

## I LOVE YOU

Devoted sons and daughters  
and superstitious dads fearful  
that any farewell or phone call  
may be their last make a point

of signing off with it every time.  
Couples have quotas or rituals  
like always after sex or before  
heading off to work. And never

underestimate the potency of  
each solitary saying compared  
to multiple ones over a lifetime.  
Take the guy (I imagine him as

a guy) who won't or can't say it,  
or maybe he has said it before  
or one day will, last chance, on  
his death bed. Why is that not

the big story here, redemption  
and salvation in one go, worth  
all rote repetitions regardless  
of how rooted they are in true

love? Why hasn't he cornered  
the market on emoting if it has  
taken him a whole life to cough  
the damn phrase up? I expect

he said it once and, unrequited,  
chose to stop, so it's a problem  
of hearing not saying: those who  
didn't, don't—they chose to stop.