

WEALTH

The psyche is the owner's delight with which he tries to expand his holdings.

--Would you like to make a little extra money?

I started to get into the idea of a psychic hot line. The kind of options that it held for me. That I could learn about my fortune, worth so much more than just something that I might like to do for now. That I could just do what I want forever.

Maybe if you just stay on the line with me.

--No, I mean real money.

--You seem really stressed out.

--I am. That's why I called.

--It's a problem with women...

--It's usually a problem with love or a problem with money.

--And how can you really help?

--You haven't been sleeping well.

--I like to stay up

--It's like your looking for something.

--Looking, it's more like trouble follow me.

--Are you afraid of something. Didn't you have a lover who left you?

--I thought that covers just about everybody.

--It was a messy separation

--I thought that you people were supposed to be good.

--Give me a break, I just started at this job.

--And that's how you keep people on the line?

--I told you that I'm learning.

--What do you do when you're not psychic?

--I'm a student.

--So you could really use a little money.

--If you could just let me do my job.

--What kind of cut do they give you from this?

--I can't really tell you. I mean they could be listening.

--They listen to what I'm saying.

--They have to know that I'm doing a good job.

--And you are? I really like talking to you. How did you get into this psychic stuff.

--It's a job.

--But psychic. Think about how interesting that it is.

--And?

--Do you like to know really know? Have you ever been having sex and almost felt that you were in a different place. You felt like you were looking down at yourself.

--I thought that was my job to figure out what the stars had in store for you.

--But it's all pretty much the same thing.

--What?

--I think we all have those sorts of experience. It's just that we don't know how to interpret them.

-I thought that was why people called me.
-I know that's what attracted you to this kind of work.
-You are good.
-You've always been fascinated by a power that you had.
-What?
-Maybe it just knowing when a loved one was sick. Or sensing danger. And the more that you felt this thing, the more frightful you became of your power.
-And this sounds so weird.
-It's not enough to have these feelings. At a certain point, you have to make the feelings. At least make them come to you.
-It really doesn't work like that.
-Oh it does. Take my word for it.
-Again, I thought that I was supposed to be convincing you.
-I don't need convincing.
-What do you do?
-I'm a writer.
-Are you good?
-I've had successes.
-What do you write?
-Fiction. Non fiction. True crime.
-Do you really write true crime. I love those books. Especially the cases that used psychics.
-You really have it in for the whole psychic thing.
-I guess my life needs some magic.
-Magic always seems to cost money.
-So much for happiness.
-But if you had real powers, you could use them to get happier.
-That's supposed to be my line.
-And does it work?
-I don't know what and what doesn't work these days.
-So there's a real need for psychic services.
-You could say that.
-Are you good?
-I'm trying.
-When was the last time that you had sex?
-What?
-Answer my question. When was the last time that you had sex? It wasn't that memorable.
-Some blind date two weeks ago.
-Do you often go on blind dates? And do you often sleep with the guy on the first date.
-He was a real fox.
-I thought women were foxes.
-You know what I mean. I 'd been feeling sort of depressed.
-Then it's a good fuck or some prozac.
-Whoa!

–But you dispense your energies so freely, and it ends up coming back to haunt you.
–What?
–You can't hardly remember. It didn't cross the deep layer.
–I can't really help you.
–It's like your dreams. You ever had dreams about ex-lovers. And you've had this great sex in the dream, and you wake up all depressed that you broke up.
–You're telling my life story.
–But it's not a story. No happily ever after—it's just a cycle.
–So how do I escape?
–The supernatural.
–What?
–Think about your last sexual experience.
–It seemed good for a while, but it was all the product of a good imagination—and a bottle of red wine.
–You need some wine right now.
–All I've got is the imagination and a coke.
–Take a slow sip on the coke. How does that feel?
–It fizzed in my nose.
–Take another sip.
–That really tasted good.
–Take some and roll it around in the mouth.
–It's still not too psychic.
–Just do it!
–What?
–Don't you love the magic of a random encounter when you seek to penetrate the personality of another. Sometimes it is so much more intense and free than anything that you can find with a lover that you have known for a long time.
–What are you saying?
–That's it's better than a coke.
–What is?
–Let your tongue drink from your lover's private secrets.
–Secret stock.
–Aged whisky.
–Nothing but.
–Can you already feel the tingle.
–Only if I've felt the tickle.
–Now that was easy.
–I'm not that easy.
–Are you afraid?
–Of what?
–Of him finding out.
–There's no him.
–Then let me stay around a little longer.
–For what?
–To help with your homework.

--What homework?
--Love work. I'm giving you an assignment. A little design that I want you to trace with your pen.
--I don't have any paper.
--You're not going to need any paper for this one. It's a kind of that you do on the body.
--I can't deal with love stains.
--Then maybe it's better that you just rub the skin with the pen rather than leave actual marks.
--Where do you want me to rub?
--Somewhere that's not going to show.
--I think that's what the last guy said.
--But he really wasn't interested in the psychic end of things.
--I think you just have a knack for coincidences.
--But that's always a good beginning.
--I think we're way past the beginning and you're trying to get away with your opening advance.
--That's because I haven't been given much of a chance.
--That's because you don't stand much of a chance.
--I called for some help.
--And you got your help.
--Well I could call back for more.
--And you'd get someone else.
--What are you doing now?
--I'm talking on the phone.
--Well, can you see into the future.
--There's not much of a future the way things are going now.
--It could get better. We could make a career out of this.
--What? Harass other innocent customers.
--We could offer a real service.
--You say I'm not real.
--You know why they want to talk to you.
--Why?
--They just want to talk.
--I know that.
--No, I mean that they really want to talk...
--So...
--Don't you get it.
--Yeah, I do!
--You give someone a mile, and then you've found they've taken your last. And you're clean out and desperate and you're both looking at the same ending to good beginning.
--What could I do now.
--Well it's not really about anything psychic or something just psychic. It has something to do with touch.
--Like a healing touching. A psychic touch.
--Right.

–I'm not really into selling anything religious.
–How about comfort. Could you deal in the comfort business.
–What do you have in mind.
–Something that has to do with touch—getting the touch—being touched.
–Are there costumes for this?
–At first.
–I'm not really into taking anything off. I'm not a goddam stripper.
–We could do all this on the phone.
–So it's about the imagination.
–Yeah, something like that.
–So.
–What are you imagining.
–I'm thinking about getting out of here as quickly as possible.
–I thought that you were starting to enjoy my company.
–I've enjoyed talking to you, but it's not exactly company.
–What are you going home to.
–Something that you're not. A promise of something that you could never have.
–That sounds promising.
–Well, that psychic stuff just ain't going to work on me anymore.
–But you've had longings?
–So what.
–Have you acted on those feelings?
–I'm getting tired of the innuendo. I don't really understand anything that you've been saying.
–This is where it gets really ugly.
–It already has.
–Are you alone.
–Of course not. I work in an office.
–No, I mean are you really alone down deep.
–I've got what it takes. That's what guys tell me.
–What do you tell yourself as you head out to the same job every night. That your going to be psychically rescued. You have as much chance as contacting aliens.
–How would you know?
–'cause I'm the fucking alien and you still don't have a clue. What do you think, sister.
–Do you want to go out or something? Because I won't go down on a guy on the first date.
–You already told me that you did.
–I did once, but I won't do it again.
–And which once was that.
–What? I don't have to take this kind of abuse.
–You get abused for a living.
–But it's not much of a living.
–I thought that there was something strange about you.
–I'm looking for a girl who's been touched by an alien. I mean really touched and really inside. No doubt.

–I'm not that kind of alien, I mean girl.

–When the hell do you get off because you need to be taught a lesson?

–Does this sort of thing ever work?

–Always.

The conversation was enough of a distraction to get me started. I really hoped that I could cross that threshold. I was deluded. But it got me thinking. I needed a new gig and there was all kind of appeal in this psychic thing. This girl was a real leftover and if I could get the rap down I could make a fortune. I loved the psychic sex angle—come without touching.

I was in a real mess. I had tried to get some money from Phil. I didn't want my place to go into foreclosure. Jane was still being a real bitch about the finances. She had just cleaned me out.

I still had some minimal health insurance, but I was feeling really run down. Coughing all the time. I once collapsed in the street—all the symptoms. As things became worse, I found myself sleeping all the time. I drew my reality from my dreams.

In one dream I was confronted by the image of an immense waterfall. It cascaded down this precipitous gorge. I myself felt this feeling of falling only to be caught by the opposite motion catching me and throwing me back. I tried to brace myself

–You have nothing to be afraid of.

–What?

–I tell you that you have to allow yourself to let go.

–And crash down on the rocks.

–You'll know how to protect yourself. You can fly.

–That's just silly.

--No, really. You can let yourself soar.

In this dream I felt her sapping some kind of energy from me. I liked the feeling, but I felt the need to be wary of her influence.

–Who are you?

–Syrena.

–What have you brought me to this place.

–You've brought us to this place.

–If you have, what is the reason.

Two massive crystals were suspended in air above two fountains. A blue light shone from one to other and spread out in a myriad of color against a golden screen that seemed to dominate my view. I was transfixed by the image.

–What is this Syrena?

I felt myself spread out against this pattern of light as if I was losing all physical form. I splashed against this wall of light and felt myself spill all over.

A concentration of light appeared at the bottom of the wall, and with it I felt myself rise to the top of this wall. I traveled along with it thin plume of light passing up the center of the wall.

At the top of the wall the light spread out in two directions, and I danced in its fire. And I rode these currents of light. The light then seemed to slap back against me again in a shower. I was completely engaged by the cluster. And here a hole started too form in the wall. I felt myself shoot through the hole and I was propelled along these interminable tunnel. And waves of light surrounded my path.

With the rush everything seemed to fall into itself, a solid core. From this core beat this incredible rhythm that seemed to bore deeper and deeper in this core as it became smaller and smaller, then it exploded in this obliterating splatter.

A wave seemed to reach down from the sky and absorb this explosion. And this torrent rode around and around. A rolling vortex that absorbed all in its wake. There was no escape from this tide. From inside the form emerged a counter wave that itself accelerated and seemed to bounce off an obstacle. This sent the wave hurtling back against the initial torrent. They both seemed to vibrate back and forth until the path became more and more direct and just headed off into an oblivion.

I felt Syrena's charm engage me in a similar manner. She spread her legs and sat on me. She moved against me until I felt aroused. Her panties were moist and her skirt bunched up around her legs. I grabbed her by the hips and pulled her closer.

She spun around me until turned her around and removed her panties. She undid the skirt and her movements were more aggressive and abrupt. As she bent over she slid me inside. Her sighs were overpowering and she pushed against me harder and harder. I eased into her. She focused all her energies on this captivating movement.

I could hardly contain myself, but she drew me in to help sustain her own concentration. I could sense this focus on her part and it maintained my arousal.

As we flowed together, our distraction was universal. Wave and waves rolling over and over us. I held her closer.

Had this dream come to me or did I direct the feelings and the images?. This skill fascinated me. Was it part of my fever? Or could I teach someone this?

Could I recall Syrena or was it a one time experience?

Phil was pestering me that morning. He wanted me to help him dispose of some evidence. I didn't know what the hell he meant. But I felt obliged. If he was going to help me out with some money then I needed to do him a favor.

How much money was I going to need? A lot. But he was entirely obliging under the situation. I told him that I had plans, big plans. He'd seen me on top. And he'd also seen me down before.

What had happened? Why had things gone so far?

I was starting to confront the actual form of my desire. When it all became substantial. Not its initial expression. The desire for Gina. The flow outward. More than that. My interaction with the celebrity. How long had she given me? What did I have to do to make up for.

The more that I spent, the more I found a consistency in her response. The more that I felt she was talking to me. At first, the replies were really standard. Then I was able to string together a number of these replies. Only later on, it was like I had crossed over. She seemed to single me out. I had to keep paying to maintain my contact, but now I really felt that the communication was genuine.

—That genuine level is just a more intense form of her act. You got snowed. It's like a stripper.

—But you pay enough and she comes down off the pedestal.

—And you really pay enough and you're paying for the fucking pedestal. she never really knows the difference. Even her reality is part of the same act.

—You don't know what it's like.

–I know all too well what it’s like. That’s why I’m agreeing to help you out.
–I didn’t want to take a second mortgage on the house.
–Man, you’ve wiped out all your equity. And what did you get?
–She remembered my name.
–You pay a hooker enough and she’ll say your name all night long.
–But will she let you kiss her on the lips.
–And you lover girl went that far.
–She went further. I felt that she could identify with my problems.
–Well, write her and tell her that you’re almost broke and see if she can really identify.
–Those are the shortcomings of love. They love you on the way up. And run like rats on a sinking ship when you’re skidding down.
–You’re skidding down from the moment that you use one of those services. It’s worse than phone sex. At least with phone sex, you get off immediately. She wouldn’t touch your cum if you paid her.
–You can’t realize how far she took me.
–She really took you—to the cleaners. What did she give you—her secret for success—put on a wig and a dress and then take the dress off in front of the camera. I’m sure that’s going to help you out.
–You should talk about help. The cops are after you.
–It’s not like that at all. It’s just a big misunderstanding. There’s just some stuff that I don’t want them to find. And you can help me out.
–By involving myself. I sort of warned you about pushing too far.
–It’s no different than your little problem.
–Phil, you’re crazy.
–You were sending money to a computer chat line hoping to have some kind of real contact with a B movie starlet.
–It wasn’t like that at all. You can’t know.
–That sounds like the perfect line to tell the cops.
–It’s better than saying I’m a crazy mother fucker who sometimes gets carried away. It’s all a matter of perception—what other people like—what they will accept. What they say is OK and later regret. That’s my life.
–You have to anticipate when things are starting to go wrong.
–I do. I’m not in crazy debt.
–You know it goes back to Jane.
–What do you think I’ve been trying too tell you?
What was he trying to tell me? What was he saying about Jane. That he was involved with her. That he would take care of her. That he already had taken care of her.
Maybe to better understand myself, I tried to get to the heart of Phil’s belief. He wanted to obliterate the will, to have it submit to some deeper force. In the end that force would be at the service of his ego. On the other hand, I saw in the will the presence of some deeper force and I wanted to tap into that.

Possession has as its grounds the property that guarantee to men the pursuit of their pleasure.

It was essential to all my plans to keep the house. Precious to my identity that I did not give in to my sickness. But it was so much a part of me. Maybe that was the revelation made so apparent my dream. I had cut myself off from my well spring—I suffered. I needed to liberate myself from this hell.

I needed to find a way to popularize my psychic research. My experience with Syrena had been entirely eye-opening. She was both psychic energy and physical form, and that form beckoned me. Her lips warned, entreated, begged, melted me—I loved that contact.

In that form I understood the foundation of my research. I need to convince my subjects that the same desires served as the basis of their experience. And if they opened the way to psychic influences then they could transform their everyday experiences into this overwhelming paradise—Syrena was nothing less than a patron.

I loved how I was caught in my own illusion that was no less absurd than Phil's. But this illusion was my world, our world and in that I could find my success.

My technique was becoming more direct. Now I could tell exactly what it was that I wanted. So much of the effort could be focused on convincing new lovers of the worth of my approach. Now I could tell when that wild spirit of adventure exploded in their eyes. I had stared into Syrena's eyes and see. Even if this seduction was a distraction, that distraction could be transformed into a treasure of untold worth.

The exercise of liberty implies a destructive power on the part of the self as he attempts to lure others into a whirlpool that he himself propels.

--I have to wake up at six tomorrow.
--That never stopped you before.
--I think that the drugs were better.
--Or they had stronger effects. You become immune after a while. It's like pesticide. You mutate. It becomes part of you.
--And then the fatigue completely wears you down.
--It's not showing.
--It's not whether it shows. It's whether you can see them moving faster than you. If you're spending all your time catching up.
--I notice something. A greater attachment to the surface.
--To beauty.
--As I said to the surface. And I can feel that I fade along these layers.
--Then you are having trouble with your writing. Thinking it is all too abstract. You have to act. Action swirling around you. Not giving you time to catch your breath.
--I think that is how I already feel.
--But there is no satisfaction.

I always trusted you. I'm sorry that I couldn't continue our relationship. I'm sorry that you had to spend so much money to keep in contact with me.

GINA

I decided to head for Gina's web site one last time. She was shown in a suggestive pose with a model with auburn hair. She was kissing Gina's leg. Both women were naked. Gina was wearing a white high heeled sandal.

"If you want to see more, click on the image, and then your account will be activated for the duration of your visit."

I wanted to follow through, to get to the next level like in a video game. The more that I saw, the more that I felt like I was participating. At that point, I would be offered a more interactive screen with chat and live images.

-You are my computer lover.

-I know.

For the time being, I did know. Phil had bailed me out and given me the added inducement. I started to calculate his "gift". How far could my dreams carry me? What was missing?

Would Gina ever consent to a real meeting. In meeting me, how long could she take from her busy schedule.

-Engage, engage. Full battle is about to commence. Stand in place. The love bomb is ready for you.

I was ready for the ultimate embrace.

-Plug in and accept the current. Come inside.

I felt it penetrate every inch of my body.

--The market's falling. Sell! Sell!

-I'm plugged in I can't move. Is this some kind of trick?

ROWENA

The more that we cherish them, the more our desires harden into objects of pleasure. I am a collector!

She gripped my hand hard.

--Would you like a performance. How much do you want to see?

--What?

-Don't I know you from somewhere?

-Not really.

-I just want to have the chance to talk to you. To tell you a story. I'm not looking for anything more.

-What if I enjoy the story.

-I can tell you another one.

-That's what I'm really afraid of.

-No, don't worry. the first story is a pretty good one.

-I've heard enough good stories.

–Then how about a dirty story.
–That’s what I was really afraid of. Do you see how far I’ve let you get already. What if I like the dirty story. If I really like it.
–Then maybe I could help you somehow.
–Are you in the habit of talking to people that you don’t know?
–I know you better than you think.
–How can you say that?
–I’ve seen you before.
–That doesn’t mean much of anything.
–No really. I’ve seen more than you think.
–What are you saying? Have you been looking through my window or something? Are you a peeping Tom.
–And what if I was? It hasn’t seemed to bother you up to this point.
–So you have been peeking. what have you seen?
–I’ve watched you put on your shoes. Slipped your sleek legs into them.
–What are you into?
–Talking. I’d just like to tell you things about yourself.
–What sorts of things?
–Nasty things.
–Guys have been telling me nasty things all my life. Things that really have nothing to do with me.
–So you don’t have a taste for nasty things?
–I’ve got a man.
–And don’t you like it when he surprises me at night.
–There’s no surprise between us. Just tenderness.
–Why are you stoking your leg like that?
She blushed. I stared into her eyes. She smiled.
–This isn’t supposed to be happening like this. My friend really wouldn’t like any of this. Maybe it’s better if we just cut it off here.
–And then you’d never be surprised.
–I told you that I’m not into surprises.
–You like to stay in control. Not even something spontaneous. Something that takes you over.
–I’ve found love.
–How can you know real love if there’s part of you that you really don’t know.
–I can already guess what that is.
–Guessing falls so short of the actual adventure. And a real adventure would turn your world upside down.
–So you have what I need.
–Is that a question?
–Is that?
–If it is?
–I’m not going to leave my lover because of some word game.
–I’m not asking you to do anything. Just consider what you’ve got. Who you are and what you’d lose if you didn’t take a chance. If you ended experience just like that.

–Does this sort of thing always work? It sound like you’ve spent a great deal of effort trying to convince women that’s something’s wrong just so that you can come to the rescue.

–I’ve asked the same questions of myself. It makes me who I am.

–And who are you?

–Someone who won’t sell life short. Who’ll take that risk. Who wants to live life. not let it pass me by.

–If you take that attitude, it just seems so fleeting.

I imagined slipping off her dress. Kissing her firm breast. Running my hands up her legs, her buttocks. Hearing her sighs.

–You have to take a chance. I just want to...write to you.

–Don’t you want it now? Are you going to let it get away.

–I’ve already got what I want. I wanted to talk. To say hello. To find out your name.

That wasn’t so hard was it.

–And you want to do it again.

–I’m not looking for a dinner date. I just want to talk to you. To write you.

–To hear my fantasies.

–To hear about your dreams.

–They’re all pretty simple. To spend my life with Ron. Maybe have him take me around the world.

–And he hasn’t already. Taken you around the world.

–What are you saying?

–Are you hungry.

–I thought that you didn’t want to get any dinner.

–I was just wondering.

–I did have to get going.

–You want me to make the invitation. Figured that if I mentioned food that I’d be hungry.

–What do you want? Because you’re not going to get what you think. I’m not going to throw away my whole life on something really stupid. Ron can give me everything that I want. What can you give me?

–I can’t give you anything. But maybe you can give yourself peace of mind. Peace of mind that you don’t have.

–What are you? Some kind of mind reader. Maybe you’re used to these fatalistic types who’ll throw away their life for a little magic. I’m not that sort of person.

–What are you willing to throw away your life for?

–I’m not throwing anything away for anything.

–But if you were in the gambling mood.

–To gamble the risk has to seem credible.

–Gambling eventually creates its own reward.

–Don’t you find that you have an insatiable appetite that you find yourself giving in to?

–Now who’s afraid of what?

–That’s how it starts. You lose the only thing that really makes sense to your. Then you spend your life trying to mess it up for some one else.

–It’d only a mess if you don’t try.

–Like I said, I’ve already got what I want. And I don’t want to mess it up

–But you’ve spent some time thinking about it.
–Where’s that meal that you’ve been offering?
–I’d love to. But not now. I’m sort of in a hurry.
–Trying to make me really hungry.
–Is it working?
–It always works. But it’s a real gamble. You’ll never know if I don’t get a better offer before you’ve had your chance.

I made sure. Rowena.

Dear Rowena

You need to escape.

–I have escaped!

Dear Rowena

Do you hunger?

–What do you have in mind?

Give in to your urge.

–Where?

When?

–Now!

Rowena knew how deeply committed that she was to her present. What she was was her future. And if she lost that, she would have lost it all, lost too much to ever get back on track. And so it went.

She needed Ron to provoke. To push her to a place that she had never before visited. So she wouldn’t have to consider my offer. Down deep she hoped I had given her the inspiration that she needed.

She looked at herself in the rear view mirror. Had the feeling that she knew the limits of her desire. Otherwise, she might as well leave Ron now.

She started her car and drove home. She had never stopped for a drink by herself but now she felt that she needed something. While at the bar, she caught a man looking at her. Taking her apart for his own designs. She knew what he was thinking. And this tawdry mind reading gave her the pleasure that she needed.

She had time. Ron was working late.

–Would you like to come back to my place for a drink. It’s sort of noisy here.

–I really don’t like noisy places.

His places was tidy, but a tidiness that suggested he was covering something musty.

It frightened her that there were other people like her. And she looked at this man and hoped he wasn’t her sort.

–I’m not sure why I came back here with you.

She knew what was motivating her. She realized that this would not be the first time. That she needed to stop this from happening. She could feel him inside her. Inside her in a way so different from Ron.

–I need to go.

–I’m afraid that I’m becoming like you. That I’m giving in to that same sort of wandering that seems to beset your life. That’s what bothered me so much about you.

You're like a lonely vampire who seeks to recruit others to his kind. I'm not a blood sucker. I don't ever want to be. But I've been feeling so sick of late. You make me afraid.

Dear Rowena

I don't want to make more of this than it really is. You messed up. You made a mistake.

-But that was always my fear. That I'd pull at one thread and the whole thing would start to come apart. It is...

When I first passed her in the street, she wouldn't take a look at me. I knew who she was but she wouldn't let me tell her with her eyes. She had practiced looking straight ahead. I turned as she went by to watch her walk off, turned and smiled.

Her icy manner made me wonder if I'd get my opportunity. Just to say hello.

I started thinking about her. Seeing her step into those shoes. Nothing but the shoes and me approaching her from behind.

I wanted to touch her, to melt the ice.

My fantasy became extravagant. Only interrupted when I saw her with Ron. Saw him rubbing her cheek.

-I need to stop doing the same thing. I just need to stop.

-You weren't following me.

-I wish that you could stop me.

-No one ever can. We just get into doing this sort of thing and later on it becomes habit. No one else can really stop you. They can only help you satisfy that need.

Rowena, I can't stop myself.

-That was what you were hoping me to write. It's not about stopping yourself. It's about giving in.

That's sort of how I've been expecting it to go for you.

-If you don't give in at least once.

Rowena started to seem special for me. That maybe she could release me from the depths of my winter funk I felt that nothing was going on around me. That nothing every had, ever would. It would be critical

--I feel like you've been trying to destroy the only thing that really means something to me.

I can't make you feel perfect. I can only make you feel pleasure.

-What is pleasure?

What do you need it to be.

I wondered how I could attract Rowena's attention. How I could catch her eye. When I saw her, I saw the hollow left by his touch. I couldn't take his place, couldn't get her to avert her eyes.

-Ron, are you there? What are you thinking about?

-About you.

-You're lying.

–Rowe, you know that I only have eyes for you.

–You’re so full of shit.

–And that’s why I love you.

–You know what I thought about you when we first met.

I couldn’t bear to hear any more. Had she realized that I was looking over at them, eavesdropping on their love notes.

I watched her move. An explosiveness in her gestures. A confidence that she could project desire. She knew where she could direct her energies. What she could risk and not really risk at all. And then that reticence that even Ron could not pierce.

This was why she needed him. To fake herself out. A decoy. Reach his level and convince herself that there was nothing else. He let her hold so much back,

In a sense there was no confidence. Sleep walking through her life. He could invade that space and take it all, take nothing. She still clung to herself. Pulled away before it was too late. Climax in that emptiness. A pride in being with someone else. No one to really test her nakedness.

Maybe they could make plans. Plans to insure it would not fall apart.

Sitting across from each other and nibbling on salad. A sip of wine. To seal the deal.

I didn’t want to take his place. I wanted to completely sweep his memory away.

I’ve been watching you and I know, know how close we can get to each other. What have you give to him. What can he hope to offer to you.

–It never can quite work this way. The more you try to push him away, the more that he seems appealing to me.

What have I really seen. Do I want to see them coupling together. To smell the bodies come closer. To taste her sweat.

He can never get close enough to you to really know.

–What are you to say? This is nonsense. He gives me what I need. I can live and breathe and my work. He lets me be me. I don’t want to tie myself around some man. To lose my ability to separate myself from my passion.

Two bodies drenched in their desire.

I was swimming inside her. I felt myself washed by the churning all around me. She was coursing all around me. That uncontrollable surrender to all these sensations. Turned all around by the excitement. Splashing all around. More and more. Drowning and absorbing me.

Her body seemed to twist around me. Weaving and intermixing. The kiss. My chest against her. All giving way. My head disappearing. Groping. The darkness.

Her smile was spread all over me. Assimilated into me. Filter through filter. Passing through wall. Barrier giving way to flow.

As we joined together, I felt myself soar with her. Then we dove so low, plunging and plunging, breathless and interpenetrating. I skimmed off a coalescence and was sent flying in the air, only to edge the surface and carom into the depths.

Our coincidence astounded me. Losing consciousness and then coming too. Our bodies plunged together. Each turning over. A mechanical frenzy both possessing us. Hanging on each

to each.

The passion was hard, immediate, raw. Pulling on the flesh to acquire identity. Buried in this lustful anonymity. Breath bubbling up. My lips against her shoulders. The sparkle of her lips reinvigorating me.

Eyes burning in the night.

–Can you know me?

Tracing down her back. My hands cupped on her breasts. Moving closer and separating. Working into flesh. Regions pushed inside, opening. Wedge inside and holding on. Maintaining this lull.

I felt swallowed by this engrossing zeal. She even deeper, lost in this unusual distraction. She was tempted by this give and take. Too drained to recover, to disengage, she was stripped of her reserve.

To maintain her balance she became attached to these fluctuations. She rode the waves, gave up to the thrill.

–Don't stop.

She knows that she has offered too much, afraid that she cannot make her way back. She pulls me closer.

All hot and around me this cold. That I have just revealed too much of myself. Now a burden, I sense her body weighing on me. A reminder of the exposure that I craved in the moment, that now seemed an irritation.

I'm on your side.

But I felt nothing of the sort. She has been so open in pleasure, and now this utter frankness disturbed me. She had surrendered too easily. Not the sex. That was expected. But she never quit, no holding back. This added to the massive character of the experience. But at this point this became too overwhelming. I was holding her whole being in my hand. And I could sense myself crushing her.

I didn't want to give the wrong impression. But the intercourse was one of deep impressions. The mass was all encompassing. What was so easy for her. Once I had broken through. More than anything that gave her the complete abandonment. The invitation to devotion. The desire to trust.

What I despised in her because I had offered her no indication that I could rescue her. I watched her fall and fall deep.

–I don't know why I did this.

–I don't like your dreams. They are an imposition. They have already destroyed you. Made you focus on something isn't real. I'm not the woman that you think that I am. Just don't try to destroy me.

You want it. All of it. The dream is your only link to anything real.

–You could never say you love me. I can never give in to you for that reason. I know myself. What I would lose. I'd have to believe in you so much. And if I did, what kind of security could you ever provide me with.

Outside the restaurant, she kissed Ron. Not too involving. she ran off. she didn't look down. A lively feeling.

–Officially we're through. I have something that I really like. Don't fuck it up.

We've shared something. Don't make it ugly!

What if Ron knew about her fantasies. How understanding could he be.

–It doesn't work like that, lover boy. You're not exchangeable. He's part of me. You never could be.

I felt her naked body rub against me.

–You're making me feel all wrong. End these fantasies.

–They're not fantasies if you feel them too.

–I don't want to. Not at all. Not anymore.

–So you realized something wasn't right.

–I didn't say that.

The kiss was so ethereal. Too much to let her brush off. What she wanted.

–Don't think that I'm going to get caught up in your little games. I don't need any of this.

You do. You really do!

I couldn't let her shut me out. End of possibility of us being together. Just watching her gave me the encouragement that I needed. But I could see that glimmer of rejection. How far could I carry through this seduction before she came face to face with her very complicity in this nightmare.

–You're just using me to get yourself off the hook.

–I don't feel any guilt.

–You're not feeling anything.

–You can't say that. You don't know what's going on when you're not around. You don't have a privilege over me. You're not a mind reader.

I really didn't have time to write you yesterday. There were so many things that I wanted to tell you about.

As she left the restaurant, she gripped Ron's hand harder. There were so many things that she wanted to say to him. She wanted to confess the doubts that she had about him, about herself, about them as a couple. she looked at him and smiled.

You offer me a regularity that I can tap and drain. You are part of me. I think of you and we are together. I fall down your well and am lost in its reverie.

Your lips are tender, inviting, relaxed, wanton. I feel them rub all over me. Glue themselves to me. Unite in abandon. I melt in our kiss. Lip over lip, around and inside me inside you. You suck on my lip, bite me, just short of drawing blood. You lure me in deeper. You have aroused me. You are stimulated. I push my hand into yours. Your fingers interlace with mine. I caress your face. You purr. You curl up. Your nose turns up. That smile overcomes us.

Your lips slide down my body. We throw ourselves into passion. I try to hold on. My face buried in your breasts. In you. You open up. The appeal of the flesh. My tongue against yours. My tongue looking for its reply in you.

I imagine you immersed deep in your work out. All your muscles are pumping together. Your breath is irregular and you stretch out. Re-establish a pattern. Find a smooth flow. A force field grips the whole body and magically radiates over you. Your hand reaches out and makes contact. The extension of the arm, reaching, touching, gripping. Pulling up and down. The legs move in concert. Each in reply. Water rains down on you. The release. Cooling you down. Washing away the sweat.

Your momentum continues. You trace an architecture with your body. Like a sculptor you form the space in front of you. Bring solid mass where there is none.

I feel this transfer of energy from your body to mine. Mimic your rhythms. Engage the same time that you do. Our coincidence brings us in contact.

I again feel your caress. The richness of your touch. My hand in yours, you pull me in. Your kiss invades me, overcomes me. We roll over each over each. Your warmth, your sweat your movement all part of me.

The heart of this flux. The shaking. Tremors absorbed each to each.

You kiss me hard. I peel off your sweater. Trace the muscles of your shoulders. Skim the muscles of the abdomen. I take in your smile. Am warmed by it.

We spiral in to each other. Lose myself in these motions. Feel myself propelled to the heart of this fire. Merge with you. And in coming together enter a trance.

Out of the trance, I am held by the immediacy of the body. Your legs spread to accept me in. I follow my arousal into your release. The movement is frenzied. I need to retain my focus. Prepare for a further delirium. The pushing back and forth. Crashing of the limbs. Torsos engaged. The dynamo whirrs.

Your arms stretch out. I pull with you. The soaring. We fly together. A resistance of the muscles transformed into these dominant flows. Propelled together from the outside and then turning around these clusters of energy from within. Both currents cross each other. A tearing of the skin and muscles. An invigorating.

I am inside you. You hold me there and pull and pull and pull.

I am breathless.

Waiting to propel myself. To toss myself into this mass.

I try to hold my concentration.

A screaming from inside. Not to give in.

Helpless.

Rowe, Rowe.

We are together.

–What are these motions that hold us together. Intrusions on your part. I don't know where the hell you got my email address. But all this is psychotic. You marked out my body like a children's drawing that you color in with your crayons. Don't I have a say in this. You don't know me. You've seem me a few times in passing.

>>Or maybe worse, you're stalking me. But you can't know the real me by piecing together these images. There are dreams that I have that you destroy by these rude impositions. I have freedom. I don't want to deal with this sort of shit.

>>You can't know who I am. what I am. And if you think you know, then I'll just do the opposite to frustrate you. You have no business prying into my personal life. You can't know what I say or do with other people. You could never appreciate real tenderness if it was in front of your face.

>>Passion isn't just a game. It's sharing things about who we are. What we love to hold on to. what we cherish.

>>You make a game of this sort of thing. You see a woman and you suck all the life out of her. You want to add her to your collection. I'm not your doll. You can't dress me up and then take me home and have me do a strip show. I'm not that girl for you.

>>I'm nothing for you and I want it to stay that way. Nothing, nothing, nothing! You see me and think that I'm all these things that I'm not. I'm not that angel that you want me to be. I've done things. Things that I hate. Things that you would hate.

>>I hate what you're doing to me. Leave me alone.

Rowena, don't end it this way. There are mysteries that I know that I would like to share. There is so much that I have to offer you. Security. I could protect you.

--This nonsense. Leave me alone.

I've watched how guys hurt you. I can help!

--Hurt. I've hurt guys. Guys I've loved and cheated on just to test them. I know who I am.

It's not like that.

--Leave me alone or I'll have to take matters in my hands.

You shouldn't stay with someone out of guilt. Just because you're afraid to hurt them. Because you're making up for past sins.

--If I want to enjoy myself I will. But don't make a spectacle out of my life. You're not my fan; you're not my lover. You're not a part of any of this.

Don't shut me out.

--You can't be shut out if you never were inside.

If we could just do something together. Maybe see a movie. Just let me be friends. Tell you a story.

--You're desperate. Women don't like that.

OK. I'll stop. Just let's have a drink.

Why aren't you answering anymore.

Dear Rowena, I miss you!

--Leave me alone

Desperation often becomes part of desire. Someone takes the devotion of others for granted until it's no longer there. Rowena could never survive with Ron. She needed new friends. Men who could revive the old complement.

--What are you doing?

To my advantage Rowena had never met me. Perhaps seen me at the gym. Picked me out of a crowd. Caught a glance that lasted a bit too long.

But there was nothing. Nothing incriminating. And I knew about her...Knew what was getting her going...

Advantage in. It was sheer accident. We bumped into each other leaving the gym. All my stuff fell from my bag. I had just been closing it. There we were, her helping me retrieve myself.

--Haven't we bumped into each other before.

She stared at me and then continued.

–Sorry, poor choice of words.

She smiled—a kissable smiled.

–I’m sure I would have noticed.

–I’m really sorry. Let me make it up to you. I’ll buy you a drink.

–I really have to be some where. What’s your name?

–Rowe, Rowena. You have to eat.

–I sort of have plans. But I do have a bit of time before then. Let’s get a drink.

She had studied architecture. Always been into art. But then quit for a job in the financial industry. She hated her work but was tied to the dream that it offered. This was what she had become.

What was left of the dream was betrayed in her passion. At the same time she was afraid to admit her unhappiness. That added to her crisp manner. If she gave in she knew that she’d break down.

Why had she disturbed her routine, almost pursued me? I couldn’t figure it. I like her. But I knew what she expected. Knew that she had lost her personality and the fact that she was still chasing that ghost.

She invited me back to the apartment. I saw the computer, the source of those furious emails—a Mac.

It was quaint. A few prints on the wall. Wood and pillows. A sparse curtain. Slightly Danish in austerity.

–I like your place.

–I seldom bring anyone here. I’m on the go so much.

She was reaching for a bottle of wine. I looked her in the eyes. Brushed her hand.

–Maybe I had a little too much to drink at the restaurant.

She blushed.

–I was glad that your dinner date cancelled.

–I never had plans.

Everything worked out too perfectly.

–I think that I got afraid. The last guy who came here took it all for granted. And then he just stopped coming. I felt bad after that. He had stolen my refuge.

I imagined her showing up at the apartment of other men. Leaving before any emotional climax. Perfecting physical pleasure to a science.

–Sometimes the things that we do just to remain sane.

I smiled and took my glass of wine from her.

Rowena, I want to write you. I’ve been thinking about you. I think that I know who you are. Let me tell you stories.

–You can’t know who I am if I don’t even know that for myself.

But I know all about your lover.

–Do you know Ron.

He knows me. At least he thinks that he does.

Imagine that part of the day that you are most yourself. The part that you can’t give over to him.

–And then I’ll give it over to you. You’ll seduce me and degrade me and abandon

me.

I can only abandon you if you abandon yourself. It's not about me. It's about the purity of your will. Totally committed to pleasure of the body. Only then can you taste your rapture.

What you want to hold you. To take you over. The more that you give, the more that I let you believe.

–I have someone.

Someone who lets you show up at any hour. Raw, begging. It's always there. And what that is. That is not someone. That is all you!

I see her overcome by someone who hurt her. But not caring.

Rowena had found her pleasure.

MELBA

**Once we possess, we assume that we can overcome the object of our possession.
Beware of the snares in our path.**

I needed a distraction. I was having trouble concentrating on work. I headed over to the gym. But even my routine started to bore me.

She was waiting for someone—otherwise, why wasn't she starting her work out. I first saw her in the mirror. then I looked over at her. Angled myself so that I could keep my reps going and still watch her.

Her abdominal muscles, the definition of her. To work them each second and separate herself from that other girl who she was. Who she might have remained. She massaged herself gently. Stretched out on the bench. Gave assurance to her breasts. Passed her hands along her legs.

–You don't know me.

But I was getting to know her very well. That fear on her part that she might slip back into what she was.

–You can't keep up with me.

Afraid that some guy might discover that former sedentary self. No one who could pop out the blue and say I know you. I know what you used to be like. Even her hair was dyed. Cut short. Crisp mannerisms. Not even a trace of her former accent. She wanted to be British. The air. The fashion.

Real estate. A new Mercedes. Her reward to herself. Maybe a gift house to her mother. Anything so that she didn't have to remember.

What did he think about all this. Where was he? Someone to spot her on the weights. To watch her precision in the crunches. The crowning achievement. The success that they shared.

Zooming in closer. What was his real dream...

She defined him so much better than he could define himself. Loved her more than she could love herself.

–I ordered us some wine.

A love that wouldn't last.

He just loved himself too much.

–More than I couldn't ever love myself.

The hollow only made deeper.

A better workout. In the heart of the muscles. That pain that has no rejoinder except for more work.. More pain!

–I can take you there.

Someone who finds it more automatic. The science of exercise. Trips to Bermuda for triathalons. Rubbing oil into his shoulder muscles. The hot kiss. Her sex an extension of the leg curl. The free flight. The flip.

–Melba, have you been here long.

Her friend Darling shaped more by the curves of flesh than the lines of steel. A caress delaying in the curves of the flesh. A little too indulgent. So desirable. A cute smile. A frivolity that frightened Melba.

I was so sure that Melba would be leading this workout. Inviting Darling into her discipline. Even the contact flesh to flesh would be so ordered by the instruction.

She braced Darling. They were close enough to kiss.

But it was Darling who was leading the dance. Melba's body was a tool for Darling's vision. She kneaded flesh. Shaped muscle. Aligned bone to bone.

Darling elongated Melba's sharp edges. Offered her sensuality where there has only been precision. Warmth where there had only been persistence.

–You don't know me.

Darling made herself known through touch. The aspirations of Melba's muscles finding form. A purring from inside.

Sweat pouring off their bodies, the two headed for the showers. Lather covering their bodies. Sleek and glowing. The sponge foaming over her vulva. The silly water slaps of her partner. The bubbling from inside. Making her feel so relaxed. A gentle cooing.

Her backside a present for the time spent in physical devotion. Commitment to this ritual between them

–Would you mind sharing?

This was not about sharing. They had already become part of a single physical force.

The tongue swallowing up the water. Exploring the currents. Following the canals.

Their closer contacts. Intimate provocations.

–Guys have these silly fantasies about me. About me and the girls that I work with. That's why I'm into exercise. Why I'm into the body. But it's nothing like they think.

And flesh folded into flesh. And in the sharp curves of the body, there was no room for doubt. No room for another.

The water beaded against the muscular legs and tight back side. A cluster of flesh where the globe of the cheeks intersected and pulled together. From here the body flowered. It opened up and radiated.

So intimately involved in these movements. The turns and attitude of flesh. The tongue nestled in this clarity. If Melba felt that she had ever gone too far, she only made her presence

made known more. More and more.

And Darling was there as that guarantee that she could protect herself. withdraw if her embarrassment ever became too much.

Sticking together. An intensity in place of an intimacy. For Melba it was all interchangeable. Darling made her lose that shame that had always beset her.

The two rubbing so hard against each other. Where to concentrate these curiosities. What the tongue could not fully attain. The frictions of skin and hair.

A deep kiss. The direct quality of the tongue.

--What are you doing here?

Who?

This was unusual.

A voyeur. A visitor.

Playing along. Find entry ways. Lost on a ramp. Tumbling over each other.

--I didn't let you in, did I.

Focusing on her. An ever widening passageway. Sliding myself inside her.

--Is there no limit to your fantasies.

I was taking care of her while she whispered to Darling.

Pulling the self all the way along in this melange.

Anything that projects erect and directs all the action.

This wasn't supposed to continue this long. After the lessons, everyone was supposed to go home on their own.

POSITION ONE: I gave you everything that you wanted.

She sat on my face and faced forward. A patch of skin on her ass--my focus--so engrossing. Work my way further down, inside her. She took it all for granted as she responded to my tickling caresses and cat licks. My tongue is active within.

POSITION 2: Melba goes down on Darling while I fuck her from behind. She is all juicy inside and I move so freely. The whole scene drives me crazy and I can hardly restrain myself from coming thinking about it all.

QUESTION: What was there to all this? (Melba, hold me.) Her body opened up and she radiated all this passion. I found myself working each section of her body. She almost separated herself from the act. She just rode the tingling and tried to turn it into something more real.

In another scene, she had just taken off her running shoes. She wore tight shorts and a sports bra that hugs her ample breasts. She pulled off my shorts as I sucked on her breasts. Pull off the bra. She massaged my dick. I pulled off her shorts and went to town She was so supple. So meant for this--liberty.

Her workout had defined the thigh muscles. It almost protected her against her former life of disappointed. Once I paid tribute to the body, she let me in--complete abandon on her part.

Her breasts pulled tight. I reached in to her blouse and started to massage her breasts. she smiled. My penis was already hard as ever. I undid her blouse. She slid her hands along her crotch. Slipped off her tight pants. She rubbed her hand along her firm ass. She started to get warm and moist. As I kissed her deep, tongue over tongue, and squeezed her breasts, she got herself off. Her hand cradled deep in her panties--they crumpled up in her hand.

She showed her insides--her-- pink and raw--tense line of her legs--pushing on the ground--the gyrating flow of her into me. Opening wider. This was it--THE SELF!

Her arms were resting on her hips as she licked her mate. She tickled her breast with her tongue.

Her legs rested high on my shoulder and projected high in the air.

I am so excited as Darling beat off in a corner while she watched us. I turn Melba around and just pump her from behind.

–How are you holding up?

Darling came over and just started sucking my cock. Melba was on a bench stimulating herself. This was so amazing. I tried to hold on. I couldn't give in. Darling touched herself while I thrust from behind. This invited Melba to spread her legs in front of Darling and she licked on Melba. I slipped around in the froth.

Melba's body jerked back as she and Darling went at it. Their bodies rocked up and down. Their vulva in contact—close and constant. The clitoral stimulation drove them crazy.

Melba almost bit off my cock as she lost herself in Darling's caresses. This would not end!

Off to the side, Darling was ravenous. Her intense gyrating, as she touched herself in a circular motion. She implied a deeper center of pleasure—surrounding orbits. Implied a system of partners

–Oh, Melba.

I pumped and pumped and pumped away. I felt myself so close to Melba while I contemplated the cosmic Darling.

(This all started again. The clothed Darling and Melba stripping down.)

Almost collapsing on the bed. Our angle was precarious. Parts of our bodies hanging over.

Her sighs--amazed and recovering

The foaming sponge rubbed along her vulva. Lathering as it was pushed inside. That ah accompanying the caresses. A giggle. Meant more for an audience than Darling could herself contain.

A butterfly. My butterfly. To leave the cocoon to find new flowers, new sensations.

Her skirt puffed up as it caressed up her thighs. She had to brace herself as she rode her heels, a gesture that invited an energetic image. Her painted toe nails pointed seductively in the opposite direction. Her blouse was deliberately low cut and she took advantage of its suggestiveness. Its small size insured that it would be revealing of her abdomen. Her panties slid up her leg and made the flutter of the skirt all the more sheer. They showed slightly as she bent forward, as the top pulled up to expose more skin

Her lipstick accentuated that deep pucker. She licked them to retain that gloss. Eye shadow that fanned wide and added to the imposing cheek bones. A concentration on the glitter, her lips succulent and alluring.

Tighter!

The blonde hair—her body!

I ran my fingers through her hair she smiled

Held her hand and gently pinned her against the wall.

As I reached over to kiss her, she stuck her breasts out. We made contact as I pulled her closer to me. A sense of relief followed by a slight shiver gripped her whole body.

Our embrace grew tighter as I worked my hand down her back. The supple response caused her

to press more snugly against me. Her body covered mine as our lips melted into each other. The dress made it easy for her to wrap her legs around. The heels emphasized her nonchalance.

I reached under her skirt and ran my hand along her upper leg. As I touched her buttocks, she cooed. She whispered in my ear. I sucked on hers. I slipped my hand under her panties. I touched the firm flesh. My other hand made it to her other cheek. As I felt arousal, I moved her close to me so she could feel it too. Her kisses grew more intense as her hair became messy over her face—her state of abandon.

I maneuvered her over to the bed. My lips worked their way up her legs as she pulled up her skirt. We worked off her top and I skimmed the outlines of her breasts with my mouth. Her perfume mixed with her sweat and intoxicated me. My arousal was more intense. I wanted to be inside her. I cupped her breasts with my hands and started to suck on one while I caressed the other. My lips played with the nipple. Holding and releasing.

She put her hands down my pants and felt my firm penis. She moved her hand in and out to intensify the arousal. I undid her skirt. She spread out on the bed in her panties. I loved how they bunched up as I took them off. All highlighted her vulva. And my tongue embraced the lips. Titillated the clitoris. Her face became flush with the excitement.

I took off my boxers and she guided my way into her. As I slid inside her, we rocked back and forth. I sensed her opening more and more to accept my motions.

This intensity prompted her to switch positions. I pulled her in as she rode above me. The rim of her vagina bounded my penis and I became more aroused as I felt the wall trace its line over me. I pushed harder to engage the fold of skin and this increased her stimulation. I thrust in a more constant motion and she rode with me. Our gyrations flowed as she accepted each advance with her deep replies. To secure myself, I sought a stronger kiss. Our faces pressed even closer together. A faint smile impressed itself on hers. She had me turn her around so she could propel the action with more intensity. She sat on me and held herself steady by digging her heels into the bed. This gave an added strength to her movements. I pushed up as she rammed into me. This only inflamed the provocative stimulation that she felt. She was lulled into enjoyment.

Rather than surrender to this intensity I held on. I would not release tension. Again on top of me, she was electric in her animation. she slammed harder and harder. I could not keep up with this earthquake.

Her skirt puffed up as it caressed up her thighs.

I already was advancing way ahead of what saw

She had to brace herself as she rode her heels, a gesture that invited an energetic image. Her painted toe nails pointed seductively in the opposite direction.

The clashing image created a sense of action-- participation

Her blouse was deliberately low cut and she took advantage of it suggestiveness. Its small size insured that it

I played along with these images and continued to feel a sense of reward in my regard

would be revealing of her abdomen.

Her panties slid up her leg and made the flutter of the skirt all the more sheer. They showed slightly as she bent forward, as the top pulled up to expose more skin,

Her lipstick accentuated that deep pucker. She licked them to retain that gloss. Eye shadow that fanned wide and added to the imposing cheek bones. A concentration on the glitter, her lips still succulent and alluring.

The blonde hair...

Her body.

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I was running way ahead of myself. She became overjoyed with my awareness.

What she had wanted me to see became so overwhelming as I drifted along with her. She watched me. She knew.

She accepted my touch and this only inspired my continued advances.

Her body had completely anticipated every move. She observed me, knew how I would act, concentrated her delights, surrendered to my touch.

I could hardly sustain myself under her awareness. I was seeing inside her and this made me more aroused.

Her words seemed to come alive inside me. I traveled along their seduction. She seemed to pull back only to form a cavity to absorb my curiosity. I felt uncomfortable that there was little that I could now hide from her. I gave in.

Her kisses grew more intense as her hair became messy over her face—her state of abandon.

I maneuvered her over to the bed. My lips worked their way up her legs as she pulled up her skirt. We worked off her top and I skimmed the outlines of her breasts with my mouth. Her perfume mixed with her sweat and intoxicated me. My arousal was more intense. I wanted to be inside her. I cupped her breasts with my hands and started to suck on one while I caressed the other. My lips played with the nipple. Holding and releasing.

She put her hands down my pants and felt my firm penis. She moved her hand in and out to intensify the arousal. I undid her skirt. She spread out on the bed in her panties. I loved how they bunched up as I took them off. All highlighted her vulva. And my tongue embraced the lips. Titillated the clitoris. Her face became flush with the excitement.

I took off my boxers and she guided my way into her. As I slid inside her, we rocked back and forth. I sensed her opening more and more to accept my motions.

This intensity prompted her to switch positions. I pulled her in as she rode above me. The rim of her vagina bounded my penis and I became more aroused as I felt the wall trace its line over me. I pushed harder to engage the fold of skin and this increased her stimulation. I thrust in a more constant motion and she rode with me. Our gyrations flowed as she accepted each advance with her deep replies. To secure myself, I sought a stronger kiss. Our faces pressed even closer together.

Given that my curiosity was now exposed, she tapped a well of aggression. In that realm, she subdued and anesthetized me. I became drunk on her charms. Nothing could protect me.

I lost myself entirely in her. I concentrated on her appeals as if I could separate them from intention. I could not and felt myself falling deeper and deeper under a spell. What I touched, what she wore—how it all suggested our holding together.

Ready to accept our coincidence, I only sensed the physical stimulation running one step ahead of myself.

Hence the danger of total absorption in the flesh. There is no hope to let go of this attachment as this risks the subsiding of the pleasure. Each intensity of desire is marked by another turn on the body. Once I have been invited this deep inside, the mere sight can inflame my desire. Beyond desire, I am committed to the physical preoccupation.

A faint smile impressed itself on her.

She had me turn her around so she could propel the action with more intensity. She sat on me and held herself steady by digging her heels into the bed. This gave an added strength to her movements. I pushed up as she rammed into me. This only inflamed the provocative stimulation that she felt. She was lulled into enjoyment. Rather than surrender to this intensity I held on. I would not release tension. Again on top of me, she was electric in her animation. she slammed harder and harder. I could not keep up with this earthquake.

The sweat poured down her face. It drenched her hair. Our stomach slid together in this humidity. She now opened herself more and more and gave more and more to these tremors.

She was possessed. Not moving, but soaring way above the movement as I just burst inside her. The torrent flowed over itself and became more and more profound. It shook both our bodies convulsively

EDITH

Our fantasies catalogue possessions that we have lent away for misuse. Objects that we hope that we can get back.

I don't want to say that it was Phil who introduced me to Edith. Maybe it was. I can't remember for sure. But she had heard about my research, had heard about my possible appointment at the University and wanted to be a candidate for study there.

I remember how she had attended a number of social functions of friends of mine, and she always seemed to hide in the background. She listened and observed, but never spoke. Or if she did her reticence left her tongue twisted before the rather formidable elders. Her eyes would grow big as she considered an idea. Or she'd take a concentrated deep breath. She was saving her insights. Or just taking them in intuitively. I wondered what really made her tick.

I remember that one of my colleagues had brought her by to my office. I had this

The physical attachment found its own equation. Value after value projected out from these combinations.

These results gave her sense of deeper emotional connection. That any longing on her part only found answer in a stronger action. She accepted the aggression of this calculus.

If there was any doubt about my understanding, it was revealed in her actions. She had projected way beyond that initial contact. We were enveloped by this realization.

Captivated by this physical concurrence.

temporary office downtown in this one story make-shift facility. She had this big book with her—almost a coffee table book on ancient cultures—psychic research and the like. She had it open to this one picture of what looked like a Mayan calendar.

—It's from Sumeria. They call it the "Four Seasons of Human Intercourse".

—Sumerian sexual intercourse.

—Human intercourse—like communication.

It had close ups of the inscription of couples in graphic sexual poses. She made fun of the faces.

--Ooo ooo. Ahh. Oh, baby!

—What?

--It's like four different states of being. One is the transfixed state where the participant is just taken over by the feeling. The second is the active state where they are made aware of their physical being. The third is submission where it is the entire surrender to their desires. And the last stage is the crossing over. It's sort of a metaphysical free flight.

—It sounds fascinating.

—It was the basis for a psychic discipline—a bypassing of the restraints of the physical realm. From the body to the body outside the body to the supernatural universe. I've always wanted to do more research.

—Investigative research.

—No, I wanted to examine the practice. I've always felt that I've had these premonitions. These weird dreams. I thought that maybe I could try this stuff out.

—It's a little too formal for me.

—You're a professor at a university. Too formal—don't be silly.

—Maybe I didn't look at it seriously enough. Let me see the book.

When I looked at the book, I still couldn't get over the funny faces that she had been making. Sure it corresponded to concepts that I had been considering, but she made such light of it that I had trouble taking it seriously. It almost reminded me of Steve Messaien's book. But I thought it might be inappropriate.

—So, you really want to do this kind of research.

It's all something that I'm thinking about. For now it really has nothing to do with my real experience. It's just a speculation.

—But it might have something to do with what you will do in the future.

—I need you guidance. I've had crazy dreams. Dreams that blur the distinction between asleep and awake.

I knew that she had a story. I felt that she could enlighten me. she would make an excellent subject.

--It's not really curiosity that motivates me. I'm just trying to make sense of what I've already figured out.

—And what have you figured out?

—That I'm basically alone. That what turns me on is really worth it if it only makes me feel more alone. But that doesn't stop me from going after really crazy things.

—Like what?

—Just really crazy things.

—What's crazy.

—Just guys. I don't like to talk about it.

–Are you into a particular guy.

–There was this guy who was living at our place. Not really living there but just hanging around. He was a friend of my brother. We'd fool around. And he really got me hot. But I don't know why I got in the habit of having sex with me. It wasn't productive in any way and it used to make me feel bad about myself.

–So why did you do it?

–It made me feel that I was part of something. Whenever he was inside of me, I really felt alive. Like I was part of some deep secret about the universe.

–That sounds like an exaggeration.

–Not an exaggeration. It was totally real.

–If it was so real why didn't have the same effect on him to?

–It did, but I could never get him to admit it.

–That seems pretty shitty.

–That's what I thought.

–I mean pretty shitty on his part.

–You can't say that. It's not like you know him.

–Well, you do. And are you really being honest about it.

–I don't really want to talk about it.

–But if you don't talk about it then your creative side is just going to get buried.

–We're just talking about getting fucked now and then.

Was she trying to challenge me—entice me? It had me going for the rest of the day. I could keep up the pretense. But she was making it hard. Like she wanted to break me down just to test me. then she'd end up denying me.

–I really like talking to you . You know

I eventually recommended Steve Messaien book to her, sort of a *Venus in Furs*.

It's really bizarre but it's deep. Really eye-opening.

She smiled as I handed her a copy.

–There's nothing that's going to shock me.

–Nothing that's going to shock anyone over eighteen years old.

–So what is shocking in the book.

–He just talks about how pleasure is linked to our tolerance for pain. And he explores ways to expand that tolerance.

–Doesn't that lead to an addiction to torture and the like?

–It's really not like that.

–You don't want me to try the things in the book

She started to wonder if her energy was being drained from her. If she was losing her stamina. If something was replacing the heart of what she was. After she had looked at the book, she returned to talk to me. All the color had been drawn from her face as if she had seen a book.

--What's wrong?

--The book.

--You seem like something happened to you. I told you not to try things described in the book.

--It changed my perceptions about things I did. Things that I enjoyed. I started to wonder who I really was. Did I really pick out what I liked. Or have I just been reacting to things that have been going on around me.

–Did you figure it out?
–More than that. I started getting afraid who I was. If I was just empty at the core. Like a vermin just focused on its own perversion.
–And what was your delight.
–This is getting a bit embarrassing.
–We can stop.
–No, I really need to talk about it. Because things were starting to surprise me. I thought that I knew my limits.
–You did try some of the things.
–It's not like that at all. Just my face. Who I saw when I looked in a mirror. Things that were all so certain started to face in and out. I really need your help.
–The book interests me, but I'm no expert.
–But I feel that you know that sort of thing. Tell me.
–Tell you what.
–Who I am?
–You're the same person that you always were. You've just shone a brighter light on your character.
–That's what scares me. Like I'm driven by this monster inside.
–We all enjoy things that make us a little ashamed.
–But I think my shame is greater. That I really have more to be ashamed of.
–What?
–I just feel like I'm too free for my own good.
–We all do things that we regret. That doesn't mean in the least that we're out of control.
–But if that's the only thing that's motivating us.
–It's not like you've changed overnight.
–I just don't think that I can care for anyone. I just like having fun.
--There's nothing unusual about that.
–It's just that I don't think that I can stop. It's like a drug. And when I read the book, I took it as sort of a discipline, a way of stopping my attachment to that pleasure. And the more I read the more I became fascinated with his definition of pain. It all seemed to feed a fixation that had already developed deep inside me. And I was just going along with it. The only way to find some stability in my life.
–I don't think the book's meant that way.
–Do you get some special pleasure in giving young girl books like this.
I winced. I suddenly realized that she was totally taken by Messaien. This revealed a avocation on her part—something that she had hidden all along up to this point. Men that she had met had been pushing that seem button and she was totally compliant in their bizarre fantasies.
–Maybe Messaien's the answer.
–I told you that it doesn't really work like that. Edith, it's just a curiosity.
–I mentioned that curiosity's not a motivating force in my life.
–Then you have to watch your attachments.
–The guys.
–No, your habits.
–So that's why you gave me the book.
–I thought you might find it entertaining.

More than entertaining, Edith was in the grips of a sensual awakening. And I felt gratified to be a witness of the proceedings. Maybe a catalyst. Our next meeting started with a bombshell on her part.

–I had the most fantastic night.

It excited me that she had brought me under her confidence.

–Things. I never really thought of myself as that sort of girl. I think that I sort of shocked him.

–In the end, there is nothing really shocking when you get down to it. It's all about what we call natural. Just stretching our definition of who we are.

–But I've been trying to tell you all along that is my greatest fear. That the only thing really gets me off has nothing at all to do with the guy who I was with.

–Who was he?

–Don't I deserve a little discretion

–Of course. I just wondered who he was to you.

–Are you starting to get a little jealous?

–Don't be silly.

–But your questions seem to have direction in themselves.

–I'm starting to feel that you're crossing a very uncomfortable line. This honesty is the basis of our friendship.

–I'm not pretending something that's not there.

–You had a story to tell me. And I didn't give you a chance to tell it. So what did happen last night.

–It's like my whole body came alive for me.

–Did he know where to touch. How to touch? Was he patient in the way that no one else had been.

–I'd like to pretend that it was the care that he took. But it wasn't anything like the oral sex. I just felt that my body felt disembodied. That I just kept pushing and pushing and there was so much more to go.

–So it was the sexual positions that liberated something about you.

–You are sometimes just so extremely crass.

–It just that I've discovered this magic that I felt never really existed before.

–And you think that I'm trying to make light of that sort of thing.

–Exactly. It's your jealousy, control, or whatever you want to call it.

–I don't know. I just feel like I have this special relationship with you.

–And you still do. I just have to explore things on my own.

–But I thought that you knew about things. You just had to sort them out.

–Well I learned that I didn't really know. Not about the total me. And Roger had it in for the total me.

–It was like he read Steve Messiaen.

–It has nothing to do with Messiaen at all.

–So it has nothing to do with me. And nothing to do with the book.

–Exactly.

I felt mortified.

–Not exactly. Well I really have to go. I have an appointment about the new position.

–Is that a joke. Position? Or is a new position about the appointment.

–You’re making light of me.

–And you’re getting attached to your own fantasy. We’re still friends.

What was the source of my anger. I couldn’t have dinner with her, my emotional reasons. but we still we’re friends. At least I wanted to act as if we were.

–What about me? Have you ever thought about me.

–I’ve never thought about you like that. You’re my adviser. My friends. I confide in you. I need you.

–And roger.

–That’s different. I don’t know why I like him. But I could never like you that way. Not ever. Not at all.

I had asked for it. I shouldn’t have called her up so soon after our rift.

–This doesn’t mean that we have to stop meeting for drinks and dinner.

–What about tomorrow?

–I’m meeting Roger.

–Maybe I could come along.

–Is that some kind of joke.

–Of course it is. But I’d probably be more entertaining than he is.

–You can’t say that. Roger’s a musician.

–Aren’t they all?

–What?

–Nothing.

–You are getting sort of bitchy.

–I’ve got to go.

–Well, so do I.

Edith woke me the next morning to tell me that she had just had the worst night of her life. She was in tears.

–You were right all along. Roger couldn’t deal with me. He said that all I cared about was sex. I mean he seemed to like it at first.

–He liked it when he could order you about. But when you took it further, that’s when he balked.

–It’s not like I was some kind of pervert. I mean I really like the Messaien book. But I’d never tolerate someone shoving a studded condom up my ass.

–What are you saying?

–Was that something that Roger was really into?

–That’s not really the point. Especially at a moment like this.

–So what is the point?

–I don’t know. I only know that I found something about myself that I truly enjoyed even if he can’t keep up.

–Do you want to get some lunch?

–I’m just afraid that I’m going to drink the whole meal.

–You need to get out of the house.

She ended up not changing from the night before. Her perfume had curdled from her time with Roger. She just dabbed a little more on herself and headed over to the restaurant. she thought that if she didn’t get something to drink that she wouldn’t last the meal.

By the time I arrived she had already drunk two martinis. She seemed much more open than usual. She was wearing hip hugger leather pants and high heeled sandals, really high heels. Her toes were a scarlet red. She had a shawl pulled around her. As she got up to meet me, I noticed her pierced navel. I wondered if this was something new. She balanced on the shoes. As she stooped down to get her purse, the shawl pulled up and revealed her back

I had an image of the leather jeans pulling further down around her. A bit of cleavage. And my tongue pursuing the invitation. Her smile seemed to confirm my desire. She was getting tipsy as we ate lunch I had a vision of spilling her wine over her stomach and lapping it up like a little dog as I watched her sink into delirium

I ended up having to help her home. She fell over me in the hallway, and as I braced her, I pulled her closer for a kiss. She sunk deep into a passionate reverie, and I drew more and more confidence from her fumbling and my assented groping. With my deeper kisses, her frenzy became focused. I slid my hand under the jeans. the tight fit forced my hand into her skin, the warmth, already aroused. As I smoothed my way inside her, the wet heat surrounded me. It brought a sunrise smile to her face. She writhed while I moved my hand. Still fumbling, we made our way inside and collapsed on her couch, The leather pants were pulled down her legs, and I was already licking deep inside her. She purred, an overwhelming assent. She beckoned for me. So close to exploding, she surrounded me. From the excitement, she climaxed with my penetration. This only intensified my arousal as she sought further elevation. Her ecstasy was excruciatingly delicious. I could sense it in the heat of her breath, and the convulsive sighs. Everything that had weighed on her, all the frustration, was now an inspiration. Riding deep inside her, she brought herself closer and closer to me. Our bodies pulled together by all her strength.

There was a total honesty in her expression. Something that had never confronted me before. It intoxicated me. It frightened me. But I only became more lost in her. And she welcomed all my gestures. Passages opened up. The flesh gave to the flesh. She sought purity of enjoyment. No holding back for a promise. Here was complete candor. No fear of betrayal as she sought to climb the ladder of pleasure.

–Oh, Edith.

It could not end as it had no clear beginning. We floated in this high.

The cold smile. Cold. Our bodies pulled together to retain the warmth.

–You know none of this really happened. It was some kind of bizarre accident.

Her naked form next to me that morning seemed to say something else.

–I mean it was just the alcohol talking.

–Edith, I wasn't even drinking.

–That's the whole point. Don't use this against me.

–There's no against. I've never felt anything like this before.

–That's what I'm afraid of. That's why I liked the Messaien. For once I didn't have to get all messy about the sex. That was what was so wonderful about what happened with Roger. Sure it got me upset that he dumped me. But see. I'm over it. I just want to enjoy things in life. I don't want to pretend that there's something more. With anyone else I can do that. They don't really know. But you—you know it all. It all means so much more, and I don't have anywhere to hide.

–But that's what so beautiful about it all.

–I just can't do it again. That's final.

But the finality hardly sunk in Monday night. She was going down on me in a restaurant washroom. Maybe, she resented the fantasy but the pressure of her day caught up with her. This natural giving without any sense of return.

The path was obvious. Back to her place for a night of experimentation. What could she endure. A reminder of emotional pains that she had cast off. How far to push. Something special.

–I don't mind pain if I can trust my partner. If he's there to catch me when I'm coming down.

She opened up to any invasion physical and emotional. Stamina, resistance, refusal to give in so that she might eke out that scintilla of ecstatic, the bypassing of the immediate for a radical transport. She pulled me harder. I fell into her grasp.

–Don't tell anyone how far I've gone or what really turns me on. I can just take more, accept more than most people that I know.

I was a little afraid that she needed that same provocation. The strangulation, the death approach. I needed to steer clear of that zone.

–It gives me a strange power over death. Beyond mortality, I have touched my own immortality.

It reminded me of experiences that Phil had related to me. The blurring of the lines, where cruelty was sought for its own sake. An assumption of possession. The yoke had such appeal, but the risk was too frightening.

For a while she just lay on the bed, not moving, not breathing. She wouldn't answer to her name as in a meditative trance.

Worse, I had these visions of blood on the bed. Experiments that had gone too far.

–I thought that you were dead for a moment.

–You know about this stuff. It's in the book.

–Right. It's in the book. It tells about some people's obsessions. It tell us who we are in our love.

–It's not love. It's our only salvation against heartbreak. To push the lover to such far reaches that there is never any possible hurt again.

–That notion of eternity is ridiculous. You're asking for guarantees that aren't there.

–They're there because you can feel them. That's why you love fucking me. That's what holds us together. We have made the crossing together. Now there is no return.

I had to get away for a day or so. I told her not to all. But I was becoming attached to this degradation on her part. I had been drawn in by the innocence, but now felt tied to the fear. How far would she let me go?

–You want to upset me. You want to see if you can bring me as close to the edge.

–You've gone over the edge. I've played this game before. And it doesn't end pretty.

–Think about my body. My long legs spread so wide...

–To take the whole world in.

–What? Do you want me to go get another man and fuck him in front of you. Is that the push that you want? What are you about.

–Edith, that's not me.

–Public sex with strangers—you want to watch it all.

–That's not me.

–What is you? You, you, you. That's all this has been about.

More than ever I felt I had made a mistake. I should have never betrayed her confidence. All this had been too easy. Like an experiment in the lab. Now I had the result that I had expected, and it had been all too easy. Then it wasn't. None of this was very fun. None of it at all. I felt all the worse for what had happened.

–We haven't scratched the surface yet.

–I can't keep doing this.

--Doing what?

–I don't know. This has all gone too far.

I felt that I had taken advantage of her pity. That she was so strong but was only becoming weaker.

–What–what are you talking about?

–All of it. The crown of thorns, the forty lashes. All this shit.

–All this shit–the smells–all of it–that's who we are.

–Who we are! I loved you more than I've ever loved anyone–more than I ever loved my wife.

–I like fucking and I like to fuck you. That's just who I am. I want to love you but I don't know you.

–That's not enough anymore. We're going to destroy each other. I can't stand blood stains all over the bed.

–What blood?

–Look!

I wanted her to look in my eyes. To see who I was. To feel my blood pulse inside me. My life source that I felt her draining.

–I'm not a vampire.

–Where have I heard that before.

I wanted to kiss her. For the time being I needed to get out.

I tried reviewing the experience in order to figure out where it all went wrong. Was this another set up by Phil. For a while I wondered if everything in my life was just something related to his.

She was so good at accepting suggestions. That should have been my first clue that she lacked independence. That she would eventually get lost when she ceased having my help. I was first attracted to that vulnerability–whatever that might mean.

–I don't know whether I can deal with this much freedom.

The line echoed from a torturer–from a former lover. I could never go back to her.

–I don't like where any of this is headed.

–What?

–It's all about your fantasies. When we first drew blood. Then you expected. Your lips touched with the ruby red.

–You're in control. You can stop at any time.

–That's what I'm afraid.

Afraid. I couldn't even make sense of the conversation. The merging. Who was saying what.

–I just liked the idea of Messaien. Not the practice. You were the one who was all into practice.

–I can't argue that point.

–So don't.

It was becoming clearer. I liked her for what I could never accept myself. what I had rejected in Darcy. What my wife had feared...

–What am I supposed to do now?

–What do you want? Who do you want?

–I still don't know if it's freedom or what.

–You knew from the beginning that it was about pleasure. About exploring. You loved it. You loved the pain because it opened up new possibilities.

–But then it all became automatic.

--And you valued the pain for its own sake.

–I still do.

–And that's what frightens me.

–But I'm getting closer to an understanding.

–But I'm not.

–You say you loved me. But you can't love. You just know how to possess.

–That's who I am. The only way to truly hold is to let go.

–That's graffiti on washroom wall.

–Men's room or lady's room.

–Shove it ass hole.

–You can't stand freedom.

–This is servitude.

–That's how you can find liberation.

–It's just an expectation that holds no water.

–What?

–No more questions.

–You want to go back to where we were.

–I don't know what that is. I've tried to figure out.

–I did things. I enjoyed them and then I learned why later on.

–So what.

–I can't change that pattern. You can either live with it or leave.

–But you won't let me leave.

–What do you want me to do—roll around in my own shit. Are you going to love that kind of performance.

–I've been trying to tell you all this time. It's about the feeling—not just the act.

–This is coming from you.

–It's coming from me because that is how I always felt. You were the one into experimentation for its own sake.

–That's not how Phil tells it. That's your reputation. You use the physical just like you use people physically.

I had to leave. We broke off contact. I received a letter from her.

It still difficult for me to think about you. Part of me hates you with the most vehement passion. Part of me cherishes you as if you are part of myself. I want to think of you in the latter way, but you would never bend enough to lend me or anyone in.

You created this climate of liberty where I thought that I was creating the rules. I was

simply following your instruction to the letter. You were my master. At first, I craved the relationship. I learned so much from your tutelage. But as time went on, I realized that you were a monster. At least in that respect. You sought degradation for its own sake. It paid tribute to your pleasure and entirely ignored who I was.

I can't be that way any more.

You hid behind your expressions of love to me. I was just a stop along the way. Since you have left me, how many women have you kept under the same illusion. How many women have held themselves under the same belief. That they were just doing what they like. I'm not your FUCK TOY!

Up to that point the candor of the letter surprised me. But it also delighted me. If she could have come to that realization when we were together.

Part of me really hates sending you this letter. That my letter will give you the gratification that you always wanted. That I will show you how much you have affected me. I needed you. You only wanted me.

And in some perverse way, I still need you. I wish that it wasn't this way at all. I wish that I could exterminate these memories from my being.

Deep down, our discussions were the best part of my life to this point. And I think that I shall always feel that way. For that part, I wish that we were together. I loved the protection that you afforded when we were close. And that is what hurts the most. I can't take this hollow. You know that hollow was not me.

So here we are. We can't see each other again. I know this more than you do.

I wish you well for what that worth. And I also wish that you could know the hell into which I have been invited.

YOUR FORMER LOVER,

EDITH

I tried to let this effect. I wanted to get the full emotional impact of the letter. I couldn't. It was an entertainment. And that was my weakness. If she could have accepted my demonstrations of love... But I picked her out because I knew her weakness would enhance mine. I hate to say it, but that is my fate.

I opened a bottle of wine, poured myself a glass, and then I watched the letter burn in the fire place. I thought of calling Zoe but figured that would have to wait for another night. She was probably passed out after smoking some hash.

