

A BIRTHDAY

By Christina G. 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 and 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-lys

Because the birthday of my life

Is come, my love is come to me.

A DEDICATION TO MY WIFE

By T.S.Eliot

To whom I owe the leaping delight
That quickens my senses in our waking time
And the rhythm that governs the repose of our sleeping time
The breathing in unison

Of lovers whose bodies smell of each other
Who think the same thoughts without need of speech
And babble the same speech without need of meaning.

No peevish winter wind shall chill
No sullen tropic sun shall wither
The roses in the rose garden which is ours and ours only.

But this dedication is for others to read
These are private words addressed to you in public.

A good marriage must be created.

It is having 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 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.

By Wilfred Paterson

Anon

A marriage

Makes of two fractional lives

A whole

It gives to 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.

Mark Twain

HOW YOU INTEREST ME

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

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

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon. I want to know if you have touched the centre of your own sorrow, if you have been opened by life's betrayals or have become shrivelled and closed from fear of further pain! I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own, without moving to hide it or fade it, or fix it. I want to know if you can be with JOY, mine or your own; if you can dance with wildness and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes without cautioning us to be careful, be realistic, or to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true. I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself; if you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul. I want to know if you can be faithful and therefore be trustworthy. I want to know if you can see beauty even when it is not pretty everyday, and if you can source your life on the edge of the lake and shout to the silver of the full moon.

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 our children.

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

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

Oriah, Mountain Dreamer, Indian Elder

Reading 2

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 is no more loneliness
Now you are two persons but there is only one life before you
Go now to your dwelling to enter into your life together
And may your days be good and long upon the earth.

If thou must love me, let it be for nought
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
I love her for her smile .. her look .. her way
of speaking gently ... for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day –
For these things in themselves, Beloved, may
Be changed, or change for thee – and love, so wrought
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry –
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and loose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou may'st love on, through love's eternity.

Elizabeth Barrett-Browning

THE BLESSING OF THE APACHES

Anonymous

Now you will feel no rain

For each of you will be shelter to the other

Now you will feel no cold

For each of you will be warmth to the other

Now there is no more loneliness for you

For each of you will be companion to the other

Now you are two bodies

But there is only one life before you

Go now to your dwelling place

To enter into the days of your togetherness

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

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May
And summer's lease hath all too short a date
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd
And every fair from fair sometime declines
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimm'd
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade
When in eternal lines to time thou growst
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

William Shakespeare

NOW

By Robert Browning

Out of your whole life give but a moment
All of your life that has gone before
All to come after it – so you ignore
So you make perfect the present – condense
In a rapture of rage, for perfection's endowment
Thought and feeling and soul and sense
Merged in a moment which gives me at last
You around me for once, you beneath me, above me
Me – sure that despite of time future, time past
This tick of our life time's one moment you love me
How long such suspension may linger? Ah Sweet
The moment eternal – just that and no more
When ecstasy's utmost we clutch at the core
While cheeks burn, arms open, eyes shut and lips meet

MY BELOVED IS MINE AND I AM HIS

By Francis Quarles

Even like two little bank-dividing brooks
That wash the pebbles with their wanton streams
And having ranged and searched a thousand nooks
Meet both at length in silver-breasted Thames
Where in a greater current they conjoin
So I my Best Beloved's am, so he is mine.

Even so we met, and after long pursuit
Even so we joined, we both became entire
No need for either to renew a suit
For I was flax and he was flames of fire
Our firm united souls did more than twine
So I my Best-Beloved's am, so he is mine.

Nor time, nor place, nor chance, nor death can bow
My least desires into the least remove
He's firmly mine by oath, I his by vow
He's mine by faith and I am his by love
He's mine by water, I am his by wine
Thus I my Best-Beloved's am, thus he is mine.

He gives me wealth, I give him all my vows
I give him songs, he gives me length of days
With wreaths of grace, he crowns my conquering brows
And I his temples with a crown of praise
Which he accepts as an everlasting sign
That I my Best-Beloved's am, that he is mine.

Marriage is

Marriage is a dynamic process of discovery.

Marriage is a journey, not an arrival.

In marriage, being the right person is as important as finding the right person.

Marriage is starting to love, over and over again.

Marriage is life's work. Marriage is an art and like any creative process, it requires active thought and effort. We have to learn how to share on many different levels. We need to practise 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.

Anon

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 wand'ring bark
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks
But bears it out even to the edge of doom
If this be error and upon me proved
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

William Shakespeare

THE CONFIRMATION

Yes, yours, my love, is the right human face
I in my mind had waited for so 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 honest and good an eye
That makes the whole world bright. Your open heart,
Simple with giving, gives the primal deed,
The first god 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.

Edwin Muir