



## *Context of Love Defined*

*By Marcus Lander (July 2011)*

I was inspired to write this poem after being invited to stay along with my family with a couple of very lovely Romanian friends of ours. They were Messianic believers like us, and they attended the same synagogue as us for a year or two. The man was a sculptor and his wife was a haematologist. When we visited them we stayed with them in their hospital accommodation. On this particular occasion they were based in the Liverpool area, so it was quite a long drive from the Midlands where we lived.

When we arrived late on Friday afternoon however, it transpired that we were missing one of the suitcases my wife had prepared—the one that contained all of her clothes. I had a feeling that when I loaded the car, my wife may not have explicitly drawn my attention to this one, and that is why it had been omitted, however this piece of hindsight did little to console my wife who was rather distraught over the prospect of having no clothes for our stay.

Our hosts however were unphased, and reassured my wife that these little mishaps were, if not common place, at least not unprecedented, and that rather than being the calamity she felt it to be, could actually be an opportunity for her to buy some new clothes. So they accompanied us to the supermarket to ensure that we got everything we needed and helped to calm my wife down.

They cooked a great Sabbath evening meal and had prepared our room for us with attention to detail and a welcome message on the dressing table mirror.

As an idea for a joint excursion over the weekend, I had concocted a plan to visit Hilbre island, which can be reached by walking when the tide is out, but as the tide returns it becomes surrounded with water leaving visitors stranded. It seemed like an excellent adventure to me, although I had perhaps not entirely calculated on how windswept and inhospitable the place could be on a squally day, and our lady host was slightly concerned that she might catch a cold on account of the rough weather, as working with critically ill patients, undergoing chemotherapy and having compromised immune systems, catching a cold could be a life threatening event for one of those under her care. However it was too late to turn back at that point, so we pressed on. The wind had whipped up the sea into a froth that resembled bubble bath and I had a short swim with some grey seals. The wife and children were getting rather cold and miserable, however fortunately someone opened the signal station building so they could shelter from the worst of the elements. It was definitely a memorable trip, made all the more so by our friends' company and good humour. To me they exemplified the very essence of love. They were always kind, generous and hospitable to us, and they will remain in our hearts and memories forever.