



Before the foundations of the earth, *the* great storyteller was penning a story that included *you*. Love was thinking about *you*, imagining ways to showcase His love for *you*, and planning to rescue *you*. Enter the greatest love story ever told. You'll want to share this with friends and family.

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CONTENTS

A Note to the Reader: Love Has a Story, and You're a Part of It	14
But First, a Confession	17

PART ONE

The Community of Love in Eternity Past and Your Story's Prologue

1. Before Creation, a Community	22
2. The Foundation of Love	24
3. Eternal Love Origins	26
"Ocean Origins"	28
4. The Son's Reward: <i>You</i>	30
5. Your Story's Prologue	32
6. Chosen in Love	34

PART TWO

Love's Overflowing Abundance at Creation and Your Story's Introduction

7. When Love Overflowed	38
8. Creation Sings God's Love	40
"Chasing My Wildest Dream (Portrait of Jael, Almost Age 3)"	42
9. God's Loving Care for Creation	43
10. Our Loving Care for Creation	45
11. Crowned by Love	47
12. Wanted: The Great Introduction of Your Story	49
13. Crafted by Loving Hands	51
"To My Inner Child"	53
14. A Big Deal to God	54

15. The Title of Your Story.....	56
16. Love’s Fingerprints.....	58
17. A Loving Author.....	60
“Mamita’s House”.....	62
18. A Redemptive Arc.....	64

PART THREE

The Corruption of Our Love and Your Story’s Great Conflict

19. Our Story’s Great Conflict.....	68
20. A Question Mark on God’s Love.....	70
21. The Warping of Our Love.....	72
“Lust is a cheater”.....	74
22. Love’s Plot Twist.....	75
23. A Love That Covers.....	77
24. God Loves His Enemies.....	79
25. A Humanizing Love.....	81
“A Man (He Is)”.....	83
26. Betrayed Love.....	84
27. Love’s Judgment.....	86
“I Can’t Breathe”.....	88
28. Patient Love.....	89
29. Unquenched Love.....	91
30. The City of Lovelessness.....	93
31. The City of Love.....	95
“When I Consider the Darkness”.....	97
32. God’s Love in Your Story’s Great Conflict.....	98
33. A Loving Author, Developing Themes.....	100

PART FOUR

The Mysterious Migrations of Love

“Cuando hace calor”.....	104
34. In the Land of Lovelessness, Love Calls.....	105

35. Beloved Migrants	107
“Welcome to the Faith”	109
36. A Certain Love	111
37. Solid Love for a Shaky Faith	113
“Little one, big heart (Portrait of Jael, age 6)”	115
38. A Tested Love	117
39. A Love We Can’t Finagle	119
40. Love’s Chorus	121
41. An Overriding Love	123
42. What About the Matriarchs?	125
“What’s a Woman Worth?”	127
43. A Loving Author, Mysterious Paths	129
“to remember redemptively: my dream”	131

PART FIVE

Love’s Rescue and Rule, Your Progressing Plot

44. Love Empathizes	134
45. Love Looks Like Freedom	136
46. Let My People Love	138
47. Love’s Rescue, Then Love’s Rule	140
48. Love Is the Law	142
49. Jealous: The Language of Love	144
“Foolish Vine”	146
50. And Who Is My Neighbor?	147
51. Love the Vulnerable . . . As God Does	149
52. God’s Heart: Love Undressed	151
53. God’s Wrath and God’s Love	153
54. Love’s Humble Abode	155
“Where are you?”	157
55. Access to Love	159
56. An Omnipotent Love	161
57. A Protective Love	163
58. A Loving Author, A Progressing Plot	165

PART SIX

Love's Longing in the Land of Promise and Your Unresolved Subplots

"getting settled vs. settling"	168
59. Settling, Would They Settle?	169
60. Love's Light in the Dark Ages	171
"Hannah, Silent Sister"	173
61. Despite Deluded Demands, Love Reigns	176
62. A Forever-House Founded on Forever-Love	178
63. Lineages of Lasting Love	180
64. Has Anyone Been a Truer Friend?	182
"The Best of Men"	184
65. How Did We Get Here?	185
"Speak, Please"	187
66. How We Got Here	188
"A Year with No Storms"	190
67. The Prophets' Cry: Love's Longing in the Land	191
68. The Prophets' Vision: Look Back, Look Forward	193
69. A Loving Author, Unresolved Subplots	195
"You Stay"	197

PART SEVEN

The Beloveds' Longings in Every Land and Your Character Development

"You Think We're Just Singing"	200
70. Singing 'Til Love Leads Us Home	201
"Tell me, beloved . . ."	203
71. Transformed by Love While Praying the Psalms	204
"To Cry and Not Say 'Sorry'"	206
72. The Psalms and Complex Relationships	207
"When Angry (A Recipe for Empathy)"	209
73. A Prayer for When God's Love Feels Like Hate	210
"A Prayer of Rage, Actually—A Confession"	212
74. Love Forms Us in the Darkness	213

“I will not neglect the pen”	215
75. A Loving Author, Your Character Development	216
“olive oil”	218

PART EIGHT

Love’s Violent, Beautiful Climax

76. Love Was Writing (His)tory	220
“Period.”	222
77. Familiarity Bred Love	223
78. But Proximity to the Truth Is Not Enough	225
79. Love Embodied, Literally	227
“The Greatest Mystery (A Hymn)”	229
80. Beloved Before Doing	230
81. Fasting So We Could Feast	233
82. Our Beloved Myths and the Kingdom He Gives	235
83. Lavish Love Befits the Forgiven	238
84. Keep Listening to the Beloved	240
“What’s the resurrection to a dream deferred?”	243
85. Dying to Raise His Friend	244
86. The True Meeting Place of God and Man	246
87. A New Covenant of Self-Emptying Love	248
“God, Why?”	250
88. Love’s Violent Climax	251
“Black Sabbath”	253
89. Love’s Beautiful Climax	254
“Resurrection Hymn”	256
90. A Loving Author, Your Story’s Climax	257

PART NINE

Love’s Living Letters

“Just an Arrow”	260
91. The Promised Power to Love	262
92. Coauthors, Wounded and Loved	264

“Ode to Jon”	266
93. Shaping the New Creation with Love	268
“One Day You’re Gonna Understand (Portrait of Jael, age 7)” 270	
94. Missing the Mark of Love	272
95. He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not?	274
96. A Loving Author, His Living Letters	277

PART TEN

The Community of Love and Your Story’s Non-Ending End

97. Love Flips the Script.....	280
98. The Great Wedding Feast, The Forever Marriage	282
“The Hands of Time”	284
99. Love Never Ends, Neither Does Your Story	286
“If I Were a Tree”	288
100. A Loving Author, Unique Stories Unified by Love	289
Acknowledgments.....	291



DAY 1

Before Creation, a Community

*“Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me,
may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me
because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”*

JOHN 17:24

Before the morning dew glistened on blades of grass, before mountains stretched their necks to peer into the clouds, before a single creature breathed or blinked, there was God—One who has eternally existed as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And, according to Jesus’ prayer in John 17, what pumped through the metaphorical veins of that three-in-one glory was . . . love.

Love has no birthday. God is eternal—He has no beginning and no end (Ps. 90:2). And, the apostle John tells us, “God is love” (1 John 4:8).

So before time was,
there was Love.⁷
And before creation,
a community.

It may seem overly ambitious to begin a hundred-day meditation on the love of God with such an ineffable, mysterious doctrine as what is typically called “the Trinity.” God’s triune nature—one God forever existing in three Persons—is something we can’t possibly comprehend in full, nor

⁷ Quina Aragon, *Love Gave: A Story of God’s Greatest Gift* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2021), 2.

should we. Our efforts to explain God's three-in-one-ness through analogies and metaphors fall short. We do well to listen to our Indigenous brothers and sisters along with early Jewish Christians in holding "the mystery of God in tension" rather than assuming we can pick apart and precisely analyze the divine.⁸

Yet it is here, in the diverse yet unified, eternal relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit—the "triune Community-of-Love"⁹—that we discover the very foundation of love.

REFLECTION

How does it land on you that at the center of the universe *is* relationship—that your desires for connection and relationship are rooted in the very nature of God?

8 Randy S. Woodley, "Beyond *Homoiousios* and *Homoousios*," in *Majority World Theology: Christian Doctrine in Global Context*, ed. Gene L. Green et al. (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 27.

9 Ruth Padilla DeBorst, "Church, Power, and Transformation in Latin America," in *Majority World Theology*, 498.

DAY 2

The Foundation of Love

*Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also
had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened,
and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove;
and a voice came from heaven,
“You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”*

LUKE 3:21–22

God has always lived in a diverse yet unified community of love:

The Father loving the Son
and the Son right back,
the Spirit rejoicing in it all
A perfect love union,
forever intact.¹⁰

The Son tells the Father, “You loved me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24). The Father tells the Son, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased”—with the Spirit descending as an expression of the Father’s love, anointing Jesus for ministry (Luke 3:22).

The unbridled, unmerited delight of parent for child is but a whisper of a greater love. The substance from which all shadows of human love are cast is the utter delight of God the Father for God the Son, “who is in the

10 Quina Aragon, *Love Made: A Story of God’s Overflowing, Creative Heart* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2019), 22.

bosom of the Father” (John 1:18 NKJV¹¹)—right there affectionately reclined on His Father’s chest, even before any creative act is achieved. Beloved before building a single thing. Imagine that.

Before any living creature breathed, there was God: loved and loving. The Trinity is the foundation of love. After all, could God truly *be* love if, within Himself, He did not exist in a diverse yet unified relationship? How could He *be* love without someone *to* love? God must *be* a community (Father, Son, and Spirit—perfectly unified) in order to *be* love.

So we begin here, in the God-occupied prologue of history—eternity past—where love was already alive and well in the community of the divine. Yet, as you know, every story must move beyond its beginning. And love, by nature, spreads.

But we’ve only just begun.

REFLECTION

What’s one of the purest, most delightful moments of genuine love you’ve experienced or witnessed? How might that relationship or moment of love reflect something of the eternal love within the Trinity?

11 Scripture taken from the New King James Version © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

DAY 3

Eternal Love Origins

So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing.

For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing.”

JOHN 5:19–20

Before God was Creator, He was Father.¹² And He was Son. And He was the Holy Spirit. And there He was: love.

Augustine, that fourth-century North African bishop, spoke of the Trinity as the Lover (the Father), the Beloved (the Son), and Love (the Holy Spirit).¹³ In other words, the Father has always burst with delight in His Son, who perfectly reflects the Father’s perfections (Heb. 1:3). Or as Jesus, the Son of God, said, “the Father loves the Son” (John 5:20). This love that flows from the Father to the Son by the Holy Spirit is no new phenomenon. It’s been God’s MO since before time.

All good and well and dusty-library-book worthy, but what does this have to do with your story and mine? Everything.

“For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing” (John 5:20). Just as back in Jesus’ day a son learned his trade from his father who showed him the ropes of that trade, so the Son of God

12 Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 21.

13 St. Augustine, “On the Trinity,” in *Basic Writings of St. Augustine*, vol. 2, ed. Whitney J. Oates (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1992), 687.

has always perceived the Father's purpose and plan—including His plan to bring you and me into His family . . . even at the cost of the Son's life (Ps. 2:7–8; Isa. 53:10–11; Acts 2:23).

Everyone has an origin story. Perhaps you tend to think of your origin story as beginning at your birth, or your upbringing in your family of origin, or even with your ancestors' stories. But what difference does it make to know that your story actually has its origins in the eternal love of God the Father for God the Son?

A love that has no beginning. A love that planned all along to bring you into its story.

REFLECTION

⋮ How do you tend to tell your origin story, that is, where the story of your life/journey began?

Ocean Origins

I don't remember
the first time my toes
touched the elusive line
where sea meets sand.
Mom says it was Cocoa Beach
there with the whole family—
titas, titos, cousins, and my lola
 (you better never call her lola
 or *abuela*, by the way
 it's "Mamita" because
 she's forever young.
 don't say I didn't warn you.)
and that sounds about right to me.

Mom says I was wobbling my way to her
when I fell and found out
sand sticks to skin like a tan
and they had to turn away
so I wouldn't see them giggle
at my discovery.
They weren't cruel, they just knew me—
barely two, already very shy
"very strict" as my mom puts it
I didn't like any signs
of failure in me
to be seen.
But despite the sandy eyes
or the time I picked up a whole jellyfish
because I thought it was "litter"

(selah)

those moments
on the shore

were shalom.
they're scattered in the film reel of my
core memories,
little glass bottles floating
on my mind's coast
filled with the feeling
of sweet humidity
and a salty breeze.

My body remembers everything.
there's no number to the times
I've let it lead me
to the closest beach
just to breathe, *really breathe*
again.

They say time is a colonial construct
a history of empires burdening us
with a tyrannical need
for more and more productivity
and maybe just maybe
we should learn from the tides'
push and pull
cyclical like life
dangerous and beautiful
unrushed, unrelenting
like love.

Lately I've wondered how much
our enchantment with
certain types of terrain
and landscapes
trace back to where our ancestors'
feet once trod.

is it the Taino blood flowing in me
when I dance on underwater
sand dunes?
is it the Arawak Maroons
in my bones that make me
fearless of fierce waves?
is it the unknown
West African tribe
from whom my great-Jamaican-child
of enslaved-
grandma ("Ma Black Eye")
descended, making this melanin
embrace UV rays
like a hug?
does my love
for kayaking, paddle boarding
awaken my arms in a way
only my river-dwelling Bikolanos
DNA could explain?
on my back, I let my flat feet kick
then I sink
as the water sings

*welcome home, Pacific queen
of the Philippines, babalik karin
you are known, Atlantic-grown
hija querida de Arecibo,
Puerto Rico—come,
let me comb your Caribbean curls,
my Kingston girl*

*and whisper mysteries of victories
between bubbly breaths
let Ivory Coast dreams
sync your heartbeat
to African rhythms . . .*

It's not a real beach visit
if I don't swim, float, or
(if it's really too cold)
at least dip my toes
in the ocean
we like to pretend
is split into four or five
when it really, like me,

is one.¹⁴

14 This is an original poem, but my inspiration here regarding our perceived need for more and more productivity comes from *Sacred Belonging: A 40-Day Devotional on the Liberating Heart of Scripture* by Kat Armas (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2003), 126–29.

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