

"All Kinds of Love" - 12 February 2023
Poetry & Reading Selections

"The Deeds of Love"
- *Catherine Lake*

Through and through,
Love loves consequence:

its school-house correspondence, primary and flowing
from centuries before calendars
and marked in the sanctuary of snow
and when
trees are unburdened by autumn and the future plans of squirrels
and when
then
the unassuming vine dresses the fence like nightfall
with its mild enthusiasm and leaves so green
a child would choose to draw
and its morning glories reawaking
to the sequence of the sun.

May we learn towards Love
Reading yet again the source of wonder through ourselves.

§

"The Facts of Life"
- *Padraig O'Tuama*

That you were born
and you will die.

That you will sometimes love enough

and sometimes not.

That you will lie
if only to yourself.

That you will get tired.

That you will learn most from the situations
you did not choose.

That there will be some things that move you
more than you can say.

That you will live,
that you must be loved.

That you will avoid questions
most urgently in need of your attention.

That you began as the fusion of a sperm and an egg
of two people who were once strangers
and may well still be.

That life isn't fair.

That life is sometimes good
and sometimes better than good.

That life is often not so good.

That life is real
and if you can survive it, well,
survive it well
with love and art
and meaning given
where meaning's scarce.

That you will learn to live with regret.
That you will learn to live with respect.

That the structures that constrict you
may not be permanently constraining.

That you will probably be okay.

That you must accept change
before you die, but you will die anyway.

So you might as well live
and you might as well love.

You might as well love.
You might as well love.

§

My Heart Will Wait

- Rev. Lilia Cuervo (UU)

From "Conversations With the Sacred"

You who are always present in my every breath,
who permeates every cell, every instant of my life,
You my beloved, for whom I desperately long...
Where are you? My soul cries out to you,
with the distress of an abandoned child.

Yesterday, I felt held, at ease in your divine embrace.
I felt solid, contented, dwelling in eternity.

Now, everything is changed,
the magic feeling, imperceptibly,

dissolved like gossamer clouds in the infinite azure.

In time, all changes, all erodes, all dissipates.
My heart, however, consumed with desire
for your presence, will not change.

In quiet vigil, it will pray, it will wait.
Without need for assurances, or for certainty,
it will chant your love and it will wait.

§

“I’m Really Very Fond”
- Alice Walker

I’m really very fond of you
he said.

I don't like fond.
It sounds like something
you would tell a dog

Give me love
or nothing.

Throw your fond in a pond
I said

But what I felt for him
was also warm, frisky,
moist-mouthed
eager

and could swim away
if forced to do so

§

"I Choose You"

- Rami Shapiro

from "Accidental Grace: Poetry, Prayers and Psalms"

I choose you this day to love and confide in,
to hold on to and reach out from.

I choose you this day
To believe in and to share with,
to learn from and to grow with.

I choose you this day to give you my heart.

-

§

Jack Kornfield

From "The Art of Forgiveness, Lovingkindness and Peace" p. 72 & 87

Love creates a communion with life. Love expands us, connects us,
sweetens us, and ennobles us.

Love springs up in tender concern, it blossoms into caring actions. It
makes beauty out of all we touch.

In any moment we can step beyond our small self and embrace each other
as beloved parts of a whole.

§

Love is based on our capacity to trust in a reality beyond fear, to trust a
timeless truth bigger than our difficulties.

Love is without demands.

Sometimes love means standing firm.

Sometimes love means letting go.
Sometimes love means letting be.

Love blossoms whenever we step beyond our fears and rest in the
generosity of the heart.

§

"Love Awaits You There"

- Chelan Harkin

From "Susceptible to Light"

It's easier to notice pain than love.
Love is the silence
in the robin's throat
that inspires it to sing.
Love is the silent mantra of the Universe
that keeps things spinning.
Pain is the tree that crashes in the forest,
love is what grows from the fallen.
Love is the silence cupped
in the perfect folds of the autumn leaf,
the beauty that dances through everything
when your worried mind has finally stilled.
We forget to notice love
because of its perfect loyalty:
morning dew diamonding the grass,
the extra sparkle in snow--
for what other reason need it be there?--
the unconditional warmth arising daily to fill your sky,
the ongoingness of flowers.
Pause, dear one.
Love awaits you there.

§

Richard Wagamese

- From "*Embers—One Ojibway's Meditations*" p. 151 & 120

Love is not always the perfection of moments
or the sum of all the shining days—sometimes it's to drift apart, to be
broken, to be disassembled by life and living,
but always to come back together and be each other's glue again. Love is an
act of life,
and we are made more by the living.

§

Me: Tell me about love.

Old Woman: It is our only real choice. The only thing that we can truly
give.

Me: How do we do that?

Old Women: Choose it above all else. Love is you leading me back to the
highest possible version of myself. It's me leading you back to who you
were created to be. It is the most important choice we can make for each
other.

Me: Those closest to us, you mean.

Old Woman: No. Everyone. Everything. Widening our circle at every
opportunity.

Me: Sounds hard.

Old Woman: So is being born. But we all do it.

§

"Creature Love"

- *Ilene Cummings*

He emerged from the tall grass
next to the water faucet outside our house.

With a crow of joy, I lifted him up.
What a pleasure to hold
his satifyingly plump body in my small hands,
feel the perfect smoothness underneath
the lumps on top.
His protruding yellow rimmed eyes looked at me
a trace of smile on his appealing face.
I could feel the palpitations of his tiny heart,
the up and down movement of his breath.

Mother let me hold him awhile,
then made me put him back into the grass.

But next day he was there again
and again for a few days following.

Mother always made me put him back into the grass
but in the meantime
I carried him in the hammock of my skirt,
stroked him, sang to him, told him stories.

It got so I could stand near the faucet
and call "Froggie" and to my joy he'd come creeping out,
not hopping,
because he wasn't actually a frog at all.
He was *anaxyrus boreas*...
or more commonly, the North American Western Toad.
I loved him warts and all.

How I wept when he disappeared.

I would have happily kissed that toad.
Perhaps I did when Mother wasn't looking.

All I can say is,
had he magically transformed in that
moment to the fairytale prince,
it would have been the sharpest disappointment
of my young life.

§

"The Arrow and the Song"
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong,
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

§

"Love Is"
- Nikki Giovanni

Some people forget that love is

tucking you in and kissing you
"Good night"
no matter how young or old you are

Some people don't remember that love is
listening and laughing and asking questions
no matter what your age

Few recognize that love is
commitment, responsibility
no fun at all
unless

Love is
You and me

"Interbeing"

- Thich Nhat Hanh

From "Call Me By My True Names"

The sun has entered me.
The sun has entered me together
with the cloud and the river.
I myself have entered the river,
and I have entered the sun
with the cloud and the river.
There has not been a moment
when we do not interpenetrate.
But before the sun entered me,
the sun was in me--
also the cloud and the river.
Before I entered the river,
I was already in it.
There has not been a moment
when we have not inter-been.

Therefore you know
that as long as you continue to breathe,
I continue to be in you.

§

“Touched by an Angel”
- *Maya Angelou*

We, unaccustomed to courage
exiles from delight

live coiled in shells of loneliness
until love leaves its high holy temple
and comes into our sight
to liberate us into life.

Love arrives
and in its train come ecstasies

old memories of pleasure
ancient histories of pain.

Yet if we are bold,
love strikes away the chains of fear
from our souls.

We are weaned from our timidity

In the flush of love’s light
we dare be brave

And suddenly we see
that love costs all we are
and will ever be.

Yet it is only love
which sets us free.

§

"Blessing that Meets You in Love"
- Jan Richardson

It is true that every blessing begins with love,
that whatever else it might say,
love is always precisely its point.

But it should be noted that this blessing
has come today especially to tell you
it is crazy about you.

That it has been in love with you forever.
That it has never not wanted to see your face,
to go through this world in your company.

This blessing thought it was high time it told you so,
just to make sure you know.

It has been shy in saying this,
it has not been for any lack of wanting to.
It's just that this blessing knows the risk
of offering itself in a way that will so alter you--

not because it thinks you could stand some improving,
but because this is simply where loving leads.

This blessing knows how love undoes us,

unhinges us, unhides us.

It knows how loving can sometimes feel like dying.

But today this blessing has come to tell you
the secret that sends it to your door.

that it gives itself only to those willing to come alive;
that it vows itself only to those ready to be born anew.