

# Valentine card, 1790

2

This is the earliest Valentine card in Royal Mail's collection. It is a handmade puzzle, or 'rebus' which unfolds to reveal poetic messages. Valentine cards became popular in the 19th century: in the week before Valentine's day in 1841 there were 1,706,000 items delivered – the largest weekly total thus far. In 2001, Royal Mail delivered 12,250,000 Valentines.

## Transcription

### Outside front:

My dear the heart which you behold  
Will break when you the same unfold  
Even so my heart with lovesick pain  
Sure wounded is and breaks in twain.

### Outside back:

In this inside sweet Turtle Dove  
I've wrote a moral of my love  
To thou my dear and only Joy  
Requite me now and be not coy.  
Banish my rivals from your sight  
And with your love now me requite  
Cupid's my guide and does my hand direct  
To write to you, whom I so much respect  
You are my dear the centre of my joy  
It's your absence my happiness destroy  
It's you alone to whom I now do write  
That scorns my heart and ravishes my sight  
So now the powers of envy can't pretend  
To say that I false stories to you send

### Inside – around edges:

#### 1st

My dearest dear and blest divine  
I've pictured here thy heart and mine

But cupid with his fatal dart  
Hath deeply wounded my poor heart

And hath betwixt us set a cross  
Which makes me lament my loss

But now I hope when this is gone  
That our two hearts will join as one.

### Inside – nearer centre:

#### 1st

You are my dear the girl and only maid  
That wholly hath my yielding heart betray'd  
The thoughts of you are always in my mind  
So be not cruel nor prove to me unkind

#### 2nd

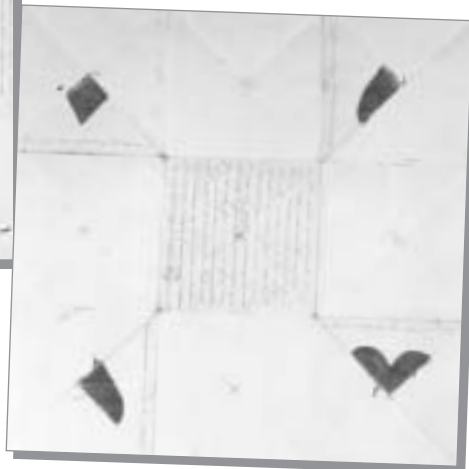
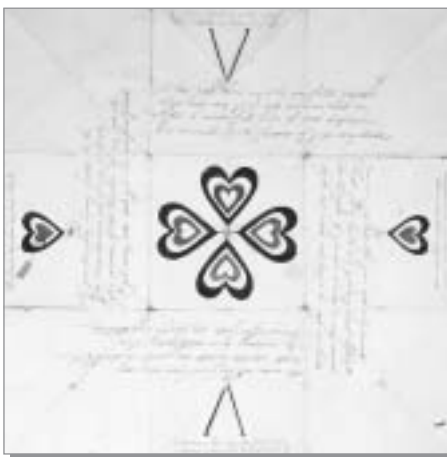
For never will my heart have any ease  
Untill our two hearts are joined and linked like these.  
My meaning is in matrimony Joy  
Which to for fear my happiness destroy

#### 3rd

If you deny my loving bride to be  
You then bereave me of my felicity  
By reasons of the troubles of my mind  
I yet may care and yet no comfort find

#### 4th

So then pale Death myst be my fatal friend  
And bring my grief and sorrows to an End  
After a mournfull time of sad despair  
Occasioned by the frowns of you my dear.



Two parts of the same paper are used  
which make the one lament only to be



So then death must be my fatal friend  
And being my grief and sorrow's end  
After a most full time of sad despair  
Convinced by the presence of you my dear

My heart is so full of grief  
Which deeply wounded my heart almost



If you find my loving letters to be  
You then receive me of my liberty  
By course of the drops of my impure  
I get may come and yet no comfort find



You are my dear the pill and only maid  
That still hath my quivering heart before  
The thoughts of you are always in my mind  
I've not and not have to my own kind

My heart is so full of grief  
Which deeply wounded my heart almost



The never told my heart have any care  
While one has hearts are gone I think  
The meaning is in matrimony they  
When for fear my happiness destroy



My heart is so full of grief  
Which deeply wounded my heart almost

