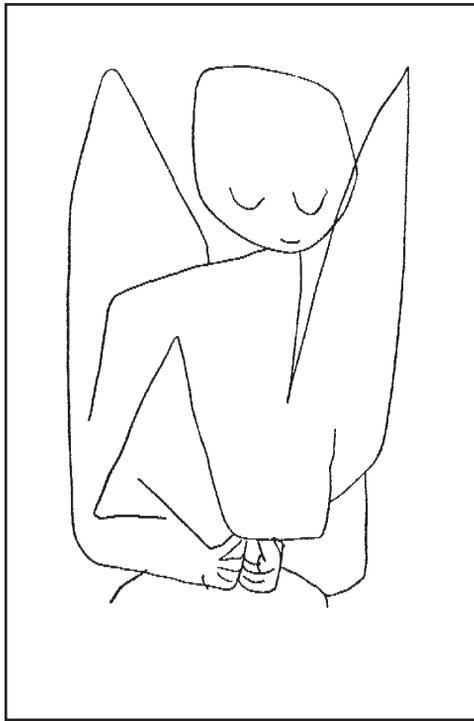


A Small Book
on Love



*Selected from the Pages of
Poetry East
Edited by Richard Jones*

L O V E

“Love is the answer to everything.
It’s the only reason to do anything.”
—Ray Bradbury

Love

You mean the world to me, meaning
the only way to see you
is from outer space.
As you know
I have little aptitude
for space travel.
Like the monkey
they launched into orbit
I tend to push buttons at random
and eat too much people food.
Where am I going with this thing? I know
the dark is all around us, love.
I'm out here waving to you, only to you,
round and green and blue.

There Comes a Time When You Have to Put Your Love into Words

I'll suck the blue out of the sky
& let you drink it down with sunlight
& bird calls. I'll make little square mints from clouds,

dreams, maple trees & the smiles of strangers,
& you can eat them until you're full & happy.
I'll erase every ache & pain, carve what is wrong into right

by pulling stars out of the night sky, one by one,
rubbing their faces in my hands
until only good wishes remain. I know it sounds sappy,

but love carries all things in its mouth & sprays it
on those who look up & believe.
The future is buried in what we love. Take my hand

& the earth will spin us like golden tops.
Hold me & death himself will look the other way,
curse his fate. Kiss me, love, & the breeze

will lift us out of this skin, out of these bulky bodies.
The world will turn but around us, standing there
at the center of all things worthy of praise.

Papers

I place your page neatly on top of mine,
tapping the edges to line up perfectly,
taking a pleasure in this, our pages on the desk,
lying there together, glowing warmly, edges
aligned, as a spine is aligned, we are aligned,
or as the celestial bodies were in line when we met,
and now there, in the golden pool of light, we lie
text-to-text, like cheek-to-cheek, vis-à-vis,
your fine, slim lines over my bulky ones,
there your minimal, powerful syllables
and there my loose, unshaven sprawl.
How our poems heat up below the desk-lamp.

Any Apostle Will Do

As long as he can fish. Knows how to cook it
whole, over coals. Has lovely toes,
feet fit for leather thong sandals.
Hair is a must, shoulder length and wild.
Does not mind being caught
in the rain; loves olives, drinks wine.
Can name the clouds. Will eat everything he's been given.
Can shear a sheep and bend a hook.
Can weave a net, unravel a story. Does not shy away
from beauty, loves the world best
when it is in his hands. Follows his heart around
each corner and leaves his shoes
outside the door.

The Barn

My grandfather made a playhouse in the space
high above the stalls—as close to heaven
as I'd ever be. He showed me where the hay
was kept to feed the sturdy horse that pulled
the carriage down a dirt road to his school,
now replaced with a house that hogs the land
around it. We sipped tea from blue cups, ate cake
on matching plates. He told stories of days
spent planting seeds in the sweet earth
of his youth. He showed me a rusted spade,
it's wooden handle worn to fit the shape
of his palm. I still remember the feel
of my small hand in his large, callused one.
A certain comfort never to come again.

My Father at Forty

I loved him so much. I've said
That before, so don't be surprised.
It was a first love. Go ahead, open
Your hand. Do scissors beat
Paper? Does rock beat scissors?
It's just love and can't be
Explained. Probably it
Happened early. You're looking
At it. The way I found
Of opening a poem I took
From the way he walked into a field.

Fifteen Ways to Revive Love

Take a midnight skate in an outdoor rink.
Study the rise of steam off snow.
Take off your clothes when you're hot.

Study how a key cuts the lock.
Spin music to practice balance.
Study fires and how, at first, they flare.

Spin joints to correct imbalance.
Listen to the fire's crackling chant.
Spin the ceiling to find the score.

Listen to a riddle and its echo.
Mix a humble guess.
Listen to an afterward of silence.

Mix a draft of sweat and tears.
Take the old shortcut home.
Mix your feet and hold. Let this hold.

Simple-Minded Song About My Wife

The door rattles when she steps in,
flowerpots click
and in her hair a small dreamy blond streak
chirps like a terrified sparrow.

The old wire light cord squawks too,
brushing its awkward body against her.
Everything spins. I can't even write about it.

She has come back. She has been gone all day.
There is the large petal of a poppy in her hand.
She'll chase death away with it.

Contributors

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“Love”

David James
“There Comes a Time When
You Have to Put Your Love into Words”

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“Papers”

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“Any Apostle Will Do”

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“The Barn”

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“My Father at Forty”

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“Fifteen Ways to Revive Love”

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“Simple-Minded Song About My Wife”
*Translated from the Hungarian
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*At Poetry East,
we believe in words. We
believe poetry is the highest
art. A poem clarifies our deep
humanity, though its grace remains
a mystery. Poems illuminate the world
we live in—a slow dance in the kitchen,
birds in flight, a loved one's death, silence
in an empty room. As you read these
seven poems, we hope you will read
with fresh eyes and full hearts. Poetry
opens a door, inviting you into its
home. Here, come a little closer,
these are for you.*

Artistic Director: A.M. Prentice

