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Love, Sex, and the Ozarks: Breaking Stereotypes and Celebrating Women and Their Sexuality in
the Poetry of Dave Malone

The literature of the Ozarks and love poetry have often been overlooked and neglected, but Dave Malone uses both to create poetry that is feminist and celebratory of women's sexuality. Love poetry, literature, art, and American society in general, have long treated women's sexuality as shameful, taboo, and not as important, while simultaneously objectifying women for their own purposes. Malone's poetry uses sex and intimacy between the male speaker and the female subject to rebel against gender roles and stereotypes and presents women's sexuality as not shameful or taboo, but important and beautiful. Most love poetry features women as quiet, flat ingredients who are only as important as their connection to the male speaker. Malone gives the women in his poetry dimension and makes them participants and not just the thing being talked about. Malone's poetry highlights the region of the Ozarks, it is feminist in how it celebrates women and their sexuality, and it connects romantic love to sex.