

WEDDING POEMS

“She Walks in Beauty” - Lord Byron

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

*One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.
And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!*

“Roads Go Ever Ever On” - J.R.R Tolkien

*Roads go ever ever on,
Over rock and under tree,
By caves where never sun has shone,
By streams that never find the sea;
Over snow by winter sown,
And through the merry flowers of June,
Over grass and over stone,
And under mountains in the moon.
Roads go ever ever on*

*Under cloud and under star,
Yet feet that wandering have gone
Turn at last to home afar.
Eyes that fire and sword have seen
And horror in the halls of stone
Look at last on meadows green
And trees and hills they long have known.*

“To Be One With Each Other” - George Eliot

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

“A White Rose” - John Boyle O'Reilly

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

“Love Is A Great Thing” - Thomas à Kempis

Love is a great thing, yea, a great and thorough good. By itself it makes that is heavy light; and it bears evenly all that is uneven. It carries a burden which is no burden; it will not be kept back by anything low and mean; it desires to be free from all wordly affections, and not to be entangled by any outward prosperity, or by any adversity subdued.

Love feels no burden, thinks nothing of trouble, attempts what is above its strength, pleads no excuse of impossibility. It is therefore able to undertake all things, and it completes many things, and warrants them to take effect, where he who does not love would faint and lie down.

Though weary, it is not tired; though pressed it is not straitened; though alarmed, it is not confounded; but as a living flame it forces itself upwards and securely passes through all.

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

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

I love you for what you are, but I love you yet more for what you are going to be.

I love you not so much for your realities as for your ideals. I pray for your desires that they may be great, rather than for your satisfactions, which may be so hazardously little.

A satisfied flower is one whose petals are about to fall. The most beautiful rose is one hardly more than a bud wherein the pangs and ecstasies of desire are working for a larger and finer growth. Not always shall you be what you are now. You are going forward toward something great. I am on the way with you and therefore I love you.

"I Love You" - Roy Croft

*I love you
Not only for who you are
But for what I am when I am with you.
I love you
Not only for what you have made of yourself
But for what you are making of me.*

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

"La Reina" ("The Queen") - Pablo Neruda

*I have named you queen.
There are taller than you, taller.
There are purer than you, purer.
There are lovelier than you, lovelier.
But you are the queen.*

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

And when you appear

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

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

"Superbly Situated" - Robert Hershon

*You politely ask me not to die and i promise not to
right from the beginning—a relationship based on
good sense and thoughtfulness in little things
i would like to be loved for such simple attainments
as breathing regularly and not falling down too often
or because my eyes are brown or my father left-handed
and to be on the safe side i wouldn't mind if somehow
i became entangled in your perception of admirable objects
so you might say to yourself: i have recently noticed
how superbly situated the empire state building is
how it looms up suddenly behind cemeteries and rivers
so far away you could touch it—therefore i love you
part of me fears that some moron is already plotting
to tear down the empire state building and replace it
with a block of staten island mother/daughter houses
just as part of me fears that if you love me for my cleanliness
i will grow filthy if you admire my elegant clothes
i'll start wearing shirts with sailboats on them
but i have decided to become a public beach an opera house
a regularly scheduled flight—something that can't help being
in the right place at the right time—come take your seat
we'll raise the curtain fill the house start the engines
fly off into the sunrise, the spire of the empire state
the last sight on the horizon as the earth begins to curve*

"A Journey" - Nikki Giovanni, from her book "**Those Who Ride the Night Winds**"

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

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

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

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

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

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

"You Came, Too" - Nikki Giovanni

I came to the crowd seeking friends

I came to the crowd seeking love

I came to the crowd for understanding

I found you

I came to the crowd to weep

I came to the crowd to laugh

You dried my tears

You shared my happiness

I went from the crowd seeking you

I went from the crowd seeking me

I went from the crowd forever

You came, too

"Wild Geese" - Mary Oliver

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

"Touched By An Angel" - 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.*

"To Love is Not to Possess" - James Kavanaugh

*To love is not to possess,
To own or imprison,
Nor to lose one's self in another.
Love is to join and separate,
To walk alone and together,
To find a laughing freedom
That lonely isolation does not permit.
It is finally to be able
To be who we really are
No longer clinging in childish dependency
Nor docilely living separate lives in silence,
It is to be perfectly one's self
And perfectly joined in permanent commitment
To another--and to one's inner self.
Love only endures when it moves like waves,
Receding and returning gently or passionately,
Or moving lovingly like the tide
In the moon's own predictable harmony,
Because finally, despite a child's scars
Or an adult's deepest wounds,
They are openly free to be
Who they really are--and always secretly were,
In the very core of their being
Where true and lasting love can alone abide.*

"21 Love Poems" - Adrienne Rich

*Whenever in this city, screens flicker
with pornography, with science-fiction vampires,
victimized hirelings bending to the lash,
we also have to walk...if simply as we walk
through the rainsoaked garbage, the tabloid cruelties
of our own neighborhoods.*

*We need to grasp our lives inseparable
from those rancid dreams, that blurt of metal, those disgraces,
and the red begonia perilously flashing
from a tenement sill six stories high,
or the long-legged young girls playing ball
in the junior highschool playground.*

*No one has imagined us. We want to live like trees,
sycamores blazing through the sulfuric air,
dappled with scars, still exuberantly budding,
our animal passion rooted in the city.*

"When I Am With You" - Rumi

*When I am with you, we stay up all night.
When you're not here, I can't go to sleep.
Praise God for these two insomnias!
And the difference between them.
The minute I heard my first love story
I started looking for you, not knowing
how blind that was.
Lovers don't finally meet somewhere.
They're in each other all along.
We are the mirror as well as the face in it.
We are tasting the taste this minute
of eternity. We are pain
and what cures pain, both. We are
the sweet cold water and the jar that pours.*

*I want to hold you close like a lute, so we can cry out with loving.
You would rather throw stones at a mirror?
I am your mirror, and here are the stones.*

"Sonnet XVII" - Pablo Neruda

*I don't love you as if you were the salt-rose, topaz
or arrow of carnations that propagate fire:
I love you as certain dark things are loved,
secretly, between the shadow and the soul.
I love you as the plant that doesn't bloom and carries
hidden within itself the light of those flowers,
and thanks to your love, darkly in my body
lives the dense fragrance that rises from the earth.
I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where,
I love you simply, without problems or pride:
I love you in this way because I don't know any other way of loving
but this, in which there is no I or you,
so intimate that your hand upon my chest is my hand,
so intimate that when I fall asleep it is your eyes that close*

"Falling Stars" - Rainer Maria Rilke

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

"Fidelity" - D.H. Lawrence

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

"Coming Home" - Mary Oliver

*When we're driving, in the dark,
on the long road
to Provincetown, which lies empty
for miles, when we're weary,
when the buildings
and the scrub pines lose
their familiar look,
I imagine us rising
from the speeding car,
I imagine us seeing
everything from another place — the top
of one of the pale dunes
or the deep and nameless
fields of the sea —
and what we see is the world
that cannot cherish us
but which we cherish,
and what we see is our life
moving like that,
along the dark edges
of everything — the headlights*

*like lanterns
sweeping the blackness —
believing in a thousand
fragile and unprovable things,
looking out for sorrow,
slowing down for happiness,
making all the right turns
right down to the thumping
barriers to the sea,
the swirling waves,
the narrow streets, the houses,
the past, the future,
the doorway that belongs
to you and me.*

"Litany" - Billy Collins

*"You are the bread and the knife, The crystal goblet and the wine . .
." Jacques Crickillon*

*You are the bread and the knife,
the crystal goblet and the wine.
You are the dew on the morning grass
and the burning wheel of the
sun.*

*You are the white apron of the baker
and the marsh birds suddenly in flight.
However, you are not the wind in the orchard,
the plums on the counter,
or the house of cards.*

*And you are certainly not the pine-scented air.
There is just no way you are the pine-scented air.
It is possible that you are the fish under the bridge,
maybe even the pigeon on the general's head,
but you are not even close
to being the field of cornflowers at dusk.
And a quick look in the mirror will show
that you are neither the boots in the corner
nor the boat asleep in its boathouse.*

*It might interest you to know,
speaking of the plentiful imagery of the world,
that I am the sound of rain on the roof.
I also happen to be the shooting star,
the evening paper blowing down an alley,
and the basket of chestnuts on the kitchen table.
I am also the moon in the trees
and the blind woman's tea cup.
But don't worry, I am not the bread and the knife.
You are still the bread and the knife.
You will always be the bread and the knife,
not to mention the crystal goblet and—somehow—the wine.*