



POEMS

Filtered Love

ELIZABETH AKINSEHINWA

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Dedication

To my parents, of blessed memory,
and their 19-20 reunion in heaven.

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Introduction

How would you define love in a world where its reality is so often shaped by hesitation, filtered through doubt, expectation, fear, and longing? A world where what we feel is not always what we express, and what we give is often guarded.

This chapbook invites you into that tender yet complex exploration of love, marriage, and faith, three forces often imagined as pure, yet rarely arriving whole.

What makes this journey different is not perfection, but transformation. Through each poem you can attest love evolves patiently and powerfully.

Take this as a reflection of love not in its perfection, but an evolving bond that reminds us to nurture the gift of Love received.

Elizabeth

1. Bridal Shower

Another friend out of this circle
We will do the same for you prayers
Ticked for her and not us yet
But God, when!

Here for her
Not for the sarcastic prayers & age shaming
Pressuring our priorities
Refocused on *when*

Today, Love arrives wrapped as gifts
Filling our shared space
But beyond ribbons and pastel hues
A deeper promise is birthed

For blessing aren't things we hold
They are showers, manifold grace
So, we cheer our girl on through her best day
Into an unfamiliar phase of un-flipped pages.

2. Whispered Prayers

In the stillness, when words fall away,
God hears the whispers no ear can catch
And he dispatches on time...

And I received you
The response to my unspoken words
The answer to my unsaid prayers
The dance to my life's beat

Loving you is the gospel I want to preach
The precepts I want to teach
The idea I want to pitch
The sky I want to reach

So, let's meet at the beach someday
Maybe to tie the knots
Declare our vows
Lie next to each other
Staring at the sun and
Running from the waves
As long as you are there
My heart would continue
To bask in its true rhythm.

3. **Reserved love**

I started with me
Loving me was like a fairytale I couldn't tell.
With hopes within
And expectations without
I just let the days roll by one at a time
Forgetting the dreams of yesterday
And shelving today's future

4. **Hey Mister**

With you, love is a given
A gift that can't be traded
So incomparable even words don't dare
You are the voice that echoes back grace
With you my life is adorned with more beauty
That leaves no room for nostalgia

Yes, you have odd ways
Of showing that tingling thing called love
But I'll still choose you over and over
On special days, or not
Comes the reminder that
You are adored!

5. **Made to believe**

I was made to believe
That love does cost a thing
It takes from you and sometimes
Gives you some more

I was made to believe
That loving your neighbour
Starts with loving you
So, I tried to find love
But looked in the wrong direction

First in juvenile escapades
Running after butterflies in my belly
Then a whole new feeling of freedom
And a few stop and checks with the men in black
Till a roller coaster ride with masked men
Fatal like one shot from David's sling

I was made to believe
That addiction is a bad thing
And so, I sought for healing
Where the balm in Gilead ought to be
Found faith with bruises seeking to hurt others

I was made to believe there was grace
So, sipping from a cup that's not mine
Didn't feel wrong at first
Until I set it down, and felt the weight

With you, it was an intended distraction
And I made you believe
I had found something perfect in me
The story I rehearsed became my voice
Until silence felt heavier than the truth I hid

But then your steadiness held me still
In a love so pure as the first breath after drowning
So real than I was made to believe
You know it's real if it overwhelms graciously

6. Find Your Truth

The walls have ears
And everyone has an opinion
But find your truth, not in what is said or felt
Or the lies you told yourself over again

Get guidance in quiet places
And while you pray, do with understanding
In moments of doubt, weakness and fear,
Let your faith make you whole

Your truth is not perfect
Sometimes tossed by the voices in your head
And the distractions from your reality

But you'll know
Once you find it—it's raw and real
And your heart will be a witness
'Cos it knows what love should feel like
So, child, find your essence in the messy and wild
For it's there you'll live as God's child.

7. Imbalance

What you bring to the table

Is also on that checklist

But first, what weight do you carry?

Ugly past you become made up of

Or secret sins that I will rather not tell?

Before we climb up the mountain

Let's lay them bare in this valley

Let's talk

Of days I give more than I can spare

Or times, I feel you're not really there.

Moments tension swallow the air around us

Lessons taken as we learn to find balance

For the grace needed on this journey

Love isn't fair; it doesn't keep scores

It leans into trust and yet asks for more

Letting go of the need to be perfectly aligned

So, what we bring to the table

Is peace, even in chaos!

Shared values not ego

A space free of egg shells

In the imbalance, we find stability;

The best versions of ourselves

8. Veiled Truth

Two have become one
How that equation works
Is a truth you have to daily unravel

Behind the veil, gospel hides soft,
Not in words, but in the look we oft
Exchange when the world steps out of view

The truth is raw, imperfect, and bare,
But in it we learn to care
And without fail cast out each fear we hold
Until love's truest face is revealed

9. Influencer

You are the one I shouldn't be
You taught me to be a reflection
Of your thoughts

Forced me into daily affirmations
That does not align to your will
And led us into paths we shouldn't tread

First, I thought you were a rainbow's promise
And I waited to see you practice what you preach
But you remained neither white nor black

Saint to the world, unmasked with me
You could keep up the glam for the gram
But I hope you don't drown us
In the filters for likes that don't measure up

10. Embraced

Embraced, not by perfect hands
But by a love that understands
The mess I carry, the weight I bear;
A love that meets me in between and everywhere

Little surprise, falling in love with you is an inspiration
The thought of you in my world
Flushes out all fantasies

A touch of you
Sends thrills to my brain
Your voice is like a wake-up call to all my senses
Your lips taste like truth
Your eyes show me the gates to everlasting happiness

And when I rant in your ears, it echoes back hope
Our heartbeats are so in sync I constantly feel the rhythm
In your arms, I am safe and whole
You have captured more than just my soul

11. Undesired

Her life turned
Page after page
Torn pieces left unbothered
Shunning the truth
Left us with lingering memories

Of the reality we couldn't handle
And the doors slammed
In the faces of loved ones
Broken walls
Shattered people.

They say your marriage either makes or mar you
But falling in love with the right person is not a guarantee to
your making
Walking away from the wrong person doesn't save you from
destruction

So, we tried to save her from the mess
Of what others will think or say
Through unbelief of the hurt her heart holds of him

But it all didn't matter
The pages kept turning,
Each day, a circle drawn by time's steady hand

Now her eyes are shut in death
And our tears can't restore her life
It hurts
To find the story ends here.

12. Shadows

The darkness I saw
Were shadows cast from my past
Little old sins piled into a thick wall of guilt

Come as you are!
And let the one without sin
Be the first to cast a stone

And no one else was left
But you and I

With your embrace
All of my fears are wrapped away
Away from the past

I have walked into today
To share forever with you

13. Imperfections

Imperfections shape the dance we weave;
A tapestry of devotion.
The stumbles, the cracks, the words unkind,
That lead us to the love we're meant to find.

Keeping up is one struggle
I don't want to deal with.
One minute
Life is a journey,
In another it's a race,
And yet it's not a competition

We tend to live for something,
Hold on to a faith;
One that keeps dreams alive

But many are lost in the race
Blinded by desire

Some, not sure what rules to live by,
Surrounded by fear of not belonging.
Survival becomes a reason for struggle

Let the consciousness of the word
Be the light that guides our path
Daily into perfection

For in flaws, beauty grows;
In the broken places, grace overflows.

14. Stay or Leave

Is love enough to bridge this divide
Or is it time to find some air and breathe again?

Stay to fight for something;
Something precious to hold.
Tolerate the excesses,
Talk through it
Or leave for the sake of peace
And find a new future without?

Love isn't just in staying still,
It's in the choice to bend the will.
So, stay or leave, but know
That love Is more
Than what you gain or lose.

15. **Halt**

The tales they told
Did not rhyme with this reality
Our expectations came with
default settings

She thought she would get some support
He was taught to be some sort of high court
So first, they fought about it,
Then they talked about it
And now they watched it roll

Dough of hurt
Diced with resentment
Glazed in bitterness
Served on a platter of strife.

But in the beginning
It was not so
Until each sowed weed
That didn't allow peace sprout

16. Count Your Loss

We all make choices
And with this coin
To count your loss or value your gain
Are the options

Would you count your loss?
On things that fade away
Or find a gain in the moments you'd rather avoid
Would it be in things broken or hearts untouched?

Would you value your gain?
For a gift that helps you grieve
When you leave the past behind
To find a future to embrace.

Your loss is a teacher with wisdom to gain
Extended to those we care about,
And what matters most to us
Buried in sacrifices of choices

Let it be known
That through each loss
New seeds of love are sown.
To gain the wins desired

17. Misplaced Priority

Don't give in
Maybe not just yet

We were both naive
When we rolled up our sleeves
And made commitment to cleave
You believed the eve

Enough to accept the apple
It grieves me to think
You'd think I deceived you

How we misplaced our priorities
Placing love on our to do list
Making it a duty worn like a hollow mask
While we lost the heart of what's been given

Now we are here and he is out
The doors shut
While we hear him call
How would we relieve love's burden
Maybe place first what truly matters
And make a choice
How long do we keep him out?

18. Given

I am suddenly scared of expressing myself
Letting you lead and following through the course
Was supposed to be the beginning of submission
But layer by layer you are peeling off
The sense of belonging I thought I had

Maybe...

A little appreciation
Less condescending remarks
Zero or minimal fault finding
Loving reprimand
Would not birth my tantrum

19. Reflex

Good morning!

I expected a response

But you walked off

Like I was either non-existent

Or you were deaf

Oh, I remember your resolution

After last's night fight

To spare each other the weight of words

And only speak when necessary

Before I agree to that resolution

And maybe adopt same

Come hear me out

It was reflex; I didn't mean to hurt you

Before you emphasize that two wrongs

Don't make a right

Maybe control your actions

And my response won't be

The reactions you despise.

20. Tattle

Pull me up or weigh me down
I am here to stay
Lift your voice or whisper in gossip
My ears still won't itch
With each of you laying a block
The foundation of truth will be established
As long as this remains
The power of two becoming one

21. Changes

Before you say no, hold on,
While we figure out if this is good or not
A blessing in its own right,
Or just a blessing in disguise.

Changes come,
But not the ones we imagined
Our expectations couldn't birth the reality.
We dreamed of love, not a family affair
Even unions depend on unity.

And yes, there was unity:
One family merging with another,
The stranger of yesterday
Now a name in our bloodline.
Believe it or not
Something changed

Names changed.
Thoughts shifted.
Habits reformed.
And something deeper
Is birthed for a change.

22. Sacrifice

Selfish would be the perfect word
To describe my world before you
I believed love asked not for riches or fame
But for a sacrifice that has no name.
Found in the moments we lay down our pride,
The fearless strides we take unasked
And the silent tears that we quietly hide.

It has become lighter for me to know
That sacrifice isn't a burden, it's grace
It's the look of love that time can't erase
When we give, expecting none in return.
It's in giving our hearts truly learn.

23. Grace and Growth

A tale of us
Didn't start with an oath
But a scripted vow
And we both said I do

I do to becoming his
And he becoming mine
Like the creation of Adam and Eve
We sailed as a pair in Noah's ark
To our new beginning

With calendars marked
We were set to celebrate each anniversary
Of staying as one

We thought we knew what sacrifice meant
But barely could give up our *onlys* unlike Abraham,
Let alone Christ, who gave up Himself for the church

So, we chose to be spontaneous,
Yielding to the calling of companionship
And submitting to the leading of the third person
Sowing growth in each other's world

In communicating to avoid assumptions
In dealing with our incompatibilities
In committing to truth and faithfulness
In caring for each other, nurturing delicate desires
In small compromises and crucial moments

So, when the tick of the clock hits another 365 days
We can celebrate how our bond has improved
How you have consciously expressed your love in respect
How closer I have come to loving you just as Christ loved the church

And trust that grace waters the seeds we sow
In silent places no one needs to know
In the prayers and the way we lift each other's ache.

24. Forgiven

Events will influence our thoughts,
Leave us with tabletop worries
And bedside stress
Sometimes, with pillow-drowned tears
And all the toxicity we let in

The morning comes after chapters of nightmares
Sun rays thrust through the mist
What more do I ask for
If you are always beside me
Like the assurance of daybreak

You didn't need to show me
The width of your shoulders.
You encircled me in your arms
I forget your voice is deep;
You whisper gentle words to my ears
When the legions in my head rage
I don't need to fear
How many women you have ever loved
'Cos you chose to stay true to one.

I have come to accept this gift
For in forgiveness, we are both free
And more than words can convey
My heart chooses to love anyway

25. Reminded

We had a common goal
To have each other's back
With different parts to play
Yet we let the whispers get louder
And strife unresolved.

Behind closed doors,
Avoiding locked eyes,
We held on the secrets tossed in our ears
And nurtured the seeds of words that only hurts.

So, when the fire alarm goes off
And either of us don't make it to the mustering point
Who will be on the lookout for our safety?

26. Her Vows

You took a stroll into my world
And like a painting on the wall, you clung

I stand in awe of your charm
And fall in the embrace of your love

I have chosen to spend eternity with you
Being each other's eyes
Lending each other a hand
Chasing an army together

If our love is just for better or worse
Or in sickness and in health
Or till death do us part
Then what we share is limited...
I'm ready to spend forever with you
Unconditionally.

27. **Our Bond**

Let them have the world
As long as we have each other
We can be free of the burden of their actions
And focus on getting our tie stronger
Till it becomes their formidable bond.



Elizabeth Akinsehinwa (Beth) is an HR professional and creative lead at Punpoets Media. She sees poetry as an art of expressing the experiences that shape our identity—life, love, grief, and everything in between. Passionate about helping others find their voice, she now shares her own through this collection. Beth is a member of the Women’s Poet Network and the Poetry Society UK. She is married and blessed with an adorable daughter.



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