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Stone Barn, Cotswolds

Everything I Know About Love

by Dolly Alderton

I know that love can be loud and jubilant...

It can be dancing in the swampy mud and the pouring rain at a festival and shouting "YOU ARE AMAZING" over the band.

It's introducing them to your colleagues at a work event and basking in pride as they make people laugh and make you look lovable just by dint of being loved by them.

It's laughing until you wheeze.

It's waking up in a country neither of you have been in before.

It's skinny-dipping at dawn.

It's walking along the street together on a Saturday night and feeling an entire city is yours.

It's a big, beautiful, ebullient force of nature.

I also know that love is a pretty quiet thing.

It's lying on the sofa together drinking coffee, talking about where you're going to go that morning to drink more coffee.

It's folding down pages of books you think they'd find interesting.

It's hanging up their laundry when they leave the house having moronically forgotten to take it out of the washing machine.

It's saying 'You're safer here than in a car' as they hyperventilate on an EasyJet flight to Dublin.

It's the texts: 'Hope your day goes well', 'How did today go?', 'Thinking of you today' and 'Picked up loo roll'.

I know that love happens under the splendour of moon and stars and fireworks and sunsets but it also happens when you're lying on blow-up airbeds in a childhood bedroom, sitting in A&E or in the queue for a passport, or in a traffic jam.

Love is a quiet, reassuring, relaxing, pottering, pedantic, harmonious hum of a thing; something you can easily forget is there, even though its palms are outstretched beneath you in case you fall.