a fanclub with only two fans
Love is walking holding paintstained hands

Love is.
Love is fish and chips on winter nights
Love is blankets full of strange delights
Love is when you don't put out the light

Love is
Love is the presents in Christmas shops
Love is when you're feeling Top of the Pops
Love is what happens when the music stops

Love is champagne and bare feet on the lawn
Love is the jumpers you’ve borrowed and worn
Love is the reason to rise at dawn
Love is

Love is
Love is you and love is me
Love is prison and love is free

Love's what's there when you are away from me
Love is...

****

VALENTINE

Carol Ann Duffy

Not a red rose or a satin heart.

I give you an onion.
It is a moon wrapped in brown paper.
It promises light
like the careful undressing of love.

Here.
It will blind you with tears
like a lover.
It will make your reflection
a wobbling photo of grief.

I am trying to be truthful.

Not a cute card or a kissogram.

I give you an onion.
Its fierce kiss will stay on your lips,
possessive and faithful
as we are,
for as long as we are.

Take it.
Its platinum loops shrink to a wedding ring,
if you like.
Lethal.
Its scent will cling to your fingers,
cling to your knife.

****

Your Love is as the Sea

Author Unknown

Your love is as the sea, constant and ever-changing… Your love is as the wind, rapturous and all encompassing. Your love is as the earth, solid and firm…Your love is as a flame, illuminating your lives and warming your hearts.

Yet your love extends beyond the sea, wind, earth and flame; it is greater than who you are and meaningless without you; it is more powerful than your past yet the foundation for your future.

It has brought you here today to become one in the eyes of your family and friends, for all the days to come.

Your love is the essence of your lives.

****

ABOUT LOVE

Bob Marley

Only once in your life, I truly believe, you find someone who can completely turn your world around. You tell them things that you've never shared with another soul and they absorb everything you say and actually want to hear more.

You share hopes for the future, dreams that will never come true, goals that were never achieved and the many disappointments life has thrown at you. When something wonderful happens, you can't wait to tell them about it, knowing they will share in your excitement.

They are not embarrassed to cry with you when you are hurting or laugh with you when you make a fool of yourself. Never do they hurt your feelings or make you feel like you are not good enough, but rather they build you up and show you the things about yourself that make you special and even beautiful.

There is never any pressure, jealousy or competition but only a quiet calmness when they are around. You can be yourself and not worry about what they will think of you because they love you for who you are. …

You open your heart knowing that there's a chance it may be broken one day and in opening your heart, you experience a love and joy that you never dreamed possible. You find that being vulnerable is the only way to allow your heart to feel true pleasure that's so real it scares you.

You find strength in knowing you have a true friend and possibly a soul mate who will remain loyal to the end. Life seems completely different, exciting and worthwhile. Your only hope and security is in knowing that they are a part of your life

****

COMPATIBLE WIERDNESS

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.

****

6. Poems and Readings inspired by Nature

THE SUN SHINES NOT ON US BUT IN US

by JOHN MUIR

The sun shines not on us but in us. The rivers flow not past, but through us. Thrilling, tingling, vibrating every fibre and cell of the substance of our bodies, making them glide and sing.
The trees wave and the flowers bloom in 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.

****

TWO TREES

By JANET MILES

A portion of your soul has been
entwined with mine
A gentle kind of togetherness, while
separately we stand.
As two trees deeply rooted in
separate plots of ground,
While their topmost branches
come together,
Forming a miracle of lace
against the heavens.

****

TOGETHER

By JO LYNN WOOD

Two trees near to each other stood
When they were young and life was new.
Their limbs reach out and their branches entwine
And thus together they grew.
Their roots spread out down under the ground
Joining one with the other,
So, from the top in the sky to the heart
In the earth-the two were joined together.
Thru days when the sun was bright and warm
And the winds were temperamental
When a laughing breeze rustled the leave,
Or when the rain was soft and gentle.
Thru days when the clouds were dark and grey
And cold and fierce the weather
The two stood firm and faced the storms
Because they stood together.

****

A BETROTHALL

by E.J. Scovell

Put your hand on my heart, say that you love me as
The woods upon the hills cleave to the hills' contours.
I will uphold you, trunk and shoot and flowering sheaf,
And I will hold you, roots and fruit and fallen leaf.

****

IT'S ALL I HAVE TO BRING TODAY

By EMILY DICKINSON

It's all I have to bring today—
This, and my heart beside—
This, and my heart, and all the fields—
And all the meadows wide—
Be sure you count—should I forget
Some one the sum could tell—
This, and my heart, and all the Bees
Which in the Clover dwell.

****

WEDDING POEM

by Whitney Hanson

They say that sometimes
love starts with a spark.

And that might be true,
but if I were to wish you a love,
I wouldn't wish fire for you.

You see, fire is powerful.
It burns bright and then it's gone.
It's beautiful and warm,
but it doesn't last long.

So instead of wishing you a love that burns,
I wish you a love like a river twists and turns.
It changes and it flows,
It is powerful and free.
But it consistently finds its way back to the sea.

And so like the water,
I hope your love is ever growing, ever changing.
I hope your love is powerful and free,
And may you always find each other,

Like a river finds the sea.

****

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

By PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

The fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean;
The winds of heaven mix forever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single:
All things by a law divine
In another's being mingle—
Why not I with thine?

See, the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister flower could be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea;
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?

****

YOUNG WE ARE

by J.R.R. TOLKIEN

Lo! Young we are and yet have stood
like planted hearts in the great Sun
of Love so long (as two fair trees
in woodland or in open dale
stand utterly entwined and breathe
the airs and suck the very light
together) that we have become
as one, deep rooted in the soil
of Life and tangled in the sweet growth.

****

THE SONG OF THE ENT AND THE ENTWIFE

by J.R.R. TOLKIEN

When spring unfolds the beechen-leaf and sap is in the bough,
When light is on the wild-wood stream, and wind is on the brow,
When stride is long, and breath is deep, and keen the mountain air,
Come back to me! Come back to me, and say my land is fair!

When Summer warms the hanging fruit and burns the berry brown;
When straw is gold, and ear is white, and harvest comes to town;
When honey spills, and apple swells, though wind be in the West,
I'll linger here beneath the Sun, because my land is best!

When Winter comes, the winter wild that hill and wood shall slay;
When trees shall fall and starless night devour the sunless day;
When wind is in the deadly East, then in the bitter rain
I'll look for thee, and call to thee; I'll come to thee again!

Together we will take the road that leads into the West,
And far away will find a land where both our hearts may rest.

****

LOVE IS ENOUGH

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 daises 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.

****

UNTITLED (You will be the clouds)

by R.M. DRAKE

You will be the clouds
and I will be the sky.
you will be the ocean
and I will be the shore.
you will be the trees
and I will be the wind.

whatever we are, you and I
will always collide.

****

Commitment Poem of the Pueblo Native Americans

Author Unknown

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?.

****

From THE SONG OF SOLOMAN

- The King James Bible

My beloved spake, and said unto me,
Rise up, my love, my fair one and come away.
For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.
The flowers appear on the earth,
the time of the singing of the birds is come,
and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.
The fig tree putteth forth her green figs,
and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

****

COSMIC LOVE: A reading inspired by quotes

Of Husband and Wife Carl Sagan and Ann Druyan

The size and age of the Cosmos are beyond ordinary human understanding. Lost somewhere between immensity and eternity is our tiny planetary home. And yet our species is young and curious and brave. In the last few millennia, we have made the most astonishing and unexpected discoveries. They remind us that humans have evolved to wonder, that understanding is a joy, that knowledge is prerequisite to survival.
Our little planet floats like a mote of dust in the morning sky. All that you see, all that we can see, exploded out of stars billions of years ago, and the particles slowly arranged themselves into living things, including all of us. We are made of star stuff. We are the mechanism by which the universe can comprehend itself. We should remain grateful every day for the brief but magnificent opportunity that life provides.

Every one of us is, in the cosmic perspective, is precious. In a hundred billion galaxies, you will not find another. Every single moment that you are alive and you are together is miraculous. We are beneficiaries of chance. Pure chance was so generous and kind for you to find one another. For you to be together. You found each other in the cosmos, and that was wonderful.

In the vastness of space and the immensity of time, it is a joy to share a planet and an epoch together.

****

A Garden

By Tash McGill

Today, my love – I am giving you a meadow.
A meadow is a wonderful place to begin something new.
We have seen this full run of seasons;
summer, autumn, winter and spring
passed over in each other's eyes, held hand in hand
I know what seasons look like on your face
I am comforted, I am hopeful, I am sure.
So now in this summer, I give you a meadow
full of wildflower, full of promise

so we may begin in earnest.
Let me tell you – how I want to build you a garden here,
A corner devoted to each season –
There daffodils in spring, here falling leaves for autumn
From an oak tree that bends but cannot break in winter storms.
And every year, roses in summer
Blooming over and over, recounting the fragrance
by which I loved you first, and love you now.
I long to see the trees grow older and take their shape
Against the prevailing wind provide some shelter
For each sacred herb and flower, that may feed us
And to sit at the end of day beside you, always beside you.
Let us be entwined together, anchored securely in this earth
Never one removed from the other,
each bringing life to the other.
Today I am giving you a meadow,
Tomorrow I am making you a garden.

****

7. Readings and poems for brides and grooms

CONSISTENCY

by UNKNOWN

You are my companion, my confidant, my counsellor, my constant.
I know you will be there, my advisor, my reasoner, my lover.
We have shared the last _____ years,
We have grown and changed together, stronger.
We have weathered distance, travel, people, life, anger.
I feel closer to you than ever and hope to grow still closer.
I know you'll stay, my constant.

****

THIS LIFE THAT I HAVE

by LEO MARKS (Code Poem for the French Resistance)

This life that I have, is all that I have
And this life that I have is yours.
The love that I have, for this life that I have
Is yours, and yours, and yours.

[Our live that we have, is all that I want
And all that I want is you.
Our life that we have, is more than I'd hoped
With you, with you, with you.]

A sleep I shall have
A rest I shall have,
Yet death will be but a pause,
For the peace of the years in the long green grass
Will be yours and yours and yours.

****

KNOW THAT I STILL HOLD YOU EVEN WHEN WE ARE APART

Author Unknown

Know that I still hold you even when we are apart
We seek only the highest in each other
Bringing out the best in each
And bending with the winds of change
When our lives rearrange
And we're looking for a hand to reach out to
That's the kind of friends we are
Never very far away, closer than a heartbeat we'll stay
That's the kind of friends we are
This love is what will lead us to the greatest love of all

****

I LOVE YOU

by Anon

I love you…….
For the kindness in your eyes
And the warmth in your voice,
For the honesty of your words
And the silence of your smile;
For the ways in which we're similar,
And those in which we're worlds apart.
For the openness of your understanding
And the acceptance of your heart;
For the tenderness of your touch
And the strength of your commitment,
For your sense of humour
And your seriousness of purpose;
For a thousand small reasons,
And one most important of all:
Simply because you are you.
In all of creation you are the one whom I cherish most,
The one with whom I hope to share my life -
Its joys, its sorrows, its accomplishments, its challenges -
While building our dreams together and growing every day
In the love that makes us one.

****

TODAY I MARRY MY BEST FRIEND

by BERTRAND RUSSELL

Today I marry my friend,
The one I have laughed and cried with,
The one I have learned from and shared with,
The one I have chosen to support, encourage,
And give myself to,
through all the days Given us to share.
Today I marry the one I love.

****

LOVE SONG inspired by Inuit traditions

You are my <husband/wife>
My feet shall run because of you
My feet shall 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.

****

I PROMISE TO GIVE YOU THE BEST OF MYSELF

by DOROTHY R. COLGAN

I promise to give you the best of myself
and to ask of you no more than you can give.
I promise to respect you as your own person
and to realize that your interests, desires and needs
are no less important than my own.
I promise to share with you my time and my attention
and to bring joy, strength and imagination to our relationship.
I promise to keep myself open to you,
to let you see through the window of my world
into my innermost fears and feelings, secrets and dreams.
I promise to grow along with you,
to be willing to face changes in order to keep
our relationship alive and exciting.
I promise to love you in good times and bad,
with all I have to give and all I feel inside
in the only way I know how,
completely and forever.

****

THIS DAY I MARRIED MY BEST FRIEND

by ANON

This day I married my best friend
the one I laugh with as we share life's wonderous zest,
as we find new enjoyments and experience all that's best.
the one I live for because the world seems brighter
as our happy times are better and our burdens feel much lighter.
the one I love with every fiber of my soul.
We used to feel vaguely incomplete, now together we are whole.

****

THE CHAOS OF STARS

by KIERSTEN WHITE

I didn't fall in love with you. I walked into love with you, with my eyes wide open, choosing to take every step along the way. I do believe in fate and destiny, but I also believe we are only fated to do the things that we'd choose anyway. And I'd choose you; in a hundred lifetimes, in a hundred worlds, in any version of reality, I'd find you and I'd choose you.

****

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 things
that no one else had looked
Quite far enough to find.

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.

****

THESE I CAN PROMISE

by MARK TWAIN

I cannot promise you a lifetime of sunshine
I cannot promise riches, wealth or gold
I cannot promise you an easy pathway
That leads away from change or growing old
But I can promise all my heart's devotion
A smile to chase away your tears of sorrow
A love that's ever true and ever growing
A hand to hold in yours through each tomorrow.

****

I BELONG IN YOUR ARMS

by DEBIRAG BRIDEAU

Finally I have found a place
Into which I fit perfectly, safely and securely
With no doubts, no fears, no sadness, no tears.
This place is filled with happiness and laughter,
Yet it is spacious enough to allow me the freedom to move around,
To live my life and be myself.
This wonderful place, which I never believed really existed,
I have found, finally,
Inside your arms, Inside your heart, Inside your love

****

THE RELATIONSHIP PROMISE

by Luke Wright

I promise, my darling, to be your best friend
to settle the quarrels before the day ends
to teach you new things and learn in return
halve debts, colds and baths, and share laughs and concerns.

I promise, my love, to be silly with you
to giggle in restaurants and cinema queues
the romance and hum-drum all blended to bliss
a life battle-plan that's sealed with a kiss.

From school runs and house work to sweet pillow talk
from mortgage repayments to long country walks
a cuppa in bed when the morning begins
and then when it's over, I'll pour you a gin.

I promise I'll seek to avoid nasty schisms
I know that at times we'll need two televisions
I love you so much that whenever we fight
I'll learn to repeat: I was wrong, you were right.

I'll cook for you darling, that's what love's about
a meal made from scratch is worth one hundred out
I'll shield you from worries that swing overhead
I promise I'll try to be awesome in bed.

I promise, my darling, I'll give you your space
when you're on the loo, dear, I'll spare you my face
but know that I'll be there when your spirit sinks
to match you for messiness, cuddles and drinks.

I love you, my darling, so let's live together
stack days into decades to make our forever.

8. Final Words & Traditional Blessings

CELTIC Well Wishing

The peace of the running water to you,
The peace of the flowing air to you,
The peace of the quiet earth to you,
The peace of the shining stars to you,
And the love and the care of us all to you.

****

CELTIC BLESSING

May peace guard
The door of your house,
The door of your heart.

May the road rise to meet you.
And the sun stand at your shoulder.

May the wind be always at your back,
And the rains fall softly upon your fields.

May life itself befriend you
Each day, each night,
Each step of your journey.

May the peace of the spirit be with you
And with your children,

From the day that we have here today
Until the day of the end of your lives.

****

INSPIRED BY NATIVE AMERICAN TRADITIONS

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.
You are two persons, but now there is only one life before you.
May beauty surround you both in the journey ahead and through all the years.
Go now to your dwelling - to enter in your life together
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, difficulties 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.

****

ALTERNATIVE NATIVE AMERICAN INSPIRED BLESSING

Now you will feel no storms, 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 each of you is companion to the other,
You are two persons, but there is one life before you, and one home.
Turn together to look at the road you travelled, to reach this---the hour of your happiness. It stretches behind you into the past.
Look to the future that lies ahead. A long and winding, adventure-filled road, whose every turn means discovery, new hopes, new joys, new laughter, and a few shared tears.
May happiness be your companion,
May beauty surround you both in the journey ahead; and through all the years to come.
Go this day to your dwelling place and enter into your days together.
May your days be good and long upon the earth.
Your adventure has just begun!

****

APACHE BLESSING

May the sun bring you new energy by day,
May the moon softly restore you by night,
May the rain wash away your worries
And the breeze blow new strength into your being,
And all the days of your life may you walk
Gently through the world and know its beauty.

****

NAVAJO BLESSING

Be swift like the wind in loving each other.
Be brave like the sea in loving each other.
Be gentle like the breeze in loving each other.
Be patient like the sun who waits and watches the four changes of the earth in loving each other.
Be wise like the roaring of the thunder clouds and lightning in loving each other.
Be shining like the morning dawn in loving each other.
Be proud like the tree who stands without bending in loving each other.
Be brilliant like the rainbow colors in loving each other.

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From THE TEMPEST (Act IV Scene 1)

by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

JUNO Honour, riches, marriage-blessing,
Long continuance, and increasing,
Hourly joys be still upon you
Juno sings her blessings on you.

CERES Earth's increase, poison plenty
Barns and garners never empty;
Vines with clustering bunches growing;
Plants with goodly burden bowing;
Spring come to you at the farthest
In the very end of harvest!
Scarcity and want shall shun you;
Ceres' blessing so i on you.

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BLESSING OF THE HANDS (generally used with a hand-fasting)

by Rev. DANIEL L. HARRIS

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 fills your mind.

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.

These are the hands that will help you to hold your family as one.

These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it.

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.

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OH THE PLACES YOU'LL GO

by Dr. SEUSS (can be edited down)

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 ¾ 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!

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ON YOUR WEDDING DAY

by NICHOLAS GORDON

On your wedding day, as you trade vows,
No ordinary moment hurries by.
You partake, as far as time allows,
Of something more than time and Earth and sky.
Unknowable, invisible, yet there;
Resplendent to the heart if not the face;
More than both of you, yet less than air;

A transcendental act conferring grace.
Reason might say, How can this be true?
Return then to the heart, for this is love.
In making vows, you make one out of two,
A mystery beyond what words can prove.
Go then as one flesh, one home, one heart.
Each still a whole, yet also now a part.

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TRADITIONAL IRISH BLESSING

May the road rise up 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 your days be good and long upon the earth.
May you live to see your children's children.
May you be poor in misfortune,
Rich in blessings,
May you know nothing but happiness
From this day forward.

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LOOK TO THIS DAY!

An ancient Sanskrit Poem by KALIDISA

Look to this day!
For it is life, the very life of life.
In its brief course
Lie all the verities and realities of your existence:
The bliss of growth,
The glory of action,
The splendour of achievement.
For yesterday is but a dream
And tomorrow is only a vision,
But today well lived makes yesterday a dream of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day!
Such is the salutation to the dawn.

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ALL MY HAPPINESS GOES OUT TO YOU

by NICHOLAS GORDON

All my happiness goes out to you:
Pride and pleasure, joy, sweet tears, and love!
Reason, hope, and faith together move

In harmony to bless all that you do.
Let this beginning be the golden dawn
At which all dew-drenched nature sings its glory!
Nor should the darkness shrouding every story
Dim the blue-eyed beauty of this morn.
More of life will come than you can hold:
A flood no mortal witness can withstand.
Rest, then, within a quiet, gentle hand,
Knowing where love is as you grow old.

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MAY YOUR MARRIAGE BE A TREE

By JENNIE HERMOLLE

May your marriage be a tree with strong boughs for your children to climb in.
May your marriage be a tree that provides shade for friends to gather under in the warm summer sun and shelter for those caught in the rain.
May your marriage, like a tree, be deep-rooted and strong, standing tall through the storms, stoic through the winter, and renewed each year in spring.
May your marriage enjoy summers in full leaf and all the glorious colours of autumn.
May the quiet calm strength of a tree be in your marriage – may it bring you contentment as deep the roots beneath our feet.
May the quiet calm strength of a tree be in your marriage – may it bring you happiness as full as the canopy of leaves above us.

Alternative for final 2 lines (if ceremony not held in a woodland or under trees)
May your marriage bring you contentment as wide and deep and high as a tree's spreading roots and branches.
May your marriage bring you happiness as full as the canopy of a myriad leaves, each catching sunlight from the sky.