

CHAPTER NINE

SOUNDING

But is virility necessarily violent? You have never been violent towards me. You directed your virility toward pursuits, sailing around the world, teaching, building ships. I don't mean, darling, that you were not the father of our children or the delight of my evening hours, you were! I mean that your sense of yourself as a man was fulfilled in many areas simultaneously and, instead of diluting the effect, it increased your power, clarified your senses and brought us where we are today.

I realize that I'm talented and I've worked hard. But, at the beginning of our marriage, I was not much different than the average woman of my generation, that is, in my expectations of myself. I was prepared to live for you and by you, create the atmosphere, the environment that would be conducive to you and the children's growth. I held all the proper young lady's self sacrificing ideals. My love, if you knew how much you opened my eyes to my needless inhibitions in all the areas of my life. It never occurred to me, for instance, that I would accomplish something of merit outside the family realm. I thought that everyone's talent made itself apparent early in life, with success following soon after, if not financial success, then certainly recognition of effort. I had gone to college and been, for the most part, invisible, so I determined that I was meant to be a mother and wife. But you kept asking me questions.

Do you remember this? You asked me the most interesting questions and we talked about issues I was interested in. You read up on my subjects as well as your own. You brought me books as well as flowers and read them too. You spoke with Maggie and Elizabeth, exactly as you spoke with Josh, expected the same quality of response from all three. And for me you planted seeds of discontent and wonder. Watered all of us with your sunny disposition, your support of our projects even when truly bizarre. No one's projects were as strange as yours, you said. Support flowed freely at our house.

Do you remember when Josh built his first dirigible in the backyard? Cost us a pretty penny, but the cars were shiny, the garage spic and span, the dog walked to exhaustion. Oh, you were the most divine father. Did we make you happy in those days? I hope so. We were so proud of you, the risks you took, the successes you had, the failures you sustained. Well, enough of this, it makes me miss you atrociously and it will be ages til I see your face again. On with my story -