

Joe Bruner  
What is love?

What is love you ask? The combining of two souls. A marriage vow. A red heart. Two people holding hands. Making love every night, or is it just sex? It's absolute trust – no – faith in another person. It's two people kissing. Valentine's Day. Chocolates. Gifts. A visit to the hospital.

*But what about you? What is love to you?* A walk on the beach. A movie night in. Candle lit dinner. Christmas eve in pajamas. Watching meteor showers with blankets and hot chocolate at 2 am. Sharing books together. A hug when I'm lonely. A laugh when I'm happy. Endless debate.

*Why do you want it?* Company. Friends. So I can hold your hand. So you can whisper in my ear late at night. To share my happiness. To share my sorrows. A special friendship. Someone who is mine, as I am as theirs. A person who listens, when no one else will.

*Why me? What do you expect?* I expect you to return those feelings. They exist for a reason, surely they must be returned? Someone I can trust. Someone who finally listens. You pretend to care. Challenge my assumptions. You tell me things no one dares tell me.

*And if I disappoint?* You say you don't return those feelings? I call bull shit. Bull - shit. What about the late night talks? Up 'til 2:30? What about those movies traded, those reading lists handed over? Did they mean nothing? Laughing over skype. The Friday night discussions when both of us were bored out of our minds?

*Are you ok?* Oh God. Is there still a chance? Maybe he cares enough. But how? Send a card? A present? I do that for all my friends anyway, that's not different. Maybe... just maybe... But shit. No. There isn't a chance. I blew it. I fucking blew it. What is love? The withering scorn of emotion that rakes all sense in a fury of scorching coals, each burning with the rage of hell? Why does he not respond to me anymore? I've lost everyone else. Him too? Damn it! No one, there's no one. Alone. Damn everything!

*Maybe we should take a break?* What did I do? Oh God. Yes. Yes, we should. I'm so sorry. I... I need time. Healing. Peace. Silence.

*What are you thinking?* Things go bad. But how? That 2am walk through the door - where the hell were you? Those words whispered last night? Lies thick... poisoned honey. Mistrust. Poor communication. Dead ends? Maybe these things imagined, maybe they're just that. Maybe this isn't love. Maybe... this is what love isn't?