

It is said by those who have examined the human soul most thoroughly and observed its ways most steadily and carefully that love is what everybody wants, but love is an enormous word, synonymous with other enormous words, like God. One wants to love and one wants to be loved. Ordinarily, it is understood by this that one wants to love another, or other, human beings, or to be loved by another, or other, human beings. It is probable, though that there is more to it than that. One also wants to love and be loved by the measureless universe and by its secret and unknown laws or graces, by the sun and the moon and the stars, by the earth itself and its vegetation, the world and its form and way, the animals and the birds and by a man's own ancestors or the ancestors of all men – in short, by the loving which is in all matter and energy. One wants love of luck and mystery, of chance and secret, of risk and art. And so on. (-p. 71-72 )

One loves another, or other, human beings because his love for them increases his love for the other things and their love for him, or because other human beings embody for him all or most of the other things, and bring some of the love out of these things to him. That is why love is a troublesome and wonderful thing, for it is sent forth out of a body and received into it, and a body is a variable thing, tentative, inconstant, inconsistent, by turns refreshed and joyously loving, weary and wearily loving, or not loving at all, even hating. (-p. 72 )

As the years went by, found that I needed to love things and persons which were not of God (of form, grace, and truth). I found that it was not enough to love that which attracted love, or compelled it. I found that I personally must love that which was not of love made, which did not compel or attract it. For what good is love if it is involved only in itself? Is it in fact love at all? I have never altogether delivered myself from hate, but I think I may have come as near to this deliverance as any man I have ever heard of. It came to pass as the years went by and I survived that I saw the need to know more about anything or anybody I believed I hated, and as I imagined or found out more about him I felt the hatred slip out of my soul. All I needed to find out about human beings was that they *were* in fact human beings. This was not an act of finding out so much as an act of simple recognition. How could I hate anybody who was precisely the same as myself and the same as everybody else? I could not hate him. I could regret the a manner in which he was a human being, but I could not hate him, for that was spiritual illiteracy, that was failure to read the human soul. (p. 89-90 )

all passages from Saroyan's 'The Bicycle Rider in Beverly Hills.'