

February's Moonstruck

2022
ediția a VI-a

High School

*felicitări
și
creație literară*

BIBLIOTECA JUDEȚEANĂ

Gh. Asachi IAȘI

2022



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Lucrările premiate la cea de-a șasea ediție
a Concursului de felicitări și creație literară
în limba engleză *February's Moonstruck*,
organizat de Compartimentul *American Corner*,
Biblioteca Județeană „Gh. Asachi” Iași

High School



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- lucrările publicate respectă variantele originale transmise de către participanți
- juriul a punctat, în principal, creativitatea, originalitatea și emoția transmisă

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OYTIS¹

From the beginning, everyone knew Otis wasn't going to make it. He was in that hospital for months, without any visitors or signs of getting better. His room was in the center of the building, right next to the operating rooms. It was easier for doctors to get to him every time his heart would stop. A simple bed with white sheets in a room without windows. A pale man, maybe in his thirties, feeling nauseous and counting the seconds until someone opens his door.

September 11th

I can't stand living in this constant fear. I think I dread death or maybe I just dread a lonely death. When I first walked into this building, I wasn't alone. I had her, I had Hope. Every time someone knocks on my door I want her to be the one who enters. I need to find a way to convince her to come back.

A few days ago, Otis was moved to another room. Someone with an actual chance of being cured needed the place. The great thing about the new living arrangement was that he had a big window. For the first time in months, he was able to daydream while looking at the sky. And, that night, with a glimpse of the moon, Hope came back.

The two were sitting in front of the window, mesmerized by the view. For others, the sky is a plain image, always there, but for Otis it's a way to freedom, a door leading to infinite universes, where he can escape his dull room.

¹ OTIS, transliteration of Ancient Greek, from "nobody" or "no one".

October 3rd

The day she came back was the happiest day of my life. I couldn't control my smile, and I didn't want to.

"You found me! You found me, Hope, after all this time, I finally get to see you again," I said astonished.

Hope and Otis started seeing each other every other day. It's been like this since she came back. She and the nurses are the only people that come into his room. Day and night, they are together no matter what. They would look at the moon, completely ignoring the lines covering a part of the sky. Only a barred window standing between them and a life of freedom.

"Doesn't the moon look beautiful tonight?"

"It does," said Hope with a soft smile.

He was finally happy, but that didn't make his heart heal.

Someone came into his room the following day. Surprisingly, they weren't wearing their usual white clothing, the blue set being a splash color that caught Otis' eyes. After saying a few things, they apologized and tried to comfort him. They seemed worried, but he nodded unbothered, his thin lips drawing a half-smile.

November 17th

The doctors said I don't have long. But every second I spend with her reminds me of a normal life. I love her. I love her so much; my heart can't handle it. I just need to ignore the pains in my chest.

As time passed, Hope's image became blurrier. Otis couldn't neglect the sharp pain in his chest and started thinking he was suffering from a broken heart. He couldn't ignore the bars on his window, so suddenly the sky was only the image of a life he could not have.

With a tear rolling down his cheek, he asked Hope about the moon, wishing that her warm voice will make him feel better again.

"Let me go."

"What?" Otis said worriedly, turning his head.

He was alone in the room he dislikes so much. She was nowhere to be found. He felt trapped, the white room becoming smaller and smaller. His heart stopped and Hope vanished, forcing him to let go...



The woman who was reborn as a star, turned into rain and died into tears

„I feel an uncertainty that settles from this present moment in a material body of strong depth and inner stupidity, in the darkest and deepest voids along with a vague feeling resulting from strange thoughts. Is there a pleasure in approaching dark topics that ultimately reflect the inside? Dreams of death seem like a release. Fearless and thoughtless, waiting for an end of life, of faith. But isn't it weird to think nonsense? No thought, no idea...”

His thoughts were chaotic and endless, destroying the inner silence, but the forest remained just as silent, especially on the cold winter nights when the snow did not settle. He always perceived the forest as a world suppressed by magic and by the desire for the impossible. He always felt an unimaginable inner warmth. His face was stiff, with dark circles that seemed to descend to his thin lips cracked by the cold wind. His brown eyes were slightly drooping, but it was uncertain whether they had taken on such a shape from a hereditary point of view or because of the tears that filled his eyes every day intending to drip lightly on his cheeks, but never successfully. He was tall and thin, without much muscle mass. He was slightly dissatisfied with his physical appearance, but he never allowed this to be externalized because he believed in the idea that life did not consist in the beauty of matter, but in the beauty of spirit.

The only person who loved him, and he loved her in return, regardless of his physical appearance, died of leukemia two years ago. His mother was a hard worker, with her hands slightly dry and injured from daily work. She had a good heart and loved her son, but she didn't show her affection to him, not because she didn't have any, but only because she didn't know how to express it. He did not feel loved and appreciated for a long time in his life, but he did not feel alone either. Since the death of his mother, he had known

very well what loneliness meant, and he often walked in the dark forest at night to admire the stars. He wanted to believe that she was one of the many stars and that her spark meant the love she had for him, but only so that he would no longer feel out of breath. He avoided remembering her as she was in the last years of her life, with her weak body and with her cheekbones sticking out excessively. He tried to remember her as she often sat in the brown chair at the old table with thin legs in the kitchen, with her hands gently on her lap, and her face tilted down like one of Nakamura Tsune's paintings he had once studied in college. He loved her dearly, but he only realized that when he lost her. He felt torn down, and lonely. He didn't talk to his mother about death, not even in the final stages. It was a conversation that involved too many feelings, and neither of them was used to it. When she died, he decided to incinerate her.

On one cold night, he took the urn with him. He came near a river, which, according to an old man in the area, would flow into the sea. Part of the ash was left to the small ripples of the river, and the rest was carefully placed in the hole in the ground which he formed with the tip of his right shoe. Now she would no longer be seen only in the stars, but she would be present in the rain too. He glanced briefly at the smooth waves of the river and could see the reflection of the moon as well as the stars. He saw his distorted face, caused by the small ripples, and for a few moments, he admired it. He was beautiful ... distorted as he was and that fact surprised him. It started raining with heavy rainstorms. The relief he received, when a water drop landed on his pale skin, like a caress, vaguely delayed the need to cry. He shifted his gaze to the reflection of a single star. Only this one was reflected, when the others suddenly disappeared. He stayed still for a long time, looking at the reflection and small tears made their way down his rough cheeks from the cold, combined with the little raindrops, and poured into the river water. That river seemed to reflect another world, different from the real one, with no pain and suffering. It was a world in which only his mother lived, in the form of a star, and he was beside her. He held out his hand slightly to the reflected image and felt the coldness of the water to the core, but after a while, he began to feel nothing and the cold didn't bother him anymore. In his state of partial consciousness, he began to slowly take off his clothes and enter the water. He was in their world. Now he was beside her, and this was able to ease his suffering. Every human being flows differently in time. For him, however, everything remained static. In another world. Forever.



The poet and the polaroid

Dear Polaris star,

Your breath of femininity and delicacy shattered piece by piece the desire to react hand in hand with the innocent pride worn for centuries. And that pride lingered until everything that seemed dead was actually alive, waiting to be revealed with new strength. The trees lose their leaves every winter but they are waiting to sprout, to lead people slowly on their journey to Nirvana. My love seemed as moldy, ready to be thrown away as an inedible fruit. When I first saw you, you were just a stressed-out teenager playing with rings on her fingers and dropping them awkwardly. Your potential was boundless and your will destroyed you physically and mentally, but that is exactly what lifted you up. My mind is too abstract and too used to patterns. I am not like you, oh sweet and spontaneous being who brings change in my life. It seemed to me that the most correct thing to do was to draw logical patterns so that I would get to know something well. My mistakes paved the way for me to mature, to a fulfillment that you can no longer meet now. Life is so unfair.

All the fire and disaster we encounter at the end of the world is the result of uncontrollable love. I'm just a fireplace that burns when the cottage is too cold. How much do we bet that you were once a goddess of a false hell, where people who have the courage to go through life end up there? Let me be Hamlet and you be the ghost around the house that changes me and drives me crazy, that makes me act in different ways. I need to be disguised as you do in the theater, little actress. You charm me when you can manipulate your emotions, when you can cry without having the slightest feeling of sadness in your body. Is this the way you were born? Or have you become so powerful that people see you as a threat?

I regret the day I made you suffer indirectly, telling you the most insignificant events and thoughts...Your poems have remained in my hands even now. Do you remember?

„Parallel is the word which clings on our lips
But the parallel lines go in the same direction
I make endeavour movements but I crave
To find excuses to caress your head.”

I compare you to Polaris, the North star, because I am guided by your unchanged position. In this way, you'll remain a poet, an artist, next to a photographer. I see the world through a camera lens and all the memories I have remain in a photo album. Some pictures are pasted on the wall of the attic where I live. And now when I look out the window I see the full moon of February 14th. I'm not a thinker anymore. This web of complicated words proves otherwise. Astrology annoys me but it scares me, because I have an inexplicable headache and I think I'm moonstruck. Teach me how to write poetry and I'll take polaroid pictures of you.

Warm regards,
your past love interest



Dear grandmother

I'm sending you some thoughts again and I'm telling you the same story...

In the evenings when the full moon is at its brightest at half past eleven, a beam of cold light comes through my father's window. While I'm running towards his room, a frustration takes hold of me but disappears when the cold light starts to warm up my soul. A soul that hasn't smiled for a long time. I only feel I'm alive when I see the light. It's cold arms hug me and sing to me until I fall asleep. My tears are free and fly to the nearest lands leaving my face dry and overwhelmed with happiness, feeling alive. The moon sings to me about happiness and peace. It discloses to me a world where happiness leads and love keeps people together all the time: in Happyland. There, tears are forbidden, apart of the happy ones, which are often seen on people's faces

who belong to this land. The people are dressed in emotions and good thoughts and help each other all the time. In shops, they don't pay with money but with a sincere 'thank you' or with a long hug. In there, life is eternal, no child is without brothers or sisters, mother or father...or love! Happiness comes first and there's no time for sad moments, because everyone will be next to you! Even cats and dogs that are very loved by their owners will come to help you.

The moon sings to me about all these and it makes hope that, one day our world will become like Happyland. Just like the night sky, quiet and full of shiny stars. Simple stars that will make your dreams come true, even the most complicated ones.

My father watches me from the doorway until I close my eyes, and then he takes me to my bed and kisses my forehead promising every night, thinking I won't hear: "I promise you, we will be forever together with moon, at the right time."

Should he believe him? Would we be able to get close to the moon? We are happy just to become the stars around it, at least we could admire it more often. Even though I feel frustrated and upset, when the moon light comes only in my father's room, I start asking myself questions: "Why are you coming only to my father? Don't you miss me?", I remember we have a dream to fulfil. To reach the moon, this is our only wish.

To feel her cold light...cold because she didn't tell us often she loved us, but I know she did. Cold because this is how she was...my mother. I just want her to hear that: thank you for sending the light, mom! Your cold love is unconditional...

I know that I've been writing these thoughts for a thousand times, in the hope that you, who died before mom, know everything about those who live in Heaven and about my moon...my mom.

Tomorrow at 9 in the morning, I will be at the cemetery and I will bring you tulips, I know you like them. I will put the letter on your grave. I love you!

With the greatest love, your favourite grandson



Verdeş Ilinca Letiția,
clasa a X-a, Colegiul Național
„Garabet Ibrăileanu”,
profesor Carmen Ilaș

The chest of memories

It was long past her bedtime when Angella sat on the porch, looking at the moon which on that February day seemed bigger than ever. She could not help herself thinking about what this month, known as the Month of Love, meant and was still meaning to her. This day, 50 years ago, she found her soulmate, who she got married three years later and also on this day, five years ago, she was left alone in this world because Thomas decided to become an angel. It was unbelievable to her how time worked: it seemed like her life was so short, but so fulfilling because of Thomas.

The cold made her tremble. The moon disappeared after an old rusty house. Angella went inside to boil some water for her herbal tea. She was sure that going to sleep wasn't an option so she chose to bring to the surface some forgotten memories. Angella opened the hatch of the attic, climbed the stairs, coughed because of the dust and had a quick scan on everything that was upstairs. "Where are those? I know they have to be here", said to herself. A well hidden chest caught her attention. "There it is!"

She opened the chest which was keeping inside special memories of a life time – a story about how two people were brought and kept together: "5th February, 1970 – this was the day my life changed forever and that morning I chose to get a tremendous cut for my hair", she laughed. "At least Thomas liked it, but I know he lied to make me feel better. That haircut was impossible to be appreciated".

50 years...I don't know when time flew. I remember that day like it was yesterday: I can see him, sitting at the next table from us, me and my girlfriends, starring at me like I was the only girl in the room. He started to get on my nerves so I stood up and went to his table. "What are you staring at?", I asked him. He looked at me again and said: "I don't know how to take my eyes of you...I'm Thomas, and you are?". I blinked twice. I was not expecting that answer: "I...my name is Angella. Nice to meet you.". On that night we were inseparable. We laughed, we talked about childhood, fears, dreams,

future and many others. After a long time, I felt happy, I felt hopeful about what was coming. Every day we went out together. He was working in the morning and I had to go to school but after that we saw each other. Sometimes we would go skating on the nearby lake, forgetting about the rest of the world, we cooked and watched old movies. “February is really the month of love”, he would often say to me. “Don’t be silly, I replied, there is no such thing as the Month of love”. If only someone told me that February’s Moon-struck exists and it will completely change us...

5th February 1973 – the day we got married. “You are the most beautiful bride I have ever seen.”. “I am the only bride you have ever seen”, I laughed back. “With a bride like you, I don’t need to look at other ones.” There were a lot of things that I loved at Thomas, but I think the most important was the way he made me feel when being next to him: I was powerful, happy, beautiful and special. This is how love should make you feel: you being the whole universe for your special one.

5th February 2015 – “I don’t have enough words to describe the pain I feel. That day not only I lost my husband, but also myself. I cannot be myself without him. Never.”

5th February 2020 – Angella closes the chest with memories colored in black and white. She gets up, goes to bed and falls asleep with the moon light touching her face.



Second Prizes



The love which seems unreachable

From Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy to Mr. Heathcliff and Catherine we are presented the love we all aspire to conquer. The love which is recognized as being tough yet powerful, fairytale like though real to some of us.

Ever since I was nothing more than a mere child I saw and read stories about the perfect feeling of love and a wonderful path towards it. But now, as an almost eighteen year old teenager, I can say that I believe none of it.

I started with rom-coms, old and new, then continued with books and, with the more I read, the more unachievable it all seemed. They give us the picture everyone wants to see, the “unexpected” beginning, where we are introduced to the main character which is ninety percent of the time, a girl, sweet and fragile and the boy, who’s very strong and the total opposite of hers.

It's upsetting and cliché how all the producers and authors have only one vision in mind. Because it's obvious that they're going to end up together at some point or movie if you'd like.

To be honest I haven't had my Mr. Darcy or Mr. Heathcliff, if they even exist. Maybe “I just didn't find the right person” which all the older people around me keep saying and I don't personally mind not having one of those but it still puts me into thinking. Why am I the only person I know that believes that love isn't all that great? I mean, sure, it's exciting to feel all those butterflies in your stomach and to feel like you're always cared about and that significant other always being there for you when you need them, but how can that even be true?

The truth that I've yet to tell anyone about, is that it may or may not be my fault for considering love in general, unachievable. I think I am a very

hard person to love. Since we're young, girls are put in "boxes". The pretty ones, the dumb ones, the sweet ones and so on. Society puts us in categories and if we are trying to eliminate those categories, it becomes a problem, because we're no longer that easy to control and manipulate. If a girl wears baggy jeans and an over-sized shirt, she is considered manly and gross and not dateable. If a girl wears a skirt and a tank top than she is considered "easy". Society isn't fair and maybe that's one of the reasons that me and maybe other girls too think we are hard to love.

I wish to be loved and to give love back. A feeling that overwhelms you and that feels like floating through the clouds. That is what I wish for myself. But I don't think that love, person to person, heart to heart, is for me just yet. I still crave that teenage dream, but maybe the Universe just doesn't have that for me and that's okay. Because I've found a refuge in another place other than a relationship and I want to mention that it still makes me happy and giggly all the time.

I know I said that books are not real and that it represents some fake ideal relationship to the readers but, when you want to have a break from reality, the best thing you can do is open up a book, any book, any genre you like and just forget everything around you for a second. Allow yourself to dream. That's what I've been doing for the last nine months. Drowning myself in every bit of every story and land I've stepped into and it's been great.

So to everyone that reads this, I want you to know that even if there isn't someone with you right now to love you, it's not the end of the world. I hate and want the concept of love at the same time and I think I do have it. Books love me and I love them, until there will be a real person to feel all those great things with.





Cristian Mihaela,
clasa a IX-a, Colegiul Național
„Garabet Ibrăileanu”,
profesor coordonator
Carmen Ilas

Distance. The test of love

Some time ago, a boy noticed a girl in a park. She was the girl who caught his eye the most. She was simple, beautiful and smart. Every time he looked into her eyes, he saw her simplicity. They fell in love with each other and created a love story. She studied at school, he worked all day. They got along great. The age difference wasn't that big, but what mattered was their love. The boy had to go abroad to earn his living. The girl was left without her own love.

The separation was very difficult. The two fell in love so much that they could not give up on each other. The thought of a possible long-distance relationship worried them both. The day came when the two had to say goodbye. The devastated girl, the destroyed boy, gave their last hug and the last kiss. Both with tears in their eyes, they moved away from each other. The boy left and the girl remained alone, without hope. Every month, he would send her a letter. The beginning was so sweet...she regained her hope little by little every month.

The winter season saddened her even more because the boy was not with her, but knowing how much he loved this season, he sent her another letter beginning with: “Today, the sun is shining brightly through the window, and the silver snowflakes are falling ... Quietly ... Today you can compare me to a snowflake and the sun. The sun is me, and the snowflakes are the words you read in this letter. The snow of the letters is not cold at all, because every 'piece' of this letter is full of love. I'm writing you this letter because I miss you. I love you so much that I remember all the beautiful moments I spent with you [...]”

The boy wanted to surprise her so that Valentine's Day would be with her. He bought a plane ticket and headed for the first flight. He bought her a big bouquet of flowers, a teddy bear and a ring. He had been thinking about this decision for a long time because he loved her very much. He wrote her a nice note that he put in the bouquet of roses next to the box with the ring. In

the note, he wrote: “We have been together for so long that we are now one and the same. We complement each other, we understand each other, we love each other. After all these years, we are still as happy as ever. In fact, I couldn't be happier than I am now. I think it's something we should be proud of and take care of, now and forever.”

Distance proved to be no problem for these two young people. Their love was absolute, so was their trust. Even though they seldom spoke, their words were very sincere. Hopefully, these young lovers will end up starting a happy family. Sadly, this style of youth is rare, but those who remained faithful to it, try to make the most of it.



Hari

I never had many friends. I was known as a lonely person but the loneliness never bothered me. I enjoyed spending time alone and I found comfort in my own company.

It's not like I didn't have problems. I was falling behind on school work, because of my lack of motivation. Everyday spent at school was terrible; all I was thinking about during classes was the moment I could finally go home and be by myself which really sucked, considering I used to love school as a child. Everything happening in my life made me fall into a deep slump whose end I couldn't find.

One windy afternoon, while walking home from school, I heard a strange sound coming from behind my building. I was curious to see what happened there so I followed the sound to get to a cardboard box placed near a couple of trash cans. I looked around to see if there were people, but I was completely alone so I looked into the box to see a small puppy crying his lungs out. I had no idea what to do because I had never had to take care of an animal but I decided to get him to the vet. I wrapped the dog with the dirty piece of material that was also in the box and I went to the closest vet

I could find.

Once there, I was told to sit down in the waiting room. After approximately 30 minutes the doctor could see us. He complimented the dog's color and started to control it. The dog was a boy, about 2 months old, with a beautiful orange fur. He was a little skinnier for his age, but considering that he had been abandoned it was normal. The doctor wanted to make the dog an ID too, so he asked for my information: name, phone number, address and also the dog's name. I didn't have the time to think about a name, so I said the first name that came to my mind, Hari. After that, we could go home.

Months went by and my dad and I decided to keep Hari. I started to really get attached to him. He was getting bigger and he was eating well, which was a good thing. I was always looking forward to take him on walks every morning and evening. I was really excited to get home from school and play with him and our friendship human-dog made me really start loving him. He was my favorite person, even though he was just a dog.

I started to inform myself on the science of animals as I started to love animals more and more as time went by. I began to enjoy the biology and chemistry classes and I finally knew what I wanted to be when I grew up, a veterinary. The fact that I knew what I wanted to be as an adult, and exactly what college I wanted to study at, made me really motivated to finish school with big grades. As a college student, I would often daydream about opening my own clinic where I would save animals' lives.

Now, I am 25 years old and I successfully opened the clinic I have always dreamed of, "Hari's vet". Hari sadly died of old age, which really destroyed me then, but now I am better and I will be forever grateful for him because he made me refind myself and gave me affection and love when I needed it most. I keep my favorite picture of us on the wall in my office, next to my degree, to remind me the only reason I am who I am today.

The conclusion of this story is that some people get attached to animals exactly how people get attached to each other, forming love relationships. The love an owner has for their animal is not different than the love people share with each other. The loss of a pet can also be a lengthy and painful, grieving process. The stages of mourning for a deceased pet are very real and can be just as intense as losing any other family member.



A medieval love

I've always wondered why things that you wish they were true can always find a way of coming to you. I thought it was the Universe's wonders, but it turned out that it's not just that. You see...I've always considered myself a non-lover, but this time it hit me.

I was participating in a volunteer activity, because this was my dream of helping people, and we worked in pairs. I forgot to mention that it was themed "The Daco-Roman war" and him and I were in the same part, the Romans. In the middle of the activities I was always checking on him. I mean who can resist a tall blonde man with blue eyes and with the same age as you? I first saw him during a representation of how Romans behaved during a training. It was so funny that I couldn't stop laughing. His eyes were always on me and because of that, he even fell while he was running. After that, I realized that he was checking on me too. So that's when everything started.

I was working on the traditional food for a presentation and he was the one who confectioned the coins. We got along very well with each other. We danced together, we did almost everything together until one day when my biggest fear showed up. The activity ended and we had to be separated from each other. We were both sad and we promised each other to keep in touch forever. The problem was he was living in the Republic of Moldova and we couldn't meet. I forgot to mention that me and my family were at the same time, on a short country trip and after the festival we had to go to "The Fairy's Castle" located in Sibiu. I realized that day was going to be the unluckiest day in my entire life, because it was raining heavily and we even got stuck in traffic for about three hours. We also thought that we were not going to make it to the destination, because it closes at 5p.m. But the Universe showed up again, because only that day, they were extending the work schedule and we got the tickets to go in. I told myself I wasn't going to do anything that day because the sadness was too much for me to handle, but

somehow I got to walk around to see what that attraction was about. When I was about to leave, I saw something in the fields. I couldn't believe my eyes. It was a traditional coin from the festival I've been. I told myself "This has to be a coincidence", but it wasn't. I kept the coin and today, I still have it in a small gift box, in my bedroom.

This story will always give me the thought that nothing is random or accidental. The Universe is reading our thoughts and feelings and gives us a second chance. Or maybe it doesn't show up immediately, it just gives us signs to have patience. Love is in the air, literally!



Dear mom

It's me, your favorite daughter! Oh, just kidding...i know you love us all the same, but i just can't conceive that i`am not your favorite.

Do you remember those times when you gently covered my hands with yours because i was cold? Or when you read to me the most beautiful stories from thick and dusty books? Of course you do... you are the best!

I know that there were times when we all didn't worry about anything but now, there is distance between us, a big spot that only love can fill. Studies aboard have separated us, but not for long, because we will see each other again soon. We will talk about every little thing that happened to us, we will stay awake until morning discussing nothing and imagining the future as if we were creating it for all mankind. But you know what? This is actually how you make me fell, mom: with you by my side, I feel like I can recreate everything, every city, every memorie, every breath, every little butterfly or ladybug...everyone`s destiny. And that is a big deal, cause you are so special to me that I can't even imagine a second without you, let alone a whole future.

I can't wait to see your gentle face and your beautiful eyes. Oh, mother... your eyes! I would be a fool to say they`re just perfect, because

perfect is not enough to describe them. These eyes are special because they are yours. Your arms are my safe place, mom. When you hug me, my heart smiles so hard it could come out of my chest.

I can't wait to fall asleep again and then you will lightly kiss my forehead before bed, like you used to do when i was a child. And I know it so well, mom. I know that you still see me as a child, even as a baby sometimes, but I'm ok with that because being your child means the world to me. Even when you cry, your tears are the most beautiful crystals I have ever seen. And I am so sure that in fact, your tears of joy falling to the ground are the one from which grow the healthiest and towering trees and the most beautiful fragrant flowers. Your soul is the purest room I have ever stepped into, and your mind is of a special wisdom. Although we do a lot of mistakes, you always manage to see what's good in all of your children. You made us who we are now and that's why I thank you every minute of my life.

And even after all of this detailed analysis of you, I can't find a word or a phrase to describe you as you are, as you love or as you let yourself being loved.

I would have so much more to write here, but I keep it all for the other one thousand letters I will write to you.

Until our reunion, all I can say is that I miss you a lot and I love you from the bottom of my heart!

With love, Teo.





The Enchanted Blue Eyes

You once asked me if I was going to look at something forever, what would it be? Then I smiled discreetly and did not answer you. I would like you to know how much I wanted to look into your blue eyes forever...

Your eyes used to pierce my body like a thorny stalk when you were looking at me and they filled my heart with a sweet poison. Your eyes that wrapped my feet in cotton because you were afraid I would step on shards of a broken love. Your eyes filled my throat with precious stones that hid your warm, suffocating touch. Your eyes that put a gold crown on my head, tightly wrapped around my brown hair, whose smell you deified. Your eyes painting the bruises on my knees and thighs. Your eyes whose color imprinted itself on my skin and soul, like a hidden tattoo.

I do think that now I am able to give you the answer. May your blue eyes be my eternity, so sweet and pleasant. Why do I give you this answer, maybe too late so that I can flatter you with such banalities? Because it was midnight then, and our bodies in the moonlight seemed to be one, looking in the same direction at the brightest star. That starry night whose charm I always carry in my soul. The stars looked like fireflies painted on the canvas of the sky. The clear moon, like a mysterious lighthouse, protected us with its timid rays. Could I have given this for a pair of eyes? Then the answer was unclear to me. But now? What does it mean to look at the stars when my soul is empty? I reach out to catch your cold arm but I am hit by an unbearable pain. I live with the hope that if I had told you that I wanted to look into your eyes for eternity, you would have stayed a little longer next to me. And a second would be enough for me to remember how your gaze made me forget about everything.

You stole my glow. I stopped looking at the stars because they all wear

a fragment of your face. And your eyes you took them away from me. You left me blind forever. Doesn't your soul hurt a little? Your selfishness frustrates me, makes me hate you in a poetic way. For if you came down from my dreams, I would not let go of your arms, but in my mind I imagine you as the one who took my soul and left it melted on the asphalt. I was nervous and ready to take revenge. I went outside in the cold night and lay on my back. I wanted to forget about you, I kept repeating in my mind what a worthless person you are, but the whole soothing background reminded me of our childhood love, almost unreal.

I stretch out my finger. The ring with the little green stone, the sign of our eternity, attracts my attention. I paint a "I love you" in the sky, maybe you look and see me. Maybe you admire my curly hair or my red dot socks. Or maybe you forgot about me in this desperate run through the stars. Before I put the point on "I" the star shines and then I know you miss me too.

But if you miss me, why don't you come down a little so I can see your blue eyes, the ones I fell in love with?...



February Rain

It's midnight and outside it is raining. The weather is making Josephine feel better. These days she has felt very unproductive and because of that she couldn't finish studying for her test and she hasn't also finished her school projects. Now that it's raining she can get some of the work done by tomorrow. Rain is one of Jo's favourite things in life. Whenever she has a bad day and it's raining, she goes outside so rain can wash her worries away.

After she did half of the schoolwork she went to a café. At that moment the rain stopped and the sun came so she thought that she shouldn't take an umbrella with her. When she arrived she sat somewhere in a corner where no one could see her. Josephine bought a latte and started reading one of her

favourite books, Blood from stone. This is one of her favourite things to do, some people may think that she is boring but she likes doing things that make her feel relaxed, clubs may be fun but will that take all of your worries away? You might get another thing to worry about next morning.

After an hour she took her stuff and went outside, just to see that it was raining. She liked it but she did not want to wet her book and everything she had with her since they were all expensive so she planned on waiting a little more till rain stopped. Suddenly after hearing the door closing, she felt something above her head. When she looked up, she saw an umbrella. Josephine, curious, looked behind her and she saw her old classmate, Dante. She got all excited and went in for a hug without even realising that there were people waiting for them to leave so that they could go inside. They both stepped away from the door awkwardly and looked at each other.

“Long time no see Jo’ how are you? Do you still live with your parents? I still remember you saying that you can’t wait to live at your own house” says Dante with a warm smile on his face.

“I can gladly say that I actually did move out and I live in a flat close to this café. What about you, are you still playing the piano? I always wanted to hear you play but never got the chance, I still regret that I didn’t ask you to play something for me...”

“I’m doing great, better than two years ago. I’m playing the piano at a restaurant actually, you can come by if you want, I’ll treat you with a drink, the restaurant is called Sketch.”

“I will but give me your number because I will definitely get lost trying to find it.”

They both exchanged numbers and then left. Dante was Josephine’s biggest crush in high school and she hoped that time she wouldn’t miss the chance of telling him her feelings. She had an occasion in the past when he asked her to be his prom date but she had to refuse him because he was her best friend’s crush.

After two hours Dante got really impatient so he called her asking if she wanted to visit him at the restaurant the next day at 3 pm. He was going to come at the café and pick her up in his car. She only had to get dressed really pretty and surprisingly he made sure she knew it would be a date asking her at the beginning if she wanted to go on a date with him. Josephine was so excited when she heard him telling her those words that she couldn’t really sleep but she forced herself to sleep a few hours so she wouldn’t look like a zombie.

The next day they had a lot a fun together, Josephine almost cried when

he played a song they both adored in high school Stand by Your Man by Carla Bruni. This was the beginning of their love life, this being their song. They danced, laughed and told each other what happened after they went to college and ended the night with a small peck on the lips.



The silver star

The whole world talks of love
Love ‘till the end of times,
A deep love that never dies,
A mystic force of lusty ties...

I've heard of love from down below,
I've watched at figures put a show,
Of mundane feelings which for me
Had always been a fantasy...

The goddess of the moon they say...
They worship me in any way,
They begged for peace,
I gave them peace...
But they can't ever hear,
They will never hear,
How I am screaming up here!

A light so bright that never fades,
A court of roses in a maze,
A face so pure drowning in tears,
Despair and sorrow for my ears.

He came to me to heal his pain,
His mind was lost, his hope in vain:
A dance of weakness for the tough,
A mortal passion born in rough.

To live a love doomed from the start,
To live for someone who can't live,
To wear emotions like a mark,
To sew a net of silver hearts...

I glanced at him, he glanced at me,
Majestic force, a ray of darkness,
Majestic force, a ray of brightness,
Two halves united, us not you or me.

The times are flying as the winds,
The days and nights, the nights and days,
The castle shatters, the world breaks,
You there, I here looking for you,
You disappear, I curse the faith,
The faith will curse me too.

As powerful I am, I'm weak,
I'm spinning out, I am lovesick,
I loved the love, I loved my role,
My magic wants to save his soul!

I raise my hand, I take my chance
His last breath, a fog of trance,
The harmony of Earth restored,
A star to gaze when I am hurt...

The times had flown, so as the winds,
The bards had sung a song of hopes:
A deep love that never dies,
A mystic force of lusty ties...

Two star-crossed lovers, God and mortal,
The Moon who loves so deep a star once mortal...



The love between siblings

Love can have many definitions but, generally speaking, it is an intense feeling of deep affection for a soul mate, an object, a state or for a special person and in this composition, I want to talk about the love between brothers and sisters. In my opinion, I would classify this love according to three stages of life in which it manifests itself differently and, in order to prove this fact, I will give as an example my relationship with my sister, who is three years older than me.

The first stage begins in the childhood, with a lot of time spent together doing different activities such as playing, participating in various educational courses or making common friends. Well, these are the first moments when you realize that you have a reliable partner along with the joy of spending time with someone and, at the same time, avoiding the problem of loneliness. But let us not forget the fact that any quarrel and reconciliation will increase the power of love between you. For example, my sister and I always played together, took pottery classes together, and even had mutual friends who always reminded us that we were lucky to have each other, and that made our love even stronger. What is more interesting about this first stage is the way you accept each other with good and bad parts which is one of the first steps of love.

The second period of this long and persistent love between brothers and sisters is adolescence. Of course, it is a difficult time with various ups and downs in the relationship, but the most important thing is that we must look at what we have gained and what we have lost to recover. Being a more difficult period, during this time there will always be a conflict between parents and children, and here the brothers begin to defend each other. For instance I still remember the first quarrel with my parents in which my sister defended me and I remember that because it is a representative moment related to the love between us when I felt that I added another brick to the foundation and the fact we have evolved. However, more and more acid quarrels begin to

arise for various reasons that are often unimportant. Moreover, the love between the brothers gains ground through the help given in the "fight with the school", because they feel more and more united. In fact, when I received support from my sister, I realised that I was so lucky to have a sister. But, to be honest, the brothers gain strength on the help side, but lose on the communication side.

Last but not least, it is the period of maturation which is, in my opinion, the time when brotherly love reaches its peak. Now you realize that disputes are almost non-existent and you are the best-friends to form the best team in front of the hardships of life and that's when you realize you need to be united because family comes first. Such an example happened even recently when my sister needed help in carrying out a project, and I gave my full support and my energy to help her and I hope the relationship between us will never break and this desire should be the standard for any brothers.

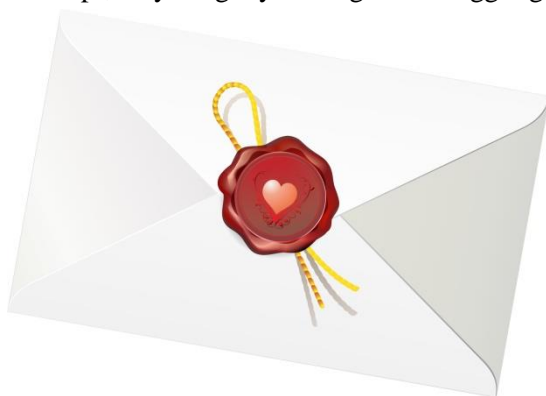
In conclusion, the love between siblings is an unspoken one but always felt and, despite the fights and arguments, they defend each other and make sure they feel safe.



Smuggling blind love

You met on a street in an English neighbourhood, your eyes met, your hands met, your chests met and then you met yourselves. Physically. You seemed to understand each other before you knew each other. It seemed you'd lived a thousand previous lives before you were born. You were just two simple entities, lost between worlds, colliding with alien souls in an attempt to find each other. And finally, you found each other. The universe seemed to hold a mirror up to both of you. From him, to her, to them, you arrived at the "us" that everyone was looking for. Morally speaking. A London haze of feeling hung over you in that moment, the desire to have each other burned as brightly as possible in each of you. You were hiding it and

hiding it so well, a pity that it was only your eyes that betrayed you. The eyes... a new spectrum of colour created especially for you. Created by you. An aura was born in you, as pure and strong as the moment you fell in love. Just before the weakness for each other betrayed you too, rays of light broke through your fog, everyone could see you, and you returned from your dream, to reality. It was a beautiful dream, you were soaring above Eden, but at the same time far too sinful to stay in Hell. Nothing so chaotic has ever given the Universe such peace. You were the peace in the chaos that was all around you. You loved each other for an eternity and another day, but even eternity stood still when it looked at you. Your soul, dear girl, was antarctic, but in its wake it left traces of a desolate autumn. You thought everything cold, leaving your feelings frozen in an iceberg that held your heart. And you, innocent boy, had a killer, cold chocolate gaze. She was Medusa herself, the snake crown hidden from the eyes of the world, but you could still feel her presence take hold of you and hold you captive like snakes. Until, out of nowhere and yet everywhere, you appeared. You, who made spring in her soul again. You, who melted away every shred of ice that had clung to her heart. You, who made her eyes chocolate and her smile radiantly warm. You, who tamed all the snakes that were really just her fears. You, the only masculine energy in this world, who made her reborn into a different person from what others knew. You two were in a continuous dance emanating enough energy to create a new vital essence of humanity. You became the pinnacle of reality and the limit of fantasy. From the very first second of your encounter, the world paused and stood in awe of you. You, child, as you lost yourself in his eyes and offered your soul as an offering at his feet, and you, boy, as you gazed at her, not imagining a more beautiful image than the feminine feat that appeared before you, copying her gesture of offering your soul before her. But... Hands up!, they caught you off guard smuggling blind love.



Honorable Mentions



Fictional characters

Books. Our weapon against reality. To survive reality. The best way to discover new worlds, make new friends, increase your vocabulary and train your imagination.

But what makes them so attractive?

Well the answer is simple. The characters. Their story, the way they act and manage the challenges, makes you fall in love with them. It is true, they are good looking, strong, brave, funny and basically perfect, but not all of them. Some have insecurities, anxiety, even school and in some of them we find small parts of ourselves. We see that we are not alone and we find comfort in it. In the small parts we find during the story. This shows that we don't fall only for their appearance or power or royalty, we fall in love with their personality, with their words. We fall in love with their souls.

Fictional characters have helped me with a lot of things. Sometimes when I am sad, I read something funny they say or just read a happy scene and I feel better. When I feel down, I remind myself that if they could, I can also do it, because strength doesn't come from muscles, but from the fire inside ourselves. They taught me this and also that there is always someone who cares for us. Now that I tasted the flavour of caring for a fictional person, I can't imagine how life is without them. Of course I could live, but it won't have the same joy, the same meaning.

Sometimes, or even most of the time, I cry for them. If something bad happens to me, if they are hurting, I am hurting too. I can feel their pain through the words and because I am so fond of them I feel it too and we experience it together. The worst part is when they die and I have to read paragraphs of sadness and I can't take it and I cry and feel bad, like someone real and really special to me died.

There is something that people who don't read cannot understand. Maybe fictional characters are yes, fictional, but the emotional damage they cause is real. In my mind they are real, they are part of me, I welcomed them in my soul. It's like any other affection, but just on another level and not everyone can understand that.

And even the villains. They are more complex than we think. Yes, they are cruel, they have a soft spot for pain, but what made them be like this? What made them crave chaos? And the story behind this might shock you, might make you want to scream, might make you feel angry, and some might make you feel the need to protect the person, might make you understand, might make you feel affection. Not any random character has a place in your heart. They are complex, they are different, only some might have the honour to receive my love.

It might seem strange, even crazy to love something that is fictional, that doesn't exist, but actually it's more than that. It's about true love, where you open your soul for something new, something from another world. You need to believe, to have faith.

I did have faith. And now I survive with "You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, smarter than you think and loved more than you know." (Winnie The Pooh).



About Love

Love... We hear this word so often, but do we really know what it means? Love... it is so diverse, there are so many types of love: love for family, love for vices, love for friends, love for nature, self-love, love for art, love for creation, love for animals, love for learning, love for material accumulations, love for wife or husband and much more. Even though it is so diverse, it still has one thing in common, the person or the object on which we focus all our affection and attention. But of all these types of

love, the most common one I think is love for the person next to us. This can be your boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, wife or even a friend .

I cannot say that I am convinced that we humans are capable of truly experiencing this feeling. I have never met a person with whom I became so attached that I could not live without, who cared for me as much as I cared about him, or who was so in love that I gave up everything as in the well-known "Romeo and Juliet" tragedy. How can I love someone when sometimes I can't even love myself?

I have heard many people say that love is the law of life, it is what makes us human. Love involves a feeling that both people are able to live and that brings happiness. A feeling that binds two souls together for eternity, something that even death could not untie, and to get there we must pass together on a road paved with sacrifices and compromises that sometimes exceeds the power of understanding of those around us. This is a feeling that cannot be corrupted, something immortal and unique for every person, something that appears when you least expect it. That changes your life and teaches you what true happiness is, but of course you can't love anyone, it has to be the right person and the one who was carefully chosen. But many times until you find that person who you are meant to love and the one who is going to offer you unconditional love, you will go through various trials and failures alone but you must never let yourself defeat. Some people find their soulmate even when they are old and not expect it. These opinions of people around me make me realize that no one really knows everything about love, with the partner with whom you may sometimes inadvertently choose to spend the rest of your life ,or as others call it, soulmate, you will go through many experiences from which you learn something over the years. Something new about love and thus learning will create new memories. Some are more beautiful or some may not be so pleasant.

This makes me hope that one day I may meet someone who will prove to me that those around me were right and that in order to gain something invaluable, I need to make sacrifices and compromises. In order to achieve those I need to learn to love myself first.



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I wish I

I wish I didn't die,
I wish I was of the world To know myself as a mortal,
To be what I wasn't, to stop being what I am,
To love myself, to hate myself, off God who am I?
I'd like to wrap my arms around you,
To laugh, to cry, oh God how good it feels,
And intoxicated with your body's perfume,
To fall asleep, to stop thinking this life is ashes.

I wish in this passing life,
The sorrows that are coming to be And all on earth be joy,
May the divine be my love's mercy.
I wish I no longer felt the sorrows of others
I wish this life could be like a string,
To be right, to be as it never was,
In this life, Lord, do I have a purpose?

I wish I could make a day of the night ,
I want every memory to bring joy,
To be loved and to love I wish,
And my life to have for myself, not just for her.
And not to be what I am,
And that I may not go like the Right to the grave,
I dream that this life is but a dream, a near departure,
OFFFF, God I forgot, something I promised you.



The month of love

Many times I have asked myself questions about love, but I think I still don't know much about it. I came across this feeling before and it seemed ironic to me. I hope that in the future I will fully know this feeling and understand its parts, whether they are good or bad. As I said, I have experienced it before, but I can't call it pure or true love. Although my expectations were different, I thought that these feelings would be intensified, just like in the soap operas I used to watch with my mother.

I would dare to say that those around us can serve as a model and we can learn from their mistakes and the sacrifices they make in the name of love. There are two main categories which are totally different but have one thing in common: LOVE. The first would be the love for our family. Generally speaking, our parents are the first people in our lives who instill this pleasant feeling in us. There are also unfortunate cases when some of us do not have such love from our parents and we look for it in other people. I could say from my personal experience that the love of our parents does not compare with anything else in this world. Do you know why? Because it is eternal!

And the second is when you fall in love with someone of the opposite gender. I don't have much to say about this because I don't know enough about it. I have just drawn some simple conclusions from my failed experiences. When you come across this feeling, you have to be aware that the beginning is always beautiful and most of us do not think at all about the end that can be a good or a bad one. True love should be endless and the feelings should be the same as in the beginning, even though everything in this world is ephemeral.

LOVE is not just a feeling or a simple "I love you" said in vain without a real meaning. It should be mirrored by our deeds, not just professed with empty words. And the feeling you feel can be good or bad, it's up to you. In the best case scenario you feel a multitude of beautiful feelings.

Sometimes you feel “butterflies in your stomach” or have your head in the clouds, feeling disconnected from this world, unable to pay attention to what is happening around you.

Love can also bring misery, but I don’t want to elaborate on this topic because I always like endings to be as happy as in the fairy tales. I really believe that if you love somebody you try not to hurt them, otherwise it was never true love in the first place. I got this advice from my mother and father, who told me how to deal with this delicate thing called “love” – the only thing that really matters at the end of the day.



February’s Moonstruck

The story I would like to tell you about is the legend of a gypsy woman called LUNA described as being like a goddess with heavenly features who conjured the moon until dawn crying, and she would ask for the day to come for her to marry a gypsy (who belongs to another tribe different from hers.) Undoubtedly the gypsies cannot be together due to this reason. The gypsy also has dark skin and dark eyes. The moon promised her to have her man, and she is also depicted as having the ebony skin. From the sky the full moon talked to her in this way: ‘But in return I would love to have Your first – born child You have from him Because someone who sacrifices her son In order not to be alone Would barely love him’ Surprisingly the moon would like to be a mother and she cannot find what she is looking for to make her mortal, a woman, and happy, according to the legend, for us the mortals it is hard to understand what the silver moon is going to do with a real child of flesh and blood. Soon after the son of the moon was born from a cinnamon father as white as the back of an ermine, with grey eyes, instead of olive skin, albino child of the moon was called. According to the legend the gypsy woman is cursed not to be happy, and her partner does not believe her when she says to him that this child was like a gift to her given

by the moon, and he imagines he is a foreign child doomed to be abandoned. Feeling dishonored, the gypsy man tragically stabs the woman, and previously he questions her to find out to whom it belongs her son; he thinks that she dishonored him, and she wounded her deadly. Soon after her death he walked up the mountain with the child in his arms and forsook him there. Since then, the legend says that in the nights when the moon is full this will happen because the child is in a good mood and if the child cries the moon shall wax to serve him as a cradle and if the child cries again the moon shall wax and wane again to watch upon him. The legend is called ‘El Hijo de la luna’ and through it sometimes love is perceived as being wonderful and tragic at the same time. ‘Hijo de la luna’ is a story of immortal characters, ancient and universal. Immoral but sympathetic in their imperfection. In the name of love and due to jealousy, a lot of crazy things are done that may lead to death. Besides the loneliness and desperation, the legend also says that the star decides to remain with the baby because it would be better with her than with a woman that abandoned him for the love of a man. In the history of the son of the moon, this feeling of melancholy provokes that its protagonists live a tragedy that leads them to death.



Red Sea

She looks at me as if I bore her. Love sets like the sun, running out of flames to burn, it leaves the sky in a mourning red palette.

Sad, tired eyes, gaze through me, reaching for the long gone sunlight, like a rough sea at twilight, folding its anger in powerful waves that melt into the cold, salty water. Having consumed the rage, they lay down their anger and settle in the uniform body of water.

I remembered I looked at her as if I first discovered the concept of love. Now guilt fills my eyes as I realize... I have failed her. Our love was

but a shape taken for just a moment by the falling drops of salt water that folded in and out of the sea weaves. The kind of fragile, ephemeral figure that your eyes catch in a powerful wave, for a second, but just a second, it is the most beautiful thing you have ever laid your eyes upon. I wish to stay in that very moment, I love her more than ever. But just like the graceful figure, it's all gone in a blink. The water spirit lays down dramatically, tired, it gives up, letting it's body be swallowed by the vibrant red sea. It fades out of sight as it melts into sea foam.

I lost. I am empty still, forgive me.

In this red palette I paint the painful scene in which the sun sets for one last time, the sea cries out for the warmth of it's touch and the waves lay down their blood thirsty arms.

She looks through the waves, searching with her exhausted gaze for the delicate water figure, knowing its body of foam lost itself into the grieving sea.

Here drown dead people, letting their decomposing bodies infest the life of the sea. Beauty's dead, and its blood fills my hands as I drag it down the canvas. I apologize.

Untold words shiver on my lips still, for I could never sculpt them out and sort them on blank paper. Rows of letters dancing without a meaning on a worthless piece of matter, all for what? None could ever express human emotion. I want to tell her I too am still searching the waves for the figure we lost. I too wish to love her once more. But I no longer have a tongue to speak, and she no longer has ears to listen...

Oh, to what means? Sorrow, anger, but most of all hatred for my own self, that was unable to keep the water figure whole to the present. As foam dissolves into the sea, and the night sets in... I give up.

Then it went dark, and birthed was the moon as it rose from the lazy, dark sea. I reach my fingers towards the tired gaze and shut close her eyes. It is time to rest, for both her and me. And so the red ran out of its vibrant hue, setting in with the cold, dark blue atmosphere of the night. We've always been dying. Never dead.



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Self-love

How do we love ourselves? This question may haunt every single one of us and, unfortunately, it happens quite often. Loving ourselves is not as simple as most people believe. This requires the disappearance of all the negative thoughts about ourselves and the recognition of our self-worth.

From my point of view, accepting both our qualities and flaws, learning from and forgiving ourselves for our mistakes, listening to our inner experience are all fundamental parts of self-love. As for the hard moments that we must go through, those are, usually, things that discourage us. They may lead us to hating ourselves.

First of all, our qualities and flaws make us unique. They make us who we are and that is why we must accept them as they are. Should we do that, self-love will instantly make its appearance in our lives. Only when accepting ourselves for whom we truly are, can we start working on our self-development and on the improvement of our own image. To create a new image for ourselves does not mean creating new talents, qualities or abilities, it means to capitalise on those which we have been endowed with. In fact, in any field, success results from the increasing use of our own potential. Authentic self-acceptance involves assuming our own being, without complaining and regretting. It is necessary to remember that we are humans, and, therefore, beings subject to error, but also capable of remarkable achievements. We are imperfect, we are in a state of continuous development: we always have something to learn and it is necessary to strive to learn and progress. Changing the “image” we have formed about ourselves consists in changing the way we think about ourselves, the appreciation we give ourselves. Many people focus on the looks of others. Nevertheless, I always say that true beauty comes from within. Our attitude and way of thinking are of the essence. As the writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry highlights, “it is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”. Unfortunately, for this generation, inner beauty does not matter. How-

ever, good looks are irrelevant, if kindness cannot be found within us.

Second of all, there are a lot of hard moments that we go through, which may contribute to self-hatred. Thus, I am going to focus on the influence that they have on us and how they can be transformed into self-love. Loathing our lives is understandable, especially after those unpleasant events, for, at a given moment, we cannot endure any more pain, we feel like the world is falling apart. But, as a matter of fact, the most difficult periods that we go through help us grow as much as our best days, and this is one of the things that we have to concentrate on. It takes a lot of time to cure those wounds created by sufferance. We may, in fact, never heal from it, but simply learn how to live with it. All we want to do is going back to the way things were, but it is impossible. We tend to minimise the pain and pretend that it did not cross our interior or that it did not leave its mark on us, when, in fact, suffering has a primary role in configuring a person's path. The monk Thich Nhat Hanh states that "the majority of people is afraid of sufferance. But sufferance is a kind of mud, which helps the lotus flower of happiness grow. The lotus blooms in the mud.". So, after all, how does pain contribute to self-love? Recognising its significant role in our lives brings us confidence and, therefore, a good opinion about ourselves. When we suffer, we turn into a better, more intelligent version of ourselves, which can go through absolutely anything, thanks to our spiritual strength. This leads to self-respect, love being meaningless without it.

To conclude, accepting ourselves as we are and going through sufferance are both fundamental and things that should be taken into consideration, when thinking about self-love and the task of achieving it.





* * *

What is love? If you were to ask me this question a year ago, I would have probably responded pretty vaguely, the reason being that I never experienced romantic love. At the same time, the subject sparked my attention frequently because I was curious to find out what was it like to experience the most beautiful feeling known by humans. Why was it that so many people built their lives around the ones that they were in love with? Reading love stories or watching romance films did not get me anywhere as they all portrayed it so differently.

But one day, I guess that when I least expected it, this feeling ventured to sneak into my life. I have constructed an extremely poetic scenery of a prince on a white horse who was supposed to arrive into my life and I will immediately realize that we are meant to be together. However, the reality brought me a person who looked rather like a friend than like a potential lover. For this reason, when I started to go out with that particular someone, I was skeptical of whether our relationship will ever develop into something more serious. To the best of my understanding, if two people hadn't experienced "love at first sight" they were not meant to be.

However, after a couple of months I realized that the concept of love was, in reality, something completely different from what I've expected.

Firstly, I thought that love was a continuous state of being, something that was with you 24/7 and was supposed to change you completely. Yet, the first time it happened to me it was more like sensation of fulfilment and happiness that lasted for a couple of seconds. I was suddenly feeling extremely grateful that the Universe aligned our paths and that I came to know such a kind, positive and interesting person. Moreover, my mind rapidly arranged all the moments in which I truly felt happiness due to our relationship which only made me feel more thankful. So, I can now say that love is simpler than it may seem, something that comes to you not necessarily on special occasions, but more into the ordinary activities that you do together.

Secondly, love means commitment. When you let go of all the negative emotions that one incident might have brought to the relationship and decide that the wellbeing of the other person is more important than personal pride, it means that you truly care about him or her. Although I am known to be a quarrelsome person, I always left my hate behind because the deep affection I had for my partner was way more important than winning an argument.

Lastly, love is when you are willing to leave all the other important activities in your life besides in order to spend time or be there for your partner. I am still amazed when I look back at the times when I first realized I was in love. I thought that everything else in my life was trivial and of little importance and questioned how could I have lived before focusing so much on things that, in reality, did not deserve too much of my attention. Some may say that this is something common for a childish love, but I think that this was a beautiful stage in my life, something to look back at with joy.

Now, a year later meeting my actual boyfriend, I can say that I finally understand what love is, at least a part of it. My high expectancies did not ruin my personal experience, in contrary, it made it even more fascinating. I am excited to see what the future holds for my relationship and confident that I will enjoy it fully.



For my darling, Sarah

It is 14 February 1976. This is the 4th year in a row when I write to you on Valentine's Day. I will continue to do it until I die. Trust me!

Being jailed in a small cell, with dark cold walls and a grey metallic door may be terrifying, but I've got used to it. The guardians are afraid to speak with me because they think that I can kill them with my words, but you know that I am not like that. The rats are really interesting if you take a look at their lifestyle. I usually catch and fed them with some worms that I have caught. The rats eat absolutely anything!

I love you. I love “all your curves and all your edges”, our favourite lyric from John’s song. Thinking at you every day, every hour and every minute makes me forget the place where I have to spend my entire life.

Even when I sleep I love you. Because I don’t have a bed, I spend my nights on the floor, but not near the wall, because you always want to sleep there to not fall off the bed. Every morning, before waking up, I dream that I bring you the coffee in bed and kiss you on your forehead. Sometimes, it is so real that I believe that I am home, with you. When I was jailed, I have had time to take a photo with you and put it in my sock. I look at it all the time...

The communists have succeeded in imprisoning my body, but they can’t jail my soul. It is and it will be always free. My soul is not in this small, dirty cell, it is at home, with you, and at the same time, in the sky, with God. Then the guard hears me singing or speaking, he thinks that I’m crazy and I speak with myself, but it’s not right. (I hope...) I am singing with you, in the kitchen, preparing a dessert for the romantic dinner that we have this night... Don’t forget to buy a bottle of red wine!

When the guard brings me the food (this is a good word for the things I eat here), I imagine myself eating with you your delicious pasta with garlic sauce...they are delicious! I hope that you prepare them as good as always!

The story of the paper that I’m using to write you is amazing! There is one guardian, named Jeff, who is in love with a girl and he is always coming at me with a paper and a pen and begs me to compose her a poem. This morning, he brought me two papers, one for you and one for her. “Don’t forget to tell Sarah the story of this paper!” , Jeff told me.

I love you, Sarah! I am praying all day long to God to forgive me, so that I can see you again, in Heaven...

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ISSN 0025-0120

