



Love Poems . . . Maybe . . . Maybe NOT!



Below are poems about love, marriage, and relationships written by women in the 1800s. Answer the questions beside each poem.

The Marriage Vow

Letitia Elizabeth Landon (1802-1838)

The altar, 'tis of death! for there are laid
 The sacrifice of all youth's sweetest hopes.
 It is a dreadful thing for woman's lip
 To swear the heart away; yet know that heart
 Annuls the vow while speaking and shrinks back
 From the dark future that it dares not face.
 The service read above the open grave
 Is far less terrible than that which seals
 The vow that binds the victim, not the will:
 For in the grave is rest.

1. What is the writer's tone towards marriage?
2. Why does the writer state that the marriage altar is death?

Love and Hate

Elizabeth Siddal (1829-1862)

Ope not thy lips, thou foolish one,
 Nor turn to me thy face;
 The blasts of heaven shall strike thee down
 Ere I will give thee grace.

Take thou thy shadow from my path,
 Nor turn to me and pray;
 The wild wild winds thy dirge may sing
 Ere I will bid thee stay.

Turn thou away thy false dark eyes,
 Nor gaze upon my face;
 Great love I bore thee: now great hate
 Sits grimly in its place.

All changes pass me like a dream,
 I neither sing nor pray;
 And thou art like the poisonous tree
 That stole my life away.

3. What is the writer's tone?
4. Who is the "foolish one"?
5. Is the poem more than likely about a marriage or a short-lived relationship?
6. How are these two poems similar?
7. How are these two poems different?