

Intertwined

Issue 2



"From the jukebox
in my head....." —
d.p.



Another weekend with you that was so beautiful, I wonder what it was that ever made me think that I could send you away without a second thought. I know I am not the kind of person with no heart, but sometimes, when I am trying to protect myself, I tend to push away the people who are trying to help me the most. It's almost as if I have to hurt myself as deeply as possible in order to feel alive. I used to try to hurt myself physically. Now I just do it emotionally, by trying to break up the relationships that mean the most. I don't want anyone too close.

Well, except for you....which is probably why I am trying so hard to push you away in the first place.

It's the intimacy of your touch that gets me every time. I can't believe we haven't known each other for eternities, because your hands travel over my flesh as if they know exactly where I hunger to be touched. Maybe we were lovers in a million different lifetimes before this, and here we are again, trying to get it right this time. I can feel your tongue inside me like a promise that you will never go away, and that I can love you and not fear the pain coming to grab at my innocence again.

I want to love you like this for as long as I breathe.

I wish I could see into the future and know for sure that there will never be a time without you. I want to walk beside you and feel safe in your arms every day like I do right now. When your strong arm encircles my waist, I am truly safe and contented that you will allow no one to hurt me as they have in the past.

I don't know where this relationship will take us, but I know it is a journey that I am enjoying. It is an adventure on so many levels, and I am so grateful for this opportunity in my life to enjoy it. For once, someone is listening to my needs, and I am listening to them as well. I need time alone. I need to write my zine. I need to spend time with my dog and cats. But I also need your touch all over my body, your lips pressing into my neck, your eyes looking at me in the dim light of the morning as we make love before the sun comes up.

Yes, I am scared, but I will do my best to hold onto my happiness.

Will you hold on to me???



The reminders that being gay is still not accepted are still in my life, no matter how much I want to ignore them. My friend Clarisse and I work together now, as I got her a job at my place of employment (and torture) for the summer. I wasn't feeling well, and we were walking back from the other side of the office. When I confessed to her that my stomach hurt, she put her hand on my shoulder to console me. Later on, on my smoking break, a bunch of other employees began razzing me.

"Oh, MY GOD, you did that TOTALLY right in FRONT of Donna, and you should have seen her FACE!"

I stood there, blankly looking at them as if they had to be talking to someone else.

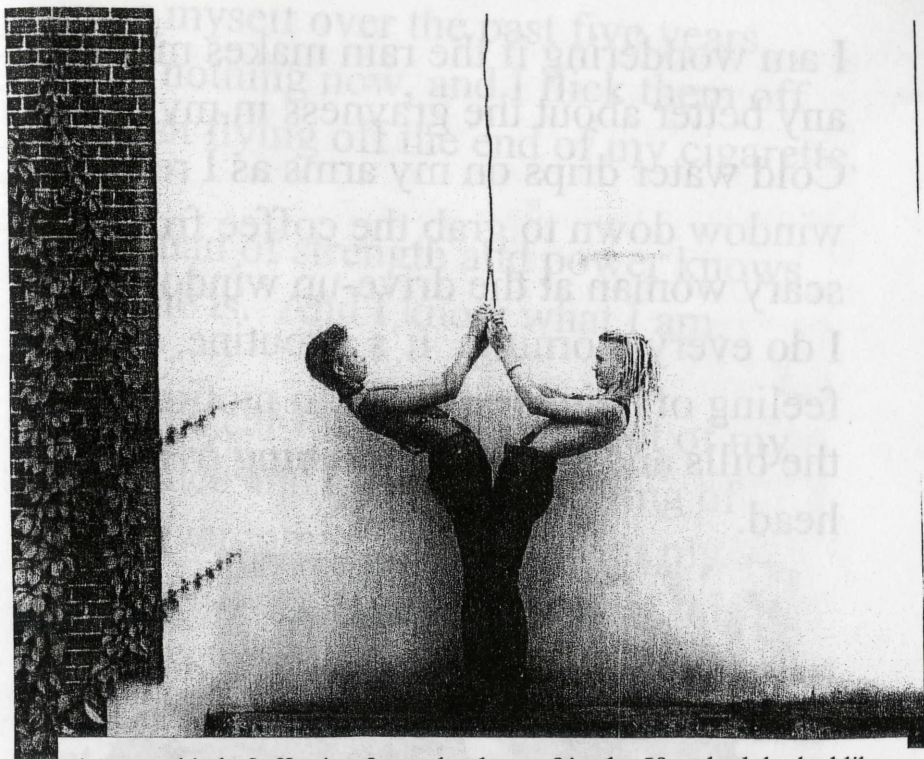
"What are you guys talking about?"

"YOU! You are so bad! Donna almost fell out of her chair!! It was so hilarious!!"

It took me about 10 minutes to realize that they were talking about how Clarisse had put her hand on my shoulder. I couldn't believe it. I made a joke of it with my friends, saying how I wished I had grabbed her breasts if someone was going to get THAT upset, but inside, I was so angry, my eyes were burning.

Why is it that when people know you are gay, they automatically assume you must want to sleep with every girl you are talking to, hugging, or touching at that moment? I am a VERY touchy-feely girl, and it doesn't even enter into my mind that other people are looking at me as a sexual predator of sorts. Clarisse and I were literally frozen in place with anger when I told her. She said that she felt that people made her out to be a freak because she touched me in public. That made me even angrier than the actual incident, because I seriously don't need a reminder that the world is not tolerant or accepting. Clarisse and I look like dykes...well, maybe Clarisse more than me, but I still look dykey, especially at work where I have to wear my glasses. So, looking like dykes, we shouldn't touch, or





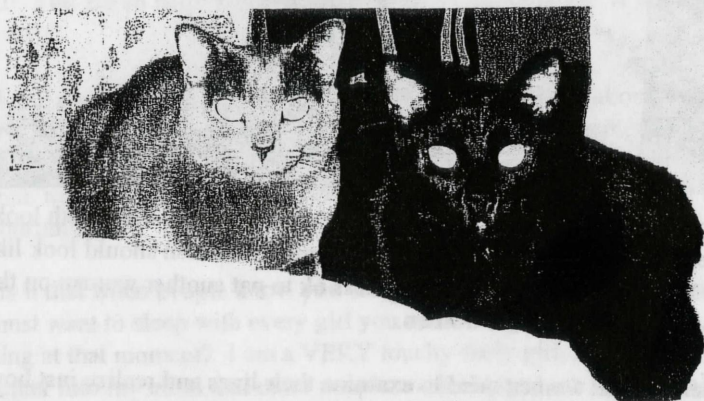
show any kind of affection for each other as friends. If we both looked like everyone's perception of what two "straight" women should look like, it wouldn't be a problem. Because it is ok to pat another woman on the back if you don't sleep with women.

I believe that women need to examine their lives and realize just how much love and support they get from other women, whether they are queer or not. Who do you call when you want to chat? When you're having a problem? When you need an ego boost? When you are trying to figure out what to do with your relationship, your job, your career, your boss? You call your girlfriends. And maybe you tell them you are sick at work and they pat you on the back because they CARE about you, not because they are trying to get you in bed.

I will touch the people I want whenever I want, unless, of course, they aren't people who like to be touched, but that is a whole other topic. I am a caring person, and sometimes I show my feelings by a hand placed on a shoulder or an arm. If you can't handle that, then I guess you need to stay as far away from me as possible. I will not forego the happy feeling I get from a friend's hug when I am sick, or the soft touch of a hand when I am sad. It is my world, too, and I will walk through it proudly....

With my arms around my friends.

I am wondering if the rain makes me feel any better about the grayness in my heart. Cold water drips on my arms as I roll the window down to grab the coffee from the scary woman at the drive-up window like I do every morning. It's a routine, a feeling of being trapped into motion by the bills and payments looming over my head.



How I long to crank the stereo as loud as it can go, and listen to angry women screaming out my passion as I smoke menthol cigarettes and let the wind blow through my growing hair. "I never wanna be no man's woman..." blares out of the speakers and I laugh because I AM a trannie boy's woman, and it makes me wonder if those words still apply to me. I wonder what other labels that I have

given myself over the past five years mean nothing now, and I flick them off like ash flying off the end of my cigarette.

A woman of strength and power knows who she is. And I know what I am.

I turn the car into the parking lot of my workplace and sigh with a feeling of dread overcoming me. I look at my friend who I have given a ride to this morning, and wonder if my eyes look that tired, too. I know they do, it's just denial that keeps us going up the stairs and into cubical land. As I look at her smiling face, I decide just whose woman I want to be.



I am driving again, watching the sun come up over jagged treetops with cigarette smoke swirling in my face. The world is rushing by, and I am longing to keep up. I am constantly lagging behind, pushing the gas pedal to the floor a little farther, hoping to find the moment when I feel as if this life is mine again and I can run ahead of the sun.



The sun bursts forth from the treetops as it begins its slow journey across the sky for this day. The music I am listening to swells just as the sunlight hits the car, and I am struck again by that feeling that my life is not ever wholly mine. It belongs to a cycle so much bigger than I am, and that I am simply a pawn in this game played by the sun, the earth and the moon every moment that I still draw breath into my lungs.

My lungs...I laugh and take another drag off my quickly dwindling cigarette, hoping to catch a glimpse of myself in the rear-view mirror as I exhale smoke and turn the car into the doughnut shop parking lot.

A woman of the moon.

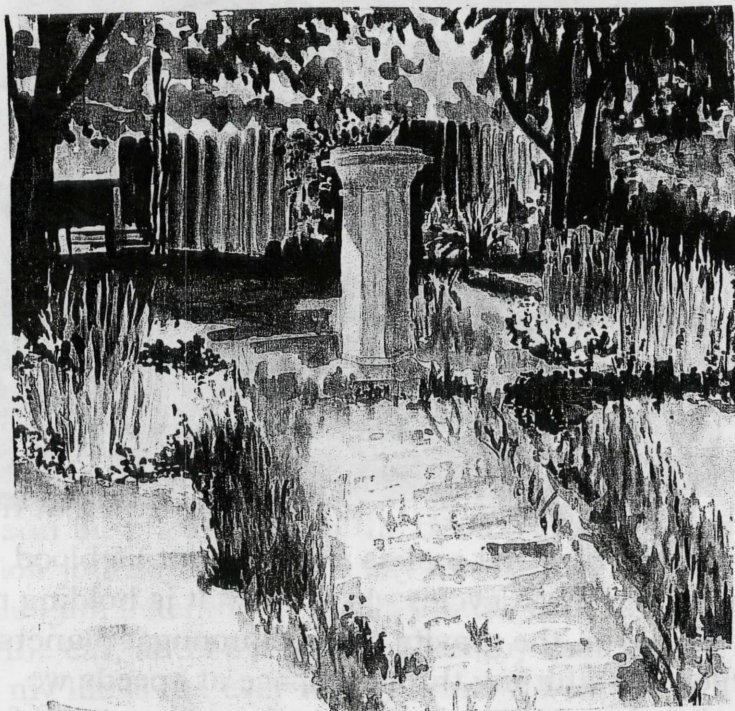


All women are of the moon, or so someone told me once. Or maybe that was an Ani DiFranco song. I'm not sure anymore. I want to feel the pull of that orb in the sky that makes us bleed out lifeblood once a month in cycles. Is that what is holding me to the earth, the gravity created amongst planets which are whirling through space at speeds we can't fathom? That is what makes me put one foot in front of the other and walk into the store every morning to buy coffee?

Somehow, that can't be all.

At least I hope not. Coffee in hand, I slide down into the car seat and look upward at the clouds that are floating gently by. I curse them for a moment, wondering why I can't just float through my life, carefree and soft as a whisper. I slide the key into the ignition and sigh, backing the car out to go to the place known as "work" which should really be called "prison." My foot eases down on the gas pedal, and I crank the stereo, watching the other drivers cringe at the noise when I stop at the stoplight.

I laugh. Look out, sun. Here I come.



I can't believe that this is my life sometimes. I think I need to try harder. I am extremely happy with my friends and my boyfriend, but I am not happy at the fact that I feel trapped in a dead-end job with no future other than staring at a computer screen and being a zombie 8 hours a day. What happened to writing my first book before I hit age 12? It is a hard realization that you are not the child protege that everyone wanted you to be. I put a lot of pressure on myself to be perfect. When I am reminded that I am not perfect, I fall into depression and become immobile. Everything feels unattainable at this moment in my life. I am not sure what to do to make things different. I tried to start by organizing everything in my apartment, but all that happens is that I go absolutely crazy trying to find a place for everything. I also see all the mail and zines that I owe everyone and feel like crying. Thus the cycle begins again.

Where is motivation when you need it? And how lame is it to write about needing motivation?

All I want is to write and make a difference in the world somehow. It doesn't seem like a tall order, but when you have to factor in work, animals, friends, family, boyfriend, errands, overtime, keeping the apartment clean, and every other thing that must be done in life, it doesn't make fitting in creative time any easier. My boyfriend, the kind and patient soul that he is, told me I should designate an evening for writing. I believe that is a step in the right direction, and I am going to try very hard to stick to that. There HAS to be time for ME in this equation somewhere.

I think that maybe part of the problem is that I don't believe I need time for myself, and so therefore I am constantly spreading myself thin. I know it is also a fear of failure that makes me fill up my time with insignificant errands instead of quiet time alone.

Silence surrounds me and I feel like I can't breathe. I have never lived alone, and there are times when I can't even function in the quiet. I know I have to be brave and get over this wall I have built between success and myself. I am going to have to gear up and become a wrecking ball, and force myself to smash that wall down. I know I can do this. I am a strong woman and I always have been. I know I am stronger than this. And hopefully that knowledge will carry me until I am in touch with that strength again. One can always dream, and I always do, but it takes a very strong person to make dreams a reality. All I ask is that I get to be one of those people.

I know I can be.



Shelly,

I can't believe that you actually sent me a letter proclaiming how much you like and miss me after you ended up with my girlfriend of three and a half years. I can't believe you want my blessing, my forgiveness, and my approval. Well, that is something you are never going to get from me.

You say that you never meant to hurt me. Well, it sure seemed as if no one cared about my feelings when I was forced to make the decision to leave my home of 2 years and the family that I considered myself a part of for that amount of time, also. No one cared about my feelings when you both had sex in the bed that Denise and I had shared, knowing full well that I had to come back to New York and sleep there for 2 weeks while I finished out my job. My side of the bed wasn't even cold yet. You don't think it kills me to think of how Denise lit those candles to make love to YOU after we hadn't had sex in a year? No one cared about that, though. I was the obstacle that needed to be removed so that you two could get together. I was not the faithful girlfriend or the fun friend then, was I?

It must be so nice for you. I was there for her through the depression, the heart palpitations, the nights she thought she was going to die, and the therapy that led her to Prozac. I held her hand and read her Winnie the Pooh stories all night even when I had to work in the

morning. I took care of the dogs, the cats, the cleaning...I did it all. And I never complained once, wanting to be a good girlfriend. I never got a thank you or an ounce of appreciation for what I did. It became expected. Now you paint the living room purple and hang curtains, and you're a fabulous woman.

It must be so nice to be the special one.

It will happen to you, too. You'll become too old, too opinionated, or too forceful. You'll want her to go somewhere she doesn't want to go. You'll get sick of kissing ass. She won't want to have sex with you. She'll make you feel like the world's most unattractive woman. She'll argue with you about orgasms during sex until you are bawling your eyes out, and she won't care. You'll spend years wondering what is wrong with you. You'll cry yourself to sleep. You'll cry to your friends. You'll go to therapy together. She'll lie to the therapist, and she'll lie to you. And then you'll find yourself out on your own, without the animals you loved as your children, the woman you loved as your wife, or the family you thought of as your own. And you'll hope that you never get a letter from her new girlfriend asking you to absolve her of her guilt. Then you'll get the letter and spend a day trying to figure out why everyone keeps shoving unpleasant memories in your face.

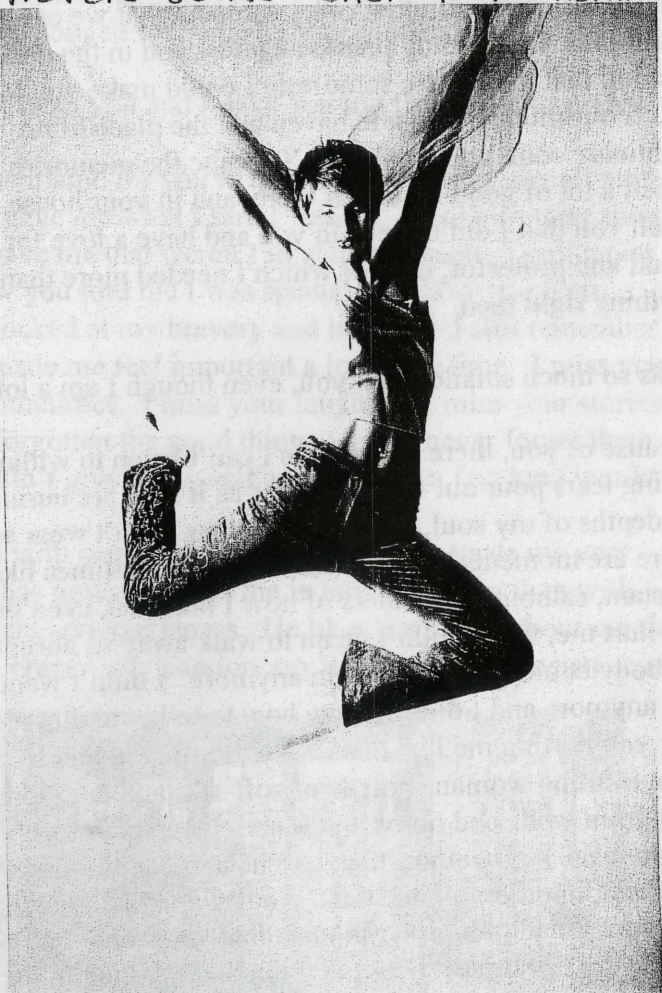
I am not sorry for being angry with you. You stopped being a friend to me the day you took Denise away. And

you can live with that forever, because it IS something you did. So deal with it, stop writing me, stop buying me presents, and leave me alone. Apparently I was such a good friend that you wanted my life. Well, now you have it. So enjoy.

-Marla

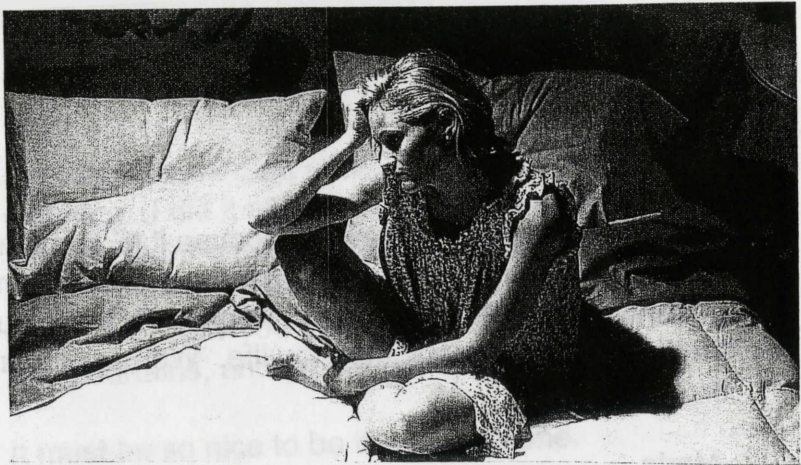
- NEVER GOING BACK TO YOU AGAIN -

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- YOU CANNOT TOUCH ME NOW ★★ ★★ -



I know you think that I don't think about you anymore. I bet you think I have forgotten every moment that we ever shared. I still think about being pressed against you in the dark, wishing that there were some way I could make you love just me. Your room was a safe haven and the place of my worst nightmare come true, and I can't escape the memories of it. I revisit a lot of good moments there, and in your house. I want to tell you that I did believe in you and have a love for you as a friend and protector, both of which I needed more than anything right then.

I was so much smaller than you, even though I am a lot taller.

Because of you, there are albums I can't listen to without having tears pour out from my eyes as if they are burning from the depths of my soul. There are clothes I can't wear anymore. There are moments that squeeze into my nighttimes like constant, stabbing reminders of how I hurt you, even though you hurt me, too. I didn't mean to walk away so abruptly, but my body couldn't take the pain anymore. I didn't want that of you anymore and I didn't know how to tell you. I couldn't bear you hurting me like that. I am too fragile, and too soft. Even a strong woman is made of soft skin and emotions that ooze from welts and burns and scars. I wanted a soft place to lay my head so I wouldn't have to be alone, and I gave you all of myself in order to have that. You swallowed me whole and I let you. I had to in order to have that small spot on the edge of your bed, your arm over me at night when I hadn't spent nights alone in three and a half years.

I would have let you kill me if you had laid me down beside you in that bed.

Yes, it is sick and twisted, but I didn't care about life anymore, or even about being alive. All I wanted was someone to care for me. It had been so long before anyone had laid their hands on my body that I was willing to accept any touch you gave me, no matter how cruel. I thought a haze of drugs and an attitude of apathy would make it easier to bear the blows to my face and body. I thought for sure that I could make the part of myself that cared float away. I wonder if you realize that so much of my innocence died in your hands. I can play the sophisticated woman game to get what I want, but I was small inside, and I longed for some kind of guidance.

I needed it from you and I gave you my flesh as your prize.

There is no blame for you in this. I know that it was all me. You only gave me what I said I wanted. But there were things that you gave me that weren't in your bedroom. I will never forget how you told me I was special, and how you were always shocked at my bravery and honesty. I still remember that you made me feel important a lot of the time. I miss your flowers sometimes. I miss your laughter. I miss your stories. I have not forgotten the good things. I may never forget them. But I couldn't give up myself anymore for a few kind words.

Now I am with someone who loves me. He treats me very well. He has never touched me in any way other than with extreme care and gentleness. He likes the things about me that made you crazy – my passion, my devotion, my consistency,

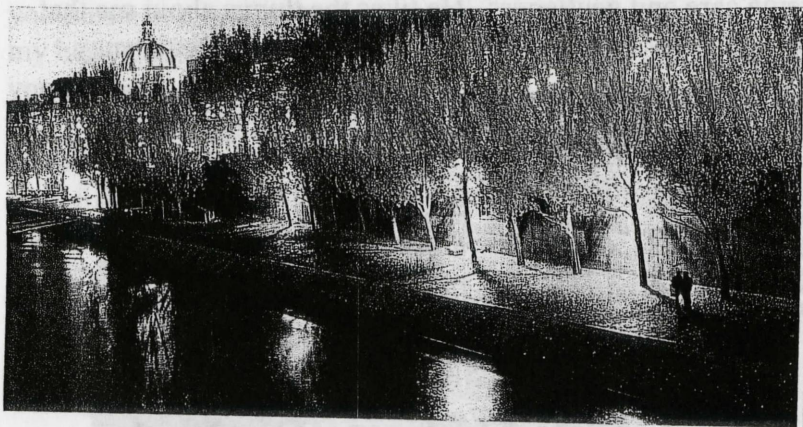


my caring, my unending support. And I love him. He has made my life better in ways I never thought possible. I am free to be myself, no matter what that might be at the moment. I am a whole person, a beautiful woman, a lover, a friend, and a partner. I am not the person who had to drive through the dark to get to your bedroom to be met with indifference. I don't have to share him with anyone and I don't have to give up who I am to lie next to him. I respect myself too much for that. And that is something I could never do when I was with you – I couldn't respect myself. Respect is what I needed to survive. I thought that I would get it if I could conquer you, and be one of the girls that you brought to your bedroom. I found that respect is not hidden beneath anyone's sheets.

In order to respect myself, I had to get away from you.

I know that this makes no sense to you, but it does to me. I know that you cared for me in some kind of very roundabout way. That was not the me I know that I am, though. That was a scared, fragile, broken Marla who had just uprooted herself from all she had known for 3 and ½ years, and felt as though death would be a better sentence than having to be alone. I wanted to hurt and you hurt me. You gave me physical pain to match the emotional pain I was feeling. Maybe I needed that in order to heal, I don't know. I do know that I will never allow anyone to hurt me ever again the way you hurt me. The scars you gave me were not physical, although my body was marked by you long after we had stopped talking.

You haunt me.





There are things that still remind me of you. One of your shirts is still hanging in my closet. This is it, though. This is my final goodbye to you. I am not going to let the memories of what happened to me with your hands make me sad any longer. I am not going to be ashamed or scared. I was a different person then, and I have learned a lot of lessons since those moments in your bedroom when my heart was breaking and trying to tell me no, but my body just numbly allowed everything to continue on. I am not going to fear seeing you any more. I am standing proudly on my own two feet, and there is someone who cares for me that wants to stand beside me. I don't need to keep making myself feel bad about what happened between us anymore.

Yes, I cared for you, and I always will. But I have to forgive myself. To do that, I have to finally say my piece and move on. I hope that you find whatever it is that you are searching for in the hearts of the young women whose innocence you take away.

I am just thankful I took back from you what belonged in my soul. Because that is only for me.

Always Remember.....

Things are NEVER what they seem....

You have to look beneath the surface.

TRANSMAN

LESBIAN

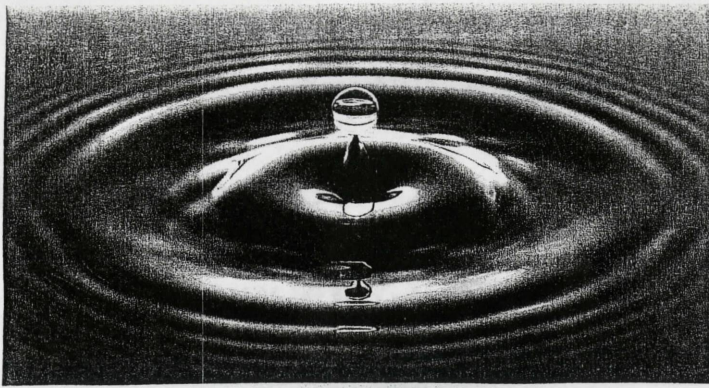


OUR LOVE IS VALID. OUR LOVE IS REAL



Despair always sets in on Monday morning. The realization that I am still not doing what I want to do with my life is starting to wear me down to the point that I feel like I am wearing every single one of my emotions on the outside of my skin. I feel lost here, imputing information into the computer than I don't care about at all, wanting to be doing something so much more meaningful and fulfilling, and running scared from the idea that I could actually make a difference in the world. Because that is power I don't know if I am ready to handle at this point in my life. I am just a girl struggling every day to make enough money to feed my animals and myself and put gas in the car to get to work. This is not the life I had planned for myself at the age of 26, but this is the best I can do right now. Which saddens me, because it means that the money I need for survival is slowly becoming more important to me than making a difference in the world, and I never thought that would ever be the case. What happened to that shaved-head, Sinéad O'Connor look-alike, leather and spike-wearing punk rocker chick who was so fierce no one would even mess with her? Where is she now? I look in the mirror and I see her eyes staring back at me but it sure doesn't LOOK like her anymore.

The system is eating me alive slowly.....



I am walking again, accompanied only by my dog and the numerous bugs clamoring to bite into my flesh. I am carrying a bag with a few pieces of old bread in it, and I am intent upon finding the geese and their babies I had seen the day before with you. I see them as I round the corner where the dock juts out into the lake, and tear the bread into small pieces, tossing it at all of them as the parents walk toward me hissing. I plead with them not to hurt me, and when they realize I am tossing food, they seem to cock their heads and look at me in a different light as they bend their long slender necks to pluck the bread from the ground. The 4 babies waddle clumsily over, picking at the bread and tumbling over each other. I laugh, and feel as if some kind of cycle has been completed. There is a circle closing as I throw bread through the air to make it land far enough away from me to keep the geese feeling safe.

My dog watches with absolute awe and fascination.

There is a cycle in my life that I thought would never come around again. I thought I would never love again as I love you now. I was so trapped in feeling lost and wasted for some time that I forgot what it was like to be kissed by someone who meant it. I feel as if I was as the geese are now – hissing and distrustful of you as you tossed me the bread I so desperately wanted. Instead of backing away, though, I inched toward you, watching the walls fall away around my heart as you came closer and closer to me. You were not put off by my façade. I admire that about you. You never back down from anything, not even me.

It takes a very special kind of person to be with me, and there was never anyone just quite right enough to snap into place like a puzzle piece beside me. That is, of course, until you came along.

I came tumbling and tripping over my feet to you with wounds from battles previously fought. I came to you hurt and scarred and tired and needy, and you never turned away. Yes, we fought and disagreed, but we also made love and kissed in the sunshine and laughed at each other's jokes. We stood up for each other and became a team. We shared triumph and tragedies. We became lovers and partners and best friends. I can't imagine life without you and you have only been here a short time.

I stick the now empty plastic bag in my back pocket and continue on my walk with my dog and the bugs. I notice that the geese are watching me walk away, and I want to cry at how beautiful I feel at this moment, because I know that I am finally a whole woman. I am the woman I have always wanted to be, and I am finally able to receive the kind of love I have always deserved. Best of all, that love comes from you. You are the first to see the woman I have always been inside, and the first to love her. And even more importantly, you have helped me to see how I have to love her, too, and nurture her as much as I can. This woman is me- a beautiful, lovable, wonderful woman.

The woman with the bread.





Write to me!

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