

CHAPTER TWO

GRIM

Living without love is hard. Babies who don't get touched enough, who have little or no sensuous love, grow less, are less successful biologically than babies who are cuddled, held, kissed, caressed. Physical love is a biological necessity.

I read a study in which it was found that, until approximately the age of one and half years, boy and girl children receive equal physical caressing then for no apparent reason that the researchers would fathom, the boys are refused tangible love touch. The analysts were able to document an increase in the boys' violent behavior, an increase in anti-social behavior corresponding to the levels of their ostracism.

Love is the sun that we planet persons need to keep us in orbit in the sky of vast experience and creative potential. We were survivors because we had not forgotten how to love. We were wobbly but orbiting.

The average American lives a life of grim determination, cut off from personalized bliss, barraged by manipulations of her desires, inundated by scads of non-linear nonsense. With the loss of internal verification mechanisms, self-determination becomes self-aggrandizement. Fueled by its own enervated disintegration, a pile of shit burns. High above the stench, bound to collapse and be dissolved, our civilization totters on ancient decrepit stilts.

Each of us, each individuated human, person, societal element, is forced to confront the demons we have created with our neglect of our essence. In order to remain an individual in our own right, we feel that we must conquer. But any sort of conquest throws us back into the yin yang spin of events. We can only maintain the position of conqueror briefly until the moment we are conquered. Even bloodless conquest brings on its reversed vanquishment. A conquest can involve getting someone to give up a career, deny a personal ambition, allowing someone else's emotions to rule our roost, taking on the sins, guilts, worries, opinions or tasks of another. A conquest can be economic, ask Allende. A conquest can be psychological, ask Hitler. A conquest can be sexual, ask Monroe. Political conquest? Ask the Kennedys.

We are each of us blind, able to discern only minuscule fractions of the abundant swirling around us. But together, each of us has a piece of the puzzle, and together, if we can stay in touch with each other, we could glimmer the world, perceive its variety, delve its multiplicity. We will be protected from the awareness of totality until we are totally aware. It's a simultaneous truth that as long as we perceive singularity and separateness as cause for discord, pain and one-up-manship, then the totality will remain out of perceptual reach. The forgotten name of God, the garden of Eden, nirvana, we know what these

betoken, all tales concur: The oneness that pervades the universe, the oneness that we have become sundered from, the oneness we perceive as longing, as emptiness, the void which terrifies us, blackness, wholeness.

Why does no one love me enough?

Why does everyone ignore me?

I'll be a victim again I'll be taken advantage of, I'll end up with nothing.

I can't risk knowing you, you might dominate or pollute me.

If I want to be treated equal I've got to stay separate.

I don't get the same chances.

I'm discriminated against because I'm fat.

...because I'm emotional.

...because I'm slow.

...because I'm tall.

...because I'm blonde.

...because I'm smart.

...because I'm pretty.

...because I like to knit.

...because I like to climb mountains.

...because I can sing.

...because I can't sing.

Oh what a tangled web and how each thread merges with the one next and the next, til no thread stands alone. The personal unity we miss because we have turned away from the peace of universal voids, we have achieved in the masked unity of wrongs, the litany of negativities tangling the center of our thought. Our tangled thoughts combine, they have weight, they exist, they have their own reality, appetites. They rage. They need to increase their mass, their hegemony over our minds.

I birthed a demon, a mind cancer consuming, free of constraints, without a possibility for satiation. A famished minotaur devours my beautiful virgin thoughts. I allow it, I almost worship it. They have built temples to it, law courts, marriages, political systems, bureaucracies. I feed my negativities. I hide. I try and contain the famished beast who's eating disorder is the obverse of mine. He will never starve himself. He will never purge. He is ravenous, carnivorous. I feed him every day with my tiniest thoughts, my recurring frustrations, my blame, my purposeless complaints, the tempests of my cruelties. He munches away and grows and grows. My internal monster pulls me towards anything absolute, fascist, mono. Because polyphony is the sound of wisdom, of inclusion, of acceptance. Mono, on the other hand values dismemberment, *the better to eat you with my dear*. Because humans are manifested intricacy, complex poly-bio organisms, in order for us masterpieces to be edible, we must first be simplified, dismantled, taken apart, cut down to size. My monster is not the devil. He is no fallen angel, no invention of the gods, no manifestation of Satan, no representation of Lucifer. He is mine, he lives with me, inside me. I put him here, he is my invention, the place I shoved the appetites that I deny.

My monster is the creature of my self betrayal. He is the result and the keeper of my fear. He is eloquent, as Mary Shelley knew. He is lonely and angry. He doesn't know why I made him, what I want him for. His will to live is strong, his confusion great. If I ignore him I will die. If I kill him I will die. If I let him run my life I will die. If he dies he takes me with him.

What have I done?