**Romantic Love**

**Story writers say that love is concerned only with young people, and the excitement and glamour of romance end at the altar. How blind they are. The best romance is inside marriage; the finest love stories come after the wedding, not before. *(Irving Stone)***

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**When you’re in love, your eyes light up, your face lights up – and apparently, so do four tiny bits of your brain. “It is the common denominator of romantic love,” says Andreas Bartels, a research fellow at University College London. Bartels used functional MRI to examine eleven women and six men who said they were truly in love – statements backed up by psychological tests. When the subjects were shown photographs of their sweethearts, different areas of the brain scan lit up – indicating higher blood flow – than when they were shown pictures of friends. These “love spots” were near, but not the same as, sections that become active when someone is feeling simple lust. Looking at pictures of their dearest also reduced activity in three larger areas of the brain known to be active when people are upset or depressed. (*Janet McConnaughey in Reader’s Digest)***

**The craving for romantic love is a distinct biological urge, separate from sexual arousal, says a new study. Researchers scanned the brains of college students who described themselves as deeply infatuated, and found that the neural pathways that were lighting up were similar to those that drive thirst, hunger, and drug addiction. The most passionately “in love” had intense levels of activity in their caudate nucleus, a region of the brain activated by anticipation of a reward. Anthropologist Helen Fisher tells The New York Times that people freshly in love become lost in their cravings, with each exhilarating encounter with their love object functioning like a bit of cocaine to an addict. “When you’re in the throes,” Fisher said, “it’s overwhelming. You’re out of control, you’re irrational. This drive for romantic love can be stronger than the will to live.” When love is suddenly withdrawn by a breakup, cravings actually intensify for a time – explaining why lovers go through an agonizing period of withdrawal similar to going “cold turkey” from drugs. *(The Week magazine, June 17, 2005)***

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**When a romantic man and woman break up they're more likely to remain friends if it's the woman who suggests the separation. So say matrimonial researchers. *(L. M. Boyd)***

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**In a great romance, each person basically plays a part the other really likes. *(Elizabeth Ashley, actress)***

**The greatest romance one can find is to fall in love with God. The greatest journey one could embark on is to seek him. The greatest achievement one can obtain is to find him. *(St. Augustine)***

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**Smokey Robinson has written many classic love songs, including My Girl and I Second That Emotion. But love, says the 67-yar-old pop-soul legend, is something he’s only come to understand late in life. “I had a few girlfriends,” he tells Laura Barton in the London Guardian, “and I thought I loved them. But a lot of the time when you think you’re in love, you’re not. I’m married to a woman now that I love more than I’ve ever loved anybody.” That romance, with his second wife, Frances, took a long time to ripen. “She’s my friend, and I’ve known her for 25 years. We were never romantic – I’d never touched her like that until six years ago. After I got divorced from my first wife, I said I would never get married again. Just be a bachelor the rest of my life and have me some fun! That’s what I had planned. And now I’m married to this woman that I’ve known all these years, not thinking about her romantically.” He blushes just thinking about it. “So I told you about love: You never know.” *(The Week magazine, July 20, 2007)***

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