

CHAPTER TWELVE

ECSTASY

"The man of flowers was a vegetarian. He spent two hours a day practicing music, one hour a day meditating, he ate two meals a day, drank fresh water copiously. This he explained to me. What he was attempting was clarity. There we were, flesh to flesh.

"Are priests supposed to do that?" I asked. "All priests aren't Catholic. In fact, even among Catholics, many men feel they'd have an easier time talking to priests who aren't celibates. On the other hand those same guys don't want their wives confessing to horny porkers. The way it falls is guys choosing self-protection over self-revelation, especially when it comes to sex."

"The man of flowers knew he had a priest aspect inside. He needed to explore and integrate this aspect into the wholeness of his being before he could do anything else.

"The man of flowers didn't go to church, except for the occasional wedding and feast day celebration. Both his parents were artists. His mother was a writer and his father was a musician, a pianist. His mother wrote gothic novels. His father was a concert pianist, probably a genius, a Czech refugee, romantic as a concept but not an easy man to live with. His father traveled to play, record or teach. His mother was the stable guiding force in his life but she never helped him to comprehend his father or why his father neglected him. She idealized her Czech genius husband and would hear no ill of him.

"The man of flowers had much guilt about his anger at his father. It had taken him a long time to realize his mother's numbness, her buried despair. We discussed how our parents had polarized personalities, how they lived out one extreme of their nature, allowing their partner to live out the other, how we felt we contained those extremes within ourselves, the roaring and the tearing of those opposites. We longed to reconcile these opposing natures. We were exhausted with relationships that ended in screaming across chasms of despair and misunderstanding.

"On the other hand, people very similar, were hardly ever attracted to one another, there was a frisson lacking, no tension calling for resolve, no question needing answers, no questing needing grails. With each other, we felt a peacefulness, a calm, less wondering about whether we would be accepted by the other, more joy in the fact of companionship. But we knew too that we didn't have long. Like telling the story of your life to a stranger on a bus, or a plane, giving the story away, letting the river of life wash us into the ocean of time. Nothing is said that is not known. Nothing unsaid is not known either. The man

of flowers matched my invisible childhood companions for his ability to share with me the sweetness, the flavor of fresh life.

"He was the visible personification of my pantheistic world. And he tasted like flowers, sweet, pungent and light, a taste more like an odor than a taste. I tasted him by accident. He was asleep and I was resting my head on his thigh, listening to music playing quietly on the stereo. It was early morning, we had broken time into the forty eight hour sequence that people in caves prefer. We were in the womb of love. We slept at intervals unrelated to the habits of our real lives. My head on his thigh, I could hear the blood in his larger veins, feel the pulse against my ear. Life was listening into me. The other, with his deeper sound, a deeper tone to the rhythms of his cells, the moving and the building of his being.

"The sun moved gradually until it was full in my eyes. I have always looked straight into the sun, ever since the first eclipse I ever witnessed, when we were told not to, that the sun would blind us if we were to look up. Especially if we looked at this glorious, historical, spiritual eclipse without the special, stupid looking, devices or glasses. If we were to ignore these warnings, the authorities warned, we might see that eclipse but it would be the last thing we would ever see. It wasn't logical. I had often looked at the sun, lying on the grass, laughing, looking up, seen the sun breaking through the leaves, thick on a summer tree, branches blowing in the wind. The sun would shoot her powerful essence straight through my eyes into my soul.

"I have always adored the sun. I assumed that everyone felt the way I did. I assumed that everyone drank the clear water from the miniature waterfalls that tumble down roadside rock walls in early spring. Don't they? Everyone lays down on the grass to look at dew jewels on spider webs gracing the blue green grass of early morning. Everyone looks at the mother sun. Don't they? The plants lean towards her, love her, suck her in. The trees reach towards her. The cock sings for her. We were born to live beneath her. Why not look at her?

"Who told the ancients not to look at the sun? For millions of years people have walked around looking at their feet? No one, in all these years has looked up? Has lain looking into the heart of our world without going blind? It was ridiculous. No matter how I looked at it, the idea that the sun was blinding was more blinding than the sun herself.

"I saw that eclipse with naked eyes. I saw summer suns in clouded skies. I saw winter suns through the frost, autumn suns through wind tossed leaves. The spring sun rose and broke through the lace curtains my mother had given me, that she and my aunt had made for me. I wish I knew how to make lace. They felt that I was made for better things so I was not taught to sew or knit or bake holiday bread. I was meant to read and think and make money and make them proud by being the first woman in the family to go to college, to have a career. To them a career was freedom. A career was escape from drudgery. A career

meant equality with men. A career meant money, joy, personal fulfillment, freedom and dignity. They thought these things because they had never known a woman with a career. They knew plenty of women with jobs, women who had to work to survive, but not one woman who worked to express herself, share her talents, pursue her destiny.

"I didn't want a destiny. I wanted to be in love. I wanted to find true love. It was my hunt, my holy grail. I was searching for myself through my better half. By loving my better half, I would come to love myself. *This will bring me wholeness.* Then I would relearn lace making, create a home, have children, live inside a dewy spider web of time and love.

"When I was with the man of flowers, I didn't know that I had my own seed of wholeness. I believed that a man held my seed of completion as well as the seed for my ovum's fertilization. I know now that I was wrong because I know I am complete, that I can seed myself or be seeded by angels, ancestors, the universe, by other women, by the sun as well as by men, even children can plant in me a seed of awareness, of understanding, of love. But I was also right, because, in the fullness of time, and the unity of consciousness, I need the other, other men, other women. I need others for more than the mixing up bodily fluids. I need others to share the unity of life. I need other people to bring myself to fruition.

"I was thinking about the tactile quality of light. I was feeling the warmth of the sun spread into me. I found myself touching his penis. I stroked him. I stretched. I was thirsty. Odd. I had never had a thirst like this. But there it was. I was warm and soft and safe and I chose to follow my feelings. I kissed his penis and began stroking it with my mouth. Slowly it grew. He opened his eyes. The sun was powerful now. The sheets were white. There was a tremendous experience of light, of being surrounded by light, supported by light. Absorbed by the light. Light before us. Light around us. Light under us. The blessing of light was in us. I had his penis inside my mouth. It was hard and malleable. His hands played lightly on my hair. Or he stroked my back. He took deep breaths. Gradually he came. Not in a burst but in a gentle stream, the liquid did not burn me. It did not come in a rush and drown the back of my throat with its excess. It caressed my gullet with its gladness of being released. It fed me. He rammed nothing down my throat. I was not gorging. I was drinking. There was even a minty taste to this magic. When he was finished releasing and I was finished receiving, I lay my head back on his thigh and rested in the light.

"I could hear the music on the stereo. It had completely disappeared for awhile. Now I was aware of traffic sounds, the refrigerator, the drip - plunk - in the bathroom that defied correction. All these sounds played themselves in my enjoyment, my return, because I was absolutely sure that they had all been utterly silent minutes before.

“When I looked up the man of flowers was smiling, I lay myself down beside him. We sang soft and silly songs to celebrate the time.”