

# Cafe love

[Life](#), [Love](#)



"Amour, amour et seul"

I'm alone. Meaning, I have no one to love, no one to love me back and quite frankly at nearly forty years old I feel past the point of having the chance to make a change. The fact that I live in Paris; the romantic capital of the world, does little to help the situation. I've lived here almost all my life; parents used to live in Wales, then England, then California for some time. Being young, I travelled with them, but now, here in Paris, I finally feel at home. I struggle to answer the question " why did I come to Paris, of all places"? I suppose it's because here that I can at least dream of one day, maybe, possibly finding some way of not being alone anymore. Everywhere I look, seems to be another person's life filled only with what I want.

I'm not selfish and I'm sure that having someone else in my life would make me a happier person. This is why I have a strong resentment towards people who have a habit of betraying, lying or simply being unpleasant. Because they take life for granted, not experiencing, learning or challenging. That's not to say that I am unhappy, I often sit with my steaming coffee at one of the many street cafes in town and spend time people watching, as I pass time and reflect on my achievements I wonder what all these souls have achieved, where have they been? Where are they going? Are they on their way home to a loved one? I just need someone to feel complete.

" I, capitalized, full.

I, looking like a snowfall as I come calling.

I, waiting for a saviour in the gas-station at midnight.

I, holding no neighbourhood, loving the air.

I, silent beside a man holding a megaphone outside of planned parenthood

I, fading."

It's busy. Busier than its been in a while, packed with all different sorts of people. Young children, some in push chairs, some being held tightly in their mother's arms. Teenagers are also present, not really enjoying the surroundings yet smiling when in the company of grandparents. Women chattering around small tables, women standing impatiently waiting to be served, wives and girlfriends being held close by their husbands and boyfriends. The only men seated are extremely old or waiting to meet their wives. One regular customer, wearing a neatly pressed pin-striped suit, is sitting alone at a small table by the roadside, distancing himself from others. He's recognisable to me so my eyes are drawn to him. He glances over towards me and on seeing me staring back at him shifts in his chair uncomfortably.

There are two glasses on the table, so I can only assume that he is waiting for company. He checks his watch several times and looks around; I look too although I don't know what I expect to see. He's an attractive man. Even though he's seated he looks tall, six foot at least. Clean shaven, glossy hair with a small amount of gel and shiny shoes which is a clear sign that he takes care over his appearance. I can imagine that he's not drinking coffee to avoid unpleasant smelling breath. So making the decision of ordering water was wise. I begin looking at him in more detail. I don't worry that he may

notice me staring. It's now that he stands and strides towards the road. Definitely over six foot tall. He suddenly stops and looks back. A phone rings, as he reaches into his pocket I realise it's his. He directs a smile at me and walks back towards the road all the while in conversation. Probably his wife.

" I, alive before the fireworks with one eye on the storm,

I, skating on the ice with one foot in the ocean,

I, drunk beneath the shelter of a thousand poets

There is no-one as blind as those who choose not to see

I, me."

Late afternoon at the cafe  $\frac{1}{2}$  is normally the busiest time. Which makes it my favourite time to sit and observe everyone. The clientele is always the same, with a few new comers each day, but only a few decide to stay. It looks especially pretty today, the tops of the tables and chairs where people have not yet sat are quilted and neatly decorated with snow, it also creates a pathway on the ground of delicate footsteps from the waitresses' angelic feet. A coffee cup has been left at my table, it is beginning to freeze and what there was once coffee is a frosty covering, somewhat improving its appearance looking almost beautiful and glistening in the light. It's sad I know, but somehow I become attached to this cup.

It's centre stage on the table, soaking in all my attention. As I look closer, a small crack becomes visible. I begin to imagine some wonderful life stories of the coffee cup, battles, fights and journeys. After pondering over the past of

the cup, I conclude that it was just dropped in the kitchen. After all, it's only a mug. I'm sitting alone, enjoying the company of strangers. A waitress comes over with my coffee, taking away the crystallized coffee mug. Now I am alone amongst strangers again.

As I stay later the snow begins to melt and the nice Christmas feeling of the crisp coldness in the air also begins to fade. I take a lighter out of my coat pocket, and because the waitresses have seemed to disappear, I walk slowly around the cafe lighting the candles at the remaining empty tables. I take my time, I'm not worried about anyone seeing me. When I have finished I sit back at my table, and admiring the sparkling candles. The Christmas feeling is half restored by the warm comforting feeling of subtle lights.

" I, wearing white and thinking black

I, planning a journey that's too far to walk, drive or sail

I, the one who never planned but always expected

I, lighting up a cigarette with the echoes of my mind

I, breathing in the smoke that no-one else can find."

An old couple walk almost silently into the cafe, they take no notice of me at all. They take a while getting comfy at the table behind mine before they begin talking. The woman looks to be in her late fifties, and is wearing a red poncho which drapes to the floor making her bottom half invisible. The man is the same age, also wearing red. I smile at the fact they look the same,

very elegant. He must have been wearing a black hat but removed it when entering the Cafe because he's now holding it in his right hand.

They begin conversation, I listen in excitedly, 'Did you want a drink my dear?' He questioned the women whilst glancing around for a working waitress. "Erm, yes a hot chocolate please Eric" I stop listening for a second, and make a mental note of the man's name. He politely ordered for himself and his wife whilst searching for his wallet. He looked inside and shuffled uncontrollably to the bottom. Finally, he held out only two euros. Looking over at his wife, he saw her becoming quite impatient.

'I haven't got all day!' She shouted whilst quickly gesturing towards her watch. Eric cancelled his order and paid for hers, looking quite flustered. 'Keep the change', he murmured under his breath. His wife stood up and took her drink off him, 'What took you so long buying one silly drink?' Questioned his wife, again impatiently. Eric stared blankly back at her, 'I... just, couldn't remember what you wanted.' The woman then began arguing about how he wastes so much time over everything and just does not listen. If only she saw what I just saw, she wouldn't bother to question his actions. I stand up and move away from the couple, there is a knot forming in the back of my throat and my vision is becoming blurry. As I look down at the table, the snow has now completely melted, as one of my tears drop I can see it clearly on the glass table top. As I stare at the single tear, it seems to multiply like bacteria in seconds as more and more appear, as if by magic.

" I, the small tear that leads to tears,

I, the one who is ambiguous,

I, attempting to buy groceries with good looks and failing miserably.

I, thanking Allen Ginsberg,

I, reading like the poet and writing like the fool

I, nothing, really."

I sit alone for a while. Wondering how such an old couple can have a such a new and romantic love. I turn to change my view of the cafe, I'm about to turn to my left to admire the fine Christmas lights recently put on display but a small, dark haired little girl managed to catch my view. At first glance I thought she was sitting on her own because she was making such a mess of her table. But I saw a man to the left of her returning with napkins. He sat down next to her and began to mop up what looked like melted ice cream on the table. 'Dad, I don't want it,' moaned the small girl.

Immediately, I'm concentrated and fully focused on this little girl. Why was she moaning, why was she on her own? The man put a final napkin down and replied, 'I know that's not...' The small girl stared violently, signally for him to stop talking - or else. I am even more involved now, it's times like these where I just want to ask what's going on. But I know I cant, that's just bad etiquette. Often I jump to conclusions and think up reasons why people are having such conversations. In this case, the situation that came to my mind first was; a girl, nofamily, living alone on the streets of Paris having to steal food from this cafe. My mind then began on a journey of other

extremities such as that she is actually German pretending to be French..? It is when the man began speaking, and took the part of the father, that my mind stopped travelling such journeys .

'Dad, just talk to Mummy. I don't like being with you only at weekends. I miss Mum. Please.' The small girl now speaking out of pure desperation. The father replied quickly with 'Darling, it's not that simple. Marriage, well, it's not easy you know.' He then took the girls hand for second before she pulled away almost automatically. The father reached for his grey coat which he had drooped over the back of the chair and began to put it on. The girl took this as a sign that it was the end of the conversation, obviously something she was use to hearing. They begin to walk my way so I turn quickly. Much too quickly, resulting in my coffee spilling half on the floor and half on me. I stand and look at the mess, for a few seconds I wonder if this would be a good excuse to ask the father for a napkin, in order to engross myself in conversation. I decide against it considering they have already left.

On my way to the washroom I start to think about the marriage that the mother and father must have had. Because it must have affected the small girl a lot for her to mention and be so upset about it. Perhaps one of them met someone else, perhaps they simply went different ways. But whatever happened to that marriage, surely the love in the marriage must have died. I wish I didn't wonder so much sometimes, it only leads me to imagine the worst of things. How can love not work out, if I found love I would hold onto it and never let it go.



How can it go wrong? When you fall in love you want it to be forever and you love them for who they are. So any flaws can be worked out or you just love them in spite of that. The thought of suddenly not being loved must eat people up inside. Heartbreaking. Possibly my life is too good to risk being heartbroken. Because even if I am on my own, at least it's only me that's liable to hurt myself. No one else can hurt me, I'm in charge. Maybe it's not as idealistic in reality.

" I, immune to heartache

I, the liar."

After drying my coffee stained skirt, I brush past the waitresses who seem to be re-appearing due to the increasing customers. I see one waitress finish cleaning my table. It's getting dark, which means I really should be soon returning home. I usually hate this time because it means I have to walk lonely through the streets looking at the couples hand in hand or the mothers and daughters smiling. And because I'm such a paranoid person I automatically think they're only smiling because I'm there and they want to make me jealous. But at this moment in time, I really don't know how I feel.

After witnessing that small girl's unlawfully relationship with her father; wondering how things in a marriage can become that disastrous. When I think about that, I'm reluctant to feel jealous by those couples smiling back at me, because one day, they could be heartbroken and wonder themselves why they put themselves in such a vulnerable position.

Suddenly, I'm startled. At first for no particular reason I feel as if I'm being watched. This feeling causes me to look wearily around, a tall man is admiring me. His eyes fixated on me. In response I smile, I feel as if I know him. He is still looking at me, so I begin to look at him in closer detail, he's an attractive man with a well cared for appearance, his shiny shoes gave that away. I scare myself with shock when I realise who he is, the regular who comes here. The man who's forever getting stood up by his wife. He stands and walks nervously towards where I'm standing, frozen. As he walks, I have the decision to walk away and pretend I have no idea that he's walking to talk to me. Or I could stay and see what he wants; everything seems to be a little flirtatious even though he's married.

Maybe, I never really had hard evidence. I do have quite a writers' imagination. He begins to speak, "Hello. I hope you don't mind but I often sit here alone and see you here alone too." I look straight into his blue exotic eyes, immediately I feel a connection. Just two strangers, just two alone strangers. I feel like I have been frozen in time as I begin to recite a monologue of thoughts to myself. 'I was wondering if you would like to sit alone together some time?'

" I, giving up structure.

I know that words once read will always be spoken

And fabric once torn will always be scarred,

And the night will always be broken by the

Gentle murmur of cars...

But, what is costume without personality,,

Or a poet without publication

What is a man without attempt,

Or a woman without patience.

Here comes the thunderstorm.

I, silent."