

[Ludwig von Beethoven](#) (1770–1827), German-born [genius](#) of classical composition, never married, but he had romantic feelings for many women throughout his life, even as he was plagued by debilitating hearing loss and frequent bouts of extreme depression. This explains why the list of names of women who are eligible to be his “Immortal Beloved” is a mile long. On either July 6 or July 7, 1812, Beethoven penned a passionate letter in which he bestowed upon the addressee the monikers of “my angel” and “my dearest creature,” but most memorably “Immortal Beloved.” He wrote in frustration of travel plans gone awry and the unbearable restlessness he was suffering as a result of separated from the addressee. This invaluable historic document, ten pages long and scribbled hastily in pencil, was discovered among Beethoven’s belongings following his death. The world remains puzzled by it—not just because it was never sent, but because it still isn’t clear for whom it was meant.

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