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A Love Letter

Kidder Smith

Bowdoin College

Suppose you see right through someone and that person does not want you to see right through and becomes horrified and runs away.... When you want something very badly, you do not extend your eye and hand automatically: you just admire. Instead of impulsively making a move from your side, you allow a move from the other side, which is learning to dance with the situation.

(Trungpa, 1976, pp. 88-89)

So I fell for Kathleen. Sure, she's a beauty queen, a heap smart, exceptionally sensual. She's even a tantric. But here's the thing: her whole mode of interaction with the world is seduction. Elusive, does anything ever land? And how, then, to engage her? So I wrote this love letter.

Dear Kat,

I, an earnest young man, have been wondering and wondering how you and I might truly meet. In preparation I have cleansed myself so staunchly, repairing all my kinks and crevices, sanding down the dance floor so that our dear feet wouldn't get scuffed as we fox-trot up and back the hall. But then it struck me that there might be something else: dancing in space, no floor at all. It was flirt.

Flirt is just joydreadful, all delight and horror on the spot: nothing implies nothing. No means to measure sweet or slimy, to tell safe from sex. Surface and depth closer even than skin and flesh, it's as if you give it all away every second, and get it all dribbling right on top of you, only nothing happened, and do tell me your name again, sweetheart.

Short: no time for "pure" or "need" or "fear" before it all moves off away. And in that absence she is as present as ever, or never, owned only in the sense that her smile seemed once to belong to her.

This is unrelationship. Already perfect, so anybody's promising would wreck the scene, would turn the sweet free flow of flirt into an embarrassed stain, someone's blood suddenly all sticky between your fingers. So she hides, distorts, fabricates, seduces, betrays. Ah, pretty much that's what happens, let's hope I'm a good dancer.

And who will flirt with me? Maybe only Kat. Who else is pink enough, gone enough, here enough? Who else could drop dyadic partnership (ugh, is that a psychiatrist's evaluation?), meet in a jiffy, change minds forty times by tiffin, and slam your breakfast clear against the wall?

Much love,

Kidder

Sounds like an ideal solution, right? Grand elusion's game, the ball as it hits the gut strings. But maybe it wouldn't be that much fun. So I wrote some codas. Here is the first, that of the romantic.

The above comes from a great loneliness, and it tries to be all so exalted. Yet after all, there is still ordinary life and ordinary desire.

I read *The Myth of Freedom* autobiographically, as Trungpa's own love story. Who will really play with him, who will stay with us all the way through? Elsewhere he writes:

Do not trust.

If you trust you are in

Others' hands.

It is like the single yak

That defeats the wolves. . . .

Remaining in solitude

You can never be defeated.

So do not trust.

*For trust is surrendering oneself.
Never, never trust.
(Trungpa, 1998, pp. 13-14).*

Ah, such an invitation, invocation of trust, such romantic longing, such a flirt!

What does Kathleen want? To be the single yaki-ni, yes. And, maybe, and surely beyond telling, to trust. In the goddess that she is, yes, and in the love that she is, yes, and maybe in a human partner, I cannot say, I must ask her at some point.

What does Kidder want? Ah, he's blushing. He wants it all: unrelationship's brutal beauty, deep trust, playflirt, kindness, all the faces of love. For Kali is ultimate love, and so is Kidder's tender joy. May I have this dance, Kat? Ever in the big truth.

Perhaps a bit demanding. So here is the second coda, that of the goddess and dakini.

But what if Kali's cutting isn't the only play? What if Kat and I were both the goddess, with full breasts and hips, swaying, bringing life as well as death, holding all warm forms, sisterhood, holding Kathleen's warm hand, in her red turtleneck and jeans, side by side.

And the goddess can make love with the goddess, always is: the sex of the ocean with the ocean, churning, genderless, transshaping, the sea that never breaks, has no necessity of further opening. It is a very deep passion, hard for humans to hear.

Yes. But Kidder is also dakini, a sky-goer. If the goddess is all places at once, he shows up in all places, all at once. If the goddess is love, giving and receiving, he dances her love songs, in and out of key. If the goddess is form, he is the emptiness aspect of her forms, dissolving at touch, reuniting from within. If the goddess glows her fullness, he dwells in the secret interstices of her womb. When she has urgent play, he is utter stillness. When she is silent, his speech splashes like light warm June drops of rain. When the goddess is seductive, dakini comes up behind and tweaks her boob.

And when they sex, who is who is who? Which rain falls, where is up or down? What wind, earth, whose water, swirl and swirl and swirl.

There is one more coda, that of Jesus.

Trungpa, the goddess, Jesus. That's a progression. T. is primal That. The goddess is his first manifestation, moving outward toward the human realm. Jesus emerges from her, is her intense refinement into pure love. Kathleen writes:

Is there anyone who will ensure that your corpse will be taken off the hook on the wall behind Ereshkigal's throne, fed the food and water of rebirth, and brought to the surface again? Yes, whispers Jesus, yes, I will come for you over and over and over until your immortal soul no longer needs me.

I hold you, Kathleen, in my love.

* * *

The Last Word

There is no last word, nor can there be a resolution in this. That's the point, where bliss is pain is bliss.

* * *

A friend of mine read this letter, he's twenty-two, he e-mails me:

It is so fine, with your well-sharpened, almost ancient tools. Kat flutters there in her constant pure aversion, turning her head to giggle when you are there admiring her loud HARKING neck. You don't see the giggle. It is still so serious, no, so fine, no, so sharpened, your tools. Drop the tools more, drop your arm, don't use your skin, trust your hairs, let that sway of your hairs dissolve into her body, it is more compelling to her insides. She can run from the truck's interior designs, the large truck of almost-flying concoctions, but if you spill the materials, break open the huge churning barrel of the truck, there it will splash for so long she will BATHE in it. The flirtdreadjoy is a place of shaking invisible sheets, look out for the tiny razors.

* * *

So Jesus wins this hand, his clear radiance and gentle voice, calling. And in the end Kathleen didn't want to play, that's all.

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