

Grant and Grace

The scene is an empty space with only a chair or sofa (possibly an accompanying desk or side table; possibly a park bench). GRANT, the would-be poet, enters, carrying a notepad, pencil, and a large book with the title "Love Poems." He sits and begins to work.

GRANT

(no. 1) This will be a great gift.

She ought to be impressed -- especially since I've never done this before.

OK. How do I begin? How do I write a love poem?
How do I choose the right words?

(Thinks)

Maybe I can use something I already know!?

(Thinks)

Hmm

Roses are red, violets are....

No... I don't think so.

Maybe... simply...

(stands)

(a bit melodramatically)

I love you, I love you, I love you.

Well... Nope!

(begins to pace as he thinks)

Hey... what rhymes with love?...

above... dove... glove... of... shove...

Well... not much inspiration there.

I guess I could use some help... something to get the creative juices flowing.

(Starts thumbing through the book.)

(no. 2) Here's something...

"O my Love's like a red, red rose

That's newly sprung in June"(1)

Wait!

That sounds too much like my first idea.

(thumbing through the pages)

Here we go... this sounds like a great way to start.

"How do I love thee?" Let me count the ways." (2)

Yeah. I'll use that.

(GRANT sits to write)

(GRACE appears)

(writing)

How... do... I... love... thee?

(GRANT stops to read what he wrote)

GRACE

How do I love thee?

GRANT

(writing)

Let... me... count... the... ways.

GRACE

Let me count the ways.

GRANT

(thinking, erasing)

Maybe I won't use that last part.

...keep looking.

(thumbing through the book)

GRANT

Here's something else.

"She walks in beauty, like the night" (3)

(pauses, thinks)

GRACE

That sounds pretty, but what does it mean?

GRANT

Maybe I can find something easier to understand!?

(keeps thumbing)

(no. 3) Hey... love song lyrics.

Some classics... really old stuff... from the 1970s.

GRACE

I'm sure those won't be too profound!

GRANT

Some of these are really odd!

(reading some lyrics)

Knock three times on the ceiling if you want me

Twice on the pipe, if the answer is no. (4)

(pauses, reads another one)

If you can't be with the one you love
Honey, love the one you're with. (5)

(pauses)

I wonder what inspired this one? -- Muskrat Love (6)

GRACE

Those aren't about love.

GRANT

I don't think those are really about love.
Those aren't what I had in mind.

GRACE

What did you have in mind, anyway?

GRANT

(thinking)

(no. 4) What did I have in mind?... What did I have in mind?

(thinking)

I don't want something silly... or trivial... or trite
And not pretentious, obscure, or floating on lofty heights.

I want something honest.
I want something real.
I need straight-forward words to reveal my heart.
I need something lasting
I need something true
My thoughts need a way to break through the words.

It's not about the verbiage... or cleverness... or style
It's not about her beauty, her eyes, or even her loving smile
It's not about my longing, or wanting to call her "mine"
It's all about commitment and loving her beyond the bounds of time

I want something honest.
I want something real.
I need straight-forward words to reveal my heart.
I need something lasting
I need something true
My thoughts need a way to break through the words.

I think that's what I had in mind...

GRACE

(to GRANT)

(no. 5) So... let me get this straight.

It's not about the verbiage!?
What kind of poem do you think I'll be... if words aren't important?
How will I ever be beautiful without you writing just the right words?

This is going to be tough.
You better get back to work.

GRANT

I think this is going to be tricky.
...Back to the book.

Maybe I can take a bunch of parts and piece them together into a poem!?

(GRANT thumbs the book)

GRACE

Oh, great! ...put me together like Frankenstein!?

GRANT

Here's an idea from one of those 70s tunes...
"If a picture paints a thousand words..." (7)

(thinks)

That's just the old adage... "A picture is worth a thousand words."
I'll use that somewhere.

(writing)

If... a picture's... worth... a thousand... words...

GRACE

If a picture's worth a thousand words

GRANT

Here's a quote from the great bard, Shakespeare.
"They do not love that do not show their love"

(reading further)

...One from another wise philosopher, Ben Franklin
"Well done is better than well said."

(thinking)

...actions speak louder than words
..."actions" would be "the picture" that's worth a thousand words

GRANT and GRACE

If a picture's worth a thousand words
My actions will paint pictures for you every day

GRACE

Good thought, but it doesn't flow very well.

GRANT

I'll need to work on that a bit.

(back into the book)

(no. 6) Here's a song by.... The Turtles!?

(reads)

"I can see me lovin' nobody but you, for all my life..." (8)

(thinking)

"For all my life..."

GRACE

Didn't you read something in that first poem...?

GRANT

I've seen this somewhere before.

(thumbs through the book)

Here it is.

(reading)

"I love thee with the breath, smiles, tears, of all my life!
—and, if God choose, I shall but love thee better after death." (2)

(thinking and thinking and...)

GRACE

If you don't hurry and finish, I'll be the one dying!

GRANT

All my life... does that mean... all that my life is right now...
or... all the length of it?

(has a revelation)

Maybe it means... both!

(thinking then writing)

All... of my... life... for the... rest... of my life

GRACE

All of my life, for the rest of my life

GRANT

(reads)

"Love is, above all, the gift of oneself."

(thinking then writing)

GRANT and GRACE

My life will be yours through time

GRANT

My life...

(thinking then writing)

GRANT and **GRACE**

It's all that I am and everything I do

GRANT

(an idea comes to him)

Wait!

(GRANT appears conflicted -- thinking & pacing)

GRACE

What is it?

GRANT

If my life is the real gift, do I even need to write a poem?

GRACE

What?

Are you just giving up on me?

GRANT

If she sees that I love her, why do I need to say anything?

GRACE

Words are good!

Poems are really special! I want to be really special!

Don't give up now!

GRANT

(no. 7) If actions speak louder, then why do I need the words?

GRACE

But, writing the poem is also an act of love!

GRANT

Paper and pen can't prove the way that I feel.

GRACE

But words can express what your actions reveal.

GRANT

Loving her is easy

GRACE

Then telling her should be too

GRANT

But words don't come so freely.

So why should I fight with these words

When love is something you do?

GRACE

If loving means doing, then do all you can with this.
Expressions of love are worth any sacrifice

GRANT

I'm just afraid my words will fade with the years.
Will poetry last?

GRACE

You've nothing to fear.

GRANT

Loving her is easy

GRACE

Then telling her should be too

GRANT

But words don't come so freely.
I don't want to fight with these words
I'm just not sure what to do?

(GRANT wads up his notes, exits, leaving GRACE all alone)

GRACE

(to GRANT)

(no. 8) Wait! Don't give up.
What about me? I'm incomplete.
Without you... won't I disappear?

(examines herself)

Well... I'm still here.
I must still be on his mind.

(thinking)

Maybe I can work this out, without him being aware of it!
He was beginning to have some really good ideas.
I'll just put them all together, so they make sense.
If I'm going to be beautiful, I guess it's up to me.

(she picks up GRANT's notes, straightens them, looks at them, responds)

I'm not in very good shape.

(thinking / referring to GRANT's notes)

(no. 9) Looking for answers is how we began,
So a question should be the first verse.
"How do I love you?" and "How do I choose the words?"
Are two that would come at the first.
The question of words and poetic truth
Should be part of the opening lines.
To document love and how that will last,
Will conclude our beginning design.

"If a picture's worth a thousand words,"
What a great way to start the refrain!
Actions will speak and paint a portrait of love
Trust and commitment are terms that will help us explain

(not referring to the notes / as if singing to GRANT)

Years will pass and poems will go
And words will lose their rhyme
But you'll know my heart and see my love
For my life will be yours through time

(referring back at the notes)

Proof that I love you is not found in words
It's all that I am and do
How do I love you?
With all of my life, for the rest of my life.

If a picture paints a thousand words
My life will paint portraits each day.
How do I love?
By giving all that I am.
Commitment and trust will shout "I love you."

(GRANT enters, hurrying to his notes)

GRANT

(no. 10) I have it. I figured it out.
It all just came to me!

GRACE

Excuse me!?
I figured it out! I came to you!

(GRANT sits down, looking at his notes, pausing)

GRANT

I thought I wadded these up!?

(shrugs it off and moves on)

It all seems to make sense, somehow.

GRACE

I know how! I'm your "somehow!"

(GRANT begins to write, mumbling)

GRANT

...Start with questions.

(writing)

GRACE

(looking over his shoulder)

Good... That's it.

No... not that.

(GRANT scratches something out)

GRANT

...Pictures... ...portraits... ...actions...

GRACE

Yes. Right.

(GRANT pauses)

GRACE

Don't forget about....

(GRANT begins to write again)

GRANT & GRACE

...commitment... (yes) ...trust... (trust)

...years have passed...

...know my heart...

...all of my life...

(GRANT pauses)

GRACE

...I love you...

GRANT

(writes again)

...through time...

(looking at his writing)

I think that's it!

It's done! What a great gift!

GRACE

Yes! I'm beautiful! What a great gift!

GRANT

(stands, begins to read from his notes)

GRACE

(no. 11) How do I love you?

GRANT

How do I choose the words?

GRACE

Can pen and ink ever document my love?

GRANT

Can poetry hold true through the years?

GRACE

If a picture's worth a thousand words

GRANT and GRACE

My life will paint portraits each day
If actions speak louder than poetic lines
Commitment and trust will shout "I love you."
For when years have passed and poems have gone
And words have lost their rhyme
You'll know my heart and see my love
For my life had been yours through time.

Proof that I love you
Is not in the words I choose
It's all that I am and everything I do

GRANT

It's all of my life for the rest of my life.

GRACE

If a picture's worth a thousand words

GRANT and GRACE

My life will paint portraits each day.
If actions speak louder than poetic lines
Commitment and trust will shout, "I love you."
For when years have passed and poems have gone
And words have lost their rhyme
You'll know my heart and see my love
For my life had been yours through time.

(GRANT takes one more look at his page of poetry. He gathers his things, leaving the book of poetry behind, and exits, with GRACE by his side.)

T H E E N D

References

- (1) "A Red, Red Rose" by Robert Burns
- (2) "How Do I Love Thee?" No. 43 from *Sonnets from The Portuguese* by Elizabeth Barrett Browning
- (3) "She Walks in Beauty" by Lord Byron
- (4) "Knock Three Times" by L. Russell Brown and Irwin Levine (recording by Tony Orlando and Dawn - 1970)
- (5) "Love the One You're With" by Stephen Stills (recording by Stephen Stills - 1970)
- (6) "Muskrat Love" by Willis Alan Ramsey (recording by America - 1973)
- (7) "If" by David Gates (recording by Bread - 1971)
- (8) "Happy Together" by Gary Bonner and Alan Gordon (recording by The Turtles - 1967)