

Loving V

by Noemi Schneider ©2025

Can you inherit love? I believe you can, in a way. I inherited my love for V from my father, who had fallen for her as a student. I can't actually remember the first time I met her, for I was in my mother's womb. My parents spent their honeymoon with her, in January of 1982. Loving V means sharing her. She isn't exclusive, you must know.

She is the brightest in January, but I learned this later.

The first thing I saw when I opened my eyes as a child was a watercolor portrait of her on the wall in our living room. It's still there. My father told me many stories about V. Her supreme love is the sea. She has exquisite taste and style. She's fragile and powerful, exceptional in every possible way and very open minded. Although she's married, she has many lovers of all sexes from all over the world. She loves music, art, literature, architecture and movies. She's an excellent rower, an inspiration for artists, a talented singer and her beauty is so overwhelming that some people go crazy. Most of the time she is reflecting herself and bathing in light.

Her name was probably one of the first words I learned. Six promising letters. And still after 43 years these six letters haven't lost any of their magic. Longing for her was part of my childhood. Now I know that longing for her is part of her.

She is the craziest in February, but I learned this later.

To inherit love means you don't fall in love on your own, you simply take over someone else's love. It comes without saying and this is why, at a certain point you might start to question it. My sociology professor said when you start questioning a relationship, it is over. That's what happened to us. But eventually we got back together.

She is the most charming in March, but I learned this later.

My father took me to meet her as soon as I was able to walk by myself. It was in August. It was hot. When she appeared – you must know, she always appears – she doesn't show up; showing up is ordinary and she is the opposite of ordinary. When she appeared in front of my eyes for the first time, it felt familiar and surreal at the same time. This feeling towards her never changed. Loving her means going beyond your imagination.

She is the most surprising in April, but I learned this later.

What made her special for me in the beginning was my father's love for her. It wasn't her. I didn't know her. I only saw her surface. I was taken by her obvious beauty, of course, but to be honest, as a 6-year-old, you don't care much about beauty, you care about ice-cream. From our first encounter I remember street-dealers selling small soldiers and tanks, handbags and souvenirs, pigeons, seagulls, the coolness of the churches, music, endless walking in the heat, chatting, laughing and the best ice cream I've ever had. Time with V is always limited, you must know, and having to leave her again is part of (loving) her. The worst part, by the way. The best part is knowing you'll see her again.

She is the most unstable in May, but I learned this later.

From that day on we visited V once or twice during the summer. These days with V were always the same but different, as is she. One thing I already felt back then was that I would somehow never get enough of her. She's not really exciting, you must know, but there is something about her that words can't express. Don't get me wrong. She doesn't have the same impact on everyone. There are actually people who dislike her. They find her overrated, deceitful, fraudulent, vain, complicated and selfish. But for romantics like me she's addictive, and loving her means endless discoveries.

She is most gentle in June, but I learned this later.

In my 20s I stayed with her for one week together with a friend. For the first time we spent nights and days together. The nights were surprisingly boring, I have to admit. Once upon a time it was the opposite, V explained to me. During the day she used to sleep and at night

there were balls and amusements and receptions. It was a wonderful trip as far as I remember, but something was missing, someone was missing, and I learned perhaps the most important thing about V. She doesn't change. Everything around me changed so rapidly except for her. I'm not sure if this is frustrating or reassuring. At the time I found it rather depressing. That year my father was already sick and had stopped visiting her. He pretended he had lost interest in her. I didn't believe him. Loving V means being aware that you'll die first.

She is the most unbearable in July, but I learned this later.

After my father passed away, me and my mum started to visit V for a weekend once a year in November. This pilgrimage turned out to be somehow exhausting. V, beautiful and charming as ever, was busy and had no time to mourn him. Mourning is not her thing. Me and my mum were missing my father and we tried to replace him the best we could, but we couldn't. After a couple of years, we stopped visiting her and somehow it was a relief. I didn't miss her. I never missed her back then. I didn't know what missing her might feel like. Now, I know.

She is the most addictive in August, but I learned this later.

Instead of thinking about V, I traveled around the world, I fell in love every now and then, not finding what I was looking for. In 2015 I visited her for an art exhibition together with a friend. I had a bad back pain and I remember pretending for five days that I was fine, but I wasn't. Something was missing, someone was missing. From this trip I hardly remember anything but the pain.

She is the most glamorous in September, but I learned this later.

In the summer of 2021, a three-month artist scholarship granted by the German government brought me back to her. I arrived on the 1st of July by train. It was a very hot and humid Friday. The train was delayed. A friend picked me up at the station. I was nervous because I needed to be at the artists' residence in less than ten minutes when the secretary was leaving. My friend took my very heavy suitcase while we ran all the way following Google

Maps and reached our destination in time. Within five minutes the secretary showed me around, gave me the keys and left. The flat was huge, overlooking the rooftops of the surrounding buildings, but I didn't pay attention to the flat. The view from the windows turned out to be the most beautiful view in the world, but I learned this later. We went out for a drink on a huge square being served by a Chinese man, and I ordered something without alcohol because I felt already drunk from the heat and the humidity. I also felt strangely happy because all I knew was that I was going to spend the next three months together with V and that although the time was limited, it might be enough to get to know her better. We went to a fancy restaurant where my friend had reserved a table. We sat by the water and talked about marriage and art. After we paid the check, it started to rain. First very gently, then stronger and finally a kind of watery-inferno started. We took shelter under the roof of a church whose name I didn't know back then. Because the rain seemed to go on forever, we were soaked to the skin when we reached the flat. You must know, V loves heavy summer rains. She has a great sense of humor. Loving her means being always prepared for the unexpected.

She's the most romantic in October, but I learned this later.

During that summer of 2021 we became close and I learned that I knew nothing about her although I had been visiting her for more than 30 years and considered myself an expert. We started from scratch, sitting for hours under her favorite mulberry tree, chatting, giggling or in silence and suddenly nothing was missing at all. I promised her I wouldn't tell anyone where she was. And I didn't. Although I revealed some of her secrets. Due to the fact that V is a star, many want to visit and get to know her. In the beginning, I was very generous with my knowledge about her to friends and acquaintances, but I found out quickly that it is tedious and takes too much time to convey the fascination and love for V to people who are too lazy to read about her, too lazy to prepare for her, too lazy to invest some time in her, too lazy to discover her, people who just want to put pin markers on Google Maps, whose first priority is food and the second taking selfies, people who just want to profit from her because they have neither style nor taste. There's a lot you can learn about V but not to love her.

She's the most mysterious in November, but I learned this later.

I got acquainted with many of her lovers and found them to be the best company I've ever had. They were exceptionally smart and funny and inspiring like her, and we never ran out of things to talk about, nor Prosecco. And for the first time in my life, I felt right.

Almost every night during that August in 2021 we used to sit together on a huge terrasse drinking, chatting and adoring her, while the moon illuminated her figure and the Perseids showered glimpses of sparkling light from the sky into the reflecting water surface of the grand canal. During one of these nights, I lost my heart to her, for once and for all.

She's the most poetic in December, you must know.