

tout bas/ Je vois la Vie en Rose" as the French say. The French are experts in love.

Friendship Set on Fire

By Dónal Thompson



There is no living creature on this planet more romantic than me. Had I lived in the times of the great poets like Byron or Shelley, I might admit to some competition; but here and now - the week of Saint Valentine's Day - I claim my rightful position as the world's most romantic man!

"I love Love—though he has wings/...And like light can flee," wrote Shelley.

"Flee" means run away. Yeah. I know all about that.

I am 44 years old and have had some horrific relationships. It's only bad luck when you think about it. So, am I bitter? Am I resentful? Is my heart as bruised as a boxer's kidneys?

Yes.

But failure is not losing. Failure is when you stop trying. And if you stop trying in love, you stop trying in life. And Saint Valentine's Day, properly considered, can help us to persevere.

Love is the sweetest thing. "Amor vincit omnia" or what? It is, we are assured, as perennial as the grass.

When a you're in love you feel no pain. You see the world through rose-tinted spectacles. "Quand il me prend dans ses bras/ Qu'il me parle

I may speak in the tongues of men and angels but if I have no love, I am as useful as an ashtray on a motorcycle. Poets, mystics and songwriters have felt, and often said, it all.

Yet love is like wine. You can't experience it vicariously. I can't get drunk on the wine you drink. No-one can do it for you. Carpe diem. In the old days young men would write sonnets to stop love driving them crazy.

Of all the gifts a wise Providence grants us, friendship is the most beautiful. I think that love must come from friendship if it is to last. It is friendship set on fire.

Humans being humans can find love an impossible ideal. But where there is a will, there is a way.

On their marriage, a buddhist couple I know were given a small pair of Tibetan cymbals wrapped in silk. Whenever they have difficulties or pain or conflict in their marriage one of them can go and sound the cymbals. When that happens both are silent for half an hour to reflect on the intentions they brought to the marriage. After that, they continue the conversation.

" If we all discovered that we only had five minutes left to say all that we wanted to say, every telephone booth would be occupied by people calling other people to tell them that they loved them."

- Anais Nin

Love. Is. Everything.

And when the universe moves mountains and creates unbelievable coincidences to bring you and the person you are to love together - then you should sing and dance and shout with happiness.

As John Lennon said, "Love is the answer. You know that for sure!"