



Title: 19 Love Songs
Author: David Levithan
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(Recommended by *School Library Journal*)

BOOK RESUME: 19 LOVE SONGS

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Born from Levithan's tradition of writing a story for his friends each Valentine's Day, this collection brings all of them to his readers for the first time. With fiction, nonfiction, and a story in verse, there's something for every reader here.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★“Every year for Valentine’s Day, Levithan writes a short story for his friends. Set up like a mixtape carefully crafted for a new crush, this is a collection of those stories, as well as tie-ins to his novels, told in 19 tracks that explore the love of friends, families, and relationships. One selection chronicles a mother’s love for her child and how it can infiltrate the details of memories, while another tackles the secrets kept in relationships and how they can bring a couple closer together. There are stories about Taylor Swift fandom, the Women’s March, 1972 gold medalist Mark Spitz, and librarians. Told in Levithan’s signature prose-driven style, this book encompasses the anticipation of new crushes, first love, and first—and second, and third—kisses. LGBT teens who often feel erased within the YA landscape will feel seen, as love of all kinds is represented: trans, gay, lesbian, as well as the love people have for words and for a community. Several stories are autobiographical, and they are honest, relatable, and will resonate with readers. Like a good mixtape, this book builds, flows, and transports readers. VERDICT A first purchase for all collections. Both teens and adults will be drawn to this title.”—*School Library Journal* starred review

★“Levithan (*Someday*) celebrates different aspects of love through song, verse, graphic art, and stories in this collection of “tracks,” many previously published in other anthologies, written with tenderness and humor. Most selections focus on gay male relationships, beginning with a story about a high school student’s “unarticulated crush” on a quiz bowl teammate and progressing on to an examination of a couple’s ups and downs through the changing seasons of one year. “Day 2934” offers a child’s perspective of his mother’s affection during one special Valentine’s Day. “We” captures the pervading atmosphere of warmth and kinship (“You are yourself and something much larger than yourself, all at once”) during a massive, peaceful protest march. Levithan’s voice resounds strongly throughout, communicating a passion for kindness, individuality, and storytelling, and frequently encapsulating the mood and profundity of single moments. Threads connect the diverse protagonists (some of whom have appeared in previous works): many characters are struggling to find their identity, and most possess a strong desire to feel understood and wanted in this optimistic reminder of the transforming power of love.”—*Publishers Weekly* starred review

★“While individual pieces are compelling, the book’s real power lies in its collective impact and unified understanding of love as a journey to self-awareness.”—*The Bulletin* starred review

Updated 3.30.2026

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*Publisher suggested age range covers the wide range of readers publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate range for their diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book’s intended use.

★“Let's start with a declaration: Levithan never disappoints, a fact skillfully evidenced in this collection of 19 stories: 16 in prose, 2 in verse, 1 in pictures, and all celebrating love. Readers will recognize some of the characters from previous Levithan novels: from *Boy Meets Boy* (2003), we have Infinite Darlene in one of the best stories in the collection; from *Two Boys Kissing* (2003), boyfriends Avery and Ryan, still sporting pink and blue hair, respectively; and from *Every Day* (2012), A, who, in this winsomely sweet story, exists as an eight-year-old boy celebrating Valentine's Day with his single-parent mother. Others offer new characters for readers to befriend, some of them Levithan himself, for at least four of the stories are clearly autobiographical. The tone of the entries varies from elegiac to matter-of-fact, from yearningly nostalgic to up-to-the-minute, from acerbic to empathetic, but all are, in their various ways, deeply satisfying and emotionally resonant. There are, of course, lovely turns of phrase: thunder sounds like a car falling from the sky and hitting the ground, a crabby character is as pleasant to be with as a news channel, and so forth. And finally, seeming to talk to the reader, one of Levithan's characters says to another, "I am words, and there you are to read them."—*Booklist* starred review

"Levithan (*Someday*, 2018, etc.) curates a playlist of 19 love-themed short-story "tracks." The first story, *Quiz Bowl Antichrist*, places a "lit-boy" on a quiz bowl team with STEM nerds—one of whom becomes his "unarticulated crush." In *Day 2934, A*—from Levithan's *Every Day* (2013)—wakes up in a child's body and shares a special mother-child Valentine's Day. Another story, *The Woods*, lets a guy in on his boyfriend's greatest secret: His boyfriend authors viral Taylor Swift fan fiction. Levithan spins sequential art by Eliopoulos (*The Adventurers Guild*, 2017, etc.), poetry, and story together for a sentimental, hopeful, and sometimes-nostalgic look at the myriad manifestations of love. Chock-full of beautiful prose and literary allusions, the collection is more a serenade to books and writing than to music. Many stories have appeared in other anthologies. Characters from *Two Boys Kissing* (2013) and *Boy Meets Boy* (2003) also appear. Told mostly in first-person and without many descriptors, many of the stories have an ambiguous yet deeply personal feel—some, like *How My Parents Met*, are outright autobiographical. The majority queer cast consists mainly of cisgender gay male romances but also contains some heartfelt lesbian and trans representation. Most stories lack racial descriptors, but a few names code diversity beyond the default white majority. Easy listening for the lovesick."—*Kirkus Reviews*

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [Interview with NCAC](#)
- [Interview with SLJ](#)
- [Interview with the YALSA Hub](#)

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