

# *Wedding Poems and Readings*

Choose one or two for your ceremony.

## Contents

R1 - "Love Is A Great Thing" - Thomas à Kempis .....	2
R2 - "I Love You" - Carl Sandberg (also called "The Mother's Day Poem") .....	3
R3 - "I Love You" - Roy Croft .....	4
R4 - "Wild Geese" - Mary Oliver .....	5
R5 - "Touched By An Angel" - Maya Angelou .....	6
R6 - "To Love Is Not to Possess" - James Kavanaugh.....	7
R7 - Song of Solomon:.....	9
R8 - 1st Corinthians 13:3-7:.....	10
R9 - A Blessing for The Journey (Buddhist wedding prayer) by Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao: .....	11
R10 - A Lovely Love Story by Edward Monkton .....	13
R11 - "Falling in love is like owning a dog," by Taylor Mali .....	15
R12 - "The Day the Saucers Came," by Neil Gaiman.....	18
R13 - 'Sonnet 116' by William Shakespeare .....	21
R14 - 'Fidelity' by D. H. Lawrence .....	22
R15 - 'The Passionate Shepherd to His Love' by Christopher Marlowe.....	25
R16 - "A Blessing for a Wedding" by Jane Hirshfield .....	26
R17 - "From Beginning to End" by Robert Fulghum .....	28
R18 - "I carry your heart with me (I carry it in my heart)" by ee cummings.....	30
R19 - "The Art of Marriage," by Wilferd Arlan Peterson.....	31
R20 - Interrelationship by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh .....	34
R21 - "Gravitation cannot be held responsible" - Albert Einstein.....	34
R22 - "What happiness looks like" - Marge Peircy .....	35
R23 - John O'Donohue, To Bless the Space Between Us .....	36
R-24 - When I Am With You, Rumi .....	37

**Thomas a Kempis** was a 15<sup>th</sup> century Catholic reform scholar from Westphalia in Germany. While living in Zwolle, Netherlands, he penned these words.

Love is a great thing, yea, a great and thorough good. By itself it makes that is heavy light; and it bears evenly all that is uneven.

It carries a burden which is no burden; it will not be kept back by anything low and mean; it desires to be free from all worldly affections, and not to be entangled by any outward prosperity, or by any adversity subdued.

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

Though weary, it is not tired; though pressed it is not straitened; though alarmed, it is not confounded; but as a living flame, it forces

itself upwards and securely passes through all.

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

R2 - "I Love You" - Carl Sandburg (also called "The Mother's Day Poem")

Early 20<sup>th</sup> century American poet **Carl Sandburg** wrote this poem from the perspective of a mother. Here we have reworked it to speak of what our love means between lovers and partners.

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

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

A satisfied flower is one whose petals are about to fall. The most beautiful rose is one hardly more than a bud, wherein the pangs and ecstasies of desire are working for a larger and finer growth. Not always shall you be what you are now. You are going forward

toward something great. I am on the way with you and therefore I love you.

R3 - "I Love You" - Roy Croft

Written by **Mary Carolyn Davies** and attributed to "**Roy Croft**," this 1936 poem captures the hope we find in love.

I love you  
Not only for who you are  
But for what I am when I am with you.

I love you  
Not only for what you have made of yourself  
But for what you are making of me.

I love you for the part of me that you bring out.

I love you for putting your hand into my heart  
And passing over all the foolish, weak things  
that you can't help.

Dimly seeing there and drawing out, into the  
light all the beautiful belongings  
That no one else had looked quite far enough  
to find.

You have done it without a touch, without a  
word, without a sign.

**Mary Jane Oliver** is possibly my favorite modern American poet. In *Wild Geese*, she speaks to the movement and sharing that our love creates in our lives.

You do not have to be good.

You do not have to walk on your knees  
for a hundred miles through the desert,  
repenting.

You only have to let the soft animal of your  
body  
love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell  
you mine.

Meanwhile, the world goes on.

Meanwhile, the sun and the clear pebbles of  
the rain  
are moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and the deep trees,  
the mountains and the rivers.

Meanwhile, the wild geese, high in the clean  
blue air,  
are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and  
exciting—  
over and over announcing your place  
in the family of things.

R5 - "Touched By An Angel" - Maya Angelou

**Maya Angelou** exploded onto the American literary stage in 1969's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. In *Touched by an Angel* she reveals the unfolding of lonely, introverted lives brushed by the wings of love.

We, unaccustomed to courage  
exiles from delight  
live coiled in shells of loneliness  
until love leaves its high holy temple  
and comes into our sight  
to liberate us into life.

Love arrives  
and in its train come ecstasies

old memories of pleasure  
ancient histories of pain.

Yet if we are bold,  
love strikes away the chains of fear  
from our souls.

We are weaned from our timidity  
In the flush of love's light  
we dare be brave  
And suddenly we see  
that love costs all we are  
and will ever be.

Yet it is only love  
which sets us free.

R6 - "To Love Is Not to Possess" - James Kavanaugh

Poet and former Catholic priest James  
Kavanaugh explores the meaning of love in  
*To Love is not to Possess*.

To love is not to possess,  
To own or imprison,  
Nor to lose one's self in another.

Love is to join and separate,  
To walk alone and together,

To find a laughing freedom  
That lonely isolation does not permit.

It is finally to be able  
To be who we really are  
No longer clinging in childish dependency  
Nor docilely living separate lives in silence.

It is to be perfectly one's self  
And perfectly joined in permanent  
commitment  
To another—and to one's inner self.

Love only endures when it moves like waves,  
Receding and returning gently or  
passionately,  
Or moving lovingly like the tide  
In the moon's own predictable harmony.

Because finally, despite a child's scars  
Or an adult's deepest wounds,  
They are openly free to be  
Who they really are—and always secretly  
were,  
In the very core of their being  
Where true and lasting love can alone abide.



Freighted with passion that burns brightly across three millennia, come these selections from *The Song of Solomon*. The lovers sing of the ache that the sight, sound, and feeling their partners inflame within.

I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine.

My beloved speaks and says to me: Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is comely. Set me as a seal upon your heart and seal

upon your arm; for love is strong as death,  
jealousy cruel as the grave.

Its flashes are flashes of fire, a most  
vehement flame.

Many waters cannot quench love, neither  
can floods drown it. If a man offered for  
love all the wealth of his house, it would  
be utterly scorned. I am my beloved's and  
my beloved is mine.

R8 - 1st Corinthians 13:3-8a:

Please permit me to share from **Paul's** first  
letter to the church at Corinth. This is **1  
Corinthians 13:3-8a** from Eugene Peterson's  
modern interpretation of the Bible, *The  
Message: The Bible in Contemporary  
Language*.

If I give everything I own to the poor and even  
go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I  
don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter  
what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm  
bankrupt without love.

Love never gives up.

Love cares more for others than for self.

Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.

Love doesn't strut,  
Doesn't have a swelled head,  
Doesn't force itself on others,  
Isn't always "me first,"  
Doesn't fly off the handle,  
Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,  
Doesn't revel when others grovel,  
Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,  
Puts up with anything,  
Trusts God always,  
Always looks for the best,  
Never looks back,  
But keeps going to the end.

Love never dies.

R9 - A Blessing for The Journey (Buddhist wedding prayer) by Roshi  
Wendy Egyoku Nakao:

Zen teacher Roshi **Wendy Egyoku Nakao**  
sees marriage as the journey two souls make  
over the course of their lives.

Let us vow to bear witness to the wholeness of  
life, realizing the completeness of each and  
every thing.

Embracing our differences, I shall know myself as you, and you as myself.

May we serve each other for all our days, here, there, and everywhere.

Let us vow to open ourselves to the abundance of life.

Freely giving and receiving, I shall care for you, for the trees and stars, as treasures of my very own.

May we be grateful for all our days, here, there, and everywhere.

Let us vow to forgive all hurt caused by ourselves and others, and to never condone hurtful ways.

Being responsible for my actions, I shall free myself and you.

Will you free me, too?

May we be kind for all our days, here, there, and everywhere.

Let us vow to remember that all that appears will disappear.

In the midst of uncertainty, I shall sow love.

Here! Now! I call to you:

Let us together live

The Great Peace that we are.

May we give no fear for all our days, here,  
there, and everywhere.

R10 - A Lovely Love Story by Edward Monkton

**Edward Monkton** is a pen name for  
British author **Giles Andreae**. Here is  
the story of two dinosaurs in love.

The fierce Dinosaur was trapped inside his  
cage of ice. Although it was cold, he was happy  
in there. It was, after all, *his* cage.

Then along came the Lovely Other Dinosaur.

The Lovely Other Dinosaur melted the  
Dinosaur's cage with kind words and loving  
thoughts.

I like this Dinosaur, thought the Lovely Other  
Dinosaur. Although he is fierce, he is also  
tender and he is funny. He is also quite clever  
though I will not tell him this for now.

I like this Lovely Other Dinosaur, thought the Dinosaur. She is beautiful and she is different and she smells so nice. She is also a free spirit, which is a quality I much admire in a dinosaur.

But he can be so distant and so peculiar at times, thought the Lovely Other Dinosaur.

He is also overly fond of Things. Are all Dinosaurs so overly fond of Things?

But her mind skips from here to there so quickly, thought the Dinosaur. She is also uncommonly keen on Shopping. Are all Lovely Other Dinosaurs so uncommonly keen on shopping?

I will forgive his peculiarity and his concern for things, thought the Lovely Other Dinosaur. For they are part of what makes him a richly characterized individual.

I will forgive her skipping mind and her fondness for shopping, thought the Dinosaur. For she fills our life with beautiful thought and wonderful surprises. Besides, I am not unkeen on shopping either.

Now the Dinosaur and the Lovely Other Dinosaur are old. Look at them.

Together they stand on the hill telling each other stories and feeling the warmth of the sun on their backs.

And that, my friends, is how it is with love. Let us all be Dinosaurs and Lovely Other Dinosaurs together.

For the sun is warm. And the world is a beautiful place...”

R11 - “Falling in love is like owning a dog,” by Taylor Mali

American poet and educator **Taylor Mali** has been slammin’ since the 90s. His words are rich with the flavor of twelve generations that lived, loved, worked, and played in New York city. In *Falling in Love is Like Owning a Dog*, **Mali** compares the emotional state of being to living with a sometimes flighty, sometimes headstrong pup.

First of all, it’s a big responsibility, especially in a city like New York.

So think long and hard before deciding on love.

On the other hand, love gives you a sense of security:

when you're walking down the street late at night

and you have a leash on love

ain't no one going to mess with you.

Because crooks and muggers think love is unpredictable.

Who knows what love could do in its own defense?

On cold winter nights, love is warm.

It lies between you and lives and breathes and makes funny noises.

Love wakes you up all hours of the night with its needs.

It needs to be fed so it will grow and stay healthy.

Love doesn't like being left alone for long.

But come home and love is always happy to see you.



It may break a few things accidentally in its  
passion for life,  
but you can never be mad at love for long.

Is love good all the time? No! No!  
Love can be bad. Bad, love, bad! Very bad love.

Love makes messes.

Love leaves you little surprises here and  
there.

Love needs lots of cleaning up after.

Sometimes you just want to get love fixed.

Sometimes you want to roll up a piece of  
newspaper  
and swat love on the nose,  
not so much to cause pain,  
just to let love know Don't you ever do that  
again!

Sometimes love just wants to go for a nice long  
walk.

Because love loves exercise.

It runs you around the block and leaves you  
panting.

It pulls you in several different directions at once,  
or winds around and around you  
until you're all wound up and can't move.

But love makes you meet people wherever you go.

People who have nothing in common but love stop and talk to each other on the street.

Throw things away and love will bring them back,  
again, and again, and again.

But most of all, love needs love, lots of it.

And in return, love loves you and never stops.

R12 - "The Day the Saucers Came," by Neil Gaiman

Does everyone know about **Neil Gaiman**?  
He's an English author and screenwriter, and the heir to Sir Terry Pratchett's literary legacy. If the name seems familiar, maybe you saw the Netflix production of *Good Omens*, the comically apocryphal fantasy about the end of the world. Yeah. Terry and Neil did that.

*The Day the Saucers Came* speaks to how all-consuming our love may become.

That day, the saucers landed. Hundreds of them, golden, silent, coming down from the sky like great snowflakes.

And the people of Earth stood and stared as they descended,  
Waiting, dry-mouthed, to find what waited inside for us.

And none of us knowing if we would be here tomorrow.

But you didn't notice it because

That day, the day the saucers came, by some coincidence, was the day that the graves gave up their dead.

And the zombies pushed up through soft earth or erupted, shambling and dull-eyed, unstoppable.

Came towards us, the living, and we screamed and ran.

But you did not notice this because

On the saucer day, which was the zombie day,  
it was Ragnarok also.

And the television screens showed us  
A ship built of dead-men's nails, a serpent, a  
wolf, all bigger than the mind could hold, and  
the cameraman could not get far enough  
away,

And then the Gods came out.

But you did not see them coming because

On the saucer-zombie-battling-gods  
day the floodgates broke.

And each of us was engulfed by genies and  
sprites offering us wishes and wonders and  
eternities and charm and cleverness and true  
brave hearts and pots of gold while giants  
feefofummed across the land,

And killer bees,

But you had no idea of any of this because

That day, the saucer day, the zombie day,  
The Ragnarok and fairies day, the day the  
great winds came

And snows, and the cities turned to crystal,

The day all plants died, plastics dissolved,  
The day the computers turned, the screens  
telling us we would obey,  
The day angels, drunk and muddled, stumbled  
from the bars, and all the bells of London were  
sounded.  
The day animals spoke to us in Assyrian, the  
Yeti day,  
The fluttering capes and arrival of the Time  
Machine day,  
You didn't notice any of this because you were  
sitting in your room,  
Not doing anything  
Not even reading, not really,  
Just looking at your telephone, wondering if I  
was going to call.

R13 - 'Sonnet 116' by William Shakespeare

Along with legendary English comedies like *Much Ado About Nothing* and dramatic tragedies that include *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, we attribute **William Shakespeare** with 154

sonnets. Among these classical poems, *Sonnet 116* shines as a monument to love.

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
admit impediments.

Love is not love which alters when it  
alteration finds,  
or bends with the remover to remove:  
Oh, no! It is an ever-fixed mark.

That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
it is the star to every wandering bark,  
whose worth's unknown, although his height  
be taken.

Love's not Time's fool,  
though rosy lips and cheeks within his  
bending sickle's compass come;  
love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
but bears it out even to the edge of doom.

If this be error and upon me proved,  
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

R14 - 'Fidelity' by D. H. Lawrence

D.H. Lawrence's strongly held opinions  
earned him many enemies, and he endured  
official persecution and censorship

throughout his life. It was only after his death that contemporaries rehabilitated his reputation. In this poem, *Fidelity*, Lawrence compares fleeting emotion and bedrock stability.

Fidelity and love are two different things, like a flower and a gem.

And love, like a flower, will fade, will change into something else or it would not be flowery.

O flowers they fade because they are moving swiftly;

A little torrent of life leaps up to the summit of the stem, gleams, turns over round the bend of the parabola of curved flight, sinks, and is gone, like a cornet curving into the invisible.

O flowers they are all the time travelling like cornets, and they come into our ken for a day, for two days, and withdraw, slowly vanish again.

And we, we must take them on the wing, and let them go.

Embalmed flowers are not flowers,  
immortelles are not flowers;  
flowers are just a motion, a swift motion, a  
coloured gesture;  
That is their loveliness. And that is love.

But a gem is different. It lasts so much longer  
than we do, so much much much longer that it  
seems to last forever.

Yet we know it is flowing away as flowers are,  
and we are, only slower.

The wonderful slow flowing of the sapphire!

All flows, and every flow is related to every  
other flow.

Flowers and sapphires and us, diversely  
streaming.

In the old days, when sapphires were  
breathed upon and brought forth during the  
wild orgasms of chaos, time was much slower,  
when the rocks came forth.

It took aeons to make a sapphire, aeons for it  
to pass away.

And a flower it takes a summer.



And man and woman are like the earth, that  
brings forth flowers in summer, and love, but  
underneath is rock.

Older than flowers, older than ferns, older  
than foraminifera, older than plasm  
altogether is the soul of a man underneath.

And when, throughout all the wild orgasms of  
love, slowly a gem forms in the ancient, once-  
more-molten rocks of two human hearts, two  
ancient rocks, a man's heart and a woman's,  
that is the crystal of peace, the slow hard  
jewel of trust, the sapphire of fidelity.

The gem of mutual peace emerging from the  
wild chaos of love.

R15 - 'The Passionate Shepherd to His Love' by Christopher Marlowe

Allow me to share this poem from the classic  
Christopher Marlowe, titled "*The Passionate  
Shepherd to His Love*."

Come live with me, and be my love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove,  
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,  
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,  
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks  
By shallow rivers, to whose falls  
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,  
And a thousand fragrant posies,  
A cap of flowers and a kirtle  
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle.

A gown made of the finest wool  
Which from our pretty lambs we pull,  
Fair lined slippers for the cold,  
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,  
With coral clasps and amber studs,  
And if these pleasures may thee move,  
Come live with me, and be my love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing  
For thy delight each May-morning,  
If these delights thy mind may move;  
Then live with me, and be my love.

R16 – “A Blessing for a Wedding” by Jane Hirshfield

American poet and essayist **Jane Hirshfield** is also an ordained Zen priest. Here is her insightful poem, *A Blessing for Wedding*.

Today when persimmons ripen.

Today when fox-kits come out of their den into snow.

Today when the spotted egg releases its wren song.

Today when the maple sets down its red leaves.

Today when windows keep their promise to open.

Today when fire keeps its promise to warm.

Today when someone you love has died

or someone you never met has died.

Today when someone you love has been born

or someone you will not meet has been born.

Today when rain leaps to the waiting of roots in their dryness.

Today when starlight bends to the roofs of the hungry and tired.

Today when someone sits long inside his last  
sorrow.

Today when someone steps into the heat of  
her first embrace.

Today, let this light bless you.

With these friends let it bless you.

With snow-scent and lavender bless you.

Let the vow of this day keep itself wildly and  
wholly.

Spoken and silent, surprise you inside your  
ears.

Sleeping and waking, unfold itself inside your  
eyes.

Let its fierceness and tenderness hold you.

Let its vastness be undisguised in all your  
days.

R17 - "From Beginning to End" by Robert Fulghum

Please permit me to share a reading from the  
author of *All I Really Needed to Know I  
Learned in Kindergarten*, **Robert Fulghum**.

This is his essay titled *From Beginning to End*.

You have known each other from the first glance of acquaintance to this point of commitment. At some point, you decided to marry.

From that moment of yes to this moment of yes, indeed, you have been making promises and agreements in an informal way. All those conversations that were held riding in a car or over a meal or during long walks—all those sentences that began with “When we’re married” and continued with “I will and you will and we will”—those late night talks that included “someday” and “somehow” and “maybe”—and all those promises that are unspoken matters of the heart.

All these common things, and more, are the real process of a wedding. The symbolic vows that you are about to make are a way of saying to one another, “You know all those things we’ve promised and hoped and dreamed—well, I meant it all, every word.”

Look at one another and remember this moment in time. Before this moment, you have been many things to one another—acquaintance, friend, companion, lover, dancing partner, and even teacher, for you have learned much from one another in these last few years.

Now you shall say a few words that take you across a threshold of life, and things will never quite be the same between you. For after these vows, you shall say to the world, this—is my husband, this—is my wife.

R18—"I carry your heart with me (I carry it in my heart)" by E. E. Cummings

Prolific early 20<sup>th</sup> century poet **E.E. Cummings'** modernist free-form style is notorious for its idiosyncratic syntax. His stream of consciousness, speed of thought words, speed through feeling and emotion like an arrow to the heart of our unconscious mind.

i carry your heart with me (i carry it in my heart) i am never without it (anywhere i go

you go, my dear; and whatever is done by only  
me is your doing, my darling)

i fear

no fate (for you are my fate, my sweet) i want  
no world (for beautiful you are my world, my  
true) and it's you are whatever a moon has  
always meant and whatever a sun will always  
sing is you)

here is the deepest secret nobody knows (here  
is the root of the root and the bud of the bud  
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life;  
which grows higher than soul can hope or  
mind can hide)  
and this is the wonder that's keeping the stars  
apart

i carry your heart (i carry it in my heart)

R19 – “The Art of Marriage,” by Wilferd Arlan Peterson

Mid-century American author **Wilferd Arlan Peterson** often said that his wife, **Ruth**, inspired his writing on the art of living. Perhaps their shared experience is the creative force within this poem, *The Art of Marriage*.

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens.

A good marriage must be created.

In marriage, the little things are the big things.

It is never being too old to hold hands.

It is remembering to say, "I love you" at least once a day.

It is never going to sleep angry.

It is at no time taking the other for granted; the courtship should not end with the honeymoon; it should continue through all the years.

It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.

It is standing together facing the world.

It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.

It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy.



It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.

It is not expecting the husband to wear a halo or the wife to have the wings of an angel.

It is not looking for perfection in each other.

It is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding and a sense of humor.

It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.

It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.

It is finding room for the things of the Spirit.

It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.

It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal, dependence is mutual, and the obligation is reciprocal.

It is not only marrying the right partner, it is being the right partner.

This is The Art of Marriage.

R20 – Interrelationship by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh

Before his passing in 2022, Buddhist teacher and author Thich Nhat Hanh wrote hundreds of books and tens of thousands of words, including these on the interrelationship of all people.

You are me, and I am you.

Isn't it obvious that we "inter-are"?

You cultivate the flower in yourself, so that I will be beautiful.

I transform the garbage in myself, so that you will not have to suffer.

I support you;  
you support me.

I am in this world to offer you peace;  
you are in this world to bring me joy.

R21—"Gravitation cannot be held responsible"—Albert Einstein

Physicist Albert Einstein is most famous for defining the Theory of General Relativity. In this brief quote, Einstein examines the transient nature of love.

I cannot hold gravitation responsible for people falling in love. How on earth can you explain in terms of chemistry and physics so important a biological phenomenon as first love? Put your hand on a stove for a minute and it seems like an hour. Sit with that special girl for an hour and it seems like a minute. That's relativity.

R22 – “What happiness looks like” – Marge Piercy

American author **Marge Piercy** has done many things in the years since was born. Feminist, Civil Rights Activist, novelist, playwright, and poet. She certainly knows *What Happiness Looks Like*.

Some things are ordinary but perfect:  
drinking coffee on summer mornings with you  
as the cats laze about, fed, on you or on me  
or curled together in the bay window on a  
sunny pillow.

Outside, the weeping beech stirs in the wind,  
leaves hanging down like just washed long  
tresses.

We talk softly of the pending day.

This is all I would need of the heaven that I  
don't believe in, but this  
I believe.

R23 - John O'Donohue, *To Bless the Space Between Us*

Irish philosopher **John O'Donohue** spent his life examining our relationships. In his book, *To Bless the Space Between Us*, we find the poem *For Marriage*.

As spring unfolds the dream of the earth,  
May you bring each other's hearts to birth.

As the ocean finds calm in view of land,  
May you love the gaze of each other's mind.

As the wind arises free and wild,  
May nothing negative control your lives.

As kindly as moonlight might search the dark,  
So gentle may you be when light grows scarce.

As surprised as the silence that music opens,  
May your words for each other be touched  
with reverence.

As warmly as the air draws in the light,  
May you welcome each other's every gift.

As elegant as dream absorbing the night,  
May sleep find you clear of anger and hurt.

As twilight harvests all the day's color,  
May love bring you home to each other.

R-24—When I Am With You, Rumi

As we consider the words that [Bride] and  
[Groom] have shared, here is a poem from the  
Sufi Sage, Rumi, titled, *When I Am With You*.

When I am with you, we stay up all night.

When you're not here, I can't go to sleep.

Praise God for these two insomnias!  
And the difference between them.

The minute I heard my first love story  
I started looking for you, not knowing  
how blind that was.

Lovers don't finally meet somewhere.

They're in each other all along.

We are the mirror as well as the face in it.

We are tasting the taste this minute  
of eternity. We are pain

and what cures pain, both. We are  
the sweet cold water and the jar that pours.

I want to hold you close like a lute,  
so we can cry out with loving.

You would rather throw stones at a mirror?  
I am your mirror, and here are the stones.