

## Love (Expanded)

*Be brave when the journey is rough  
It's not easy when you're in love  
Don't be ashamed when the going gets tough  
It's not easy don't give up  
If you want it to get stronger  
You'd better not let go  
You gotta hold on longer  
In heaven's name why are you walking away  
Hang on to your love*

Sade, Hang on to Your Love

Imagine love songs weren't addressed to just one "you". One can get a bit obsessed when writing, or when falling in love in general. There is just that gleaming, bright, wonderful other. Not so for me. I've been in love, for the majority of my life, with multiple people at the same time. It hasn't always been a fun fair. In a world where people already face many difficulties finding a healthy relationship

with a single person, try explaining to them that you're not "making it harder on yourself" by loving in multiples. Nobody taught me that it's possible to fall in love with different people at the same time, that it could make me happy to acknowledge those feelings and, perhaps, act on them, too. While trying to find out more about this way of loving I mainly encountered writings by white men detailing accounts of threesomes where the third party (almost always a woman) sticks around with the couple after living out a sexual fantasy. Legitimate stuff to write about, of course, but the limited scope of written experience that I faced almost made me want to give up my research and experimentation. To be frank, it made me want to give up on love in general. When one of my professors told me, in confidence, that she had "experimented with poly-amory" and had "obviously given up on it because it was simply impossible," I cried.

### *Five Short Songs Celebrating Our Erotic Autonomy*

#### 1 *Learning to Swim Means Learning to Hold Your Breath*

Nights in which we dance with the prospect of fucking. A very specific kind of dance. It is a drowning and flowing, drifting and letting go. The space is underwater dark. My pockets, filled with change and candy, weigh me down. Music like deep sea drones, the temptings of a siren while you stand guard on the pier. Baby, I need to dive.

#### 2 *Go Easy on the Sweets*

She was nothing close to a siren. When I asked her outside for a smoke and you gave us space, she kissed someone else in a way that spelled m-o-n-o-g-a-m-y. I resurfaced empty handed, caught my breath and continued swimming against the tide.

#### 3 *Tongue Tide*

I remember first starting this research on love nine years ago. I am still without conclusions.

#### 4 *Unwavering Deviance*

Let's assume love. Potentially the most beautiful, the most interesting. Let's not assume beauty is never painful. Let's not assume pain is something to avoid at all costs. Let's not assume we're romantic, heteronormative, monogamous, right on the first attempt, two middle class people with steady incomes, typically-abled bodies and neuronormative minds. Let's once not assume two. Let's not assume that when we speak of more than two, we speak a language of betrayal, deceit, secrecy, distrust, insecurity, unfulfilled desire, getting kicks elsewhere, etcetera...

#### 5 *Collectively Quitting Assumptions*

How do you feel about your friend(s), your (chosen) family, your mentor(s), a certain stranger, humanity, yourself, nature, your work or preferred leisure activity/ies, food maybe, music...? Tell me there isn't one thing you can come up with that you love besides your eventual romantic partner. Tell me love isn't a spectrum and a multitude of: different feelings of affection, goodwill, intimacy, friendliness, loyalty, warmth, care. Tell me you don't maintain many different loving relationships.

Dear,

“All or nothing” is something I don’t understand. There is always something.

Dear,

Last night I was looking for a photo upon my mother’s request, a photo I shot of an empty couch right after an ex and I had sat there, talking and crying. For exhibitions, I pair it with a photo I took of the moon through a telescope. I try to cure myself of my obsessions by zooming in and out. Going through my archive to find the negative, I cried fat tears on the plastic sleeves that cover millions of photos of the girls I loved, long before I dared to name it. And everybody knew, and nobody knew, and it was good that way.

Dear,

My favourite pastime is talking to crushes about other crushes turning into the most wonderful friendships and loves while falling in love and listening to the sound of us falling in love crushing (on) each other crushing on strangers because they are strangers starting a relationship with someone you know until you’re leaving relationships because surprises about the other keep popping up or staying in a relationship for exactly the same reason.

Dear,

The most used and questioned word in my diary is *desire*. My desire for people – some of concrete, some of flesh – is what gets me dressed in the morning, what keeps feeding me (knowledge and actual food), what makes me take care of this body of mine. I love myself involved with others. Look: I, in my default loneliness, lay eyes on you and see what could possibly ensue when we meet. I am alive. The potential beauty of it all. In such a moment my loneliness isn’t loneliness, but one human being looking at another with curiosity, admiration, clemency.

Dear,

The idea of you kissing someone other than me delights me. When you feel desire (to stay alive), I too. In moments we make love, I feel the ones who were with you before, drifting through the energies and images. They blend and fuse, fluids and dreams. All who you have loved and been loved by. I sit on your laps, wrap my legs and all of me around you, facing you, straight into the eyes. Circluding your bodies and the archives of sensation, hope, feeling. I love what you harbour.

Dear,

Do I know jealousy? I’m not sure, but I met insecurity and abandonment.

Dear,

You touch my hand that writes a letter. She opens the letter with the hands that once stroked my ex’s cat. The cat belonged to a mutual friend who moved countries with her lover. Now they live in the city you escaped to, heartbroken, years ago. In that same city lives someone I thought I was crushing on, but who was impossible to meet. You are never alone.

Dear,

I got a new job in my desire for you; it needs a better house. I want a castle for the desires, both yours and mine, and the ones that haven’t been born yet. The world we live in is an appendage of our castle. Love expanded. I am not without limits, but I avoid drawing lines, and when we break up I am not done loving you.

Dear,

In my dream you were nine and I was six. We were in the woods together, soil covered with blue bells. We ran so hard and fast I wasn’t sure if we were two or a dozen. More. You were the best at hide and seek, always hiding in the most surprising places. But I find you.