I'm not a bot

Despite all the difficulties in the world right now, love does prevail and as we approach Christmas and the festive season, there's never been a better time to have a go at writing a little romantic poetry for your loved one. If you're feeling a touch of writer's block, why not borrow a line or two from some of the most romantic poets of all time. From William Shakespeare to Emily Dickinson to Carol Ann Duffy, the great poets have helped us articulate that crazy little thing called love, so we've compiled our pick of the best. So whether you're looking for a line to make your letter that bit more romantic, a whole poem to read aloud, or you just want some inspiration for writing your own, read on for our selection of the best romantic poetry... Shakespeare was a big fan of the original form of romantic poetry - the classic sonnet - which always included 14 lines, with each line written in iambic pentameter (a steady, bouncy rhythm of 10 syllables). He has countless famous sonnets, but this one, published in 1609, is a beauty we've memorised by heart.Best part:Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?Thou art more lovely and more temperate 2. She Walks in Beauty by Lord ByronWritten in 1814, this is one of Lord Byron's most famous works. It is said that the poem was written about his cousin's wife, after he was struck by her unusual beauty. Best part:She walks in beauty, like the nightOf cloudless climes and starry skies;And all that's best of dark and bright3. Love is... by Adrien HenriWhen it comes to poetry, simplicity often resonates the most. This is why we love this perfectly articulated poem by Adrien Henri, written in 1968.Best part:Love is you and love is meLove is a prison and love is freeLove's what's there when you're away from me4. How Do I Love Thee by Elizabeth Barrett BrowningWritten for her husband, fellow poet Robert Browning, this idea of love being never-ending resonates as much today as it did when it was first published in 1850.Best part:How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.I love thee to the depth and breadth and heightMy soul can reach, when feeling out of sightFor the ends of being and ideal grace. 5. If You Forget Me by Pablo Naruda This famous poem by the Chilean writer, published in the 1950s, perfectly captures the willingness to love if loved in return.Best part:If each day a flowerclimbs up to your lips to seek me,ah my love, ah my own,in me all that fire is repeated,in me nothing is extinguished or forgotten,my love feeds on your love, beloved,and as long as you live it will be in your armswithout leaving mine. 6. Love Song for Lucinda by Langston HughesWhile Hughes characterises love in this poem as dangerous and difficult, it's also enchanting and all-encompassing.Best part: LoveIs a ripe plumGrowing on a purple tree.Taste it onceAnd the spell of its enchantmentWill never let you be.7. The Good Morrow by John DonnePublished in his 1633 collection, Songs and Sonnets, this poem references biblical and spiritual conceptions of love.Best part:Whatever dies, was not mixed equally;If our two loves be one, or, thou and ILove so alike, that none do slacken, none can die.8. Hour by Carol Ann DuffyInspired by Shakespeare's sonnets, ex-Poet Laureate Duffy's modern-day version weaves mythological references with everyday joy to capture what love is all about.Best part:Now. Time hates love, wants love poorbut love spins gold, gold, gold from straw.9. That I Did Always Love by Emily Dickinson The rebellious young American poet - who has now been immortalised on Apple TV, played by Hailee Steinfeld - wrote this unique poem about love in 1923.Best part:I argue theeThat love is life--And life hath Immortality--10. To My Husband by Wendy CopeCope wrote this beautiful modern ode to long-term, everlasting love, for her husband, fellow poet Lachlan Mackinnon.Best part:We may not have too many years beforeOne disappears to the eternal yonderAnd I can't hug or touch you any more.Yes, of course that knowledge makes us fonder.Would I want to change things, if I couldAnd make us both immortal? Love, I would.11. The Gift by Mary OliverThe American poet, who died in 2019, was described as the country's best-selling poet by the New York Times. We love this poem about being grateful for love.Best part:Love still as once you loved, deeplyand without patience. Let God and the worldknow you are grateful. That the gift has been given. 12. A Conceit by Maya AngelouThis short poem by the late, great writer Maya Angelou perfectly captures the reciprocation and simplicity of true love.Best part:Make room for meto lead and followyoubeyond this rage of poetry. 13. Love's Philosophy by Percy Bysshe ShelleyPublished in 1819, this romantic poem could also be interpreted as a love letter to the natural world.Best part: And the sunlight clasps the earth And the moonbeams kiss the sea:What is all this sweet work worth If thou kiss not me?Treat your loved one to a book of love poems as the ultimate romantic gift this year. Here's our round-up of some of the best:Now 13% OffCredit: AmazonNow 51% OffCredit: AmazonLike this article? Sign up to our newsletter to get more articles like this delivered straight to your inbox.SIGN UPIn need of some positivity or not able to make it to the shops? Enjoy Good Housekeeping delivered directly to your door every month! Subscribe to Good Housekeeping magazine now.SUBSCRIBE NOW There's nothing quite so moving as beautiful love poems. Luckily for us romantics, they've been in abundant supply throughout history! From Rumi in the Islamic Golden Age, to iconic playwright William Shakespeare, to modern-day "Instapoets" like Rupi Kaur, love has been one of the most-explored themes among writers and poets for centuries. In this post, we've put together the 65 most beautiful love poems ever written. Whether you're looking for something to share with your partner, seeking solace after a breakup, or craving inspiration for how to write your own passionate prose, there's bound to be a poem on this list which speaks to your heart. Wondering which love poem you are? Take our 30-second quiz to find out. Which love poem are YOU? Discover which poem best fits you in this quiz. Takes 30 seconds! 1. "Come, And Be My Baby" by Maya AngelouMaya Angelou was one of America's most acclaimed poets and storytellers, as well as a celebrated educator and civil rights activist. In 'Come, And Be My Baby', Angelou beautifully captures how overwhelming modern life can be and the comfort that love can provide during times of hardship — even if only for a moment.2. "Bird-Understander" by Craig ArnoldThese are your own wordsyour way of noticingand saying plainlyof not turning awayfrom hurtyou have offered them to me I am only giving them back if only I could show youhow very useless they are notThe raw honesty of Craig Arnold's poetry makes 'Bird-Understander' an easy pick for our list of the most beautiful love poems. In this piece, Arnold recounts a moment with his partner that makes his love grow even stronger. The language is simple yet evocative, putting a strong metaphor in the reader's mind and facilitating a deeper understanding of Arnold's feelings.3. "Habitation" by Margaret Atwoodat the back where we squat outside, eating popcornthe edge of the receding glacierwhere painfully and with wonderat having survived eventhis farwe are learning to make fireBest known for her alarmingly realistic dystopian novel The Handmaid's Tale, Margaret Atwood demonstrates similar strengths in this poem: 'Habitation' is strikingly real. For context, Atwood here admits to the challenges of marriage and acknowledges the work needed to overcome them. It is this candor which makes the poem so beautiful.4. "Variations on the Word Love" by Margaret AtwoodOne of the most fascinating things about love is that it can come in so many different forms — platonic, passionate, or even patronizing. Margaret Atwood unflinchingly lays out some of these in her poem 'Variations on the Word Love'.5. "The More Loving One" by W.H. Auden Were all stars to disappear or die, I should learn to look at an empty skyAnd feel its total dark sublime, Though this might take me a little time.Whilst poems about heartbreak might not be as uplifting as those about the joys of love, they can be equally as beautiful and meaningful. The celestial extended metaphor of W.H. Auden's 'The More Loving One' demonstrates this — though ultimately he would rather be 'the more loving one' himself, Auden perfectly encapsulates the pain of loss when love ends.6. "To My Dear and Loving Husband" by Anne Bradstreet Thy love is such I can no way repay;The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.Then while we live, in love let's so persever, That when we live no more, we may live ever.Anne Bradstreet's Puritan belief that marriage is a gift from God comes across strongly in 'To My Dear and Loving Husband.' Reading it through a modern lens, it's easy to start the poem feeling a little skeptical; however, Bradstreet's genuine gratitude and dedication to her husband soon manifests to make it a deeply moving assertion of true love.7. "Always For The First Time" by André BretonThere is a silk ladder unrolled across the ivyThere isThat leaning over the precipice Of the hopeless fusion of your presence and absence I have found the secret Of loving youAlways for the first time'Always For The First Time' is André Breton's ode to a woman he has not met, but is willing to wait every day for. Breton was the French founder of the surrealist movement, which aimed to blur the lines between dreams and reality in art — explaining the rather whimsical nature of this beautiful love poem. 8. "Love and Friendship" by Emily BrontëLove doesn't have to be confined to romance — love between friends can be just as strong and beautiful. In 'Love and Friendship', Emily Brontë compares romantic love to a rose — stunning but short-lived — and friendship to a holly tree which can endure all seasons.9. "To Be In Love" by Gwendolyn BrooksNext on our list of the most beautiful poems about love is 'To Be in Love' by Gwendolyn Brooks. Brooks was a poet, author, and teacher — and perhaps most notably, in 1950, was also the first African-American writer to receive a Pulitzer Prize. In this powerful poem, Brooks conveys the intense emotions which come with falling in love and how it can change your entire outlook on life.To be in loveIs to touch with a lighter hand.In yourself you stretch, you are well.10. "How Do I Love Thee? (Sonnet 43)" by Elizabeth Barrett Browning How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. I love thee to the depth and breadth and heightMy soul can reach, when feeling out of sightFor the ends of being and ideal grace.Elizabeth Barrett Browning was a renowned Victorian poet who influenced the work of many later English-language poets, including Emily Dickinson. 'How Do I Love Thee?' is one of Browning's most recognizable poems, and indeed one of the most famous love poems ever written — its ardent yet clear declaration of love has resonated with readers for over 150 years. 11. "A Red, Red Rose" by Robert Burns Similar to Browning, Robert Burns' profound love is evident in his poem 'A Red, Red Rose'. Burns declares this love to be both passionate and refreshing — with each comparison, we see that even the loveliest language pales next to the depth of Burns' 'Luve'. 12. "She Walks in Beauty" by Lord Byron She walks in beauty, like the night Of cloudless climes and starry skies; And all that's best of dark and brightMeet in her aspect and her eyes; Thus mellowed to that tender lightWhich heaven to gaudy day denies.Though its author was known for a life of adventure and scandal, Lord Byron's poem 'She Walks in Beauty' refers notably less to passionate or sexual love compared to his other works. That said, his astonishment at this woman's beauty comes across instantly, making this a beautifully romantic poem.13. "Love is a fire that burns unseen" by Luís Vaz de CamõesLove is a fire that burns unseen, a wound that aches yet isn't felt, an always discontent contentment, a pain that rages without hurting,One of Portugal's greatest poets, Luís Vaz de Camões is known for his lyrical poetry and dramatic epics. 'Love is a fire that burns unseen' is an example of the former, reflecting his numerous turbulent love affairs and how each brought a complex fusion of pleasure and pain.14. "Beautiful Signor" by Cyrus CassellsThis is the endless wanderlust:dervish, yours is the April-upon-April lovethat kept me spinning even beyond your eventful arms toward the unsurpassed:the one vast claiming heart, the glimmering, the beautiful and revealed Signor.'Beautiful Signor' is an entry from Cyrus Cassells' poetry collection of the same name, which he dedicated to 'Lovers everywhere'. Culturally set against the backdrop of the AIDS epidemic, the collection aims to remind people of the potent beauty of romantic love.15. "Rondel of Merciless Beauty" by Geoffrey Chaucer Upon my word, I tell you faithfullyThrough life and after death you are my queen;For with my death the whole truth shall be seen.Your two great eyes will slay me suddenly;Their beauty shakes me who was once serene;Straight through my heart the wound is quick and keen.Widely regarded as the 'Father of English poetry', Geoffrey Chaucer wrote some of the most renowned works of the English language, including 'The Canterbury Tales' and 'The Book of the Duchess'. The standalone poem 'Rondel of Merciless Beauty' (here translated from Middle English) recounts Chaucer's heartbreak after being left by the love of his life, pledging his everlasting devotion to her even though it pains him.16. "Love Comes Quietly" by Robert Creeley Robert Creeley's short but striking love poem aptly summarizes the feeling of never wanting to be apart from the person you love, almost making you forget what life was like before you met them.17. "[i carry your heart with me(i carry it in]" by E. E. Cummings i carry your heart with me(i carry it inmy heart)i am never without it(anywherei go you go,my dear;and whatever is done by only me is your doing,my darling)As one of America's most prolific twentieth century poets, E.E. Cummings needs no introduction. Many of his poems centered around love and '[i carry your heart with me(i carry it in]' is perhaps the best-known of them all. The rich imagery and intimate infatuation earns it a prominent spot on our list of the most beautiful love poems ever written.18. "[love is more thicker than forget]" by E.E. Cummingslove is more thicker than forget more thinner than recallmore seldom than a wave is wet more frequent than to failAnother brilliant example of Cummings' love poetry is [love is more thicker than forget]. This poem explores the complexity of love, expressing that it cannot simply be defined as one thing or another — and indeed, painting love as a paradox of rarity and frequency, modesty and profundity, sanity and madness, and much more.19. "Sthandwa sami (my beloved, isiZulu)" by Yrsa Daley-Wardmy thoughts about you are frightening but preciseI can see the house on the hill where we make our own vegetables out backand drink warm wine out of jam jarsand sing songs in the kitchen until the sun comes upwena you make me feel like myself again.Yrsa Daley-Ward's 'Sthandwa sami (my beloved, isiZulu)' is one of the most personal and revealing accounts of love on this list. The poem comes from her collection bone, which tackles some of the deepest aspects of humanity, including religion, desire, womanhood, race, and vulnerability.20. "Married Love" by Guan DaoshengYou and IHave so much love, That it Burns like a fire, In which we bake a lump of clayMolded into a figure of youAnd a figure of me.Guan Daosheng was a Chinese painter and poet of the early Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). 'Married Love' uses the image of clay figurines to represent two lovers being united as one through the sacred act of marriage, just as clay solidifies in a kiln.21. "Heart, we will forget him!" by Emily Dickinson Heart, we will forget him!You and I, to-night!You may forget the warmth he gave, I will forget the light.'Heart, we will forget him!' aligns with the forceful nature of so many Emily Dickinson poems. It is a powerful reflection of the fallout after a passionate love affair and how she tried to move on, going so far as to command her heart to do so, even knowing it's futile.22. "Air and Angels" by John Donne John Donne's work is known for tackling faith and salvation, as well as both human and divine love. In 'Angels and Air', Donne compares his love to the movement of angels — pure and elegant. His conclusion that two lovers can come together and grow stronger adds another layer to this already quite romantic poem.23. "Flirtation" by Rita Dove Outside the sun has rolled up her rugsand night strewn salt across the sky. My heart is humming a tuneI haven't heard in years!The sparkling flirtation at the start of a new relationship is surely one of the most exciting parts of love. 'Flirtation' by Rita Dove eloquently captures this joy and anticipation, and is one of the most relatable poems about this aspect of love. 24. "Heart to Heart" by Rita Dove It's neither rednor sweet.It doesn't meltor turn over,break or harden,so it can't feelpain, yearning, regret. In 'Heart to Heart', Rita Dove rejects the typical clichés that come with falling in love. With her down-to-earth approach to the topic, she assures the intended reader that although she may struggle to show her love, that doesn't mean it's not there. 25. "Love" by Carol Ann Duffy you're where I stand, hearing the sea, crazy for the shore, seeing the moon ache and fretfor the earth. When morning comes, the sun, ardent, covers the trees in gold, you walk towards me,out of the season, out of the light love reasons.In 2009, Carol Ann Duffy made history when she was appointed the first female and openly lesbian British poet laureate. 'Love' is a perfect example of the monologue-style poems she is known for, fitting in with her usual sensory and emotional style of writing; here, she describes love as beautifully boundless, like the light of the sun or the crashing sound of waves. 26. "The Love Poem" by Carol Ann Duffy 'The Love Poem' takes a different tack, depicting Duffy's struggle to find the right words to describe her love. It comes from her 2005 collection Rapture, which charts the speaker's journey through a love affair; at this stage, Duffy gets metafictional about love poetry, striving to explain the challenges of writing it (and invoking several other famous poems along the way).27. "Before You Came" by Faiz Ahmed FaizDon't leave now that you're here—Stay. So the world may become like itself again:so the sky may by the sky,the road a road,and the glass of wine not a mirror, just a glass of wine.Faiz Ahmed Faiz wrote of love, politics, and community throughout his tumultuous life, and has been especially acknowledged for his contributions to traditional Urdu poetry. In 'Before You Came', Faiz writes about how his perspective on life changed after falling in love and how he never wants to be without his lover, who helps him see things as they truly are.28. "Lines Depicting Simple Happiness" by Peter GizziIt feels right to notice all the shiny things about youAbout you there is nothing I wouldn't want to know With you nothing is simple yet nothing is simplerAbout you many good things come into relationThe beauty in Peter Gizzi's poetry stems from its simplicity. In 'Lines Depicting Simple Happiness', Gizzi's adoration for his love is clear — however, he avoids overused clichés, meaning the poem is both more personal and less mawkish than other modern love poems.29. "Six Sonnets: Crossing the West" by Janice Gould In that communion of lovers, thick sobsbreak from me as I think of my love back home, all that I have doneand cannot say. This is the first time I have left her so completely, so alone.Janice Gould's work homes in on themes of love and connection, with strong links to her identity as a Maidu lesbian. In 'Six Sonnets: Crossing the West', Gould equates her lover to a dream, never running short on ethereal ways to describe her... and mourning when she slips away, even temporarily.30. "For Keeps" by Joy Harjo Contrasting love with the beauty of nature helps to create an unbreakable bond between the two. This comparison helps illustrate Joy Harjo's feelings for her lover in her marvelous poem, 'For Keeps'.31. "You Are the Penultimate Love of My Life" by Rebecca Hazelton The garden you plant and I plant is tunneled through by voles, the vowels we speak aren't vows, but there's something holding me here, for now, like your eyes, which I suppose are brown, after all.''You Are the Penultimate Love of My Life' is an unorthodox love poem, focusing on the realities rather than the fantasies of being in love. Rebecca Hazelton isn't writing about her soulmate, and she's aware of that — but that doesn't make the love they share any less special.32. "Yours" by Daniel Hoffman I am yours as the summer air at evening is Possessed by the scent of linden blossoms, As the snowcap gleams with light Lent it by the brimming moon. Without you I'd be an unleaded treeBlasted in a bleakness with no Spring.Daniel Hoffman's carefully chosen metaphors make 'Yours' a truly beautiful love poem. Hoffman's complete dedication to his lover is obvious — in comparing her to everything from summer evenings to snow-capped mountains, it seems he cannot stop thinking about her throughout the changing seasons.33. "A Love Song for Lucinda" by Langston Hughes LoveIs a high mountain Stark in a windy sky.If you Would never lose your breath Do not climb too high.Each stanza of Langston Hughes' 'A Love Song for Lucinda' compares love to a specific feeling, all of which are linked to the natural world. This poem emphasizes the exhilaration of falling in love and the all-encompassing enchantment that comes with it.34. "Poem for My Love" by June Jordan Political activist, poet, and essayist June Jordan is one of the most widely-published Jamaican American writers of her generation. In her 'Poem for My Love', the speaker is in absolute spiritual awe of her partner and the way she feels about their transcendent love.35. "for him" by Rupi Kaurno, it won't be love at first sight when we meet it'll be love at first remembrance 'cause i've recognized you in my mother's eyes when she tells me, marry the type of man you'd want to raise your son to be like.At just 21 years old, Rupi Kaur wrote, illustrated, and self-published her first poetry collection, milk and honey. She describes her poetry as 'simple and accessible' — which has allowed it to reach millions of readers worldwide, particularly through Instagram presence. 'for him' is a perfect example of a beautiful, powerful love poem which doesn't have to try too hard to pack a punch.36. Untitled by Rupi Kaurlove will hurt you but love will never mean to love will play no gamescause love knows life has been hard enough alreadyAnother entry from milk and honey, this short, untitled poem takes a bittersweet and world weary, but ultimately generous look at love and its challenges.37. "Poem To An Unnameable Man" by Dorothea LaskyAnd I will not cry also Although you will expect me toI was wiser too than you had expected For I knew all along you were mineProlific poet Dorothea Lasky has written multiple collections and currently directs the poetry programme at Columbia University. In 'Poem To An Unnameable Man', she uses celestial imagery to explore a romantic relationship, describing her power and strength to the lover who underestimates her.38. "Movement Song" by Audre Lorde'Movement Song' by Audre Lorde is about the end of a relationship. While the sorrow felt after the speaker's heart has been broken is clear, the poem ultimately ends with hope that the pair can both have a new beginning — albeit apart.39. "Camomile Tea" by Katherine Mansfield We might be fifty, we might be five,So snug, so compact, so wise are we!Under the kitchen-table leg My knee is pressing against his knee.Our shutters are shut, the fire is low,The tap is dripping peacefully;The saucepan shadows on the wallAre black and round and plain to see.Katherine Mansfield has been praised for her ability to simplify complex emotions through short stories and poetry. One of the more tranquil poems on this list, 'Camomile Tea' paints a picture of a couple who are calm and quiet and happy with the life they've made for themselves, highlighting the underrated joy that peaceful familiarity and comfort can bring in a relationship.40. "Love Elegy in the Chinese Garden, with Koi" by Nathan McClain Because who hasn't done that —loved so intently even after everythinghas gone? Love something that has washedits hands of you? I like to think I'm different now, that I'm enlightened somehow, but who am I kidding?Nathan McClain's inspiration for 'Love Elegy in the Chinese Garden, with Koi' was a date to the Huntington Botanical Gardens. In the poem, McClain aimed to 'explore the sense of anxiety' between two potential lovers, and the weighty emotional baggage that previous failed relationships can bestow upon you.41. "I think I should have loved you presently (Sonnet IX)" by Edna St. Vincent Millay I think I should have loved you presently, And given in earnest words I flung in jest;And lifted honest eyes for you to see, And caught your hand against my cheek and breast;And all my pretty follies flung asideThat won you to me, and beneath you gazeEdna St. Vincent Millay's 'I think I should have loved you presently' serves as a subversion of the traditional sonnet form. In the poem, the speaker laments their inability to reciprocate their lover's earnest affection, instead choosing sweet nothings and superficial flirtation over genuine connection.42. "Love Sonnet XI" by Pablo NerudaI crave your mouth, your voice, your hair.Silent and starving, I prowl through the streets. Bread does not nourish me, dawn disruptsme, all dayI hunt for the liquid measure of your steps.There is a strong sense of longing in Pablo Neruda's 'Love Sonnet XI', as our speaker confesses the thought of his love never leaves his mind, driving him to the point of distraction. Evocative and at times alarming, it's a love poem which perfectly treads the blurred line between romance and obsession. 43. "Your Feet" by Pablo Neruda In 'Your Feet', Neruda expresses a similar devotion to his love as he explains his love for her from head to toe, and gives thanks for the forces he feels brought them together inevitably.44. "Dear One Absent This Long While" by Lisa OlsteinI expect you. I thought one night it was youat the base of the drive, you at the foot of the stairsyou in a shiver of light, but each timeleaves in wind revealed themselves, the retreating shadow of a fox, daybreak. We expect you, cat and I, bluebirds and I, the stove.The speaker in Lisa Olstein's 'Dear One Absent This Long While' is anxiously waiting for her loved one to return home. The nervous buzz of anticipation as the speaker waits to return to a life of comfort and mundanity, a puzzle from which their lover is the only missing piece, gives this love poem a beautiful raw honesty.45. "My Lover Is a Woman" by Pat Parkermy lover is a woman & when i hold herfeel her warmthi feel goodfeel safePat Parker was an American poet and activist who drew great inspiration from her life as an African-American lesbian feminist. 'My Lover Is a Woman' is about the struggles Parker faced as an openly queer woman of colour, and the safe harbour her lover represents in that storm.46. "It Is Here" by Harold Pinter What is this stance we take,To turn away and then turn back?What did we hear?It was the breath we took when we first met.Listen. It is here.Relationships have a funny way of transcending time and space, and that transcendence isexpressed in Harold Pinter's beautiful love poem 'It Is Here' as he asks his lover to think back to the beginning of their relationship, and in doing so brings the long-passed moment to life.47. "Untitled" by Christopher PoindexterI miss you even when youare beside me. I dream of your bodyeven when you are sleepingin my arms.The words I love youcould never be enough.Christopher Poindexter here presents a deeply honest and relatable portrait of a love that goes beyond the limits of language, as he describes the overwhelming and paradoxical longing it's possible to feel even when your lover is right by your side. 48. "Love Is Not A Word" by Riyas Qurana Amidst all this I keep a falling flower in the mid-airNot to fall on the earth Is it not up to you who search for itTo come and sit on itAnd make love?Don't forget to bring the wordDarling When you come.Written from the point of view of a personified love, "Love Is Not A Word" is a rather ambiguous poem. Riyas Qurana explores the notion of love as a whole and relates the concept to nature to emphasize how elemental it is to the human experience. 49. "[Again and again, even though we know love's landscape]" by Rainer Maria Rilke Again and again, even though we know love's landscapeand the little churchyard with its lamenting namesand the terrible reticent gorge in which the othersend: again and again the two of us walk out together under the ancient trees, lay ourselves down again and again among the flowers, and look up into the sky.Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke believed that it was 'perhaps the most difficult of all our tasks' for one human to love another (Letters to a Young Poet, 1929). In '[Again and again, even though we know love's landscape]', Rilke celebrates the continuous, everyday love that two people can share, and the strength that comes from making one vulnerable enough to love another, despite knowing the risk of heartbreak.50. "Echo" by Christina RossettiIn 'Echo', Christina Rossetti reflects on a lost love and how she wishes it would come back to her like an echo. Rossetti is in despair, longing for her ex-lover, and the resulting yearning creates an equally heartbreaking and beautiful love poem. 51. "I loved you first: but afterwards your love" by Christina RossettiI loved you first: but afterwards your love Outsoaring mine, sang such a loftier songAs drowned the friendly cooings of my dove.Which owes the other most? my love was long, And yours one moment seemed to wax more strongDespite a concern with reciprocity (or a lack thereof) in these opening lines, a feeling of 'oneness' in fact runs throughout 'I loved you first: but afterwards your love', also by Rossetti. This poem reflects the feeling of complete understanding between two people who love each other deeply, as Rossetti explains how their individual feelings combine to create one love, a whole greater than the sum of its parts.52. "Defeated by Love" by Rumi The sky was litby the splendor of the moon So powerful I fell to the ground Your love has made me sure I am ready to forsake this worldly life and surrender to the magnificence of your BeringThe words of 13th-century Persian poet Rumi have transcended national, ethnic, and religious divides for centuries. The passion and dedication in 'Defeated by Love' is apparent in each line, making this enduring testament to the power of love one of the most beautiful love poems on our list. 53. "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? (Sonnet 18)" by William Shakespeare Although William Shakespeare may not have have written any romance novels, there are few more celebrated love poets and 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?' is perhaps the most iconic and recognizable opening line of any love poem. Its simplicity compared to some of Shakespeare's other sonnets makes it stand out against an incomparable library of work, but the hidden depths and layers of meaning in this densely packed mini-masterpiece have kept readers returning for centuries.54. "Let me not to the marriage of true minds (Sonnet 116)" by William ShakespeareLet me not to the marriage of true mindsAdmit impediments. Love is not loveWhich alters when it alteration finds, Or bends with the remover to remove.O no! it is an ever-fixed markIn 'Sonnet 116', Shakespeare talks about the permanence of love — even if the people change as time goes on, the love between them will remain true and strong, or else it isn't love at all.55. "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" (Sonnet 130) by William ShakespeareI grant I never saw a goddess go;My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rareAs any she belied with false compare. In Shakespeare's final entry on our list, he challenges the traditional association of love with beauty. It doesn't matter what his lover looks like — to him she is the most rare and valuable thing in the world.56. "Love's Philosophy" by Percy Bysshe Shelley The fountains mingle with the riverAnd the rivers with the ocean, The winds of heaven mix foreverWith a sweet emotion;Nothing in the world is single;All things by a law divineIn one spirit meet and mingleWhy not I with thine?'Love's Philosophy', while a beautiful love poem, offers a much more logical take on romance than many of the other poems on our list. Percy Bysshe Shelley expresses to his lover that their love is as natural as a river meeting the ocean — but equally that all the beauties of nature are meaningless if he doesn't have her.57. "One Day I Wrote her Name (Sonnet 75)" by Edmund Spenser One day I wrote her name upon the strand, But came the waves and washed it away:Again I wrote it with a second hand, But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.This beautiful love poem is part of Amoretti, a sonnet cycle about Edmund Spenser's relationship with Elizabeth Boyle. Spenser explains in 'Sonnet 75' that — despite the seemingly portentous way his attempts to make a physical monument to his lover by writing her name in the sand is repeatedly foiled — his love for Boyle will never end, and he will do whatever it takes to make it last. 58. "I Am Not Yours" by Sara TeasdaleA longing for genuine, passionate, all-encompassing love is the central theme of Sara Tesdale's 'I Am Not Yours'. The speaker doesn't feel any sense of belonging in her current relationship, and wants to find a partner who makes her feel lost in their love.59. "Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal" by Alfred, Lord Tennyson Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font.The firefly wakens; waken thou with me. Now drops the milk-white peacock like a ghost,And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.'Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal' is a song from The Princess, a longer, narrative poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. It was inspired by the ghazal, a Persian form of love poetry which focuses on unsustainable love, and is a classic masterclass in sensual description.60. "poem I wrote sitting across the table from you" by Kevin Varrone I would fold myself into the hole in my pocket and disappear into the pocket of myself, or at least my pantsbut before I did like some ancient starI'd grab your handKevin Varrone confesses how close he feels to his lover in 'poem I wrote sitting across the table from you'. Written in a moment of procrastination as he worked on a longer verse in a coffee shop, the poem expresses how Varrone wants his lover to partake on all of his adventures, no matter how big or small.61. "On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous" by Ocean VuongTell me it was for the hunger & nothing less. For hunger is to givethe body what it knows it cannot keep. That this amber light whittled down by another war is all that pins my hand to your chest.While you're probably familiar with Vuong's 2019 novel by the same name, you may not be familiar with the poem that came first. Ocean Vuong's writing invites the reader to slow down and understand every word, and 'On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous' explores themes of desire, impermanence, and craving when in love.62. "Love After Love" by Derek WalcottYou will love again the stranger who was your self. Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heartto itself, to the stranger who has loved you all your life, whom you ignored for another, who knows you by heart.Nobel Prize winning poet Derek Walcott offers advice and reassurance to anyone experiencing a breakup in his poem 'Love After Love'. Encouraging the reader to return to themselves, the poem is a tonic in a world full of love poetry which expects us to hand ourselves over to lovers completely. 63. "I Love You" by Ella Wheeler Wilcox I love your lips when they're wet with wineAnd red with a wild desire;I love your eyes when the lovelight liesLit with a passionate fire. I love your arms when the warm white fleshTouches mine in a fond embrace;I love your hair when the strands enmeshYour kisses against my face.In 'I Love You', Ella Wheeler Wilcox lays out the tiny moments that add up to why the speaker feels so passionately about her love, before going on to describe the colder attributes she's not looking for in a relationship. This juxtaposition helps to make the initial love she describes all the more special.64. "We Have Not Long to Love" by Tennessee WilliamsThough better known for his plays than as a romance author, Tennessee Williams was also an accomplished poet. In 'We Have Not Long to Love' Williams stresses the importance of appreciating the time we do have and cherishing the love that comes with it, remembering that nothing will last forever.65. "Poem to First Love" by Matthew Yeager To have been told "I love you" by you could well be, for me, the highlight of my life, the best feeling, the best peak on my feeling graph, in the way that the Chrysler buildingmight not be the tallest building in the NY sky but isthe best, the most exquisitely spiredMatthew Yeager's 'Poem to First Love' is a bittersweet young romance where, as the title suggests, the speaker is reminiscing about his relationship with his first love, and explores the different ways one might try to logically quantify the utterly illogical force of love. ***Looking to dive a little deeper into the world of poetry? Check out our post on the 60+ best poetry books of all time! by Conrad Geller People are always asking "What are the best love poems?" or "Where can I find something beautiful to say to the woman I love?" or "...to the man I love?" If you are looking for love poems in more modern language, you will probably find the 10 Best Love Poems of 2022 or 10 Best Love Poems of 2021 useful. If you like a more classical style, well, here I am again, unbowed by the heartfelt, sometimes urgent suggestions for altering my recent "10 Greatest Poems about Death." This time I choose a topic—love—less grim if equally compelling. These should quench your thirst for the best love poems, but don't take these as some kind of how-to manual in your relationship. Like death, love seems to be something most poets know little about; for evidence, see their biographies. The poems I have chosen this time cover the full spectrum of responses to love, from joy to anguish, and sometimes a mixture of both. As befits the topic this time, the list is a bit heavy on Romantics and light on those rational Enlightenment types. Here, with a few comments and no apologies, is the list: Related Content 10 Best Love Poems of 2022 10 Best Love Poems of 2021 10 Greatest Poems Ever Written 10. "Since There's No Help," by Michael Drayton (1563-1631) It may be a bad augury to begin with a poem by a loser, but there it is. Drayton, a contemporary and possible acquaintance of the Bard, evidently had come to the unhappy end of an affair when he penned this sonnet. He begins with a show of stoic indifference: ". . . you get no more of me," but that can't last. In the last six lines he shows his true feelings with a series of personifications of the dying figures of Love, Passion, Faith, and Innocence, which he pleads can be saved from their fate by the lady's kindness. Michael Drayton . Since There's No Help Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part; Nay, I have done, you get no more of me, And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart That thus so cleanly I myself can free; Shake hands forever, cancel all our vows, And when we meet at any time again, Be it not seen in either of our brows That we one jot of former love retain. Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath, When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies, When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death, And Innocence is closing up his eyes, Now if thou wouldst, when all have given him over, From death to life thou mightst him yet recover. . . 9. "How Do I Love Thee," by Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861) If poetry, as Wordsworth asserted, is "emotion recollected in tranquility," this sonnet scores high in the former essential but falls short of the latter. Elizabeth may have been the original arts groupie, whose passion for the famous poet Robert Browning seems to have known no limits and recognized no excesses. She loves she says "with my childhood's faith," her beloved now holding the place of her "lost saints." No wonder this poem, whatever its hyperbole, has long been a favorite of adolescent girls and matrons who remember what it was like. . How Do I Love Thee? Browning How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. I love thee to the depth and breadth and height My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight For the ends of being and ideal grace. I love thee to the level of every day's Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light. I love thee freely, as men strive for right. I love thee purely, as they turn from praise. I love thee with the passion put to use In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith. I love thee with a love I seemed to lose With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath, Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose, I shall but love thee better after death. . . 8. "Love's Philosophy," by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) In spite of its title, this very sweet sixteen-line poem has nothing to do with philosophy, as far as I can see. Instead, it promulgates one of the oldest arguments of a swain to a maid: "All the world is in intimate contact – water, wind, mountains, moonbeams, even flowers. What about you?" Since "Nothing in the world is single," he says with multiple examples, "What is all this sweet work worth / If thou kiss not me?" Interestingly, the lover's proof of the "law divine" of mingling delicately omits any reference to animals and their mingling behavior. In any case, I hope it worked for him. Percy Bysshe Shelley . Love's Philosophy The fountains mingle with the river And the rivers with the ocean, The winds of heaven mix for ever With a sweet emotion; Nothing in the world is single; All things by a law divine In one spirit meet and mingle. Why not I with thine?— See the mountains kiss high heaven And the waves clasp one another; No sister-flower would be forgiven If it disdained its brother; And the sunlight clasps the earth And the moonbeams kiss the sea: What is all this sweet work worth If thou kiss not me? . . 7. "Love," by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) Here we have another bold attempt at seduction, this one much longer and more complicated than Shelley's. In this poem, the lover is attempting to gain his desire by appealing to the tender emotions of his object. He sings her a song about the days of chivalry, in which a knight saved a lady from an "outrage worst than death" (whatever that is), is wounded and eventually dies in her arms. The poet's beloved, on hearing the story, is deeply moved to tears and, to make the story not as long as the original, succumbs. As with his most famous poem, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," Coleridge employs the oldest of English forms, the ballad stanza, but here he uses a lengthened second line. Coleridge, by the way, could really tell a romantic story, whatever his ulterior motives. . Love Coleridge All thoughts, all passions, all delights, Whatever stirs this mortal frame, All are but ministers of Love, And feed his sacred flame. Oft in my waking dreams do I Live o'er again that happy hour, When midway on the mount I lay, Beside the ruined tower. The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene Had blended with the lights of eve; And she was there, my hope, my joy, My own dear Genevieve! She leant against the arméd man, The statue of the arméd knight; She stood and listened to my lay, Amid the lingering light. Few sorrows hath she of her own, My hope! my joy! my Genevieve! She loves me best, whene'er I sing The songs that make her grieve. I played a soft and doleful air, I sang an old and moving story— An old rude song, that suited well That ruin wild and hoary. She listened with a flitting blush, With downcast eyes and modest grace; For well she knew, I could not choose But gaze upon her face. I told her of the Knight that wore Upon his shield a burning brand; And that for ten long years he wooed The Lady of the Land. I told her how he pined: and ah! The deep, the low, the pleading tone With which I sang another's love, Interpreted my own. She listened with a flitting blush, With downcast eyes, and modest grace; And she forgave me, that I gazed Too fondly on her face! But when I told the cruel scorn That crazed that bold and lovely Knight, And that he crossed the mountain-woods, Nor rested day nor night; That sometimes from the savage den, And sometimes from the darksome shade, And sometimes starting up at once In green and sunny glade,— There came and looked him in the face An angel beautiful and bright; And