

The Library of Love

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for the Tubercled-Blossom Pearly Mussel Memorial Library of Hope

The Library is all love—and therefore excessive and messy. The Library of Love, though. The Library of Love has a joy furnace. It is always warm there. It is also salty because there are many tears of feeling and also marine life in the Library of Love. Also, there is a flower border of dandelions and a grove of ginkgo trees. *The spores blow in and spread yellow.* Lichens and fungi grow upon the biggest oldest books of Love. Also mussels on the parts of spines submerged. In the Library of Love no one ever opens a book until that book has released its clench (what is the muscle which mussels use to keep their shells closed? That one.) The books In the Library of Love open readily, but readers must not grow impatient. *They find spines to grab onto like pilings.* Yes! The Library of Love catalogs by sweetness, tenderness, steadfastness, yearnings, lost and loved and longed for and found. The Library of Love has shelves milled from imaginative leaps...milled from tenacity with lashings from the mind's eye. I mean lashes. The Librarians of Love will tell you they have no answers but they are good at looking. They will tell you that looking is a precursor to gazing and thence to contemplation and then to arrival at the very first step: which is curiosity. The Librarians of Love have extremely light touches. They remain always outside of the threshold of response. What is the

threshold of response? All want to love, to be loved. Not all who are loved want to be. One must love oceanically—present and oxygenated but diffuse and far away, too. The Library of Love is woven with mesh. They are like spider webs in that there is great tensile strength. All repairs and relacings are visible and therefore beautiful. The Librarians are always mending and making both. How better to capture clouds than with filament. Any reader there knows all about gossamer and how we must fling it or never be caught by it in turn. There are convection currents and eddies, there are sluices and flows. Dappling is key. Because the patterns of shade through leaves, through webs explain what the light between them is. These are basic tenets of research. Oblique angles of discovery. It is not all whispers and tiptoeing in the Library of Love. There are errant-knights (hardly ever male) atilting, in all boldness and ardor. They are not defined by size or strength but by tenacity and improvisation and heartfeltness. Sometimes workers comp has to get involved, but the errant-knights are not performative. They are also however not causative nor correlative. The Library of Love is writing itself as it lives and breathes.

It has an exoskeleton. It *is* an exoskeleton which is to say it is all windows and free passage and alveoli. Coral reefs and beds of mussels—their memories are what make the exoskeleton. A book aspires to be a bivalve. A bivalve holds within, takes from without, releases and filters. The bivalve and the book are witnesses and records of their own singularity. On particularly ardorful days, the exoskeleton appears to open all over, a complex surface of little stoma embedded within, a chorus of pores opening and lightly closing. Is this music? How can it not be?

The vex of tension, the sounding board, the tensile gossamers that float and also span, the Library of Love is made of flying buttresses. It is a roost of them, in fact. There are nothing but mixed metaphors in the Library of Love. It is a kind of exile to the reshelving cart otherwise. Where the bivalve book cannot help but rectify its merely temporary isolation by opening up; porousness being the base condition of love, mixing, *and* metaphor.

The Library of Love is thick with plankton, you see.

There is so much to be said about the moon and the library of love! Moon shadows, moon phases, but also always the implication, the embodiment of pull and draw (and therefore of devotion). Also bioluminescence, riffing like harp strings if they were not strings at all only the inference of moving through or stroking across. It is, by definition, an entity with a memory both solar and lunar. To hold light means not merely to cast shadows, but to memorize it, synthesize it, for release upon touch.

The Library of Love is a rigorous place. Upon entering, one is on one's toes, not least because the tidal flow affects us all differently according to height and whether we have gills or feathers. Fur or, what is most pitied by its denizens, naked skin. The head Librarian is an octopus. Of course she is! She can taste with her skin and speak with it too! Colors pass through her like western sunsets and windblown clouds. This makes her transparent but also infinitely complicated (the two go together). She is therefore often the most brilliant as well as the most beautiful (as these go together, too). She is always the most learned as she embodies and expresses her wide experience; more than witness or interpreter, she becomes oracle, hers therefore the greater

metabolism, the fullest understanding. She is not sentimental (though she is scrupulous about the care and filing between vellum of all sentiments). Therefore the Library of Love is not a cloying place. Every river delta (or creek) is a branching and depositing of sediments. Sediments are the tree canopy. And sentiments its leaves. Speaking of leaves: there is much interleaving as well as leave-taking inherent to the Library of Love's mission. There is a clear understanding that turning over of leaves is one way to disturb insects and fungal networks. If leaves must be turned, turn them back then. If leaves must be taken, then there will be such joy upon their return. The Library of Love does not assess fines.

The Library of Love is not an ossuary or a reliquary although it takes great care of relics and faint traces (the old saying: Still waters run deep!). What would have been the Periodicals reading room in libraries of yore is a gathering of foundational texts (which as you know are kin to textures who, in turn, are known for their sensuous understanding of the tactile arts) in sympathies and empathies. There is a librarian at your shoulder now: she is showing you the roots (have I mentioned that there are roots and tendrils everywhere? If they point downward, their nominal declension is "root"; if they point upward they are known as canopies. Branches are substructures of canopies. And leaves, as we all know interweave throughout) the roots to which she gently directs your attention are as follows: *text* derives from woven. *Textus* is tissue (collagen interweaves, just as vellum and tissue interleaves texts printed on tree tissues); it is also literary style. Words are woven. Literary style is rhythms of warp and weft. It's what makes them so impossible as texts. No one here thinks text weaving is for the faint hearted. Text can also mean Gospel, which is only capitalized in

the Library of Love because the exoskeleton's mutely eloquent chorus of stomas deserves nothing less.

The Library of Love is extremely partial to etymologies. Because all who love fear forgetting, must understand from where they came, and because towards the making of words, which is the interweaving, which is text, which is the mesh, there is colliding and mixing towards the urgent need for expression (of love).

The Library of Love recognizes urgent needs for expression (of love) and recommends further research, which is to say abiding in love and memory, which is what supports the future and its continuous unfurling, which some prefer to call unraveling. The future unravels. In living and loving, we reweave against the unraveling. The knights-errant are extremely committed to coping with, through recognition and challenge (which is tilting at, never wasting), the future.

Constancy is a fuel, argue some of them. It is the method, say others, and still others insist the method is a meditation. Constancy does not seek outcome or benefit. In the Library of Love, semantics are baked into the lemon squares at teatime and consumed with much affection and not at all like the body of christ. No no.

The Library of Love recognizes that not all volumes come in pairs. And that some must migrate and recombine. No one is dogmatic about the shelving systems because everyone knows if you think you know exactly where love is to be found, you will not find it; this is not an argument for a more rigorous system because if all organization is strictly followed, you may find love, but it will be archival love. It will be very dusty, and almost certainly long past requiring oxygen. There is to be no shared breath with such volumes. These varieties of long

shelved love retain value, certainly, as the Library of Love is decidedly unabridged and comprehensive and lost memories deserve finding, too. To discover answers to yearning is why diligent research means committing to serendipity. Direct gazes, as is most certainty, are discouraged as being prematurely appropriative. Patrons are therefore constantly stumbling into exactly what they need when they are most disorganized, most confused, excessively dilatory, but not lazy because of their continually thrumming curiosity and alive senses (cilia and antennae, pseudopods, too).

Of particular currency in the Library are portmanteaus: both as the tote bags carried by all library-goers but more importantly as the textual embodiment of like and unlike, or known and unknown if you prefer, of two words combining to make a new word. Everyone is always very excited about new words because it is very clear to all patrons that Constancy does not denote Fixity. You must remain fluid within a library that is so very much water. It is only natural to feel asea or adrift at times; sometimes one has sensations of drowning, but the Library does not want your body, being more conversant with souls and their longings, and will burp you upwards to the canopy if you are not a gills-having patron.

The best part of the Library of Love is that it is not indoors, but it is a sweet crystal cavern, it is the heart of a tree and a meadow, it is a bower and a blaze, it is quick and ever so slow. No one needs reading glasses. Unless, no, everyone needs reading glasses?

There is no Library of Love without touch (texture texts) because there is no reading without holding. A deep dive (into story) or a quick scanning of an index are two points along a spectrum between embrace

and caress, perhaps. The Library of Love is ecumenical about coupling and tripling, even quadrupling; but also holds that the language of touch is part of reading. It is the grappling with text, the almost abutment to insight, it is the knowing of a body within its heart surrounded by its mind. Much of this occurs, however transitively, in the one-to-one, through membranous, osmotic transfer. In any case, every library has the literalists and the textualists. The extracting (of meaning!) (though sometimes of tentacles and fronds) is not easy but it is nearly always frictionless for being entirely figurative rather than figural. Or maybe it is the other way around. You have never met so many enjoyers of double entendres in one place ever. There is no profit motive and therefore no capitalists. But there are hoppers and fearers, desirers and helpers, and so many more.

The Library of Love sanctions no dogma (but loves dogs). It hones catalysis (and loves cats). It holds that intensity of feeling is just as likely durational, even of great longevity, as it is liable to burn and purge. Even the burners do not fall out of love. They simply carry it forward. What one beloved teaches us (this is a central tenet) does not die; the burn yields new growth. We carry love like wisdom and give it anew, in full naivete. The librarians will frown if you say, "Ah well, the grass is always greener, right?" but they will allow other hoary chestnuts like "where there's hope..." but it must always end in an ellipsis.

There are no pedants or know-it-alls in the Library of Love as how could there be! All are enthusiasts. The librarian is again at your side asking: did you know "enthusiasm" at one point implied possession by a god? You both agree within the Library, I mean, come on, gods, let's not talk about when Zeus discovered Rohypnol, the word we mean is rather delight within, among, without, and abounding. Delight: the

pilot light. The bell buoy. The only parsing and oppositional practices within the Library have to do with supporting the dense coral hedge behind which is somewhat quarantined Yearning to the Point of Pain. Whose pain lover or beloved? It does not matter. This is the Self Help section sometimes also known as Juvenilia (unrelated to age). Pain, see the blazers above, is unavoidable, but it is a sideshow to the primary research and practice. Which is to say Devotion.