

CHAPTER TEN

NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

Everyone has thoughts inside, feelings that they keep to themselves but this is a million times more intense than a regular secret. The thing I hate the most, the thing I'm most ashamed of, is that my whole life became sexualized. Other people have part of their lives that isn't about sex. Sex is just a part of their life, a part of their identity. For me, sex is me. I see every relationship in terms of sex. I see every ambition I have, everything I want to do, alone or with people, as something to do with sex.

When your father is touching you it's cozy, familiar, you feel really safe. But there's another part that is slimy and creepy and forbidden. That's the part that everyone reinforces when you tell what's happened. It's hard to admit that your Dad was your first lover. A bad, selfish, corrupt, irresponsible lover but still the first male to touch your body in the way that makes it run all hot and cold. Fathers have double access to your love. Because he's your Dad, because he takes care of you, you love him. Because he's your lover, he touches you, makes you feel the sweetness hiding inside your body.

We live by the whim of gods. We're taught to believe that God and men are above us, are more important than us, that we are insignificant to them except when they need us to fuck or make a baby or decorate their arm for a party. Some women I know live like servants. But Jesus didn't say that only men were sons of God. I mean he probably should have said that we were all the sons and daughters but maybe he did and they just wrote it down wrong. Because women, we have God in us too.

Fat is sexy.

Fat is slow.

Fat is no where to go.

Fat is for touching and squeezing for falling down into.

Fat greases the wheels.

Fat cleans the engine.

Fat is a glorious appetite unleashed. Fat is wallowing in swallowing.

Fat is fun except when you're trying to get around in a hurry.

Fat is tender.

Fat is jail.

Fat can bury you alive inside your body, make freedom impossible, chain you to the refrigerator, make you ashamed of secret eating binges, at night when no one can see what's going on.

You never know what's going on inside someone.

You never know.

You make assumptions or you ask.

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I love him when he shows me his love. It's a lot harder to love him when he withholds his love. There is this burning in my chest. I love him. Every time I see him I wish he would reach out his hand, touch me. If women are the earth, how come I feel grounded when he touches me?

What is buried, what is subconscious, what we live according to but never ever acknowledge? Women's lives are lived almost entirely outside of, underneath, beneath the notice of, tangential to, not so deeply enmeshed in the consciousness of the main stream, We are off, wandering in the woods, no one notices any way, whether we are in the game, or not, so we go out, into the sunshine day, wander around, look for berries, stumble on. What? Two lovers kissing? *I wish that was me.* A leprechaun, treasure, spirit voices, birds who look with knowing eyes, who sing forth messages from other sides. We wander home with even more things on the tip of our tongues that no one wants to hear. Instead they ask mean questions. "What did you make today? What have you accomplished? Have you killed anything? What did you bring home for me to eat? What good are you? Why do I bother keeping you around? You don't even take good care of my children. The least you could do, Cunt, is take care of things at home while I'm supporting you. I make the living around here. And don't you forget it." Make a dying, she wants to say, but doesn't.

Women can do whatever they want. It's absurd to say that being a woman is any more difficult than being a man. Men have a much harder time.

I don't buy that at all. Even horrible newspapers, that won't put any woman's accomplishments, no matter how great, on the front page, will put in the statistic that women make one third less than men.

Well how come, since you think newspapers bullshit about everything else, why do you trust them about that? Because that's what you want to believe it fits into what you think. People only believe the stuff they already believe.

If I could kill him I think I would, the world would be better off, wouldn't it? Without this mess. It's him makes all the mess all the time because all I'm trying to do is be a nice person and he won't let me, won't let things just be, just let things be like they could be, nice, you know. Why did he always have to start fights and why didn't he listen to me, trust me, let me speak what I know was right, what I knew would work. I mean all the answers had to always be his, how come there was never room for my answers, for the things I wanted to do? I couldn't help it, sometimes I got so angry, I broke out in a rash. Other times I tried to talk to him about things and he'd be drunk. You can't get anything figured out when one of you is drunk, it's impossible. I think that's the whole point of being drunk, to not have to work things out.

I became what he wanted me to be. I believed in his fear and in his cruelty. I became afraid. Fear became an obsession, then it became my main motivation

and finally when it mutated again, it began to influence events. I allowed my life to bend towards his darkening implosion of spirit.

People get mad if you laugh at their pain.

I loved him so much. When he was angry I tried so hard to soothe him, to take his pain away. I felt like a willow in the wind, bending and swaying, giving in to his wants, his rages, his doubts, always he was the strongest. Then he started hitting me and forcing sex on me. He was a lot bigger than me. I'm 5'1" and he's over 6' and he was filled out, you know, not bony or anything, beefy really. He ordered me to do things and I'd do them. I'm so ashamed of that. I can't believe I did that. But I did. And he'd order me to lay down on the bed. He'd take my pants off with my underpants, at the same time. He never took my socks off and I remember being grateful because I was always cold, very cold inside and I was glad I had my socks on to keep me warm. Sometimes he'd take off my shirt but he didn't like my breasts because they're too small so I liked it better when he didn't take my shirt off because it made him angry sometimes to see how small my breasts are. They've gotten bigger since then, you know, and I was thinking one day, I was wondering if maybe they hadn't been scared of him too and kinda shrunk up and once he was gone they could sorta spread out again.

A lot of times he wouldn't take his pants off, just undo himself like he was going to piss. I remember the first time he did it thinking he was going to pee on me, he was standing over me superior, he looked really big, and I knew he was strong, and I felt sick to my stomach. When he unzipped himself and pulled himself out of his pants, he wasn't all the way, erect, yet, so I thought he was going to pee on me, but he never did. I guess he wasn't kinky or anything like that, just mean. Sometimes his zipper would really hurt me and I had trouble with my vagina then, I bled a lot and I was really confused about the trouble with my vagina. I was getting pregnant all the time because he didn't like to wear anything he said it cramped his style and he wouldn't give me the time to put in my diaphragm. One time I mentioned it he hit me pretty hard. I never talked about it again. I have a lotta kids. Two abortions, he never knew about those. I saved up the money to get away but I spent it on abortions. He thought I'd gone barren. He teased me about my short life batteries. He said he wasn't sure he wanted me anymore if I was all used up.

I know you probably think I was stupid to stay. But I was only sixteen when I got married. I was seventeen when I had my first baby. I didn't know much. We didn't even have a tv for a long time. And people liked him. When people came over for a barbecue and he'd be mean to me, no one seemed to notice, no one said anything about it. One time when he slapped me, they didn't even stop and look. I figured there was something wrong with me. He told me I was trash, that he could do whatever he wanted to me and nobody would care.

Remember the part in Mary Poppins, they left it out of the movie, it's the part where the twins, the babies, can speak with the birds and Mary can understand too, and there they all are, talking away, chat, chat, chat, and the twins don't believe that they'll ever forget how they were born or how to speak to the sun or the birds and of course there's Mary as an example, and then one day the bird comes to the sill, he was away on a bird journey, one of those follow the sun and wind trips and the bird tries to talk to the babies, asks for his share of the teething biscuits. They don't answer him. The babies cry. They don't relate to the bird who turns, hurt and confused, to Mary Poppins. She explains that people only remember for a little while after they are born. I love that story. I knew things when I was little, things that were too true.

The first time I ever had sex was ok. I think. My parents were away for a week, and there was this girl who lived a few houses down from us, her Dad was rich and everyone knew that he had girlfriends because he'd show up at restaurants with women who weren't his wife at weird times like 10 o'clock Sunday morning when the motel brunch tables were filled with people taking Granny out for her birthday, or little Pam for her honor roll whatever, and there he'd be this guy, wealthy enough to determine real events in our town. "Here's \$100,000. Name the library after my mother. Make sure that you have a superlative collection of sailing books because my father would have liked that if he had lived, if he had ever been remotely interested in entering a library. Ha, ha, ha." They lived a few doors down with stepmother number three. She was pretty out there, loose, we called it, but by then things were changing and we, to tell the truth most of us envied her, most of us desperately wanted to be bad like her.

I had the house more or less to myself and this girl, who was pretty popular, in the sense that everyone turned up for her parties, and I'd never given a party, and I was a virgin, and I didn't want to be. I thought that if I got this girl to help the atmosphere at the party would push me over the line, I could give up my cherry.

Which part is the cherry? Is it the clit? You don't lose your clit, you lose your hymen. What do guys give up when they lose their virginity?

No, I do want to tell you. I know I don't have to, I just thought, well, I want to. She helped me give the party at my house and it was great, lots of people came and nothing got wrecked or broken that couldn't get fixed and so basically it was a success and she and I even got to be friends kinda both because we were good at sharing the responsibilities, and because the next week when our parents found out we were punished together. We were punished as a team and that made us a team. We spent a month working as Candy Strippers in the town hospital. We hated it. We hated blood. I fainted twice. But then we kinda gravitated to the little kids' section and then we mostly just played with them. It was sad because most of those kids were dying. She and I stayed friends for a long time after that party. We still write to each other sometimes. Back then we

believed in true love, the kind that comes once and lasts forever. We took every little thing that happened very seriously as if we could guess the meaning of our lives from the things that were happening to us. We'd pour over our adventures looking for clues, mediums interpreting signs. Did you ever see that soap opera from Brazil called Agony? My first flash when I saw the title, was that period of my life. All relationships were agony then. It makes me dizzy just to remember it.

I lost it at the party, in the garden, under my favorite tree, under the sky dawning. It was the best sex I've ever had. His name was Rusty because he had red hair, very freckly features and open eyes, blue and happy eyes and he was a really great kid. He got killed in Vietnam. I hate thinking about that. I don't think he would have married me though. When he left he was in love with this nice blonde girl who ended up married to a dentist. Rusty wasn't that special really, kind of a small town guy. He wasn't very ambitious because he knew he'd inherit his dad's stores. His dad had these chain stores all over the state. They had money and everything but Rusty was ok. His dad wanted him to go to college but he got drafted and decided he shouldn't be exempt just because he had money and might go to college. He was the sort of kid who didn't push, he was happy with whatever was happening. I was always kind of dis-satisfied, I've never been happy with my life. I think I could live better than I'm living but there's something keeping me from doing it.

I loved him I guess. I loved him because he seemed perfect to me, his happiness was perfect. And I loved him because I felt grateful to him because he never got mad at me, the men in my life are always angry at me over something. I'm a klutz but he never seemed to notice, it never bothered him. Once I accidentally dumped a Jumbo Coke on his pants. We were at a drive in, half of a double date. The guy who's car it was, was so angry at the mess, he kicked us out of his car. We had to hitch hike home. Rusty's corduroys were sticky wet but he laughed, he didn't yell, I think I cried all the way home, between his jokes, and my guilt, I was so relieved he didn't hate me, I think it was that night, on the walk home we stopped, well, really, we got stranded, stuck, kaput, on a shadowy tree spooked road and we kissed for a long while and he slid his hand under my shirt and I felt my breast which could barely be called a breast it was that little, kinda rose up to meet his hand. Right then I thought, I want this one to be the one, *I want to go all the way with him. I want him to reach inside my body with his body. I want to be naked with him outside, just like then, kissing under a tree, on the empty road, except lying down and not on a road but somehow outside, with the air coming into it somehow, being part of it.* And that's what happened, just exactly like I imagined it to be.

What do you do when you know it's not you who's crazy but you're the one acting insane?

Sometimes you're kinda like expressing everyone else's feelings but then there's no room for your own. It's like you become this emotion radio, this is how mom feels, this is how Jack feels, the neighbor channel, my best friend channel. Me? I'm just the radio. They transmit. I receive. How do I feel? Cheap. Tinny. Replaceable.

I think it's emotions that make us who we are. I mean, everyone eats and shits and fucks, and all that. But how you feel about what you do, that belongs to you.

I chose to be invisible. I used to wish I was invisible. If they couldn't see me, they wouldn't hurt me. And I could know all their secrets.

I remember how it felt. A burning sensation, as if my vagina was on fire. The sides seemed to be shedding, and out of each shredded crevice came volcano pain, and my legs kept twitching, and he didn't like that, it messed him up, moved him around and so he'd hit me, so I had all these bruises on my thighs, and those punches were weird because I thought I was strong but my flesh seemed to just melt under his fists, and he felt like he could push through all my flesh and nothing stopped the impact of his hit, just the bone. Then I saw myself as a skeleton with fleshy soft squishy bits kind of flabbing, flapping around, keeping his fists from reaching the marrow of my bones. But the hot pain retching out of the tears in the sides of my vagina, those came from the marrow, from the inside of the inside of me. He was bleeding me, my life force, my life was oozing out of me. I've thought about it so many times since then because he wasn't very strong you know, he was skinny and I read this article in the paper the other day, my Dad cut it out for me, and I know he showed it to me to make me feel better, but it made me feel worse because this guy was small and I don't know why I was so scared, why I didn't fight back.

In the article there was this lady, she was older than us maybe that's it, maybe when you get older you stop being so scared of guys. She lived with her aunt who was older even than she was. She was a working woman, I don't know, maybe she was a lesbian, maybe she didn't even like men, I don't know, the article didn't talk about that at all. I wish I could talk to her. But anyway this guy writing the article wanted to give her a prize because she was so cool. I mean this guy comes into her room and says he's going to rape her and all that shit and he has a knife or something but when he gets his pants off she grabs his penis, really hard at the base and it hurts him and he starts begging her to let go and there she is, this killer grip on his penis, yeah, it made me laugh too, I mean, God, she had him and he's begging her to let go and she won't unless he promises to leave. He ends up running away without his pants which have his name tag in them, can you believe it, like a kid going to camp or something. She calls the cops and when they come they find his pants. They look his name up in the phone book, go over to his house where they find him crying, holding his dick. He admits to everything but he wants to sue her for hurting his penis.

When they go to court he's the defendant, she wins. They put him away for awhile.

Why was I so scared? Why did I think he was stronger than me? Why did I see his penis as a weapon? It's just a weenie piece of flesh that stands up when it blushes.

I lay there and let him rip my life to shreds with his flushed tube. I don't get it. I feel pathetic when I think about it. I know we're not supposed to judge ourselves I can't help it, I'm in that place. I'm so ashamed of myself. I'm ashamed that he picked me to hurt. Why me? Is there something wrong with me?

I look at us and I think we're great, we're smart, we're pretty. None of us deserved what happened. No one asked for it. I can see that you guys didn't do anything wrong but it's hard to see myself the way I see you. I want to like myself again. I love you all, I do. I listen to the things you say and I can understand you, for the first time in my life I don't feel so freaky alone. I didn't want to come here. I resented my therapist when she said I should come.

I'm not a victim, I don't want to sit around talking with a bunch of victim types about what happened to fuck them up, that's Queen For A Day shit. Do you remember Queen For A Day? Wow, maybe you're all too young for it, God. It was a tv show when I was a kid. It was fucking weird this show, everyone loved it, it was really popular. These three women would get up, one at a time and tell a live audience all the terrible things that had happened to them. I mean amazing shit. And it would go on and on. Like one lady would say it all started when her husband got sent overseas and died in a freak accident in the military, then her house burnt down, and then her baby, in it's baby carriage, got hit by a car and died. Then the audience claps for her pain and the strength of the audience's clapping registers on the Clap-O-Meter on the screen. A red arrow rises up the semi-circle. Then the next woman would say something like, oh wait, there'd be commercials between stories then back to the show, and the guy host chatters. Then Contestant Number Two reels out her story, her mother died of cancer last week, her son fell off a cliff a year ago, he's in the hospital now but she can't afford a wheelchair, her daughter had two miscarriages, her husband left her for a younger woman so the son and daughter are about to move back home but their house is too small, everyone is depressed because the cat fell down the well and they could hear it screaming while it drowned. More clapping, the semi-circle meter, more commercials, more patter, "next contestant," final commercial, more patter "and the winner is," and they give her, I'm not kidding, a huge red velvet robe, well I think it was red, we didn't have a color tv then, with a white fur collar, a huge crown and lots of roses like Miss America. She's Miss Miserable for the day. She sits on a throne while they announce her prize, a GE dishwasher and a toaster oven.

What's the point of going through it all? You never get any answers. You just layer events on top of other events, fucks on fucks, nothing grows, nothing opens. No one knows themselves or anyone else any better than they did the night before and all this fucking and coming, phone calls, appointments, fancy suits, cocktail parties, power lunches, power steering, what's it doing for us? We still think in terms of buying and selling each other. We want what we want when we want it. Like a baby in the womb, we pull and grasp and try to make something grow by sucking in every possible nutrient, sucking off other people. We're vampires, cannibals. We don't care who or what we destroy when we're hungry. And the way we treat the planet, we take and feed off it as if we were stoned teenagers, or sperm starved nymphos. Well maybe we are, maybe the earth really is our mother or our lover. When you look at those time lines and everyone oos and ahs over the inch people have been on the chart, and all we've gone through, never a dull moment, maybe we're so selfish, so demanding of nature, of God, of each other, because we're infants completely swayed by our physical appetites. Maybe this is the terrible two's of human development.

It sends sensations down my spine when he kisses me I feel so hot and warm inside and I feel a wetness between and above my legs. I want him so much sometimes it makes me cry. I feel like I'm in a dream and he's there but I can't touch him and I'm melting away and, if I could touch him, I would be real, I would stay, I would be permanent somewhere. I know it's scary but that's how I feel.

When I was little, my grandfather bought me a clock that was also a music box. When I opened the top it played Hear That Lonesome Whippoorwill. I loved it. I thought my grandfather wanted me to know that he was lonesome. How do boys who get hurt get to be ok again? I think of all the ways that men are raped and it makes me sad for them. A lot of times they don't even realize that they are being screwed.

Someone fucked me or forced me to be passive while he stuck his rigid dick where he wanted. I used to think he did it for his pleasure regardless of my pain but now I don't think he had pleasure. I mean I used to think that rape had something to do with sex, that it was a kind of sex, so I was always scared of sex, because I thought that sex could become rape magically, just verge too close to some line you can't even see, and poof, sex becomes rape. I don't think that anymore.

I think rape is a kind of violence, not a kind of sex. I don't give it the honor of sexuality. I mean if you punch me in the nose or kick me in the ribs, you don't call that different things. If you attack my body, any part of my body, with any part of yours, your intention is to hurt me. If you succeed, it is wrong and against the law.

When you crash someone's space and hurt them you are the law. My Dad used to hit my mom, you know, it was her punishment when she was wrong, when he thought that she was wrong, when he was in a bad mood, when he didn't get what he wanted, when he thought she could do something to make him happy and wouldn't, he'd hit her. He was the law, his word was gospel, his happiness everyone's responsibility. In church God was the king size Daddy who was in charge of our souls, our priest was the medium Dad, God had charge of him and he had charge of the small Dads, the real Dads like mine, who were in charge of us, the insignificants, the wives and children. Because we were ignorant, because we were too far away from God to know better without all these Dad's between us and God telling us what to do, falling out of grace, slipping into sin diving deeper into insignificance. The Dads and God tore out their hair. The priest was bald, he had no hair left to pull, he had pulled and pulled, to no avail, all us insignificant specks still insisted on stubbornly obeying our instincts. We refused to heed the torrent of words spewing from the unstoppable mouths of our Lords. We were just being like that song, we just wanted to have fun, we wanted to be, loud and say things that made no sense, nonsense I guess, move without purpose, speak without meaning, all the reverses, get in the blank spaces, the suddenly spacious, take a fucking break from the relentless, damning, self denying hierarchy of significance.

There's no such thing as the bottom of the totem pole, I mean there's always something worth less you can torture.

God, I get boggled with Christian shit. It's unbelievable how convoluted words can be. Here I am saying what I think I want to say and out comes a word which is really more like a junction with six or sixteen different possible meanings leading off from it. I can stop and say, this is how I define this word, this is the road I mean you to follow here but by that time everyone, myself included, has lost the thread of the story. I can get to this word hub, this junction of meaning and let everyone follow whichever meaning suits them, trusting that the confusion will be sorted out at the end, that all the diverse meanings will lead to clarity and coherence. But I know from experience infinite paths lead to infinite confusion. I decide to be like a camp counselor with 100 unctuous, rambunctious kids, all running different ways, I try to find them, collect them all, bring them back to the junction but now I'm tired and ticked off that they all went the wrong places and they're way stressed because they're each absolutely sure that they went where I told them to go. A trial can be a court of law trial, a Christian trial of faith or, as in trial and error, an attempt. What I meant by trial is attempt, a trying, an effort made for a purpose. I refuse to believe that life is about carrying a stupid fucking ton heavy cross up a boring hill in bare feet with people spitting at me and the sun beating me, my skin stretched over my aching muscles, my mind uncomprehending why a good person like me should be punished this way but having the ultimate faith that one of the big Daddies in the sky, the biggest, baddest Daddy of them all, has my future, my happiness, well in mind, if I can just get up this fucking big hill, Daddy will explain to me

why, he will lift me up to heaven No. It doesn't work for me. Sisyphus is ok, I can see myself as that guy pushing his rock up and down hills, or the silly bear climbing over the mountain to see another mountain. but one long series of trials and a permanent ascension, no, I don't think it fits any experience of this planet.

People create tortured lives attempting to imitate what they've been told the life of Christ consisted of, His trying. They ignore the fact that self styled Daddies, for your own good types have been dicking around with the bible for ages, changing a word here, doing without this altogether, making sure that the word of God was palatable to the authorities of Mammon. We're left with this immensely bizarre treatise, massively edited by power mad committees over centuries. We're unable to reconstruct original meanings, which, of course, would themselves be the words of fallible humans, writers for God's sake, limited by what can be scratched onto parchment, limited by the technological, spiritual, physical, mental and emotional levels of the prophets and scribes. And what about the people who had to transport those manuscripts, all the slaves who put their energy into this bible's contrived existence. How did the couriers themselves effect the transmission of these famous words of God?

If I let myself think that my body is evil, that when I came into my body to participate in the ways of flesh my soul was betrayed, if I think that my physical being is disgusting, sinful, lost, inherently bad, then I find myself needing to punish my bad body, to force her away from her team mate, my vagrant, wayward soul. I create a war within myself, a divisiveness. I then can believe that parts of me are holier than other parts. I divide and conquer myself. I distrust myself. My soul itself is suspect so I need priests to intervene for my salvation because no decent God would connect with my bad soul. I can't trust my mind. I see myself as crippled, lacking, deficient. I cannot sufficiently control myself. I cannot succeed in severing my body from my soul and the greatest sin of all, I'm not sure that I want to because I can't help noting the nagging fact that when my soul is severed from my body, I shall die, I cannot bring myself to be absolutely certain that I want to die. Life has an attraction for me. I still have access to my emotions, but no control over them. I feel I've got to merge with something greater than myself because I can't bear my self, my mind longs to dissociate itself from my body, to become one with my soul. My soul sends messages to me, lessons, of unity but my mind interprets these as meaning only unity between itself and spirit. Mind keeps trying to deny her nature. In desperation I look for someone better than me, someone who will complete me, make me good or at least humble, kill or maim my body so that I can transcend her vile needs, her appetites, her demands and desires.

Sometimes I want it. When I was throwing up, I wanted to be alone in the bathroom, on the coolness of the tile floor. The rancid, or bleach, or cool blank smell of the water in the clean pristine piss stained, or poop splattered bowl. The solitude. The remains of people. No people. No feelings, just relief and release, the grasping, gasping, swallowing reversed. The bowl took my offering, received

the food I had eaten with too much earnestness. I was ashamed of my need for food. I was unable to contain bounty, break it down, release useless matter. I still have difficulty sustaining pleasure. I like being in the shadow of evil, knowing what I'm doing is wrong, doing it anyway. I thought these feelings set me apart, made me special, more knowing. The tears that came out from my eyes I interpreted as coming from the pressure of the vomit. It didn't occur to me that I was crying because I was lonely.

My father was sly. He didn't like confrontations. In fact both my parents loathed confrontations which is good in a way, there was never yelling at my house, but bad too, because good things and bad things, happy times and miserable times, all occurred at the same level, in the same tone of voice, so they were hard to distinguish one from the other. Feelings were muted, mild, "act nice, be respectable," behave palatably so the neighbors will be frustrated in their search for hot stinky gossip.

When I fell in love for the first time I got an idea of the crazy kinds of things a person can feel. I was really lost, I thought I was going nuts, my feelings made me think thoughts that I couldn't control or understand. Sex with my teenage boyfriend was so different than sex with my father. My father was a walk softly and carry a big stick kind of guy. He gave me lots of presents. He liked me to wear pretty, feminine clothes. He was always the proud Dad in public, but at night he'd talk dirty to me, very explicit things, then he'd say that sex was secret and bad but a daughter could do it for her father, it was ok for us and because we were family, because we could keep the secret. "Doesn't it feel good baby? Can I kiss you there baby? Mommy hates sex, she won't let me kiss her there." My mother was mean to him, he said she won't keep secrets. I'm not like my mother, I gave him what he needs.

I was a reporter for my school paper, I went to a school board meeting to write a report on the debate over sex education. People seemed really confused and embarrassed about the whole thing. They couldn't decide whether it was good or bad to talk about sex, whether there was an age when sex could be talked about, whether talking about it would lead to doing it like pot smoking leading to heroin use. Homosexuality could not be discussed at the meeting and never in the schools. Everyone agreed that discussion was tantamount to approval. But they argued hard over incest, I kid you not, there were furious Dads saying it was an abrogation of their rights, their right to privacy. "The state can't interfere with the way I raise my children," unbelievable but I heard it. It didn't matter that it was wrong. They weren't ashamed, they were angry. They didn't want their kids to be taught that incest is against the law, they insisted that this would interfere with their ability to give their children an innocent bedtime hug. Mindboggling.

Kids think that grownups have all the power, there's no way a little kid is going to have the guts to turn a parent in for sticking his finger or her finger where it

doesn't belong unless someone helps them. Little kids are completely dependent, they can't even find their own way to the grocery store alone, they need adults for everything, there is no way that without an adult ally, a little kid would even understand that they were being sexually molested. And they'd never tell. Not a chance. Not unless they knew some grownup would stand up for them.

I saw this show on tv once where they went into like Death Row or something, only none of these people were dying because they decided it wasn't ok to kill people but they didn't know what to do with these guys either so they sort of just were on Death Row even though they weren't going to die and this one guy they interviewed was a child molester and murderer. He was completely unrepentant about the things he'd done. He was very outspoken about it and he smiled a lot, it was eerie. His main point was that grownups never pay attention to kids, they never take them seriously or really listen to them so this guy who raped and murdered all these little kids, he says that all he has to do is be nice and listen, offer them some grownup attention and they'll go anywhere with him, they'll do almost anything for him but there are things they don't want to do so then he has to hurt them. Then they yell at him and stuff so he has to kill them. "They're not good then." He sneered at the interviewer, looked right into the camera, said it was our fault, served us right because we never listen to kids. "I give them what they want," he said.

Awareness of unity presupposes a respect for boundaries and takes as a given that all others are, in fact, yourself. We are bounded regions of soul, bound, not enslaved by form. We are a creative act, the result of the choice we made to be, to be in a form which can in its turn perform creative acts, make new choices.

It seems reasonable to posit that the motivating factor of life is curiosity.

Sometimes I think that women are places and men are actions, two aspects of God, the situational and the aspectional. My take on yin yang. Like, if you were an angel, an interested angel, an angel interested in life on earth, in life with us little people, I don't know why I think angels are big, they're probably teeny, like seeds, with infinite potential but so small they can move themselves easily, instantaneously, anyway, when I imagine that I'm an angel, looking at me, at my life, I can see that it's denser where I live, and a little cloudy, clouded by emotions probably, the grody complexities of emotional dramas, clouding the auric fields, so if I was an angel out there trying to see in, trying to see me, trying to help me probably because angels are beneficent, I can't see really well what's going on because of the murk. An angel gets the general idea, the locale, the gist through the mist. Like when I'm walking in the shallow part of the beach, medium tide, the water at my knees, or my thighs, I look down and I see a rock, *Oh, there's a rock.* I try and avoid it but stub my toe, smash. I come away bleeding. *Damn. I saw it. How could I run into that fucking rock? I saw it.* The next time, on another beach, in another tide, there's another stone. *The water's clear here, I'll stick my head in, open my eyes, I can see exactly where this stone is.* I think I can get around

it. *I get it.* No way. I stick my head in. I look. I see. I still smash my foot. I'm ticked off now. The next time, the next beach, the next tide, the next rock, I squat down and feel the rock gently, so I don't rip my hand flesh apart. I feel where the rock is. I get a little cut on my hand but I'm ok. I notice something interesting. The rock doesn't look to be where it actually is. I recall the deal in physics about refracting light. Light shifts around when it bounces through mediums, even air. Denser mediums like water, bodies, or emotions, really get that light bouncing around. So if I'm the beneficent angel watching, trying to help, I need people to guide me because the light comes back bent into my medium. Plus angels don't interfere, it's against their mandate. Angels think twice before they tread, they rely on fools to rush in. They have a lot of gratitude for fools. That's how fools get to be blessed, when they share their sightings with the angels, the angels send them luck. Angels love partnership.