

## Lovesong

By Afaf Zurayk  
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*this portfolio speaks of love  
love as light and love as shadow  
transparent love as well as cloudy love  
for me, love become sight  
and sight is light  
love shed its light inward  
making understanding  
possible  
and I grew  
my childhood gave me  
a crystal bowl  
for safekeeping  
i broke the rim  
it's healing*

Beirut-based artist Afaf Zurayk has created what she calls a portfolio that “speaks of love” – a collection of love poetry. Her poetic verse and watercolor paintings were transformed into a light and airy 56-page meditation on love and all its complications.

While the poems are intensely personal, they touch on emotions affecting us all – “love as light and love as shadow.” Interspersed with the poems are drawings and paintings that are dreamy and ethereal in appearance and harmonize with the theme of the collection. *Lovesong* unfolds rhythmically to echo love as it moves forward and backward in time. The handmade paper was chosen for its lightness and transparency to help express the presence of the past and the future as it hovers in the present moment. The precious and almost secretive nature of love and loving is found in the design of the cover that becomes a hidden treasure to discover and behold. The design reinforces the concept that love found – and/or love lost – is bound by a thread.

Held closed with a snug-fitting, watercolor-painted belly band, the book’s soft Marcate Tintoretto outer cover with felt marked finish and deckled edges further enhances the dreamlike quality of the 19 color paintings within. And like any dream, the cover turns out not to be all that it seems. The Singer hand-sewn binding cleverly binds one of the author’s paintings to the inside pages and is then folded over twice to create a double-thick cover.

Ultimately, the cottony paper and gentle watercolors make *Lovesong* – limited to just 1,000 copies – the print equivalent of spying a former lover through the rain-slicked window of a warm café. Ain’t love grand?

The recipient of the 2011 Beirut Art Book Fair Book Design Award, *Lovesong* is an exquisite celebration of one of the deepest and strongest of human emotions. *Lovesong* is dedicated to the memory of Afaf’s mother Najla Zurayk.