



LOVE AND OTHER POEMS
ALEX DIMITROV

Love and Other Poems

Alex Dimitrov

Love

I love you early in the morning and it's difficult to love you.

I love the January sky and knowing it will change although unlike us.

I love watching people read.

I love photo booths.

I love midnight.

I love letters and this is my letter. To the world that never wrote to me.

I love snow and briefly.

I love the first minutes in a warm room after stepping out of the cold.

I love my twenties and want them back every day.

I love time. Whatever it's here to do. However it does it.

I love people.

I love people and my time away from them the most.

I love the part of my desk that's darkened by my elbows.

I love feeling nothing but relief during the chorus of a rock song.

I love space.

I love every planet.

I love the big unknowns but need to know who read my message, when they'll write or call, if they want the same things I do.

I love not loving Valentine's Day.

I love how February is the shortest month.

I love that Barack Obama was president.

I love the quick, charged time between two people smoking a cigarette outside a bar.

I love everyone on Friday night.

I love New York City.

I love New York City a lot.

I love that day in childhood when I thought I was someone else.

I love wondering how animals perceive our daily failures.

I love the lines in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* when Brick's father says, "Life is important. There's nothing else to hold onto."

I love Brick.

I love that we can fail at love and continue to live.

I love writing this and not knowing what I'll love next.

I love seeing a painting and being reminded I am alive.

I love Turner's paintings and the sublime.

I love the coming of spring even in the most withholding March.

I love skipping the usual "hey, how are you, good to see you" and getting straight to the center of pain. Or happiness.

I love opening a window in a room.

I love the feeling of possibility by the end of the first cup of coffee.

I love hearing anyone listen to Nina Simone.

I love Nina Simone.

I love how the past changes when there's more of it.

I love that people can choose their own families.

I love when no one knows where I am but feel terrified to be forgotten.

I love Saturdays.

I love that despite our mistakes this will end.

I love how people get on planes to New York and California.

I love the hour after rain and the beginning of the cruelest month.

I love imagining Weldon Kees on a secret island.

I love the beach on a cloudy day.

I love never being disappointed by chocolate.

I love that morning when I was twenty and had just met someone very important (though I didn't know it) and I walked down an almost empty State Street because it was still early and not at all late. And yes, I could change everything. I could find anyone. I was not sorry for who I was.

I love the impulse to change.

I love seeing what we do with what we can't change.

I love the moon's independent indifference.

I love walking the same streets as Warhol.

I love what losing something does but I don't love losing it.

I love kissing.

I love hailing a cab and going home alone.

I love being surprised by May although it happens every year.

I love closing down anything. A bar. A restaurant. That time between late night and dawn when one lamp goes on wherever you are and you know. You know what you know even if it's hard to know it.

I love being a poet.

I love all poets.

I love Jim Morrison.

I love Jim Morrison for saying, "I'd like to do a song or a piece of music that's just a pure expression of joy, like a celebration of existence, like the coming of spring or the sun rising, just pure unbounded joy. I don't think we've really done that yet."

I love everything I haven't done.

I love looking at someone without self-consciousness or panic.

I love the quiet of the trees in a new city.

I love how the sky is connected to a part of us that understands something big and knows nothing about it too.

I love the minutes before you're about to see someone you love.

I love any film that delays resolution.

I love being in a cemetery because judgment can't live there.

I love being on a highway in June or anytime at all.

I love magic.

I love the zodiac.

I love all my other lives.

I love that hour of the party when everyone's settled into their discomfort and someone tells you something really important. In passing. Because it's too painful any other way.

I love the last moments before sleep.

I love the promise of summer.

I love going to see theater and looking at ourselves.

I love glamour. Glamour! Which is not needed to live and shows people love life. What else is it there for?

I love red shoes.

I love black jeans.

I love the grotesque ways in which people eat ice cream. On sidewalks, alone, however they need it.

I love being in the middle of a novel.

I love how mostly everyone in Jane Austen is looking for love.

I love July and its slowness.

I love the idea of liberation and think about it all the time.

I love imagining a world without money.

I love imagining a life with enough money to write when I want.

I love standing in front of the ocean.

I love that sooner or later we forget even “the important things.”

I love how people write in the sand, on buildings, on paper. Their own bodies sometimes.

I love silence.

I love owning a velvet cape and not knowing how to cook.

I love that instant when an arc of light passes through a room and I’m reminded that everything really is moving.

I love empathy. For strangers. For the people we’ve been who might always be strangers to us.

I love August and its sadness.

I love Sunday for that too.

I love jumping in a pool and how somewhere on the way up your body relaxes and accepts the shock of the water.

I love Paris for being Paris.

I love Godard’s films.

I love wherever my friends are.

I love our Universe and how 95% of it is dark matter and energy. And the rest includes us.

I love the way anyplace looks from above. In a ferris wheel, in a hot air balloon.

I love bookstores and the autonomy when I’m in one.

I love the extra glass of wine we all know too well.

I love that despite my distrust in politics I am able to vote.

I love voting though I know art, not power, changes human character most.

I love protesting all wars no matter who's president.

I love what seems to me the discerning indifference of cats.

I love what might be the uncomplicated joy of dogs.

I love schools and teachers.

I love September and how we understand it as a way to begin.

I love knowledge. Even the fatal kind. Even the one without "use value."

I love getting dressed more than getting undressed.

I love mystery.

I love lighting candles.

I love religious spaces though I'm often lost there.

I love the sun for worshipping no one. And for showing up all the time.

I love the felt order after a morning of errands.

I love walking toward nowhere in particular and the short-lived chance of finding something new.

I love people who smile only when moved to.

I love that a day on Venus lasts longer than a year.

I love Whitman for writing, "the fever of doubtful news, the fitful events; / These come to me days and nights and go from me again, / But they are not the Me myself."

I love October when the veil between worlds is thinner.

I love how any moment I could forgive someone.

I love the wind and how we never see it.

I love the performed sincerity in pornography, and wonder if its embarrassing transparency is worth adopting in other parts of life.

I love how magnified emotions are at airports.

I love dreams. Conscious and unconscious. Lived and not yet.

I love anyone who risks their life for their ideal one.

I love Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera.

I love how people make art even in times of impossible pain.

I love all animals.

I love that we continue to invent meaning.

I love the blue hours when Plath wrote *Ariel*.

I love that despite having one body there are many ways to live.

I love everyone looking for God.

I love everyone looking for a strong drink instead.

I love November because I was born there.

I love people who teach their children that most holidays are a product of capitalism and have little to do with love. Which would never celebrate massacre. Which would never care about money.

I love you if you've quit your job to be an artist.

I love you for reading this as opposed to anything else.

I love the nostalgia of the future.

I love that the tallest mountain in our solar system is on Mars.

I love dancing.

I love being in love with the wrong people.

I love that in the fall of 1922, Virginia Woolf wrote, "We have bitten off a large piece of life—but why not? Did I not make out a philosophy some time ago which comes to this—that one must always be on the move?"

I love how athletes believe in the body and know it will fail them.

I love dessert for breakfast.

I love all of the dead.

I love gardens.

I love holding my breath under water.

I love whoever it is untying our shoes.

I love that December is summer in Australia.

I love statues in a downpour.

I love how no matter where on the island, at any hour, there's at least one lit square at the top or bottom of a building in Manhattan.

I love diners.

I love that the stars can't be touched.

I love getting into a car and turning the keys.

I love playing songs on repeat.

I love people who have quietly survived being misunderstood yet remain children.

I love that Marilyn Monroe requested Judy Garland's "Over the Rainbow" to be played at her funeral. And her casket was lined in champagne satin. And Lee Strasberg ended the eulogy by saying, "I cannot say goodbye. Marilyn never liked goodbyes, but in the peculiar way she had of turning things around so that they faced reality, I will say au revoir."

I love the different ways we have of saying the same thing.

I love anyone who cannot say goodbye.

June

There will never be more of summer
than there is now. Walking alone
through Union Square I am carrying flowers
and the first rosé to a party where I'm expected.
It's Sunday and the trains run on time
but today death feels so far, it's impossible
to go underground. I would like to say
something to everyone I see (an entire
city) but I'm unsure what it is yet.
Each time I leave my apartment
there's at least one person crying,
reading, or shouting after a stranger
anywhere along my commute.
It's possible to be happy alone,
I say out loud and to no one
so it's obvious, and now here
in the middle of this poem.
Rarely have I felt more charmed
than on Ninth Street, watching a woman
stop in the middle of the sidewalk
to pull up her hair like it's
an emergency—and it is.
People do know they're alive.
They hardly know what to do with themselves.
I almost want to invite her with me
but I've passed and yes it'd be crazy
like trying to be a poet, trying to be anyone here.
How do you continue to love New York,
my friend who left for California asks me.
It's awful in the summer and winter,
and spring and fall last maybe two weeks.
This is true. It's all true, of course,
like my preference for difficult men
which I had until recently
because at last, for one summer
the only difficulty I'm willing to imagine
is walking through this first humid day
with my hands full, not at all peaceful
but entirely possible and real.

Impermanence

The first ending. And knowing it would end
I wanted another. Lover, summer,
pen with which to write it all down.
The first disappointment. Which is not
remembered but lives in the body.
And how familiar it became. To take
the same walk home or lean over ledges,
to say my own name when meeting someone.
Again and again for the last time:
the taste of salt in the afternoon.
Flowers for no one—alive and sold on the street.
What did I think was promised in being?
The way a stranger can finish you off.
Once only. And never the same
after that. After knowledge.
How people are being detained
and shot with our money.
All of which cannot prepare us for death
of which I am a student
and which is this country's business:
the permanence of others.
Even our cruelty toward one another.
Will end. And I know
that looking at the night sky
is me looking at the past. At light
that's long escaped and travels alone
but won't always.