

The winter will lose its cold,
As the snow will be without whiteness,
The night without darkness,
The heavens without stars,
The day without light,
The flower will lose its beauty,
All fountains their water,
The sea its fish,
The tree its birds,
The forest its beasts,
The earth its harvest –
All these things will pass before
Anyone breaks the bonds of our love,
And before I cease caring for you in my heart.
May your days be happy in number as flakes of snow,
May your nights be peaceful,
And may you be without troubles.

Matthew of Rievaulx (13th century)

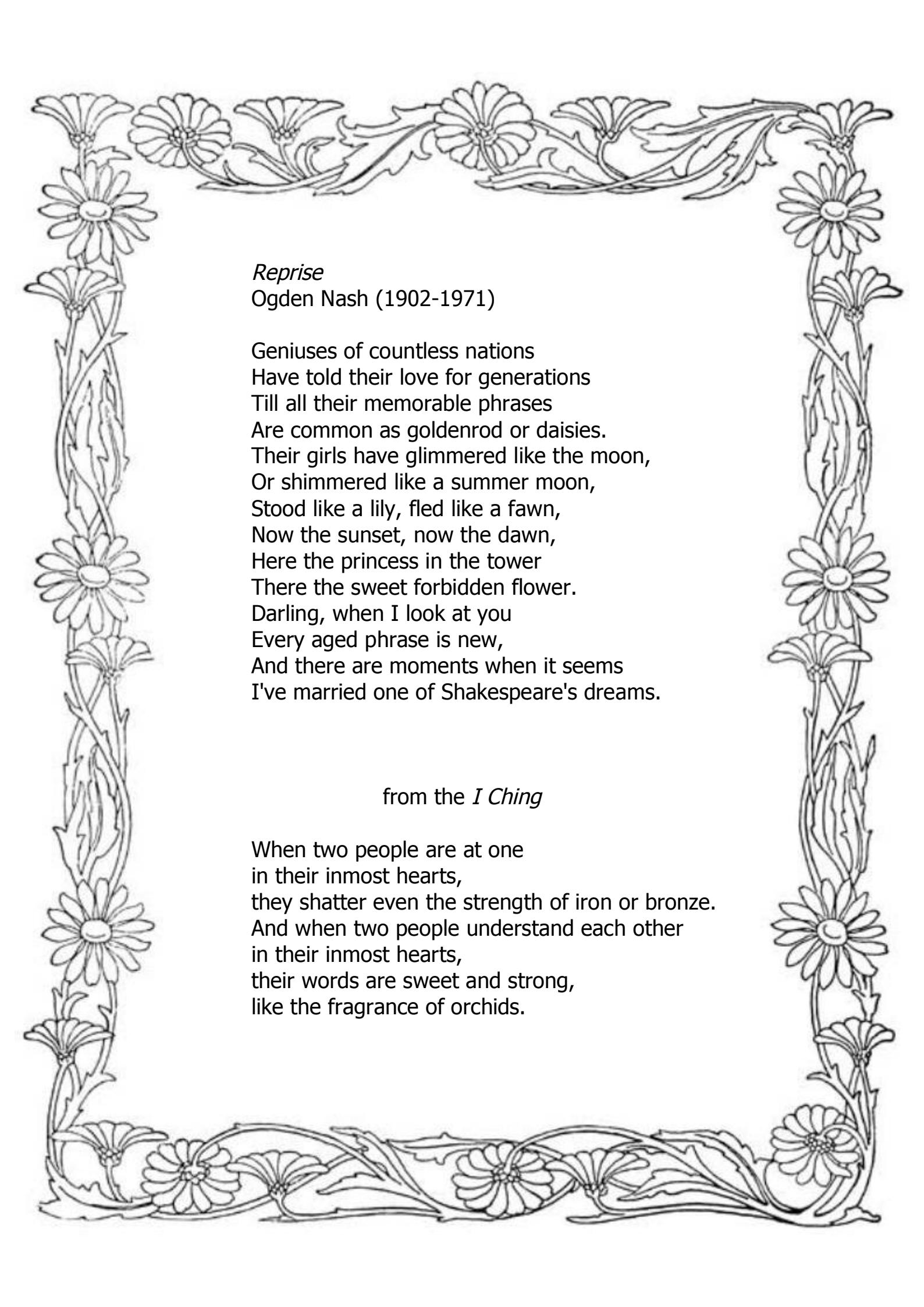


A Reflection
Lynne Milum

When I look at you,
I'm looking into a still blue lake
seeing a reflection
not identical to me
yet, underneath,
the meaning is still the same.

When I look at you,
I'm looking in a mirror,
or just wishing
that we were more alike.
The words you speak
are the words I write.

When I look at you,
I see a river
a flowing that never ceases
spreading love in many branches.
Your silence, your actions,
have strong undercurrents.




Reprise
Ogden Nash (1902-1971)

Geniuses of countless nations
Have told their love for generations
Till all their memorable phrases
Are common as goldenrod or daisies.
Their girls have glimmered like the moon,
Or shimmered like a summer moon,
Stood like a lily, fled like a fawn,
Now the sunset, now the dawn,
Here the princess in the tower
There the sweet forbidden flower.
Darling, when I look at you
Every aged phrase is new,
And there are moments when it seems
I've married one of Shakespeare's dreams.

from the *I Ching*

When two people are at one
in their inmost hearts,
they shatter even the strength of iron or bronze.
And when two people understand each other
in their inmost hearts,
their words are sweet and strong,
like the fragrance of orchids.



On marriage
Khalil Gibran

You were born together, and together you shall be forevermore.
You shall be together when white wings of death scatter your days.
Aye, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.
Love one another but make not a bond of love:
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.
Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.
Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf.
Sing and dance together and be joyous,
but let each one of you be alone,
Even as the strings of a lute are alone
though they quiver with the same music.
Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.
For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.
And stand together, yet not too near together;
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.



On Love
Khalil Gibran

Then said Almitra, "Speak to us of Love"
and he raised his head and looked upon the people,
and there fell a stillness upon them. And with a great voice he said:
When love beckons to you, follow him, though his ways are hard and steep.
and when his wings enfold you yield to him,
though the sword hidden among his pinions may wound you.
And when he speaks to you believe in him, though his voice may shatter your dreams
as the north wind lays waste the garden.
For even as love crowns you, so shall he crucify you.
Even as he is for your growth, so is he for your pruning.
Even as he ascends to your height
and caresses your tenderest branches that quiver in the sun,
So shall he descend to your roots and shake them in their clinging to the earth.
Like sheaves of corn he gathers you unto himself.
He threshes you to make you naked. He sifts you to free you from your husks.
He grinds you to whiteness. He kneads you until you are pliant;
And then he assigns you to his sacred fire,
that you may become sacred bread for God's sacred feast.
All these things shall love do unto you that you may know the secrets of your heart,
and in that knowledge become a fragment of Life's heart.
But if, in your fear, you would seek only love's peace and love's pleasure,
then it is better for you that you cover your nakedness
and pass out of love's threshing-floor, into the seasonless world
where you shall laugh, but not all of your laughter,
and weep, but not all of your tears.
Love gives naught but itself and takes naught but from itself.
Love possesses not nor would it be possessed; for love is sufficient unto love.
When you love you should not say, "God is in my heart,"
but rather, I am in the heart of God."
And think not you can direct the course of love,
for love, if it finds you worthy, directs your course.
Love has no other desire but to fulfil itself.
But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires:
To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night;
To know the pain of too much tenderness;
To be wounded by your own understanding of love and to bleed willingly and joyfully;
To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving;
To rest at the noon hour and meditate love's ecstasy;
To return home at eventide with gratitude;
And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart
and a song of praise upon your lips.



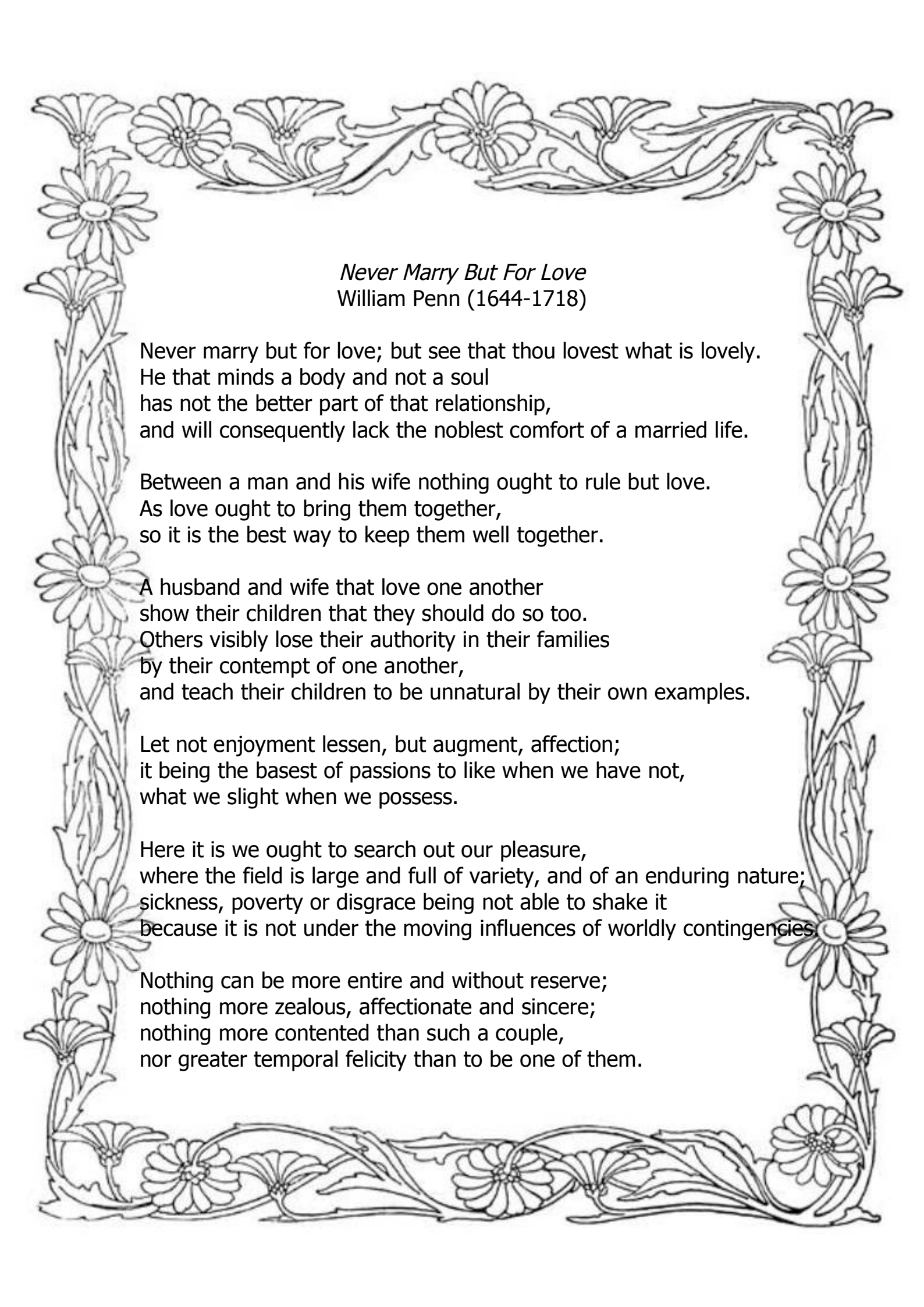
from *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*
Louis de Bernieres

Love is a temporary madness,
it erupts like volcanoes and then subsides.
And when it subsides you have to make a decision.
You have to work out whether your roots have so entwined together
that it is inconceivable that you should ever part.
Because this is what love is:
Love is not breathlessness,
it is not excitement,
it is not the promulgation of eternal passion.
That is just being "in love" which any fool can do.
Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away,
and this is both an art and a fortunate accident.
Those that truly love, have roots
that grow towards each other underground,
and when all the pretty blossom have fallen from their branches,
they find that they are one tree and not two.

The Bargain
Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86)

My true love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange one for another given:
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,
There never was a better bargain driven:
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.

His heart in me keeps him and me in one,
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides:
He loves my heart, for once it was his own,
I cherish his because in me it bides:
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.



Never Marry But For Love
William Penn (1644-1718)

Never marry but for love; but see that thou lovest what is lovely.
He that minds a body and not a soul
has not the better part of that relationship,
and will consequently lack the noblest comfort of a married life.

Between a man and his wife nothing ought to rule but love.
As love ought to bring them together,
so it is the best way to keep them well together.

A husband and wife that love one another
show their children that they should do so too.
Others visibly lose their authority in their families
by their contempt of one another,
and teach their children to be unnatural by their own examples.

Let not enjoyment lessen, but augment, affection;
it being the basest of passions to like when we have not,
what we slight when we possess.


Here it is we ought to search out our pleasure,
where the field is large and full of variety, and of an enduring nature;
sickness, poverty or disgrace being not able to shake it
because it is not under the moving influences of worldly contingencies.

Nothing can be more entire and without reserve;
nothing more zealous, affectionate and sincere;
nothing more contented than such a couple,
nor greater temporal felicity than to be one of them.



If Thou Must Love Me
Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861)

If thou must love me, let it be for naught
Except for love's sake only. Do not say,
'I love her for her smile - her look - her way
Of speaking gently, for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day' -
For these things in themselves, beloved, may
Be changed, or change for thee - and love, so wrought,
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry:
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.



somewhere i have never travelled
e.e. cummings

somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond
any experience, your eyes have their silence:
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,
or which i cannot touch because they are too near

your slightest look easily will uncloset me
though i have closed myself as fingers,
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring opens
(touching skilfully, mysteriously) her first rose

or if your wish be to close me, i and
my life will shut very beautifully, suddenly,
as when the heart of this flower imagines
the snow carefully everywhere descending;

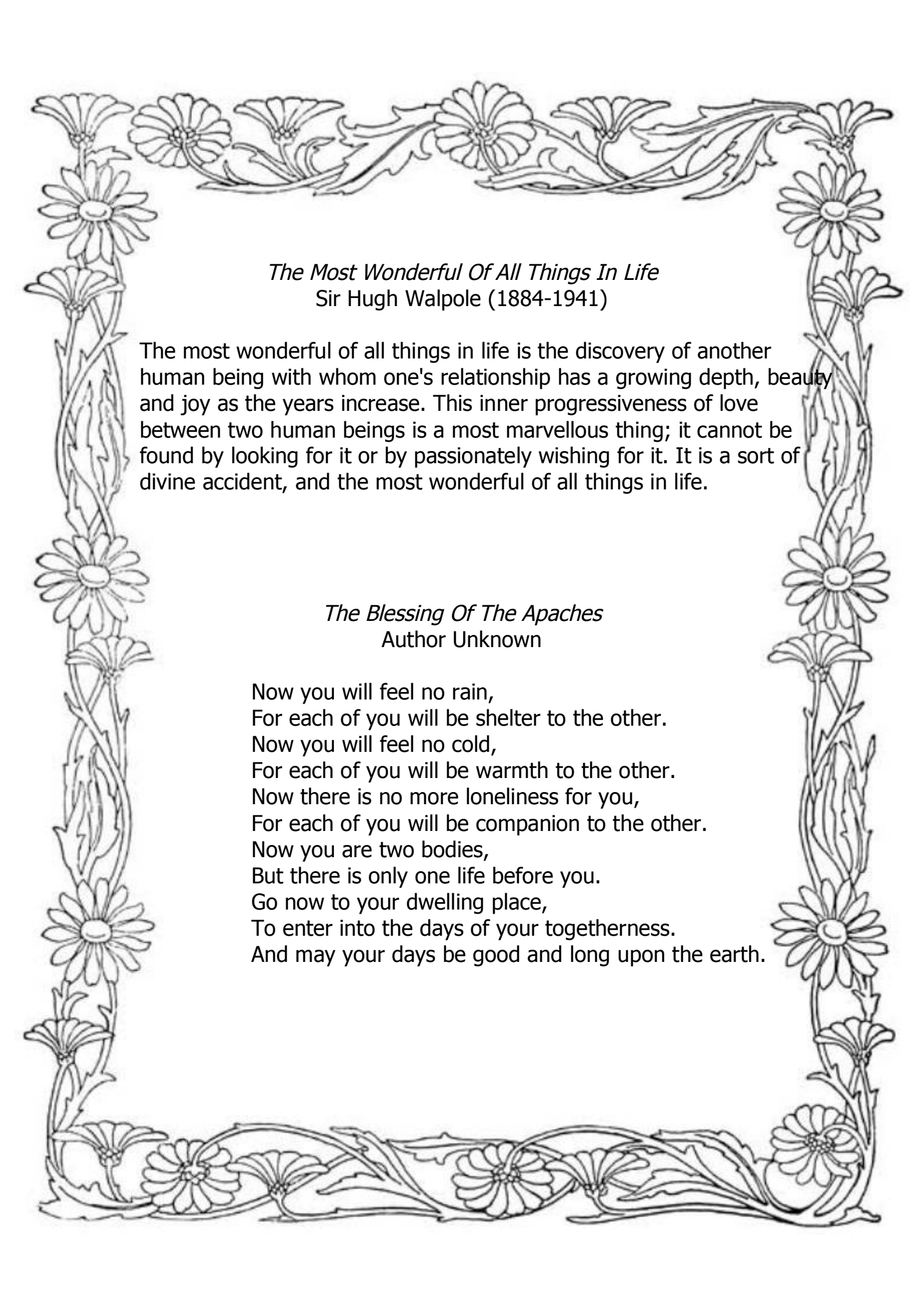
nothing which we are to perceive in this world equals
the power of your intense fragility: whose texture
compels me with the colour of its countries,
rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes
and opens; only something in me understands
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)
nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands



On Love
Thomas à Kempis (1379-1471)

Love is a mighty power, a great and complete good.
Love alone lightens every burden, and makes rough places smooth.
It bears every hardship as though it were nothing,
and renders all bitterness sweet and acceptable.
Nothing is sweeter than love,
Nothing stronger,
Nothing higher,
Nothing wider,
Nothing more pleasant,
Nothing fuller or better in heaven or earth; for love is born of God.
Love flies, runs and leaps for joy.
It is free and unrestrained.
Love knows no limits, but ardently transcends all bounds.
Love feels no burden, takes no account of toil,
attempts things beyond its strength.
Love sees nothing as impossible,
for it feels able to achieve all things.
It is strange and effective,
while those who lack love faint and fail.
Love is not fickle and sentimental,
nor is it intent on vanities.
Like a living flame and a burning torch,
it surges upward and surely surmounts every obstacle.



The Most Wonderful Of All Things In Life
Sir Hugh Walpole (1884-1941)

The most wonderful of all things in life is the discovery of another human being with whom one's relationship has a growing depth, beauty and joy as the years increase. This inner progressiveness of love between two human beings is a most marvellous thing; it cannot be found by looking for it or by passionately wishing for it. It is a sort of divine accident, and the most wonderful of all things in life.

The Blessing Of The Apaches
Author Unknown

Now you will feel no rain,
For each of you will be shelter to the other.
Now you will feel no cold,
For each of you will be warmth to the other.
Now there is no more loneliness for you,
For each of you will be companion to the other.
Now you are two bodies,
But there is only one life before you.
Go now to your dwelling place,
To enter into the days of your togetherness.
And may your days be good and long upon the earth.



Marriage Joins Two People In The Circle Of Its Love
Edmund O'Neill (b.1929)

Marriage is a commitment to life, the best that two people can find and bring out in each other. It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other relationship can equal. It is a physical and an emotional joining that is promised for a lifetime.

Within the circle of its love, marriage encompasses all of life's most important relationships. A wife and a husband are each other's best friend, confidant, lover, teacher, listener, and critic. And there may come times when one partner is heartbroken or ailing, and the love of the other may resemble the tender caring of a parent for a child.

Marriage deepens and enriches every facet of life. Happiness is fuller, memories are fresher, commitment is stronger, even anger is felt more strongly, and passes away more quickly.

Marriage understands and forgives the mistakes life is unable to avoid. It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences, and new ways of expressing a love that is deeper than life.

When two people pledge their love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique unto themselves which binds them closer than any spoken or written words. Marriage is a promise, a potential made in the hearts of two people who love each other and takes a lifetime to fulfil



This Day I Married My Best Friend
Author Unknown

This day I married my best friend
...the one I laugh with as we share life's wonderous zest,
as we find new enjoyments and experience all that's best.
...the one I live for because the world seems brighter
as our happy times are better and our burdens feel much lighter.
...the one I love with every fibre of my soul.
We used to feel vaguely incomplete, now together we are whole.

To Keep Your Marriage Brimming
Ogden Nash (1902-1971)
Keep your marriage brimming,
With love in the loving cup,
Whenever you're wrong admit it;
Whenever you're right shut up.

Sonnet 116
William Shakespeare

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.



To My Dear Loving Husband
Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672)

If ever two were one, then surely we.
If ever man were loved by wife, then thee;
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me, ye woman, if you can.
I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold
Or all the riches that the East doth hold.
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,
Nor ought but love from thee, give recompense.
Thy love is such I can no way repay,
the heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.
The while we live, in love let's so persevere,
That when we live no more, we may live ever.

Fidelity
D.H. Lawrence

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 foraminiferae,
older than plasm altogether is the soul underneath.
And when, throughout all the wild chaos 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.



A Birthday
Christina Rossetti

My heart is singing like a bird
whose nest is in the watered shoot:
my heart is like an apple-tree
whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
my heart is like a rainbow shell
that paddles in a halcyon sea:
my heart is gladder than all these
because my love has come to me.

Raise me a dias of silk and down:
hang it with vair and purple dyes;
carve it in dove and pomegranates,
and peacocks with a hundred eyes;
work it in gold and silver grapes,
in leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;
because the birthday of my life
is come, my love is come to me.



The Confirmation
Edwin Muir

Yes, yours, my love, is the right human face.
I in my mind had waited for this long,
seeing the false and searching for the true,
then found you as a traveller finds a place
of welcome suddenly amid the wrong
valleys and rocks and twisting roads. But you,
what shall I call you? A fountain in a waste,
a well of water in a country dry,
or anything that's honest and good, an eye
that makes the whole world bright. Your open heart,
simple with giving, gives the primal deed,
the first good world, the blossom, the blowing seed,
the heart, the steadfast land, the wandering sea,
nor beautiful or rare in every part,
but like yourself, as they were meant to be.