

## Daniel Romo

### Love Song for Matthew McConaughey

*"I have no problem with commitment. In fact, I love having someone in my life."*  
-Matthew McConaughey

I wouldn't call it a *man crush*.

Because I'm not too ashamed to declare—  
You are more than mere man, and I'm not some  
Self-conscious sophomore gushing  
At the prospect of a temporary squeeze,  
A Friday night post football game flashback  
Hidden within your laugh lines.

And every time you smile it's as if you're  
Paying homage to the sun  
For bestowing you that bronzed, taut torso,  
Because his beams were partial to a Texan twang  
That even then, rang Alamo bell towers  
Upon your lovely birth.

You're a real-life version of the  
Shirtless, charismatic characters you play  
Christening you worthy of Oscars,  
And paparazzi flash, looking to profit off pictures  
Of you jogging briskly down Doheny Drive.

But I wouldn't call it a *man crush*.

Because I'm not gay, and this is more of an admiration,  
A "McCon-aholic" invitation if you will  
For all who wish to thank you for filming  
Love scenes opposite slinky starlets  
Kissing them hard as if you're doing it for us,  
For every man in the theatre who doesn't look as good  
As you undressed,  
As if your lips are our lips,  
And your pecs are our pecs.

I *Wikipedia'd* you last night Matthew David McConaughey  
Born November 4, 1969 in Uvalde, Texas to Mary and James...  
McConaughey,  
And discovered your personal motto  
Is *Just Keep Livin'*, and I felt intrusive, guilty, selfish,  
Because that's what we do through you.

You are a martyr Mathew McConaughey.  
A Bud Lite drinkin', talkin' box scores man's man,  
A perfectly pleasin', two-steppin' lady's man,  
A candlelit star whose splendorous vapors  
Remain firmly rooted in real life,  
Embodying all that is beautiful,  
In this Hollywood world.

## Question

At the meeting conducted by the assistant principals,  
They told us how we are losing our children.  
That we need to plan lessons with more rigor and relevance.  
That our students are playing catch-up to India.

The day before in my Creative Writing class, Arthur Platt,  
Who sat in the assistant principals' offices many times,  
Asked anyone who'd listen—

“Did you know that we lose 40 to 100 strands of hair a day?  
And that the Neanderthal's brain was bigger than ours?  
And that India has more sex than any country in the world?”

To which Paul Sizemore replied, “Book me a flight to India *homie*.”

They put bite-size chocolates on the tables to appease us.  
And for some it seems to suffice; but not me,  
Showing us graphs on degrees of retention.

“We need to use our instruction minutes wisely.  
Students can't learn if they're not actively engaged.  
They'll never fulfill our expectations if we can't  
Stimulate them enough to pay attention.  
As educators, it's our job to...”

I just stared at the spinning ceiling fans  
Imagining I was in Calcutta,  
A transcendental passenger reflecting in a rickshaw  
Letting someone else earning meager pay lead *me* around,  
So I can raise my hand and quizzically ask,

*“What are we supposed to do again?”*

## Living

I'm at the Y trying to finish that last pull-up  
Ignoring my leaden torso the weight of too many burdens,  
As if fulfilling the fullness of the number 10  
Will actually make me a fitter and better person,  
When *Bon Jovi* filters through the cost efficient speakers  
Over the classic rock station.

It's as if Jon and his big-haired namesakes  
Wrote that song specifically for this moment  
With me in mind.

*"Whooooaaahhhh, we're halfway there. Whooaahh-oh,  
Liiiiiiiving on a praa-ayer.  
Take my hand and we'll make it I swear."*

He swears we'll make it.  
And I believe him.

I believe that my thirty-something years on this planet  
Has taught me never to underestimate the power of goodwill,  
And the inspiration of an 80's power ballad.  
I believe that despite man's best efforts to thwart himself,  
In the end he gets what he deserves.

Yet I wonder why we intrinsically rely upon music  
To get us through difficult times in our lives.  
I wonder if musicians listen to their own songs  
While *they're* working out.  
And I wonder when *Bon Jovi* became classic rock.

My grip loosens. Fingertips numb. Because failing and feelings  
Have always been one in the same for me.

But my body pushes on in spite of itself,  
Pulling my grinding jaw over the metal bar  
Society has set for thirty-somethings like me,  
Where childhood mantras in the form of pop music play  
Still ringing true, and middle age is just a faded dream away.

*“We’ve got to hold on to what we’ve got,  
It doesn’t make a difference if we make it or not.”*

But this is where he is wrong. It does make a difference.  
*Making it*, makes all the difference  
In the world Jon.

## Homeroom

The wide receiver who plays for New York,  
Whose team actually plays in New Jersey,  
Accidentally shot himself at 1 a.m.  
In the nightclub.

You know,  
The one who made that catch as if  
Every muscle and nerve in his taut body  
Had been preparing for that Superbowl moment  
Ever since he left the inner city.

You know,  
The one with the cool nickname  
That bestows him an All-Pro cog  
In an I-formation constellation.

Why can't teachers be christened slick monikers?  
We sweat too.  
Like *Lightnin'* or *Bolt*.  
I'd want to be called... *Rainmaker*.

"*Rainmaker*. Are we gonna' write an essay today,  
Because I hate essays."

"*Rainmaker*. My mom wants to have a parent conference with you,  
Because she wants to know why you're failing me."

"*Rainmaker*... You're my favorite teacher."

The judge gave him a minimum of twenty months  
For shooting himself in the thigh,  
While Buckner got twenty years  
For shooting himself in the foot,  
Failing to get down far enough on the  
Slow roller to first.

"*Rainmaker*. Who's *Buckner*?"

## Negative

The results of the paternity test  
On the morning talk show that only focuses  
On baby momma' drama  
And transgender makeovers  
Were obvious when the charismatic host announced,  
*"You are NOT the father!"*  
Turns out, neither was his brother.

And the young unwed mother  
Who upon first glance  
Looked like a resident of Bedford Falls,  
But whose deliberate urban accent claimed  
Westside Bedford Sty  
Cried as if every DNA test thereafter  
Would be a rerun reminding her  
Of reoccurring failure,  
And bad decisions made.

*"You do NOT have the job!"*  
*"You can NOT buy the car!"*  
*"He is NOT the father either!"*

Sometimes it's necessary  
To change the channel,  
Make the decision  
To get off your ass  
And search for the remote,  
Rather than subject yourself to  
Infinite daytime drabble  
And what you are not.

Because who wants a daily dose of that shit?  
Not me.