

Oh, Tell Me the Truth About Love
Poem by W.H. Auden

Some say love's a little boy,
And some say it's a bird,
Some say it makes the world go around,
Some say that's absurd,
And when I asked the man next-door,
Who looked as if he knew,
His wife got very cross indeed,
And said it wouldn't do.

Does it look like a pair of pyjamas,
Or the ham in a temperance hotel?
Does its odour remind one of llamas,
Or has it a comforting smell?
Is it prickly to touch as a hedge is,
Or soft as eiderdown fluff?
Is it sharp or quite smooth at the edges?
O tell me the truth about love.

Our history book refer to it
In cryptic little notes,
It's quite a common topic on
The Transatlantic boats;
I've found the subject mentioned in
Accounts of suicides,
And even seen it scribbled on
The backs of railway guides.

Does it howl like a hungry Alsatian,
Or boom like a military band?
Could one give a first-rate imitation
On a saw or a Steinway Grand?
Is its singing at parties a riot?
Does it only like Classical stuff?
Will it stop when one wants to be quiet?
O tell me the truth about love.

I looked inside the summer-house;
It wasn't over there;
I tried the Thames at Maidenhead,
And Brighton's bracing air.
I don't know what the blackbird sang,
Or what the tulip said;
But it wasn't in the chicken-run,
Or underneath the bed.

Can it pull extraordinary faces?
Is it usually sick on a swing?
Does it spend all its time at the races,
or fiddling with pieces of string?
Has it views of its own about money?
Does it think Patriotism enough?
Are its stories vulgar but funny?
O tell me the truth about love.

When it comes, will it come without warning
Just as I'm picking my nose?
Will it knock on my door in the morning,
Or tread in the bus on my toes?
Will it come like a change in the weather?
Will its greeting be courteous or rough?
Will it alter my life altogether?
O tell me the truth about love.

Love in the Dictionary
Text from from *Funk & Wagnalls Dictionary*

Love: A strong, complex emotion or feeling of personal attachment, causing one to appreciate, delight in, or crave the presence or possession of the object, and to please and promote the welfare of that object; devoted affection or attachment; specifically, the feeling between husband and wife; brother and sister; or lover and sweetheart; One who is beloved; a sweetheart; animal passion; the personification of the love-passion; Cupid; in some games, as tennis, nothing.

Animal Passion
Poem by Gini Savage

Fierce as a bob cat's spring with start up speeds of sixty miles per hour
I want a lover to sweep me off my feet and slide me into the gutter
Without the niceties of small talk roses or champagne.

I mean business, I want whiskey,
I want to be swallowed whole,
I want tiles to spring off of walls when we enter hotel rooms
Or afternoon apartments
I won't pussyfoot around responsibility
"shoulds" and "oughts" are out for good.

Ah, ah, ah!
And I don't want to be a fat domestic cat
I want to be frantic, yowls and growls to sound like the lion house at feeding time
I don't give a damn who hears, I don't give a damn!
No discreet eaves droppers coughs can stop us in our frenzy.
Let the voyeurs voient and let the great cats (ssss) come.

Canticle II
Adapted from the Chester Miracle Plays

GOD: Abraham, my servant, Abraham,
Take Isaac, thy son by name,
That thou lovest the best of all,
And in sacrifice offer him to me
Upon that hill there besides thee.

Abraham, I will that so it be,
For aught that may befall.

Abraham: My Lord, to Thee is mine intent
Ever to be obedient.
That son that Thou to me hast sent
Offer I will to Thee.
Thy bidding done shall be.

Here Abraham, turning to his son Isaac, saith:

Make thee ready, my dear darling,
For we must do a little thing.
This woode do on thy back it bring,
We may no longer abide.
A sword and fire that I will take,
For sacrifice behoves me to make;
God's bidding will I not forsake,
But ever obedient be.

Here Isaac speaketh to his father, and taketh a bundle of sticks and beareth after his father, and saith:

Isaac: Father, I am all ready
To do your bidding most meekely,
And to bear this wood full bayn am I,
As you commanded me.

Here they both go to the place to do sacrifice:

Abraham: Now, Isaac son, go we our way
To yonder mount if that we may.

Isaac: My dear father, I will essay
To follow you full fain.

*Abraham being minded to slay his son Isaac, lifts up his hands,
and saith the following:*

Abraham: O! My heart will break in three,
To hear thy words I have pitye;
As Thou wilt, Lord, so must it be,
To Thee I will be bayn.
Lay down thy faggot, my own son dear.

Isaac: All ready father, lo, it is here.
But why make you such heavy cheer?
Are you anything adread?

Abraham: Ah! Dear God! That me is woe!

Isaac: Father, if it be your will,
Where is the beast that we shall kill?

Abraham: Thereof, son, is none upon this hill.

Isaac: Father, I am full sore affeared
To see you bear that drawne sword.

Abraham: Isaac, son, peace, I pray thee,
Thou breakest my heart in three.

Isaac: I pray you, father, layn nothing from me,
But tell me what you think.

Abraham: Ah! Isaac, Isaac, I must thee kill!

Isaac: Alas! Father, is that your will,
Your owne child for to spill
Upon this hilles brink?
If I have trespassed in any degree
With a yard you may beat me;
Put up your sword, if your will be,
For I am but a child.
Would God my mother were here with me!
She would kneel down upon her knee,
Praying you, father, if it may be,
For to save my life.

Abraham: O Isaac, son, to thee I say
God hath commanded me today
Sacrifice, this is no nay,
To make of thy bodye.

Isaac: Is it God's will I shall be slain?

Abraham: Yea, son, it is not for to layn.

Here Isaac asketh his father's blessing on his knees, and saith:

Isaac: Father, seeing you muste needs do so,
Let it pass lightly and over go;
Kneeling on my knees two,
Your blessing on me spread.

Abraham: My blessing, dear son, give I thee
And thy mother's with heart free.

The blessing of the Trinity,
My dear Son, on thee light.

*Here Isaac riseth and cometh to his father, and he taketh him,
and bindeth and layeth him upon the altar to sacrifice him, and saith:*

Abraham: Come hither, my child thou art so sweet,
Thou must be bound both hands and feet.

Isaac: Father, do with me as you will,
I must obey, and that is skill,
Godes commandment to fulfil,
For needs so it must be.

Abraham: Isaac, Isaac, blessed must thou be.

Isaac: Father, greet well my brethren ying,
And pray my mother of her blessing,
I come no more under her wing,
Farewell for ever and aye.

Abraham: Farewell, my sweetè son of grace!

*Here Abraham doth kiss his son Isaac, and binds a kerchief
about his head.*

Isaac: I pray you, father, turn down my face,
For I am sore adread.

Abraham: Lord, full loth were I him to kill!

Isaac: Ah, mercy, father, why tarry you so?

Abraham: Jesu! On me have pity,
That I have most in mind.

Isaac: Now, father, I see that I shall die:
Almighty God in majesty!
My soul I offer unto Thee!

Abraham: To do this deed I am sorrye.

*here let Abraham make a sign as tho' he would cut off his son
Isaac's head with his sword; then...*

GOD: Abraham, my servant dear,
Lay not thy sword in no manner
On Isaac, thy dear darling.
For thou darest me, well wot I,
That of thy son has no mercy,
To fulfil my bidding.

Abraham: Ah, Lord of heaven and King of bliss,
Thy bidding shall be done, i-wiss!
A hornèd wether here I see,
Among the briars tied is he,
To Thee offered shall he be
Anon right in this place.

Then let Abraham take the lamb and kill him.

Abraham: Sacrifice here sent me is,
And all, Lord, through Thy grace.

envoi: Such obedience grant us, O Lord!
Ever to Thy most holy word.
That in the same we may accord
As this Abraham was bayn;
And then altogether shall we
That worthy King in heaven see,
And dwell with Him in great glorye
For ever and ever. Amen.