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Nota di contenuto	Love plays God -- The foundation of Western love : Hebrew scripture -- From physical desire to paradise : Plato -- Love as perfect friendship : Aristotle -- Love as sexual desire : Lucretius and Ovid -- Love as the supreme virtue : Christianity -- Why Christian love isn't unconditional -- Women on top : love and the troubadours -- How human nature became loveable : from the high Middle Ages to the Renaissance -- Love as joyful understanding of the whole : Spinoza -- Love as enlightened romanticism : Rousseau -- Love as religion : Schlegel and Novalis -- Love as the urge to procreate : Schopenhauer -- Love as affirmation of life : Nietzsche -- Love as a history of loss : Freud -- Love as terror and tedium : Proust -- Love reconsidered.
Sommario/riassunto	Love-unconditional, selfless, unchanging, sincere, and totally accepting-is worshipped today as the West's only universal religion. To challenge it is one of our few remaining taboos. In this pathbreaking and superbly written book, philosopher Simon May does just that, dissecting our resilient ruling ideas of love and showing how they are the product of a long and powerful cultural heritage. Tracing over 2,500 years of human thought and history, May shows how our ideal of love developed from its Hebraic and Greek origins alongside Christianity until, during the last two centuries, "God is love" became "love is God"- so hubristic, so escapist, so untruthful to the real nature of love, that it has booby-trapped relationships everywhere with deluded

expectations. Brilliantly, May explores the very different philosophers and writers, both skeptics and believers, who dared to think differently: from Aristotle's perfect friendship and Ovid's celebration of sex and "the chase," to Rousseau's personal authenticity, Nietzsche's affirmation, Freud's concepts of loss and mourning, and boredom in Proust. Against our belief that love is an all-powerful solution to finding meaning, security, and happiness in life, May reveals with great clarity what love actually is: the intense desire for someone whom we believe can ground and affirm our very existence. The feeling that "makes the world go round" turns out to be a harbinger of home--and in that sense, of the sacred.

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