

CHAPTER SIX

SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

"I noticed, she said, that the young men I met were much less interested in love than in the acquisition of more tangible affects. Power figured high in the minds of the men I knew, whereas love was the goal of all the women I knew. Women think that love provides security. Men are more inclined to think that power is the currency that can buy security. But everyone I asked, male and female, defined security as the acquisition and maintenance of a career with advancement possibilities, a comfortable home and a presentable partner of the opposite sex. One or two attained this paradigm but life disdains security. Get yourself into a situation that you feel is stable and it will, of a mad suddenness, dissipate into chaos, full tilt and roiling. a healthy plant dissipates into flowering, explodes into its seed, withers aspects and begins again.

"Having begun life in a chaotic family, I craved security and so fit in well with my peers. I achieved at school and was able to get a good job with benefits. Benefits is what management calls the money that pays for the ill health and diminished capacities directly accountable to, but never openly acknowledged by those responsible for your job.

"All of this was fine with me. I was searching for the unspoiled picture, the happy woman in a spotless kitchen filled with shiny new appliances, surrounded by happy clean children, a dog, a cat, birds in cages, fish in tanks, a gerbil on a treadmill. Like a king visiting a loyal subject, Mr. Clean would live my toilet. My house would smell fresh at all times. My children's noses would never be runny in public. The man in the picture was only sporadically in the picture because he would work hard, make money, keep us safely in the state called marital bliss. Whenever he joined the picture, he would be well dressed, well pressed, polite and emotionally giving. He would play with the children and love me passionately at night. He would not have women all over the neighborhood. We would be Protestants. Even our religion would be squeaky clean. Throughout my early puberty this was my design for life.

"It never once occurred to me that the pictures in magazines were mostly advertisements attempting to tempt me with the insatiable prolonged desire for progressively more expensive major appliances. These advertising campaigns were so successful that there are now many men and women whose private lives are consumed by their appliances. A successful playwright, I heard tell, watches filthy movies and masturbates for hours. He is so enmeshed in this behavior that he often greets friends at the door, television blaring in the background, his fly unzipped. He'll tell them to come in, make themselves at home. Once everyone is ensconced in his den, he thinks nothing of slipping his hand inside his pants and stroking himself while he listens with one ear to the conversations around him. No one has ever dared mention their discomfort. They respect his talent,

his ability to get them good paying work. They don't want to offend. The den remains in darkness except for the flickering screen. "It's his house. If he wants to hold his dick in his own house, it is his dick. Right?" I picture his penis red and sore, a magnet compelling his constant caresses. "If you want anything done right, you gotta do it yourself."

"I saw Oprah interviewing women on tv who say they sit on dishwashers and washing machines to pleasure themselves. Some of them said that their partners were hopeless at foreplay, so they make sure that they get themselves aroused before letting their man near them. Some said that they're making the best of a bad situation, others that the machines are better, more reliable than men. The machines are always hard and, given the batteries are charged, energetic. Vibrators are considered not just healthy, not only normal, but de rigeur for sexual sophisticates, single women and bored housewives, doesn't that pretty much cover everyone? "No one can rely on anyone else these days. "

"And cars, whoa! Everyone is in love with their car. Speed. Comfort. Solitude with the stereo turned up, the seats pulsing. They only have to reach down between their legs and let her rip. In our post Freudian, post modern paradise we masturbate with impunity even creativity. It is considered Neanderthal to caution moderation in this or any sexual activity. Sexual self-pleasuring is a right, guaranteed by the Constitution, under the pursuit of happiness clause. "Everyone is out for numero uno."

"I don't intend to mourn for my life. I intend to share my joys. Women are survivors, we have transformed ourselves to suit the times, no longer women mad with grief and rage, we are beauties bathing in self-generated bliss, ecological feminists."