

Sweet sorrow¹

There's no better way to know a person than in his sorrows. We best know this, when with his death, we have no regrets, perhaps not even sadness, about it, as we have truly known him. We rejoice at his memory; we even feel honoured and blessed to have known him.

We painfully miss others only when we knew them in their joys and gains. There's really nothing to learn from them. They were a celebration, and during celebrations we forget what really mattered, to be merely drawn into what mattered to others.

Sometimes, it is difficult to separate the two. We see people we care about being caught between sorrow and real loss. This pain is especially real when we have loved and been loved by that person, and then we lose that love whether through death or through deprivation. Such things really have no reason to happen, and our pains arise just to seek the reasons for such a loss.

We cannot really be happy – if we have a heart – to know, and to feel, the pains of those who are separated from their loved ones, or who are deprived of the love they deserve. Even more painful is when we can do nothing about it. We are unable to close the painful chasm between the loving and the unloving, or to heal that broken heart, or to warm a cold heart.

When we see someone crushed by the agony of lost love – we who have a heart – will realize that the most terrible thing about it is not that it breaks our hearts. A heart is made to be broken. But unfeeling, unmoving, it turns our heart to stone. We are unable to love another, even those who love us. We are blind to the colours of love, and see it only in black and white.

Yet the colours of love are the living hues of the constant rainbow that props up the heavens after the severest storms. If we cannot see these colours, then we are truly blind: we are blind to love. We have hurt those could well love, and loving whom we would have seen most clearly and freely how rich we are within. Now, unloving, we are forever poor and colourless, tied to the rolling wheel of life.

Most of us live *for* love and admiration. But it is *by* love and admiration that we should live. For, love is only love when it is openly shown and freely given. Love is not love if we do not show it.²

If we love not, but only lust, then we are but animals; if we love to have more of our kind, then we are only human. But to love just as our breath gives us life, breathing it in and giving it back, is to raise heaven right here and now.

Whether we are unable to love, or we are unloved, there is no good reason to regret it. Nothing really happens for a reason; we find the reasons for it. And our reasoning is often neither good nor right, especially without love. If we do not fully feel these moments – when we feel unloved or are unloving – then we have arrested our own

¹ This reflection is a response to the sufferings of the unloved and the unloving, and an inspiration from Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis* (1897), a letter he wrote, while imprisoned, to unappreciative Lord Alfred Douglas.

² See **Love**, [SD 38.4 \(8.2\)](#). Further see Reflection, "[The child we still are](#)," R393, 2015.

development. We have stopped growing, perhaps we've never grown, and we do not even know this.³

To deny our own experience of loss and sorrow is to put a lie into the lips of our own lives. It is no less than a denial of life itself. For, we have not lived. We are not living. We are dead really.

Sorrow is a wound that bleeds when touched by unloving. The unloved, with a heart, bleeds. The unloving, heartless, bleeds not.

For, love is the breath that gives us life. Love is the space that embraces others as friends and lovers. Those whom we love are our true relatives, our real friends. Our life is then full in living colours.

The final mystery is our own self. When we have weighed the sun in a balance, and measured the light of the moon, and mapped out the heavens star by star, there still remains our self. How can we measure or chart the orbit of our own heart?

The heart measures not. If we have a heart, we measure not love. If we truly love, then we must also suffer. Ours is not to reason why, ours is to boldly love and live. For, only when we truly love that we really live. Only when we have loved that we have lived, and then we die. Not knowing to love is not knowing to live.

To love to learn; to learn is to love ever more. For, life springs from love. To give love is to give beauty: it brings out the good in the giver and the best in everything.⁴ To love is to live; to live is to learn; to learn is to feel pain; when pain leaves – pain must leave – there is joy. This is the art of living; it makes Artists of us.⁵

Everyone is worthy of love except one who thinks he is, but has none. Love given boundlessly, without reason – love that's a good feeling for those who don't deserve it – that is the greatest heroism, the supreme worship. All else is selfish hope.

We relentlessly seek the pleasures of life and the tastes of our heart's desires. Pleasure and desire are but unfulfilled love. Seeking, we find it not; giving it, we are it.

All the pleasures of earth and heaven have taught us nothing, can teach us nothing. Yet, right here, perhaps, we will learn something much more wonderful: the meaning of sorrow and its sweet beauty, the very first of the noble truths.

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³ See Reflection, "[To live is to feel](#)," *Simple Joys 1*, 2009, p 51-53.

⁴ See Reflection, "[To love is to learn](#)," R282, 2013.

⁵ See Reflection, "[The Artist](#)," R419, 2015.