

## THE GREATEST GIFT

The meaning of love.

What then is this elusive thing called “love?”

It is a word in whose name crimes are committed, wars have been fought, new worlds conquered, oceans spanned.

But it can be as simple as a baby’s smile, or nothing more than the joy at seeing the first green shoot jutting forth a tender spear in the spring. It is all that is real in a smoldering, sulphurous world. It is a changeling, a wild, untamed thing that knows no rules.

It appears when least expected and declines to leave when asked to go. It refuses to be awed by space or time. It understands the mysteries of the wireless and television and outer space, as it has probed the earth’s greatest secrets.

It has made simple the insoluble riddle of the Universe. It has caused blossoms to appear in Siberian wastelands. The mirage of love has been the quest of the world, but only those who know its secret have really drunk from its well.

Love is a paradox. It is self-sacrifice, and yet it demands. It is patience itself, and then a wild thing at delay. It lives on a dream-filled cloud because of a tender look, and it falls into a melancholia over a cross one.

It can transform ugliness into a thing of beauty, and without it beauty can become a thing of ugliness.

It can tremble like a hummingbird at the touch of a hand, read volumes into a knowing smile. It can remember for a lifetime a shared moment and forget overnight the happenings of yesterday.

Love can make each tulip more scarlet, each bird song sweeter, each cloud a thing of beauty.

It can make the young old and old young. It alone is the magic fountain of youth.

It is all things to all people—the meaning of life, eternal salvation, resurrection itself.

It is God’s ultimate and final gift to man.

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