

Sonnet XII  
from *One Hundred Love Sonnets*

by Pablo Neruda

Woman ripe, carnal apple, sultry moon,  
thick aroma of seaweed, mud and light mashed together,  
what obscure clarity opens between your columns?  
What night of ancient arousal does man touch with all his senses?

Ah, to love is an excursion with water and with stars,  
with suffocated air and brusque whirlwinds of flour:  
to love is lightning combat in continuous flashes  
and two bodies defeated by a single drop of honey.

From kiss to kiss I travel across your small infinity,  
your borders, your rivers, your diminutive villages,  
and the genital fire transformed into delight

runs through the slender roadways of the blood  
until it rushes to open itself like a nocturnal carnation,  
until it is and is nothing but a glistening sweetness in your shadow.

*Translated by Alex Sawit*  
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