

Love and Relationships quotes, in plain words

Every big quote from the fifteen poems. Which poem, which poet, and what it means. Start with the ones marked with a dot.

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Learn these twenty first

Short. Easy to remember. Between them they cover every theme and every main character.

- **In silence and tears**

Byron · [When We Two Parted](#) · [romantic love](#) · [loss](#)

How they split up. The poem starts and ends on these words. Nothing was said. Everything was felt.

- **Nothing in the world is single**

Shelley · [Love's Philosophy](#) · [romantic love](#)

Everything in nature comes in pairs, he says. So why not us. It is a chat-up line in verse.

- **I am quite sure she felt no pain**

Browning · [Porphyria's Lover](#) · [control](#) · [romantic love](#)

He has just strangled her with her own hair. He is quite sure it did not hurt. He is not someone to be quite sure about anything.

- **I think of thee!**

Barrett Browning · [Sonnet 29: I think of thee!](#) · [romantic love](#) · [distance](#)

The first words. She cannot stop thinking about him. The thoughts grow like vines round a tree.

- **The smile on your mouth was the dearest thing Alive enough to have strength to die**

Hardy · [Neutral Tones](#) · [loss](#)

Her smile was already dead. Just alive enough to finish dying.

- **Too young maybe—but more's to do At harvest-time than bide and woo**

Mew · [The Farmer's Bride](#) · [control](#) · [romantic love](#)

The farmer married a girl too young and had no time to be kind. He says so himself.

- **Like a satellite Wrenched from its orbit, go drifting away**

Day-Lewis · [Walking Away](#) · [parents and children](#) · [growing up](#) · [loss](#)

His son walks off after a football match. Like a satellite torn loose. A father watching.

- **Anchor. Kite.**

Armitage · [Mother, any distance](#) · [parents and children](#) · [growing up](#)

Two words. She holds him down, he wants to fly. A tape measure between them.

● I wanted the bold girl winking in Portobello

Duffy · [Before You Were Mine](#) · [parents and children](#) · [memory](#)

Duffy looks at a photo of her mother before she was born. She wanted that girl, the fun one.

● Half - fledged thing

Day - Lewis · [Walking Away](#) · [parents and children](#) · [growing up](#)

A bird not ready to fly. The son, seen from behind.

● The brown of her—her eyes, her hair, her hair!

Mew · [The Farmer's Bride](#) · [control](#) · [romantic love](#)

The last line. He wants her and cannot have her. The words break down.

● the waterlogged earth gulping for breath at our feet

Sheers · [Winter Swans](#) · [romantic love](#) · [distance](#)

A couple walk by a lake after a fight. Even the ground is struggling to breathe.

● Is your life more real because you dig and sow?

Dooley · [Letters from Yorkshire](#) · [distance](#)

He digs in the garden. She sits at a screen. She asks which of them is really living.

● the slow pulse of his good heart

Waterhouse · [Climbing My Grandfather](#) · [parents and children](#)

The last line. He can feel the heartbeat under him.

Every quote, in order

All 40, in the order they happen.

Romantic love 21 quotes

Distance, memory and place 2 quotes

Parents and children 17 quotes

Romantic love

● In silence and tears

Byron · [When We Two Parted](#) · [romantic love](#) · [loss](#)

How they split up. The poem starts and ends on these words. Nothing was said. Everything was felt.

Half broken - hearted

Byron · [When We Two Parted](#) · [romantic love](#) · [loss](#)

Only half. He is angry as well as sad. She got over it. He did not.

They name thee before me, A knell to mine ear

Byron · [When We Two Parted](#) · [loss](#) · [romantic love](#)

Hearing her name is like a funeral bell.

● Nothing in the world is single

Shelley · [Love's Philosophy](#) · [romantic love](#)

Everything in nature comes in pairs, he says. So why not us. It is a chat-up line in verse.

What is all this sweet work worth If thou kiss not me?

Shelley · [Love's Philosophy](#) · [romantic love](#)

The last line. The sun kisses the earth, the waves kiss each other. Now kiss me.

● I am quite sure she felt no pain

Browning · [Porphyria's Lover](#) · [control](#) · [romantic love](#)

He has just strangled her with her own hair. He is quite sure it did not hurt. He is not someone to be quite sure about anything.

That moment she was mine, mine, fair, Perfectly pure and good

Browning · [Porphyria's Lover](#) · [control](#)

He kills her at the moment she is his, so she will stay his. Mine, mine.

And yet God has not said a word!

Browning · [Porphyria's Lover](#) · [control](#)

The last line. He has sat all night with her body. Nothing has happened to him. He takes that as approval.

● I think of thee!

Barrett Browning · [Sonnet 29: I think of thee!](#) · [romantic love](#) · [distance](#)

The first words. She cannot stop thinking about him. The thoughts grow like vines round a tree.

my thoughts do twine and bud About thee, as wild vines, about a tree

Barrett Browning · [Sonnet 29: I think of thee!](#) · [romantic love](#) · [distance](#)

Her thoughts are wild vines climbing him. Too many. They hide the tree.

I do not think of thee—I am too near thee.

Barrett Browning · [Sonnet 29: I think of thee!](#) · [romantic love](#)

The last line. When he is here she does not need to think of him. He is too close to think about.

We stood by a pond that winter day

Hardy · [Neutral Tones](#) · [loss](#) · [romantic love](#)

The first line. A cold pond, a grey day. The end of something.

● **The smile on your mouth was the dearest thing Alive enough to have strength to die**

Hardy · [Neutral Tones](#) · [loss](#)

Her smile was already dead. Just alive enough to finish dying.

And a pond edged with grayish leaves

Hardy · [Neutral Tones](#) · [loss](#)

The last line. Years later, every lost love brings back that pond.

● **Too young maybe—but more's to do At harvest-time than bide and woo**

Mew · [The Farmer's Bride](#) · [control](#) · [romantic love](#)

The farmer married a girl too young and had no time to be kind. He says so himself.

We chased her, flying like a hare

Mew · [The Farmer's Bride](#) · [control](#)

She ran away. They hunted her like an animal and locked her up.

- **The brown of her—her eyes, her hair, her hair!**

Mew · [The Farmer's Bride](#) · [control](#) · [romantic love](#)

The last line. He wants her and cannot have her. The words break down.

- **the waterlogged earth gulping for breath at our feet**

Sheers · [Winter Swans](#) · [romantic love](#) · [distance](#)

A couple walk by a lake after a fight. Even the ground is struggling to breathe.

like a pair of wings settling after flight

Sheers · [Winter Swans](#) · [romantic love](#)

The last image. Their hands find each other. Like swans' wings folding.

from di stool each night she say

Nagra · [Singh Song!](#) · [romantic love](#) · [parents and children](#)

Every night his new wife sits on the stool and asks how much the moon costs. The poem is happy, and funny about it.

vee cum down whispering stairs

Nagra · [Singh Song!](#) · [romantic love](#)

They sit together and look at the moon over the shop. Love in a corner shop after hours.

Distance, memory and place

- **Is your life more real because you dig and sow?**

Dooley · [Letters from Yorkshire](#) · [distance](#)

He digs in the garden. She sits at a screen. She asks which of them is really living.

our souls tap out messages across the icy miles

Dooley · [Letters from Yorkshire](#) · [distance](#) · [romantic love](#)

Two people far apart, sending small messages. Not love. Not not love.

Parents and children

- **Like a satellite Wrenched from its orbit, go drifting away**

Day-Lewis · [Walking Away](#) · [parents and children](#) · [growing up](#) · [loss](#)

His son walks off after a football match. Like a satellite torn loose. A father watching.

- **Half-fledged thing**

Day-Lewis · [Walking Away](#) · [parents and children](#) · [growing up](#)

A bird not ready to fly. The son, seen from behind.

love is proved in the letting go

Day-Lewis · [Walking Away](#) · [parents and children](#) · [growing up](#)

The last line. Real love is letting them leave.

They are waiting for me somewhere beyond Eden Rock

Causley · [Eden Rock](#) · [parents and children](#) · [memory](#) · [loss](#)

His dead parents at a picnic, young again. He is old. They wait across a stream.

I had not thought that it would be like this

Causley · [Eden Rock](#) · [loss](#) · [memory](#)

The last line, on its own. Death, or memory, is not what he expected.

My father worked with a horse - plough

Heaney · [Follower](#) · [parents and children](#) · [growing up](#)

The first line. The boy watches his father plough. He wants to be him.

I stumbled in his hob - nailed wake

Heaney · [Follower](#) · [parents and children](#) · [growing up](#)

The boy trips along behind his father's big boots.

But today It is my father who keeps stumbling Behind me, and will not go away

Heaney · [Follower](#) · [parents and children](#) · [growing up](#) · [loss](#)

Now the father is old and the son cannot shake him off. The roles have swapped.

● Anchor. Kite.

Armitage · [Mother, any distance](#) · [parents and children](#) · [growing up](#)

Two words. She holds him down, he wants to fly. A tape measure between them.

the last one-hundredth of an inch

Armitage · [Mother, any distance](#) · [parents and children](#) · [growing up](#)

They measure a room together. The tape runs out. He is about to leave.

to fall or fly

Armitage · [Mother, any distance](#) · [parents and children](#) · [growing up](#)

The last words. He reaches for the sky and does not know which it will be.

● I wanted the bold girl winking in Portobello

Duffy · [Before You Were Mine](#) · [parents and children](#) · [memory](#)

Duffy looks at a photo of her mother before she was born. She wanted that girl, the fun one.

The decade ahead of my loud, possessive yell was the best one, eh?

Duffy · [Before You Were Mine](#) · [parents and children](#) · [memory](#)

The ten years before the baby arrived were the mother's best. Duffy knows it. She was the yell.

stamping stars from the wrong pavement

Duffy · [Before You Were Mine](#) · [parents and children](#) · [memory](#)

Her mother dancing, sparks from her heels, in the wrong place for a good girl.

I decide to do it free, without a rope or net

Waterhouse · [Climbing My Grandfather](#) · [parents and children](#) · [growing up](#)

A child climbs his grandfather like a mountain, from the shoes up.

gasping for breath I can only lie watching clouds and birds circle

Waterhouse · [Climbing My Grandfather](#) · [parents and children](#)

At the top, on the old man's head, he lies down and looks at the sky.

- the slow pulse of his good heart

Waterhouse · [Climbing My Grandfather](#) · [parents and children](#)

The last line. He can feel the heartbeat under him.
