

From *The Beatrice Letters*

How will I love you? Always. Continuously.

I will love you as a taxi loves the muddy splash of a puddle and as a library loves the patient tick of a clock, and as an oven loves malfunctioning in the middle of roasting a turkey.

I will love you no matter how many mistakes I make while trying to reduce fractions, or how difficult it is to memorise the periodic table.

I will love you if I never see you again, and I will love you if I see you every Tuesday.

I will love you as a drawer loves a secret compartment, and as a secret compartment loves a secret, and as a secret loves to make a person gasp. I will love you until all such compartments are discovered and opened, and until all such secrets have gone gasping into the world.

I will love you until all the codes and hearts have been broken and until every anagram and egg has been unscrambled.

I will love you as we grow older, which has just happened, and has happened again, and happened several days ago, and several years before that, and will continue to happen as the spinning hands of every clock and the flipping pages of every calendar mark the passage of time.

I will love you as the starfish loves a coral reef and a vine loves a tree, even if the oceans turn to sawdust and all the trees fall in the forest without anyone around to hear them.

That is how I will love you even as the world goes on its wicked way. I never want to be apart from you again, except in the restroom, at work, and when one of us is at a movie that the other does not want to see.

Daniel Handler