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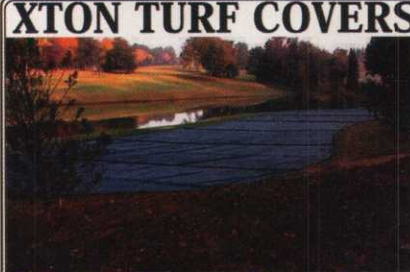
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love poems

Iwrote a poem in the fourth grade called “Blue.” The ditty chronicled, ostensibly, my adoration of the best of all possible shades. However, the lines, “The sky is blue, colors too/Blue is saying I love you,” masked feelings of loneliness, confusion and excitement for a bonny young lass named Marla, who shockingly, had little interest in a dirty-knee-jeans kick-ball phenom.

In the intervening years, my taste for poetry became more sophisticated, and I’ve learned enough about waltzing with words to know that I ain’t no poet. So, when it’s time to adulate my dearest, I turn to the masters, whose poems turn knees woozy, soften hearts and cause the types of swoons that will take your sorry butt out of the dog-house and into the catbird seat.

However, before you search for the right words to adorn a card, we need to get a few things straight.

1♥ Even the most inspiring American Greeting might not be a love poem, per se.

2♥ Almost all poems can be broken down into two themes — love (or sex) and death. Avoid the latter.

3♥ Afraid of poems? Can’t figure out what one means? Relax, read the thing aloud a few times, and pay attention to what you feel. Trust your instincts.

ROMANTIC RANTS DESIGNED TO
WOO YOUR SWEETIE

BY MARK LUCE

4♥ In a letter to his beloved Fanny Brawne, romantic poet extraordinaire John Keats captures the sentiment you should be striving for — making the other seem special, unique and wanted. Keats penned, “I never felt my Mind repose upon anything with complete and undistracted enjoyment — upon no person but you. When you are in the room my thoughts never fly out of window: you always concentrate my whole senses.”

Now you need to concentrate on finding that right poem. Folks like Keats, William Shakespeare, Rumi, W.H. Auden, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Pablo Neruda will start you down the right path. A purchase of a collection such as “Love Poems” (Everyman’s Library Pocket Poets) will provide you with an amazing selection. In addition, the \$2 “Great Love Poems” (Dover Thrift Edition) offers a nice array of prose as well.

For more poems by one author, try Neruda’s “Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair.” Neruda can be a tad naughty, but he’s phenomenal.

Or try Coleman Barks’ translation of ancient 13th century Persian poet and theologian Rumi, “The Soul of Rumi,” which will enrapture even the most cynical. It was Rumi who wrote:

*“I want to be where
your bare foot walks,
because maybe before you step,
you’ll look at the ground.
I want that blessing.”*

For something a bit racier, you could do worse than John Donne’s “To His Mistress Going to Bed.”

It doesn’t take a literature professor to figure out that Donne’s about to do well, and all because of a little poetry.

Mark Luce lives in Kansas City, Mo., where he still can’t write poetry, but still likes the color blue.



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