What We Love About Love

Sijo (SHEE-jo) in ancient Korea were powerful, personal songs, often about change. A sijo has three lines, with a pause in the middle of each one. The lines are nice and long and they can be different lengths. The last line has a twist or a surprise in it, and is always the longest. (Translations frequently depart from the three-line form of the originals.)

The long lake was autumn fresh, the water blue as jade;
I tied my boat deep within the lotus lushness.
I saw my love across the water; I tossed him lotus seeds.
Half the day spent in shame, afraid I might have been seen.
— Ho Nansorhon, 1563-89

When I was faithless,
when did I ever deceive my love?
The dark moonless night runs late, and still there’s not a sign of him.
Leaves falling
in the autumn breeze, what can I do?
— Hwang Chini, 1502-40

I wish I could cut out the waist of this deep mid-winter night
And curl it softly, softly under the warm spring quilt;
And slowly, slowly spread it on the night my love comes back.
— Hwang Chini, 1502-40

A horse neighs outside, but my love will not let me go.
The sun has set over the hill and I have a thousand li to go.
Love, do not stop me; make the setting sun stand still.
— Anonymous

May the wind blow, blow the wind bringing the rain.
May the shower stop and become a heavy rain.
May the road become the sea and stop my love from leaving me.
— Anonymous
What We Love About Love
from The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon (966—c. 1025)

Things that Make One’s Heart Beat Faster
- Sparrows feeding their young
- To pass a place where babies are playing
- To sleep in a room where fine incense has been burnt
- To notice one’s elegant Chinese mirror has become cloudy
- To see a gentleman stop his carriage before one’s gate and instruct his attendants to announce his arrival
- To wash one’s hair and put on scented robes
- It is night and one is expecting a visitor. Suddenly one is startled by the sound of raindrops blown against the shutters.

Things that Cannot Be Compared
- Summer and winter
- Night and day
- Rain and sunshine
- A person’s laughter and his anger
- Black and white
- The little indigo plant and the great philodendron
- Rain and mist
- When one has stopped loving somebody, one feels he has become someone else
- In evergreens crows are asleep. Towards midnight, crows in one tree wake in a great flurry. The unrest spreads, and soon all the birds are cawing. How different from daytime!

Elegant Things
- A white coat worn over a violet waistcoat.
- Duck eggs.
- Shaved ice mixed with liana syrup and put in a new silver bowl.
- A string of beads made of rock crystal.
- Wisteria blossoms. Plum blossoms covered with snow.
- A pretty child eating strawberries.

Unsuitable Things
- A woman with ugly hair wearing a robe of white damask.
- Hollyhocks worn in frizzled hair.
- Ugly handwriting on red paper.
- A plain wagon on a moonlit night.
- An elderly man who has overslept, who wakes up with a start.
- An old woman who eats a plum and, finding it sour, puckers her toothless mouth.
- A handsome man with an ugly wife.
Origami Love Knot

Love inspired ancient Korean poets to write a sijo. To write of love with metaphors, they looked outside at nature, instead of looking inward at thoughts or feelings.

1. Have fun writing about love without using the L-word! "I love you" in English is three words, but in just 3 lines, Korean poets could fit their whole world! Write your valentine message on the piece of paper you’re going to fold.

To fold a Love Knot, write on a strip of paper.

For a secret message, write on the side that will be face-up when you start to fold.

For a visible message, write on the side that will be face-down when you start to fold.

2. Fold the paper in half

3. Fold the strip of paper in half crosswise. Unfold. This shows where the middle of the paper is.

4. Fold the right side of the paper down. Position the fold so the crease falls across the middle of the paper. Observe movement dot for help.

5. Mountain fold (fold behind) the side of the paper (watch dot).

6. Fold the right side of the paper across so it overlaps with the lower side of the paper.

7. Switch the position of the paper: bring the top section down and bring the lower section up. This locks the model so it doesn’t unravel.
WHAT WE LOVE ABOUT LOVE

VALENTINE

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To fold a Valentine, write on a square of paper.
   A. For a secret message, write on the colored corners of the paper.
   B. For a visible message, write in the center of the colored side of the paper.

1. Valley-fold vertically and horizontally and unfold.

2. Valley-fold corners to center.

3. Valley-fold three corners back out, but not all the way to the edge.

4. Mountain-fold two red corners behind. Mountain-fold entire model down the centerline to make the model stand or valley-fold to make a card with the valentine hidden.

Completed Valentine.
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