



Pantoum

BY [RANDALL MANN](#)

If there is a word in the lexicon of love,
it will not declare itself.

The nature of words is to fail
men who fall in love with men.

It will not declare itself,
the perfect word. *Boyfriend* seems ridiculous:
men who fall in love with men
deserve something a bit more formal.

The perfect word? Boyfriend? Ridiculous.
But *partner* is . . . businesslike—
we deserve something a bit less formal,
much more in love with love.

But if partner is businesslike,
then *lover* suggests only sex,
is too much in love with love.
There is life outside of the bedroom,

and lover suggests only sex.
We are left with *roommate*, or *friend*.
There is life, but outside of the bedroom.
My *friend* and I rarely speak of one another.

To my left is my roommate, my friend.
If there is a word in the lexicon of love,
my friend and I rarely speak it of one another.
The nature of words is to fail.

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