

CHAPTER SIX

TEMPORARY INSANITY/CYCLICAL IRRESPONSIBILITY

My sister used to say that there was something wrong with me. Undoubtedly you will say that there is quite a bit more than one thing amiss in the beehive structure of my personality. And, you will add, that it is the very perfection of those imperfections, the balance of flaws, that ordain us in love forever. You see, you repeat yourself. And I memorize.

Heloise used to tell me that I ought to take women as full on dangerous as men in the competition for the bases of establishment of self and maintenance of resources. Women are cold blooded creatures, she says. But I don't believe her. The women I meet are swamped by their day to day activities and responsibilities. Occasionally there is a Miss, who fancies she's a Mister, and bellows like the bulls. But an interesting woman is no threat and an uninteresting woman, powerful as Croesus, is still as uninteresting as the Devil himself. I disagree with Tolstoy on this. Soap operas have proven, without a doubt, in my mind at any rate, that all unhappiness is regurgitatingly the same. Every unhappy family, relationship, situation, a variation on the same twang. Whereas happiness is so rare as to be practically unrecognizable, unique as a snowflake or a butterfly. Undoubtedly every instance of life, we will one day realize, is unique beyond our sense ability to recognize. I speak as an old woman. Yes, I am. Despite what you would have me believe, I know what I know. I have lived enough for two old women thank you. Be pleased and satisfied that I fancy myself only one of them. Can you imagine living with me in duplicate? "Ha! Twice the fun!" you say, I laugh and think of us on the ridge of Honey Mountain, barely twenty... what was I saying? Oh, yes - that we are all unique in the eyes of eternity.

The reason that I feel, contra Tolstoy, that happiness is unique and unhappiness not, is, first, that there is so much more unhappiness, it blurs the mind into indivisible blocks of meaninglessness. Secondly, unhappiness is contagious and, according to esteemed anthropologists, is a critical bonding force in female subcultures. Inclusion in these groups is often based on shared miseries.

People are fundamentally mimics. Auntie so and so, suffered such and such and so shall I. Mark so and so, got so much love when he suffered thus and so, so shall I. You see? Well, it's quite clear to me. And to full fill my argument, though I know you would be too interested to argue and would rather ask me which bread I had bought for the toast for by now you have forgotten that the ones in the freezer marked with the T are for toast. Easy? I do love you. How you find your way around the world and still get lost inside our three story house? I cannot fathom it.

The other point to clarify, so I can make a convert of you, know that you fully comprehend my meaning, is that happiness, the real thing - by the by, the otherwise so perspicacious Tolstoy, believing himself unhappy and unique, convinced himself that the two are equivalent, he was completely taken in by the false masks of polite society,

he thought happiness was the superficial "How are you? Fine, and you?" routines. This was his fatal flaw, that he could not recognize happiness in himself or in others. He was fooled by the most shallow shadow plays of joy. Great men have the most extraordinary blind spots. Of course great women have perfect vision (kidding!) - happiness is a process, not a state of being. It is inside the moments of being true to one's calling and bliss is the powerful light, the lamp that Jesus refers to, the inner truth of talent, unhampered by philosophy, the burning bush, the sort of truth no one wants to think exists because, if it does, then pain and sacrifice can no longer be justified for the maintenance of power elites.

The transformative power of pain, the humbling refinery of sacrifice, were the lessons of the original rituals, the esoteric meaning of the crucifixion. Continuous pain is not the truth of life. We are not meant to endure constant pain. We are meant to survive and grow through pain's periodic recurrence. When I put this into words I feel like I'm going in circles.

Back to Jacqui Cericinotte. She stood a head smaller than myself. Almost childlike from your point of view, but you are very tall, which you never seem to fully cognate, as am I, my darling, and so lucky to have found you. I was marked out early by my father and mother to be the old maid intellectual of the bunch and imagine their surprise when you turned up. Strange how things turn out. I wish we had married before my father died. I wanted him to give me away. Silly, these old fashioned things, I know. He shall give me away in heaven. We shall remarry there, what do you say? A great reunion. And quite the party that will be. Oh, I am utterly morbid today, it must be the lunch, it was horrible, I couldn't eat a bite, the meat smelled rancid to me. The vegetables today were awful rooty things. All I was able to stomach was the tea. God help me but I am hungry.

American Indian, Jacqui, through her mother and black Irish through her father. I have no idea why she was small. She says that she didn't eat properly as a child, her mother tried to feed her but she wasn't interested in anything but adventure. Lovely dark hair and dark eyes. A full mouth and large breasts which she contends she earned in bed. Like the obverse of the blind fish in the Blue Grotto, she used them so they grew. What a child she must have been!

She was on her way to be married, as I said, and quite a bit excited about it too. I suggested she write the story of her life. She said that, when she was twenty four, after she had achieved her Master's degree, she made a vow to never pick up a pen again, except to sign her name, write checks, that sort of thing. She said she had finally come to realize, after years of indecision, that she must choose between creating life or creating art. For her, the pen was the road to an art, an artified non-authentic life. She chose she said to loose her words into life.