CONTENTS

Acknowledgments xi
Preface: Who Do You Love? xiii

Introduction: What Is This Thing Called Love? 1
  So What Is Love? 2
  Love Is a Many Splendored Thing—and the Greeks Had a Word for
    All of the Types 4
  The Basics of Your Brain in Love and Sex 6
  I’ve Got You Under My Skull: Love in Your Brain 7
  You Make Me Feel So Good: The Pleasure Center 8
  The Very Thought of You 9
  How Scientists Research Love and Sex in Your Brain 10

1 Born to Love: Why People Need People 15
  Do You See What I See? How Mirror Neurons Connect Us 17
  The Dangers of Involuntary Mind Merging 22
  The Chemistry of Love 23
  Love Is Everywhere: Where Love Grows in the Brain 26
  A Brain Unable to Love: Inside the Brain of a Psychopath 27
  Baby Face, You’ve Got the Cutest Little Baby Face 33

2 Learning to Love 35
  How Your Parents Affect Your Love Life 36
  Love at First Sight: The Earliest Lessons in Love 39
  If You Could Read My Mind: Moms Do 42
A Mother’s Everlasting Love  43
How Parenting Primes Your Brain for Love  45
Parenting Rewires the Daddy Brain as Well  46
How Father Love Feeds Both Brains  47
Postpartum Depression: Misery for Mom and Baby  50
Loving the One Who Hurts You: Why Children Cling to Abusers  51
What If Things Went Wrong with That First Love?  52
In the End: Do Parents Matter?  54

3  His Brain, Her Brain, Gay Brain, and Other Brains  57
How Real Are the Differences?  58
The Five Genders of the Brain  60
His Brain, Her Brain: The Geography  61
So What Does This Have to Do with Love?  63
Our Changeable Brains  66
Some Myths About Male and Female Brains: True or False?  68
Toujours Gay: The Gay Brain Is Born That Way  72
Can Animals Be Gay? Better to Call It Bisexual  74
I Am What I Am  76
The Third Gender: When Gender and Sex Do Not Align  79
Are There Asexuals Among Us? On the Possibility of a Fourth Sexual Orientation  81

4  That Old Black Magic: Your Brain in Love  85
How Love and Sex Are Good for Your Brain  88
When Love Occupies Your Brain  90
Who Do You Love? And Who Loves Ya, Baby?  91
You Go to My Nose: The Power of Smell over Sex  96
A Kiss Is (More Than) Just a Kiss  102
You Light Up My Brain  104
What’s Love Got to Do with It? Plenty It Turns Out—for Women  108
Need Some Love Potion? Try a Bit of Oxytocin Spray  109
I’ll Have What She’s Having: What Makes a Better Female Orgasm?  110
Does the Penis Have a Brain of Its Own?  112
When Things Go Wrong: A Fine Romance  115

5  Friendship, Such a Perfect Blendship: Or, with a Little Help from My Friends  121
Is Friendship Declining?  123
Are You Lonesome Tonight? 60 Million Other Americans Are  125
You’ve Got a Friend—or You Should!  126
Widening the Social Circle  129
Imaginary Friends: TV Characters Can Ease Your Pain  130
Until the Real Thing Comes Along: Your Brain on Facebook  133
Work, the “Other Love” in Your Life  135
Can Animals Love? Yes, and More  136
How to Make Friends  139

6  Only You Can Make My Dreams Come True: Let’s Get Married  143
Grow Old Along with Me: The Marriage Benefits  144
You Make Me Feel So Good: Romance Lowers Stress  145
Finding That Special Someone: Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places?  146
Falling and Staying in Love  148
I’ve Grown Accustomed to Your Face  150
My One and Only Love: Are We Monogamous?  151
Granny’s Got to Have It  153
Your Hormones May Drive You Apart: A Tough Pill to Swallow  155
Making Love Last: I Get a Kick out of You  156
Can Pornography Help Your Love Life?  158
Love Will Keep Us Together: Lasting Romance Is Embossed in the Brain  159
Will You Still Need Me When I’m 64?  161
Contents

7 You’ve Lost That Lovin’ Feelin’: When Love Dies 165
   Breaking Up Is Hard to Do: How Rejection Affects Your Brain 166
   The Jilted Brain 167
   After the Love Is Gone—you Ache and Ache 169
   Can’t Live If Living Is Without You: The Widowhood Effect 171
   Achy Breaky Heart: Can You Die of a Broken Heart? 172
   Ain’t No Cure for Love—but Acetaminophen Could Help 172
   Every Time You Say Good-Bye, I Die a Little: Why It Hurts to Leave Your Lover 174
   Broken Promises: Can the Brain Predict Betrayal? 176
   Coping with a Breaking Heart 178

8 For the Love of God 181
   Searching for God in Your Brain 182
   Epilepsy, the Temporal Lobe, and God 182
   Strokes of Insight: Brain Changes and Spiritual Awakening 184
   Religious Ecstasy Is Like Romantic Love—in the Brain at Least 186
   God on the Brain: What Brain Scans Show 188
   Could Religion Shrink Your Brain? 190
   The Evolutionary Roots of God Thought 191
   God Neurons May Be Everywhere 192

9 Technology, Science, and the Future of Sex 195
   The Wonderful World of Cybersex 196
   Sex in Bits and Bytes: The Future of Virtual Sex Is Here 199

10 How Can Love Survive? 201
   But What of Love? 204

Glossary 207
Sources 215
Illustration Credits 229
About the Author 231
Index 233