

scratch. We ate by candlelight and then watched a video and had a long, sensuous, teasing footrub. It was a combination of relaxing and arousing, calm and peaceful, and full of a lot of restorative aspects and private. It led to bigger, better and greater things. If I had it to do over again, I wouldn't change a thing about this one. It's one of those wonderful jewels of a memory. It doesn't have to get any better than this, and then it did.

Legal Brier

GAIL SHIBLEY
Oregon State Representative

My fantasy date is waking up every morning with my partner and realizing that we are building a life together one day at a time.

Mexican Meander

GEORGE EIGHMEY
Oregon State Representative

Peter, the man with whom I have shared the past 13 years of my life, and I were vacationing in the Yucatán Peninsula in 1993. Our trip had started out somewhat ominously with such things as finding our rental car wrecked outside our hotel, the cost of things in Cancún to be outrageously high, that Cancún was not the Mexico we wanted to visit, and all this causing a few tense moments between us. We agreed to rectify the situation by turning in the car, taking a bus to the ruins in central Yucatán, and ignoring the tourist traps.

Our "day date" started off with a great Mexican breakfast and comfortable bus ride to the ruins. We toured all day to the point of blissful exhaustion. As we were about to return to our hotel, I spotted in our guidebook a reference to a small restaurant which was supposedly hidden in a cavern near the ruins. We decided to give it a try. We walked down 3 miles of dusty roads, past odoriferous pigs and chickens, past some mangy-looking dogs, to what turned out to be a truly unique restaurant hidden deep in the caverns. We were greeted by the staff—by all of them—since



we were the only diners. We were treated as royalty. The music and food were traditional Mexican and the atmosphere, Eden-like. As we affirmed our love by candlelight and wine, it was raining torrents outside with thunder and lightning accenting the sky. We left sated with food and love. On the return to our hotel we capped the evening off with a swim in one of the underground pools that pocket the Yucatán. Truly a date to remember.

Common threads connect the lacy patterns surrounding each of these valentine vignettes: vulnerability, candlelight, foreign restaurants, home-cooked dinners, massage melting into intimate lovemaking between women, men craving to connect beyond cruising to caring—and, everywhere, water whets our urge to merge.

As for my partner and me, we mark many dates on Valentine's Day: It is the day she arrived in this

country as a young refugee from post-World War II Germany; and it is the anniversary of the day we met, 16 years ago. We have been through better and worse, sickness and health, and many, many magnificent dates. What endures is love.

In closing, what can we conclude from these variations on the ancient theme of attraction? In lust and in love, our avant-garde community always comes round to the classics. The latest style in piercing is straight through the heart. Whether you date or don't, this Valentine is for you:

*Perhaps a shiver
from Cupid's quiver
will tickle your fancy
or feather your bed.
A lighthearted wink
of Valentine pink
or full-blood obsession
of Valentine red.
Who's your pleasure?
your passion?
Your lover so fine
you dare not imagine?
Have you loved and lost?
or only longed?
There will always be love—
love's never wrong.
Love is the rhythmic tick and tock
of the universal clock.
Love may be hidden, but it's here.
Love drives the wheel of the year.*

All aboard.

Risa is collecting more dating stories, with an eye to compiling them into a book. Send yours to her in care of
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