

Cathy and Mark

a novel introducing Feeling-Healing.

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Divine Love Spirituality

It said “long”, so that’s what I’m doing: longing for a new girlfriend. I’m longing for someone to share my life with. Isn’t everyone? However, it does sound good, and it feels good too. Right, so I’m longing, as the website told me to do, with all my heart - with all my heart and all my soul. Oh yeah, and what was that other bit it said, the part that was crucial... hmmm... oh yes, that I should long for someone to help me express my feelings so I can find the truth of them. Yes, that was it, I like that, because it’s what I want. I do want it, truly I do. I want a girlfriend who will help me express myself - express my feelings, as that’s my problem, so I also discovered on the website: I don’t express my feelings enough, and particularly my bad feelings. And I admit I’m feeling-repressed. Yes I am, I’m a bloke, and aren’t all men feeling-repressed to some degree? It is what my past girlfriends complained about.

So I’m longing, LONG, LONG, LONG, for a girlfriend to share my feelings with. I’m longing, so okay God or whoever it is who’s out there, do you hear my longing, LONG, LONG, LONG, so how about it, how about helping me out. My longing is sincere, or at least I hope it is, and so you God should answer it, isn’t that how it goes? I do prefer longing than praying, I can’t go with all that religious stuff. Longing is more my speed: wanting, desiring, longing and wanting - I just want a nice girl to come into my life, one who wants to also express all she feels. I want a relationship in which we both express all we feel - is that too much to ask?

I’m twenty-eight, bored with my life, nothing has gone how I wanted it to, and here I am sitting in yet another cafe nursing my coffee feeling sorry for myself, longing for yet another relationship. Yet why am I; why on earth do I want another relationship only to put myself through more misery. Sure the beginning stages are great, getting to know someone new, and the sex, yes, I admit, exploring a new woman’s body is something I do love, but I also want to explore her deeper, and myself too, but I don’t know how to do it. I’ve tried in my past relationships but I didn’t get very far - they all failed. I won’t go into why they failed, as I’m sure what the girls would say would differ from what I would say; and the one thing I have learnt and have to admit about myself, as much as I want and believe I’m right about everything, is that I’m not right. The girls have shown me that all too clearly.

I long for the right person, the right woman to come into my life, the right one for me, the right one to help me... to help me express myself, and to help me... what was that other part I read on the website... umm.... yes, the truth, that’s right, to help me uncover the truth of all I feel. Yes I like that, I would like to know the truth of all I feel. I’d like to know what I feel first and then the truth of such feelings. Sounds all very impressive, doesn’t it? Do you think a nice girl would be impressed if that’s what I told her I wanted in a relationship? Do you think I’d stand a chance? Or would she have heard it all before, all that new age sensitive guy stuff, god I don’t know. And really, who cares, who am I trying to kid, no such woman is going to waltz into my life looking at me as being her Mr. Right. That’s never going to happen, I’m just dreaming again, yet another fantasy to amuse me, to while away the time.

Now, what about that girl over there sitting at that table by the wall. Ok, what if I went up to her, sat down, and said, hello, will you help me to express and find the truth of my feelings - would she go for it? Would I want her to go for it? Hmm, that part I don’t know. She’s pretty in a kind of way, sort of different looking, reddish longish hair, nice eyes - can’t see their colour, longish legs, oh god I’m useless at describing someone. All those novelists can do it so easy, it just seems to flow out and you get a good picture of whom they are describing, but you reader, what sort of a picture have I given you, reddish longish hair, I may as well just leave it all up to you to imagine

whomever you like is sitting over there. But na, I don't think she's my type, whatever my type is. She looks to engrossed in her book, probably reading a lovely description about a handsome man sitting over by the window drinking a cup of coffee, and what he's thinking about. But not someone like me.

Handsome, am I handsome? My mother said my father was handsome, but she would, wouldn't she. She's not going to marry some ugly sod, and she said that I took after him. Took after him - what did that mean? I do sort of look like him I guess, but I'm taller, about as thin, I don't have a drinkers paunch yet, and hopefully never will as I don't drink. I have dark wavy thick hair as he does, all the women in my family loved my hair, but is that enough to attract the woman of my dreams - dark wavy hair. So I'm tallish, dark and... and I have eyes that are a bit unusual, well at least I think so. One is mostly brown with a green edge to it, the other is half brown half green, so what about that, is it all about the eyes after all? No girl has every commented about my eye colour, perhaps I'm the only one who's looked that closely at myself - that's a depressing thought. Or maybe it's about what comes out of your eyes, the 'light', which I have no idea what they're talking about when I read it. But that light, that mysterious part of us that is expressed through our eyes, the light of our soul - is it? Who knows, and if it is, then my soul is a bit of a dead duck, probably rather dreary, as I sure ain't drawing in the broads who are following the tractor beam from my soul to the bosom of my heart.

So will I go up to that girl and lay my new line on her... or, will I order another coffee and look out the window at the drab grey tram passing by. God life is so hard, I never know what to do. I don't want to be rebuffed, I don't want to make a fool of myself. I don't want to be rejected - again. That's the worse feeling. You only want to be friendly, to go up to a girl you don't know and have a bit of chat, and yet they think it's a big come on and piss you off. No, I'm not up to it today, maybe another time. I'm feeling... ah, how am I feeling... what am I feeling... and this is my difficulty, you see, I just don't really know. Ok, am I happy? No. Am I sad then? No. Am I somewhere in the middle? Probably - I guess I have to be somewhere in there, so what am I feeling... hmm, it's more on the down side today... it's overcast, that's how I feel: overcast... a bit grey, yes, a bit down.... so what - miserable, melancholy, depressed, off-colour as my mother would say. "It's probably nothing, I feel like that a lot, you're just a bit off-colour, nothing to worry about", so what off-colour I am feeling. What does a bit grey feel like?

See, do you understand, this is why I am longing for a girl to help me. I want someone to be able to say these things to, and for her to help me understand what I am really feeling, as I'm very confused about it. I'm really very mixed up about a lot of things, yes, basically a bit of a mess, so shit, what sort of girl would want to bother with such a mess as me. No girl, so here I am again, back kidding myself, thinking and hoping, that someone is going to want to be with me - is going to even like me. And really, when I think about, I can't believe what my past girlfriends saw in me anyway, what did I offer them. And you know - I never asked them. We just met, liked each other, slept together, and that was it. I can't even remember anything we spoke about, but we must have. What did we speak about - what did I say to them... how about more sex? God, what would I have done if we hadn't rooted. What would our relationship have consisted of if we hadn't had sex all the time. I hate to think, we'd probably have sat there looking at each other, or out the window, bored stiff and wondering what to say. Yuk, what a rotten thought. Sex, sex, and more sex, that's what it was all about - that's what it was all about for me. I can't say for them... I wonder if they liked it as much as I did, and wanted it as much as I did. Shit I never asked them that either. We never spoke about such things, just kissed and cuddled, and fucked a lot. Great relationship! Well now I want something else. I'm not going to do that all over again. I do still want the sex part, don't get me wrong about that, but I also want to talk, and not to just talk about which movie we'll go and see, but talk about... about... about sex? Oh god, I don't know... talk about feelings, what

we're both feeling all the time. But god knows how you'd do that, but at least it might be different. And as women are generally more about feelings, perhaps she'll like me more, maybe we'll have more in common. Maybe. I don't know. How can I know, I don't even know what I'm talking about. How would I know what it's like to speak about what you feel all the time when I don't even know what I feel. I think I'm going to long for her to be a teacher of sorts too. She'll have to teach me about feelings. And that's a bit rich, isn't it. Hi, nice to meet you, however, if you want to have anything to do with me, you're going to first have to teach me about feelings so I can speak to you about them and myself. It's all for me, what would she get out of it, she has to do all the work, I'm just the useless male of the species. I'm not already fully feeling-expressive, going to her and giving her my feeling-self so she can give her feeling-self back to me. Oh god, now I stand even less hope of finding a woman to be with. It's been six months now, and my chances of ever finding anyone to be with is getting slimmer by the day. And it's all that bloody website's fault. childhoodrepression.weebly.com, that's it, all that stuff about having a repressed childhood, it's probably a lot of rot anyway. And how did I come across it... oh yeah, that's right, I googled Cape Barren Geese, as I saw them on a visit to Phillip Island, and of course google gave me so many choices, and of course I chose the one that happened to have Cape Barren Goose in the title and tags yet had nothing really to do with them, but all to do with childhood repression. It was a post on the blog of the [childhoodrepression](http://childhoodrepression.weebly.com) website.

Anyway, it was interesting, that I have to say, and I learnt a few things. And so with a little more browsing through the website and blog I found out about longing - which I've been doing for some time now in various ways, so here I am again longing; longing for Miss Right, who might become Mrs Right, to come into my life and help me sort out all my crap, all my repressed childhood stuff. I pity her, having to deal with all my yuk. But I suppose it will be fair as she'll no doubt have all her childhood yuk. So maybe we'll be able to help each other. Well... it's a nice idea.

You see it came about because of a dream. Truly, it was inspired by a dream. I'd come back from the toilet, drifted off to sleep again, and then there she was in the dream. Then I woke up again with her fresh in my mind and it happened, it sort of just came into my mind, as if it were downloaded into me. And that was that, the idea, the first few introductory paragraphs and my mind was set in motion. Having woken up I thought about it. I began the novel this way and that, always based around her, around actually meeting her. And that it was to pan out into including something of my childhood repression healing. I was going to write about it, but still there was only one problem, it was only a dream. She was still only in my mind, out there somewhere in real life, yet for me, still only in my mind.

She is real, a real person I mean. I have even met her, her name is Catherine. Cathy everyone calls her, and I have seen her occasionally over the years, but not for a long time now. But obviously she's still alive and well in my subconscious. She still figures in my dream life, the life I'd mostly prefer to be in.

After I left school there were a few parties celebrating twenty-first birthdays I was invited to, and it at one of these that I first saw her. She had a simple, yet very stylish, light-blue pretty dress on. She's always dressed in sky-blue in my mind. I don't know what it was made of, it wasn't too shinny, and it came down to just above her knee. She had matching light blue pretty shoes - certain women's shoes and those cute little ankle boots, were attracting my eye at the time - and I loved watching how she walked. There was something intriguing about it, graceful and feminine but also boyish, with a bit of a strut, and she was determined but not pushy.

And I liked her face. Pretty, attractive, eye-catching with her naturally blonde hair, and these things were very important to me. Most of the girls I knew were unattractive, yes, I was terribly judgemental, and I felt a bit sad for them because who'd be interested in them, even though they all seemed to have boyfriends and I didn't have a girlfriend.

But Cathy was intriguing. There was something indefinable about her that I was attracted to, and I've often wondered about this. I suppose it's the same for you, you're in a room with let's say fifty members of the opposite sex, and you can line them all up from least attractive to most attractive for you. And so why is the least and most attractive ones the least and most? What is it that attracts us to each other? And as I've grown older - matured perhaps?, it's become less about the physical attributes being the most dominant in my list of requirements as to what draws my attention to the opposite sex, and more about something else, something else that I can't quite put my finger on. Personality perhaps, the jizz of the person, I don't know, but I enjoy it. I like feeling that attraction, it makes me feel good, and like there might be a chance of something special, something out of the ordinary. And I felt those things looking at Cathy on that first night.

But I also felt bad. I felt shy, very shy, and embarrassed staring at her, watching her. I felt as if I was doing something wrong, like perving on her. I didn't want her to think I was just a perv, and these thoughts made me feel like a dirty old man, me, all of twenty-one years old. So I surreptitiously watched her. A sneaky look here and there the whole night. And unfortunately it was very easy to determine that she was with a guy, some bloke from a different school to me, someone who in fact I'd admired as being a good looking fellow, and he excelled at sport. We'd played against each other in football, although he was shorter than I and played in the centre. Still, as I was one of the rucks of our team, we had a bit to do with each other. We never spoke to each other, that wasn't what our school sport was all about, but we knew of each others presence, that's for sure. And then he kept popping up at those horrible dancing classes I went to, that 'everyone'

went too, and he rowed as well and ran fast. His school always beat us at football but we beat them in the rowing - we beat everyone in the rowing that year, something unheard of for my school, and that was fun, a little consolation.

So that night was the first time I had seen her and seen her with him, which I thought, jealously, was kind of fitting, they did look like a good couple, they were at least the same height as each other, and he too was blonde. And he had a good all-rounder's body, muscly but not too heavy, and she looked lithe and fit. And what was my body like, well it was fit enough still but not very muscular, I wasn't vainglorious enough to keep up the bodywork - all that heavy boring repetitive weight lifting - once I'd left school. Not that we did it at school much, only a little for rowing training.

So I contented myself with watching her occasionally through the night. It was somehow right, so I felt, even though I hated the feeling, that they were together, both happy and confident with each other; whereas I was shy, could hardly speak to girls, and needed to be half drunk before summoning up enough Dutch courage to even try. She wouldn't be interested in someone like me, I wasn't the sporting star, even if we did beat his crew easily in the Head of the River. No, I was never going to have a girlfriend like that, I just wasn't in or a part of 'the scene', and as much as I wished I were, I also didn't want to be because I didn't like many of the boys who were in it. They were all interested in horse racing, gambling, football and cricket; they all came from wealthy families; they all knew what they wanted to do when they left school, when I didn't have a clue - something about economics, or accounting???

I ended up studying politics at university by default, but soon gave it up, it seemed like a good idea at the time. And that was a great part of my trouble, I didn't know what I wanted to do. Nothing grabbed me, it was as if I'd missed out on some essential ingredient, the one that made you know what you wanted to do with your life. And so I knew that a lovely looking girl like Cathy wouldn't be interest in me. There wasn't any way I was ever going to look closely into those soft pale-blue eyes of hers, or to caress her lovely silky-looking honey-brown skin, or to run my hand through her shoulder length thick-looking blonde hair, or to have her speak directly to me, or to see her without her clothes on, or to kiss and caress her... or to... well, you know what I mean, all that lustful stuff.

And I wasn't going to lust after her, or even dream of her, so I told myself, because she was above lusting, too much the goddess up there; and as far as dreaming about her, well surely there were other fish in the sea, and it had to be only a matter of time before they came my way - hadn't it?

It's funny looking back on it now, because it wasn't too long after that first sighting of her that I did meet my first real girlfriend, the first one I had sex and a proper relationship with. And the first one of many.

As the years passed I had other sightings of Cathy. One time at a friends party, she had a different male friend that evening. Then I saw her at the football - yes occasionally I succumbed, going to a game trying to prove my manhood - she was with yet other bloke, arm in arm, laughing, and obviously they were having a good time together. Then I saw her from afar one day in the city. I was driving past and caught sight of her, a momentary glimpse, walking along the footpath down Swanston street. She was wearing all black and looked ravishing, looking even better as she got older and still with that quick determined step of hers.

And then I had a wonderful close encounter, one that was totally unexpected and took me by complete surprise. And it went like this. I wish I could set the scene properly for you, but as I'm rather hopeless at it, please don't expect too much. And I know that you're probably getting rather tired of all my talking about this woman, but it's a part of the fantasy of writing a novel such as this, and if you still want to read it, then you'll just have to put up with it - won't you.

It was during my drug phase - mostly marijuana and trying a bit of everything else - that it occurred. Macca, - from Macintosh his surname - that's what we called him - wanted to go dancing, and it just so happened that I'd been to a night-club called the Hardware Club in the city in Hardware street (original name... but why not), so we decided to go there.

Macca was my drug supplier and usually had twenty more pipes to my one, and was well gone by the time he wanted to go into the city - it was about two am. But off we went. I borrowed mum's car and somehow we got there and got ourselves in past the door bouncer. It was a case of: "Oh go on mate, no, we're not members, but our friends are in there, and it's late, and..." and he let us in.

The Hardware club was a narrow three or four story building with the dance floor on the top. My memory is a bit hazy about it all now, you know how it is when you're in that kind of fug in your mind and everything is not quite where it should be, and you feel numb and dull yet surprisingly quite good; and there was a caged off area that was the small dance floor, very dimly lit, music loud but danceable, and with very few people there. Macca went off to the bar on the lower floor and I danced. When I was that stoned, back in those days, I liked dancing - or what I called and thought was dancing - by myself. I just seemed to be able to go at it for hours, sweating like mad, away in myself somewhere having a grand old time. And I think that for the most part I was the only one in the room. Then Macca came back and danced too.

After some time I became aware of other dancers, girls, but Macca had had enough and was sitting on the bench seat along the wall opposite the entrance to cage, so I joined him. His eyes were looking horrible, and I was thinking it was about time we should go home. We didn't speak as the music was too loud and everything was too foggy within us, we just sat there. Then out of the corner of my eye I noticed movement and Macca was slowly falling over to lie along the seat, then not content with that, he rolled off onto the floor. And there I let him be.

It's a strange feeling when you're in that state and you couldn't care less about anything - or anyone. He could have been dying, but so what, I didn't care. He was probably just asleep, too much booze and dope, and as he'd looked far worse during our sniffing of heroine some weeks back and had survived that, I didn't think too much of him. And besides, I couldn't really move either. Having stopped dancing my motor had turned off, I was just numb. And then something else caught my attention on the other side of me.

Suddenly, a body sat beside me. It was a long empty bench seat, but 'it', who quickly turned into a 'she', sat right next to me. And then she put her head on my shoulder and guess what - you've already guessed?, well, yes, IT WAS HER! CATHERINE!!! Can you believe it, there she was, sitting next to me, her head on my shoulder - MY SHOULDER! Fuck what should I do? What should I say. I sat in a state of excited spastic paralysis. Yet shit, it was my moment, my one big moment, my lucky break, my one big shot - all frightfully American - my time to ACT!, but hey, I'd been fed all that movie crap for years. And besides, I couldn't do anything. I smelt the nice smell of her hair as I turned my head towards her. I felt her body pressing warmly against mine, I wasn't aroused sexually in any way, it was all just nice - as if it was, as it was meant to be. It was all so natural, as if we'd been friends for years, or as if she were my sister catching her breath before returning to the dance floor. Not a word was spoken.

And then she was up and back at it. And Macca stirred and said something, so I thought I'd better attend to him helping him get back on the seat and then helping him to his feet; then following him as he staggered off down the steps showing me it was home time.

By the time I'd dropped him off at his house in North Melbourne dawn was breaking, and I was

more awake and conscious of myself and life. I also had a huge desire to go back to the club and be with her. So off I went. I knew it would be a futile exercise, but I was bursting with need, I so much just wanted to be with her again. I had no idea what I'd do were she there, yet I couldn't stop myself from driving back into the city in the desperate hope that.... but of course, she had gone.

So close and yet so far, and we didn't even speak to each other. I knew her name, but did she know mine? Did she recognise me - was that it?, so felt comfortable sitting next to me, relaxing on me. Or did she just do that with strange men, was she that kind of girl, whatever that kind of girl is? And if she did recognise me, did she feel anything for me... argh, it was just too much to think about. Too much to get my hopes up about. And my chance was gone. I didn't know where she lived, and besides, for all I knew, she might have a boyfriend, he might have been down stairs at the bar. No, it was just what it was, an interlude in my otherwise rather uneventful life; a moment to capture and remember and to dream about what might have happened. Those sorts of things never happened to me. The girl never came up to me, it was always up to me to go up to her. I had to work so hard, whereas just for a change it would have been so nice to have, say... just gone home with her, neither of us speaking, to just get into bed together, to lie together, to hold each other, to want nothing more than to just be together. It would have been nice. Fantasies are great aren't they, always so perfect, and none of that feeling and thought interfering stuff that we people are so full of.

Why am writing this? Why do I want to write it? I don't know. Why do I want to write anything that I write? I get a strong feeling to write, words or a heading for an article or a book come into my mind, and I want to write.

It's a nice feeling, a good sense of satisfaction when I've written it, when I've expressed the inspiration through writing. I wish I had the same good feelings after I'd spoken about my feelings, but I don't. I hope maybe one day I will, but for now, speaking about my feelings is more like a chore, something I know I have to do, and I find it very hard to do. What am feeling? - it's just so hard to know. And I also want to write to help myself be more self-expressive, but shit it's hard work. It doesn't come naturally to me - writing or speaking about my feelings, and this I now know all thanks to my parents fucking that natural part of me up when I was young.

They didn't want me speaking about all my bad feelings, and my grandmothers sure didn't want me to get excited with good feelings, they always came down heavily on me, telling me to stop making a fool of myself, to be more sensible, more grown up. I wasn't allowed to be a child freely expressing itself, that made everyone feel bad, so they all stopped me. They made me become like them, feeling-dead, all in their minds. My mother ranted and raved about some of her bad feelings but only when she needed us to behave, it being another tool in her arsenal of 'controlling the children'.

I write also because I don't really have anything else to do. I'm not working full time, and I'm sick of reading the same old stories in the 'best seller novels'; nor am I interested in reading about other peoples feelings and great lives, as it all makes me feel more miserable and depressed about my nothing life. I'm not out there living a full life freely expressing myself all over the place. I don't know how to get the best out of relationships. I'm really too scared to cross that line, to genuinely reach out and enjoy being with other people. Again it's something I seemed to have missed out on, some fundamental part of life, that part that is all concerned with relationships and interaction. I want relationships, and I desperately want an intimate and personal one, but that's about as far as it goes. However, if you were to ask me what do I want it for, I don't think I could tell you. I'd mutter and mumble about wanting something like the companionship, having a friend, the closeness, warmth - even maybe love, but really I don't know. That's all the obvious stuff, and although important, it's still just stuff I've learnt about. And even though I have experienced it in my relationships with women, still I want something more, something I can't define, something I'm as yet unaware of. I feel too dissatisfied and discontent with everything, and although my relationships go well for the first six months or a few years, still they peter out, with something not right and both of us feeling unfulfilled. And why, and what is it? And will I ever find out?

And the more I read and come to understand about childhood repression, the more I tend to think it's all because I missed out on being properly loved by my parents. That's probably the cause of all my problems. So because I didn't have a fulfilling relationship with them, I can't have it with anyone else, which if true, really pisses me off. It means that I'm stuffed, that I can't get out there, meet someone, and be truly happy with them, all because I wasn't truly happy with my parents. And I have to suffer the rest of my life because of that. So, great, and what a fuck! What can I do about it? Nothing. I'm caught in this predicament. So forevermore I'll be wishing I was normal, wishing I was like someone else; wishing I could have normal relationships getting on well and easily with people and thoroughly enjoying every minute being with them. And being totally happy in life - happy with my life; happy in myself. But it's not to "be my lot" as one of my grandmothers said about so many things. She didn't think to add this to her list of how she was training me, but

she still managed to help make me be this way, and now here I am, living her list and hating life because nothing is for me. So what is it all for, what's the point of it - what's the point of me?

What is the point of living a completely meaningless life. One that doesn't fulfil me or make me happy. What good does it do for me or anyone else, and yet I can't do anything about it. I've tried all sorts of things to break out, to make myself happy, to indulge in doing things that I've liked, but they've all ended the same way, either by being taken away from me or just dying a natural death, taking me along with it. So what is the point of my life. I'm a useless waste of space, a nothing person, a person with a no-life. And all I want to do is write about it.

God it must make boring reading. I'm the lucky one, I enjoy writing it, it just seems to come out effortlessly, mostly I hardly have to think about it, so long as I'm not trying to express my feelings - but what's it all for? Am I going to seriously try and get it published - that is my dream, but like all my dreams, they've faded over the years, so no doubt this one will too. No, I might stick it on the net free for someone to download if they have nothing better to do in their life than to read about my nothing life - God they would be in a bad way - worse than me! And why not, everyone else puts all there stuff out there.

No, the further I go the less I understand about some of the things I want to do. I think that overall they are probably just escape mechanisms, my pretending that I have something of a life, pretending that I am someone important: I write books for people to read, therefore, I must be important. Only important people write books, as only important people have something worthwhile to write about. What do I have to write about, meeting the so-called love of my life, a woman called Catherine. A romantic novel - yeah right!

But I like writing about it, her - us. I want to write about it all. So that's what I'm doing now. But the other thing is of course - my great fear and worry - that I don't know if my writing is any good, whatever good writing is. But I can't help that, I can only express myself as I can in my limited way - this way, and so, so be it.

David, one of my old school friends, invited me to a late-Friday-afternoon-barbecue at his new house. I hadn't seen him in a long time, and it was good to see him with his young children running around, daddy this and daddy that. Surprisingly it was a most enjoyable afternoon catching up with old friends, even though I was a bit anxious as to what they might think of me; me who is doing nothing other than writing to no one and working a couple of days a week in a local aquarium flogging beautiful undeserving-of-their-suffering little fish to people who will mostly kill them. But my old school mates, all who'd done infinitely better in the world than I had, didn't seem to mind, it was not unlike how it had been at school, only this time there were also partners and kids. I had never wanted to have any children, but I liked being with them that afternoon, their freshness and enthusiasm about everything, something that I had long ago lost. So, as I said, it was a delightful afternoon and as it started to cool down and get dark some of my unattached friends decided that we should all go and "kick on" at a pub. And I thought, well, why not, pubs and standing around drinking usually being the last place I'd want to go.

We agreed to meet at a hotel I'd never been too in Hawthorn as it was central for most of them, but not for me. However, and as I had nothing else to do, it was in-a-round-about-way, on my way home back to St.kilda.

The hotel was crowded, obviously very popular, and soon it became clear that my friends who'd all seen more of each other than I had of them, and who did this sort of thing more frequently than I did, knew almost everyone who was there. So very quickly they had dispersed leaving me to catch up with yet more blokes whom I'd been to school with and not seen for a long time.

And then, suddenly, there she was.

I turned around and she was standing at the far end of the room with three other girls, this time in a peach coloured cotton summer-dress with black leggings and flat black shoes. Her now more auburn coloured hair, was loosely, seductively and artistically tied up with strands of it sticking out and falling out all over the place. She looked very tanned, healthy, older, like we all did, and still took my breath away. Still I wanted to be with her more than anything in the world, this I instantly felt, but also riding along with this feeling was the familiar one of despair: she's not for you, she never will be, it will never happen, look, but you'll never be able to touch. I looked to see which of the men around her was accompanying her, but it didn't seem like anyone was.

Now, before I should go on, being a writer ha, ha, I think I should do what all good writers seem very good at; and possibly I should have done it before, but I forgot about it, although it had been going around somewhere in the back my mind lurking in one of those many dark hiding places, and it's to write one of those 'likes'. I don't know what you call it, maybe it's a touch metaphoric, I don't know, English grammar and I never hit it off together, but anyway, here goes. In my one sided relationship with Cathy thus far I feel *like* I'm the sand on a beach, and she comes to me, walks on me, but is not there for me. She might not know me, there are many such beaches and lots of sand, but I am one who seems to be a part of her destiny, one there available and waiting for the touch of her foot. The sweet print to make it's mark on; the delicate grace of the feminine form to smile at me, and once in a while to give a moment of her time; a place to rest on and recuperate before moving on. And I am always longingly looking at her as she passes by hoping one day she'll take more notice of me.

There, that's about all of that stuff I can do. That's about the extent of my creative writing skills, so let's get on with it, shall we.

Well, as you can no doubt guess, this was my big night - YES!, and what a delight it is to think

back over it as I have done many times. And it happened like this.

Very quickly she was engulfed by friends and that was it, so I thought, the end of it, it just being once again nice to have her around and take more sneaky looks at. I didn't think she'd remember me from that night at the Hardware club, she was probably in the same fogged-out state of mind I was, so there was going to be no point about speaking to her about that, should I be lucky enough to actually speak to her.

One of my friends was now with her, I could see him speaking with her through a crack in the people across the room. It's amazing when you want it, that such things happen, that with all those bodies in the room, every time I looked up I could see her, like a line was connecting us, there always seeming to be an opening, a gap along which my sight travelled but was never met by hers.

Why did I bother driving myself crazy. It was stupid I chided myself for about the millionth time as I looked again at her hoping she'd look at me. I felt I wanted something from her, but what I couldn't have told you. It was probably fantasy or something tied up in my early childhood that was calling out for recognition. And as much as I enjoyed it, no, LOVED, looking at her, it annoyed me and I wished I could stop myself. But I couldn't stop, and I felt a fraud in the friendship with John who was speaking to me as I kept looking past him over his shoulder - over nearly everyone's shoulders for that matter - to catch sight of that hair - there it was again - bobbing away as she talked. But it didn't matter. I hadn't seen these boys, now men, whom I'd gone to school with for years and probably wouldn't see them again. I'd already turned down invitations and then compliantly acquiesced to persistent encouragement by them for me to attend some function or another knowing it was only lip service and I would never go. I was being false and I didn't care, she was all I was interested in. I didn't want to be with my old friends, it was too much like it had been, and although it had been okay then, it wasn't okay now. I had changed, whereas they all seemed much the same. They were all happy and secure and still going places with lots of ambition, whereas I wasn't. I felt like I was mostly going down hill, falling, or sinking, and into what I didn't know, nor did I want to think about. And this afternoon and evening with them confirmed it all for me: I wasn't in their league. Although I wouldn't have been able to admit it then, and possibly wasn't even aware that I felt it, compared to them, I was a failure, and I didn't want to keep having my nose rubbed in it by being with them. They all had houses, some even two or three; they all went on nice holidays to their holiday houses by the bays with their dogs and boats, or overseas. Money wasn't a problem. Yet I lived in a very small apartment, I was on the dole, I didn't have anything except my old iMac, and nothing to look forward to. What I did have, which they didn't, was a growing awareness that I was fucked up because of my childhood repression. And had they had bad childhoods, and where they full of childhood repression, I didn't know and I couldn't tell - probably not, as they all seemed happy with themselves and life. However, the childhood repression website said we're all full of it, so maybe they had also had bad childhoods and were full of childhood repressed feelings, but their behaviour didn't seem to show it, it didn't look like they were suffering in any of the ways I felt I was. And if they had had bad childhoods, why weren't they a mess like I was, why were they successful and I was going down hill. Where would they be at forty and fifty, and where would I be. Grovelling around in the gutter didn't please me too much, but I guess I could always go to them and ask for a hand out, that being when all my pride had been finally erased out of me.

I'd had enough for the time being and was having "time out", as one of my friends put it, handing me another beer to go on with. I was sitting up the far end of the wood panelled room - yet another ugly pub - as far away from the disturbing music as I could be, and away from the stuffiness of all those hot bodies, minding my own business. And for once, I wasn't looking for Mrs Right, being momentarily distracted by comparing myself with my friends. Then, there she was, just like that, sitting at my table opposite me. And do you know what she said - and I bet you'd never guess in a

million years, as I would never have, it sure wasn't part of my fantasy scenarios, and it took me be complete surprise: "Mark, are you, my Mr. Right?"

Now honestly, I ask you, what the fuck could I say to that. Am I her Mr Right? First of all, it was a great shock that she actually knew my name - SHIT, SHE KNEW MY NAME!!!! - let alone the fact that she'd obviously seen me when I wasn't looking at her, and then had come - WANTED TO COME!!! - all the way back there to sit with me - just ME!!!! So, what was I to say? Shit I felt hot, I must have looked so stupid, so embarrassed, my face glowing like a radiator (ha, another one of those 'likes'), whilst my mind screamed for help not knowing what to say in answer to her question.

I mean really, it was a cruel thing to do to me - don't you think? To drop it on me like that. Here she is, my ultimate and absolute dream fantasy girl, and she's asking me a question like that. And it was no dream. I didn't have to pinch myself, I didn't have that sort of self-confidence, all I could do was hold on and not lose it, I'd never been pushed so far, so close to the edge.

"Are you my Mr Right?" Fuck knows, I mean honestly, what could I say to that. I was too stitched up and unexpressive to answer her back with something cool, appearing nonchalant; something that would obviously tell her that it was all up to her to find out, and she'd be mad if she didn't. I wasn't a movie star, I was Mr. Nobody, Mark Nothing, that was what I was: no money, no rich house, no great high-flying career, no going overseas skiing in Japan, no going fishing for kingies in my new twenty-five footer down the rip, no nothing. I was poor, shit poor with no prospects, and so was I her Mr Right? Who in their right mind would want me!

Then a little thought crept in and said, maybe she already knows all of this about you and doesn't care about such things, but it vanished along with every other thought because my mind was as blank as much as it was reeling. And she wanted an answer. She was looking at me, at my brown-with-a-bit-of-green and half-green-and-half-brown eyes, but no, it wasn't the complete movie fantasy, no, she didn't say: "Oh and what nice eyes you have got", but she was waiting, and I was looking into her lovely cool blue eyes, that seemed strangely compassionate, even sympathetic. And that threw me too, it wasn't what I was expecting to see, not that I was expecting to see anything. But I had thought during my fantasy imaginings that she'd be too far beyond that, I don't know, someone sort of tougher, more assertive and possibly even slightly aggressive, and not soft, kind and caring. I guess with all the men I'd seen her with, and all the ones I'd heard she'd been with, that she'd be harder, more wise to the ways of the world, tainted in some way, her youthful innocence and purity long gone. And that had also kind of excited me more, as she'd bring with her into my fantasy life loads of experience, things I could learn about.

So what could I say? The obvious? No, yes, maybe I am your Mr. Right. Or: I don't know. Or: how could I know. Or: what sort of fuck'ouse question is that to ask me when we've never met before. I didn't know what to say. And I don't know how much time had passed as I watched her sip her beer a couple of times as she just waited. She didn't seem to be in any sort of rush, but then she looked up at me and asked me again: 'Well, are you?' And to that I replied pathetically, 'I don't know'. But luckily it must have been enough, as she smiled, took another sip, and then was gone.

Gone! Gone, now what was I to do. It was all too much for me and I felt like going too, but I couldn't move, so I just watched her back as she carried on socialising with her friends. And I thought and felt God knows what. I was a mess, still perspiring like mad, the cool beer glass in my hand was freezing, and slowly I realised she'd done it to me again. Twice now, out of thin air she'd come, floating in on some invisible, and known only to her, breeze to be with me, and only for the briefest of moments, and then away again.

What should I do. I wanted to get up and go after her, go and try and speak to her, but it was useless, I wouldn't know what to say. It was too hard, I'd built her up into being so much the goddess that I'd put an insurmountable barrier between us both. And it was all my doing, obviously

she had nothing going on like I did, she didn't even turn around and give me another moments look - nothing. I sipped my beer. It was nearly gone, and I was starting to need another pee. I'd go and have it, the men's was opposite me, and then go home. So I struggled up, my muscles ached like I'd been running a marathon, not that I'd ever run one; okay then, *like* I'd rowed the forth two thousand metre race for the day as we had done on Lake Wendouree at Ballarat each day over the three day regatta during my last year at school - how hard was that!. I could hardly walk and staggered to relieve myself. Luckily I was all alone. I didn't have to speak to anyone I knew.

By the time I'd finished I'd found a little composure, enough to brave my exit saying good-byes and getting the hell out of there. And I hoped I wouldn't see her. I wanted to see her, but I was so pathetic, that being my new word of late, and I reckoned all I'd be able to do at best was smile idiotically at her as I passed by. I couldn't try anything funny, I'd thankfully given up trying to impress women doing that sort of thing, and I wasn't pissed enough, as I was driving, and I no longer enjoyed drinking like I used to - another of my failings. So I gathered up what little courage I had, pulled open the door, and fuck me dead, THERE SHE WAS AGAIN!

She was looking straight at me, obviously waiting for me to come out of the toilet. Somehow luckily I remembered to duck a little through the door so as not to bang my head making myself be the complete fool I felt I was, my wits once again having fled, my mind nearly caving in. I think I smiled lamely. She beckoned me over pointing to a new glass of beer that was waiting for me. I walked over feeling all arms and legs akimbo and sat down thanking her. And then she said, "I've been thinking about your answer, and it's not good enough". OK, so it's not good enough, but what were I to say to that. Oh God, this wasn't going well, and what was she doing sitting with me again, it was hard enough for me to try and come to terms with her beauty, let alone function with any brain cells firing normally. She was probably immensely enjoying herself stooging me like this, but I was determined now to try and say something more than a croak. And suddenly I had it, I knew what to say, what to ask her, as I'd had enough. I couldn't bear it anymore, I still wanted to go even though my goddess was sitting opposite me, so I asked her "Would you like to go somewhere else and talk?" And to my surprise and relief, she said, "Yes." So we left - TOGETHER!

It was relatively easy after that to say goodbye to everyone. She said her goodbye's as I said mine, and we sailed effortlessly on through the crowd with the sea of humanity parting, with a little gossip being added in some circles, that which thankfully I'd never hear; but also, which I have to admit, quite tickled my fancy, as I imagined what was being said. "Mark and Cathy, well I never would have believed it..." Up your bums you lot, I'm out of here once and for all, Cathy and I are heading for the hills... or something like that; anyway, I had it mind to head for my home turf, St.Kilda, that place where my friends might come to if wanting to be daring for a Sunday coffee and a stroll along the pier. The St.Kilda pier, what a good idea, the night was calm and not too cold, at least there wouldn't be too many people there, and I had a thick coat in the back seat I could give Cathy... and she willingly agreed.

Once we were in the car and on the way I felt my confidence returning. I liked the company of women once I was in it, and not floating around like flotsam on the fringe. And it was easy to speak with her, and fun.

'So why that question?'

'I went and had a reading the other day, you know, a clairvoyant, and she told me what my Mr Right would look like, and when I saw you there tonight, something inside me rang a bell and her words came back to me.'

'Yeah? What did she say?'

'That he's rather tall, and will have one eye that's half-green and half-brown -' (YES! THANK YOU CLAIRVOYANT!) '- and I'd meet him soon, although, in a way I had already met him, even

though I hadn't actually spoken to him - clairvoyants seem to love talking in that cryptic way, and that I'd meet him in or with a crowd of people. So when I saw you and her words suddenly came back into my mind, I thought I'd come over and see what colour your eyes were. And low and behold! And so I asked you that question.'

'And you think I would know?'

'Well don't you?'

'I wish I were... I hope I am... but I don't know. How can I know the answer to that! However, I'd love to find out. You might meet another man with the same colour eyes tomorrow or the day after.'

'I might, but somehow I don't think so. So in the meantime, you'll have to do - won't you?'

'I guess so. Not that I mind, not in the least.'

'Good, then can we get some fish and chips to eat on the pier? I'm hungry.'

'Good idea.' And so it went. And it went well. We got the fish and chips, she ate about three chips and half a piece of fish and half a dim sim, and I hoed into the rest. And the coat worked out well as she snuggled into it and happily into me. And it was one of those things, it all felt good, natural, and well, just right. We strolled along under the lights until they gave out, and then into the darkness past the pier cafe and out onto the path through the breakwater rocks. And we found a nice flat rock for two, snuggled up, she with her head on my shoulder - just like that good old night back at the club - and looked out over the bay and at Melbourne's colourful night lights... And that was that - easy really!

‘What else did she say?’

‘That we’d be good for each other -’

‘Meaning?’

‘I don’t know. She didn’t really elaborate and I meant to ask her afterwards but forgot as there was too much to remember.’

‘Do you believe in all that sort of thing, clairvoyance, telling the future?’

‘No, not really, but I don’t dismiss it either. I keep my mind open to new things. It was the first time I’d been to anyone who read like her, she did seem to be really connected - to something... or someone. So many readers seem like they are just making it up. A girl at work said she’d been to her, she’s always going to them and telling me all they say, but this time she said she was really good and I felt like going to see what it would be like. And I enjoyed it. The lady was Romanian, and just like any ordinary housewife - no fancy stuff, she lived out at Roweville. We sat down and she had a pack of normal cards, you know, the ones you play blackjack with -’

‘She didn’t use Tarot cards?’

‘No, just ordinary playing cards, and she got me to shuffle them then laid them out in rows on the card table. Then she looked at them and started telling me stuff about my family and my past, most of which was rather general, but still it was right. And then she told me some other personal things, things to do with my past boyfriends, and then she said that was enough of all of that, that she wanted to give me a better more detailed reading about my future. She put the cards aside and took a large quartz crystal out of her pocket. It was a really nice one, half of it was clear the other half cloudy, and it was pointed at both ends. She told me to hold it for a while while she went off and made a cup of tea. I didn’t want one. Then she came back and took the crystal and held it in her hand and then just started speaking looking at me, but not really focusing on me. It was rather weird, but that didn’t matter because I was struggling to keep up with all she was saying. And part of that was about meeting you.

‘She said you needed help to bring yourself out, that you were looking for someone, a nice lady - that’s me of course, a nice lady! - to do it with. And that I needed someone who wouldn’t control me, who’d just be there for me, for whatever it was I wanted to do, which sounded good to me. And it’s what I do want. I’m fed up with men who want to take over, telling me what to do and how to be all the time. Then she went on to say that if this person I was to meet, the one with the half green and brown eye, was the man I was looking for, and we got on well together - which she said we would - then we’d have something of an unusual relationship together. It wouldn’t be like what most people want, it would be different and not all false love and false niceness, even being very difficult at times, but not like the difficulties I’d had in past relationships. The difficulties would be good ones, ones to help us both grow, and that if we did want to grow, then we’d be able to help each other. And I do want to grow. I want to grow as a person. Lately I’ve been feeling that I’m not growing, I thought I was growing these past years, but now I’m beginning to think that I haven’t grown much at all, and that really I’ve only been going around in circles.

‘So I liked what she said. Actually, I liked it a lot. It’s exactly what I want. It was uncanny really, as she put into words things that had been floating around in my mind for a while. And after, during the drive back - my friend from work took me as she wanted another reading from her - it seemed like she’d helped me in some way catch up with myself. It was a good feeling, like she put my whole life up to now into some kind of perspective for me, and I liked that. It was really quite amazing.’

'Yeah, it sounds like it, and it's exactly what I have been longing for - I can't believe it! I've been longing these past months for someone to help me express all my feelings, that's what I want, just as she said, to help me come more out of myself. I feel like so much of me is in some way trapped or buried inside me. It's a strange feeling, I feel very inadequate, like with you for example.'

'What do you mean?'

'It's rather a long story, it stems years, and well, you have no idea... and it's kind of... embarrassing. I would like to tell you, but maybe one day, it's all too new with you for now.'

'That's fine with me Mark. I don't want to put any kind of pressure on you. And if what that lady said comes true, then we've got plenty of time. And I like the feeling of that, not rushing into anything, and not having to rush into anything for fear of missing out on something.'

'Yeah, that suits me fine too. I don't want to rush. And as much as I say I do want another relationship with someone, I want the right one, not like the ones I've had with my past girlfriends. I don't really know what I want, but I want more than just a sexual relationship, more than just a physical one. I want that too, and shit I sure would like to have that with you, you'd literally be a dream come true for me, but I want more, and so I'd like to take it easy, feel my way along a bit more rather than rushing into things.'

'So you don't want to go to bed with me now then - tonight?'

'Shit Cathy! Well I wouldn't say that, I've love to go to bed with you right now, but -'

'I understand, or at least I think I do, and it sounds good to me. Anyway, we can see how we feel about things, there's no rush. I like being here with you now, and that's good enough for me. And besides, let's be realistic, shit we've only just met, and here we are talking about rushing into things.'

'I know, but I feel like I've known you forever. I'm so excited about it, you have no idea, a part of me feels like running around screaming with joy, that you, and you of all people Cathy, do want to be here with me now. I can't believe it, and yet I also have that sense that it's right, like it's meant to be.'

'But that sounds stupid doesn't it, it's what you say when you meet someone new and you get along well. It sounds so corny, but what else can you say when you meet the love of your life - that I hate you and feel it's all wrong being with you.'

'So you *are* my Mr Right, Mark! But I know what you mean. And so what if you feel that way with every new person you like being with, as you said, it would be rather pointless if you didn't feel this way. And besides, it's kind of romantic. And sure, I've felt like that with other guys before, but it's nice to feel like it with you, and I do. So I know what you mean, and it makes me feel good. And I just want to feel good, that's what it's all about - right?'

'Yes. It is. Well I think it is. I used to think it was, it was what I wanted, but now I'm not so sure. I mean of course I do want to feel good, but there are other things as well that I want.'

'Such as?'

'Cathy, have you heard about childhood repression?'

'No.'

'Well it's something I've been reading about for a while, and there's a part to it that says that in way although it is all about feeling good, we should also not deny feeling bad, as most of us do lots of things to stop ourselves feeling bad, and that feeling bad can actually be good too - at times. Or at least I think it can. I haven't as yet come to terms with that one yet: that feeling bad can be good, because how can it be good when you feel bad, and who wants to feel bad anyway... But then again, maybe you are right, maybe I think about it all too much and I should just try and focus on trying to feel good more often, as you said you wanted to feel. To just keep it simple.'

'But what you said Mark I can understand, it does make sense to me.'

‘It does?’

‘Yes, some of my most valuable experiences in life have come out times when I’ve felt bad, I’ve certainly learnt the most during them, that’s for sure. So I can see what you’re saying, that it is good to feel bad, and yes feeling bad is shit, but I suppose it’s got its place. I’ve never really thought about it like that before. And you are right, I do, and I know everyone I’ve been with does all they can to stop themselves feeling bad. No one does want to feel bad, at least not all the time. Maybe every now and again, it’s part of life, but not too much.’

‘What if you were to try and live a life in which when you felt bad, bad in any way, you accepted those bad feelings and tried to allow them to be, without doing anything to make them go away - do you think you could do something like that?’

‘God I don’t know. I’ve never thought about it. It would be hard work, to just allow yourself to feel bad when you do. Argh, I don’t know. I don’t know if I could bare it, what if I felt bad all the time. Oh it scares me -’

‘Sorry, I shouldn’t have brought it up.’

‘Yes you should have, and don’t be sorry, if we’re to be together, even if it’s only for this one night, for now, don’t be sorry. I don’t need you to try and make everything nice for me. I’m a big girl and I can take care of myself. You don’t have to worry about me, you just say whatever it is you want to say. And if I don’t like it, if it scares me or whatever, if it makes me feel bad, then it does, but that’s not your problem. And even if what you say stops me from feeling good, so what, then I feel bad, and I can deal with that, maybe even accept it like you suggested.’

‘That was the bloody problem with all the men I have been with. They all started telling me how I should be and what I should be feeling, right from the beginning. They were all so bloody controlling. And fuck it, I’ve had enough of that. I want to feel what I feel and I don’t want anyone telling me otherwise. Of course you can feel sorry that you’re making me feel scared, that’s your business, but on no account do I want you to not speak what’s on your mind because you think you might make me feel bad. You have to be your own person, that’s what I want, that’s what I want in a relationship. I want the two of us to be our own unique selves, and equal in that, so you say whatever you think or feel and whenever you think and feel it, and if I don’t like it, then I can say whatever I think or feel, just as you can. So, how does that sound?’

‘Sounds good to me, however I hope I can do it. It does worry me that I might be like all those other men you’ve been with.’

‘Well, I can tell you for starters Mark, you’re not like all those other men I’ve with, because if you were, we wouldn’t be sitting here arm in arm on the end of St.Kilda pier. That I assure you. And another thing, I wouldn’t be telling you what I just did and you wouldn’t have been open to me and listening to me and giving me credit for what I’ve said. You haven’t dismissed what I said, you’re thinking about it, and I like that. And what you have also said to me, for me to try and imagine living by allowing every bad feeling to be, is new, I’ve never heard anything like that before, and I like that too. And I can tell you, all those other men I’ve been with would run a mile at that proposition, let alone be the ones telling me to imagine it. So you’re way ahead of them to begin with, and we’ve only been together for a few hours. And if this is how it might be with us, then I don’t know about you, but I’m in, I’m prepared to give it - give you - ago, and see what happens. So if you want to ask me such things, then do so, and don’t worry about what I say. I want to be able to speak my mind - for once. And thinking about it now, I really do. I want to be able to say everything I think and feel, even if I hurt your feelings. I’ve always put myself aside, held back, kept things to myself, and now fuck that, I want to come forward and just go for it. I want to see what happens, and if it means that I can’t have a relationship with anyone because they can’t handle it, then so be it. I don’t care anymore. Mark I’m so fed up with how it’s been for me in my relationships, and I don’t want to keep going along that track. I want to change, a new track,

some other way - something entirely different. And if you can help me along that path, and even if it's only for a short time, even if it's for only a moment, then that's good enough for me. Yes, that's what I want. And I do want to try to imagine what you said, but I don't want to try and do it just now. I'm too angry for that, and I feel good, I feel really good about it - about all I just said. So I thank you Mark, already you've helped me put a few more things into perspective. And that, I can sure tell you, no other man has been able to do. And what's more, I want more of it, so don't you bloody well hold back - GOT IT!

'Sure have. You know you look even more beautiful when you're angry, when you're all fired up. And so I guess it can happen, you can feel good feeling bad, or at least feeling angry.'

'I don't know about that, but thank you, and I don't care. I feel good, really good, so let's walk, this rock is beginning to make my legs ache and my bum's gone numb.'

‘Tell me more Mark?’

‘OK. How about we walk back and get an ice-cream, the shop should still be open...’

‘Sounds good to me. But you know, before you go on, I have to say, I still feel really good, and I am very much enjoying being out here with you. It’s so nice isn’t it, being all alone, just the two of us and so close to the city. And it being all dark, and look at all the lovely stars sparkling away and all the pretty city lights and their reflections on the water, it’s so calm, not a breath of wind. And I do like you’re arm around me, that feels good to.’

‘Are you warm enough? Aren’t your feet cold in those shoes?’

‘Yeah a little, but they’ll warm up now we’re walking - I’m okay, and it makes me want to snuggle in more next to you.’

‘That’s definitely fine with me!’

‘As I said, it’s all still rather new to me, but it goes something like this. There’s a website about childhood repression that I’ve been getting this all from. Anyway, one of the parts to it that I’ve been thinking a lot about lately is bad feelings. A lot of the website is about bad feelings, about trying to accept them instead of what we’ve all been programmed to do - deny them. Apparently we all do many things to stop ourselves feeling bad, and I’ve been trying to be more aware about what I feel to see if I do stop myself feeling bad a lot, and I think I do, but I’m still not so sure. I find all the feeling stuff a little hard to grasp, but I can sort of get the meaning behind it all... well, I hope I can.

‘The fact that we’re denying or stopping ourselves from feeling so many of our bad feelings means we’re stopping ourselves being complete people. Bad feelings are just as important as good ones, which makes sense, and so we should allow them to be and feel them, rather than trying to do all we do to prevent ourselves from feeling bad.

‘So it sort of makes sense... but am I making sense, I don’t know if I’m explaining it too well.’

‘You’re doing fine, I understand it. And although I’ve never thought about it, about any of it, it does make sense. It makes perfect sense. Of course if we feel a feeling, be it good or bad, why not allow yourself to feel it. And I can see that if we don’t, if we stop ourselves feeling any feeling, good or bad, then we’re not allowing ourselves to be a complete person, as you said. That makes perfect sense to me. And I like it. I like it a lot. I’d like to be able to do it. I know I do things to stop myself from feeling bad, so how do you stop yourself doing that. How can you make yourself accept all your feelings. Does this website say how you do it?’

‘It does, but it’s not that straightforward, which is actually one of the things I like about it all. It makes it harder for me, but it’s not some stupid latest trendy thing you can do in five easy steps or something like that. It sounds very hard, and from what I gather, it’s much easier - if not essential - doing it with someone else, rather than trying to do it on your own.

‘It’s about speaking about your feelings, good and bad, to each other when you feel them, and at the same time, wanting to know the truth, the reasons why you’re feeling them. It’s really all about getting to know yourself, every part of yourself, through your feelings and not with your mind - which you can’t do anyway.

‘And it’s called doing your Feeling-Healing if you want to label it, healing yourself of all that’s not right within you by honouring your feelings - that’s about the main thrust of it.’

‘I like the sound of that. Feelings - eh?’

‘Yes, it’s all about feelings, that being, what life is meant to be about. Relationships and feelings. Feelings, feelings and more feelings, are continually emphasised all the way through everything

I've read, right to the point of overkill. But still each time I read more about them, I see more things I hadn't understood about feelings. And the worst part for me is, I'm beginning to understand that I don't really know what I am feeling half the time. Like now, here with you, what am I feeling right now... I don't know. I am feeling good, very good, I'm on cloud nine - that's for sure, no problem with any of these feelings, but what else am I feeling. What are my good feelings composed of. And I ask myself, am I happy - yes. Am I contented - yes. Am I ecstatic to be walking arm in arm with you along this pier - YES! I can't believe my luck. I really can't. It's a dream come true for me, being here with you - you, with you, and you of all people - you are my dream come true, and I can't believe it. Such things don't happen to me, and yet here I am now - they do happen. It's been a big day, that's for sure.'

'That all sounds good to me, you seem able to speak about your feelings well enough.'

'Possibly, but there's got to be more, surely there has to be, yet I don't know how to bring it out of me. And these are good feelings, what about if I were feeling bad.'

'Maybe you're asking too much of yourself. Maybe you should just concentrate on one feeling and speak more about it. Let's see... what about this ecstatic feeling, tell me more about it.'

'What more can I say, I feel ecstatic being with you. It's wonderful, fantastic, it's amazing, I can't begin to tell you how lucky I feel. And how it's all come about, and so easily, without my having to do anything. I've wanted to meet and speak to you for so long now, but I've been too chicken to come up to you because you'd have just ignored me, I'm not like those other men I've seen you with.'

'You've seen me with?'

'Oh yes, it's part of that long story I was going - am going, to tell you one day. Look Cathy, your being here with me is beyond my wildest dreams, I can't tell you how good it's making me feel. I feel so happy, so excited, and yet as I said, I also feel content, like it's the most natural thing in the world for me.'

'I like hearing you say those things... please go on.'

'I'll try... how do I feel... how do I feel with you being here with me? I feel great, I love you being here with me. I love holding you, you feel so good to hold, and your hair smells so nice, and you're so pretty and... and then I go blank, I don't know what to say, I just want to hug you and hold you - forever. I feel like I never want to let go of you, I never want this moment *now* to end. I don't want to ever leave this pier. I don't want the morning to come, I don't want to have to go back into my normal boring life, to do the same old things I do, I just want to be here with you and do nothing more than that... does that make any sense?'

'It sounds good to me, it's about what I'd like too. Keep going, I think you're doing very well.'

'I feel so good, just so good, so bloody fantastic! I feel like running and jumping in the air, twisting around, doing somersaults, jumping for joy, bursting out of my skin. I feel so good, just so good, I don't know if I've ever felt so good before. You, Catherine Armstrong, here with me, walking down the pier with me - that's good, very good. It's all very good - YOU, here with me, I feel very good - perfect. **YOU FEEL VERY FUCKING GOOD, SO GOOD! I LOVE BEING HERE WITH YOU! YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW GOOD I FEEL!**'

'Phew, I feel exhausted listening to all those good feelings. It all sounds really nice Mark, you make me feel good, really good, too. It's all very new to me, different, and I like it. I'm so glad I went to see Rosa the clairvoyant. It is amazing how it's all just happened. The next day, after seeing her, it didn't all seem so wonderful, my future, as she had made it sound. Back at work, it was just the same old usual things. It was such a surprise to see you sitting there all alone at that table and then to feel that I wanted to go up and speak to you.'

'Why did you want to speak to me? Did you feel sorry for me, were you taking pity on me?'

'No, not at all. As I told you, seeing you there made me remember what Rosa had told me - her

words suddenly popped into my mind, so I thought I'd see if you had a brown-green eye. I had nothing to loose and it was fun, it was kind of naughty, or at least that was the feeling I had.'

'Naughty?'

'Yes, like I was doing something I wasn't meant to do, you know, something people don't usually do. I mean, it's not everyday I go up to strangers looking in their eye -'

'And then asking them if they are your Mr Right.'

'Right! So are you?'

'Yes! Well... I don't know, I bloody well hope so. I hope the clairvoyant was right. I'd like that a lot. God, I couldn't think of anything better. And so far so good, don't you think?'

'Yes. So far so good. However it's early days yet. And you never can tell. I've thought things were good before only to think the very opposite some months later. And we won't really know what we're like together until we live together and for some time. Did you live with your girlfriends?'

'No, not really in a settled way, not long term. I wanted to, but it never really happened. It was mostly me spending a lot of time, sort of like a live-in guest, at their places. My prior relationships were good, I did enjoy them, well... most of them anyway, but they were never what you'd call settled. What about you?'

'Yes, with each of them, but with Matthew the last, it was the longest. I met him in London, I was on holiday with another girlfriend and started to live with him over there. He worked for the ANZ bank and finished his work experience with the bank in London six months after we met, and then we moved back to live in Sydney, as he carried on with bank. He was into FOREX dealing and trading anything he could, and we lived together for about three years. The other main ones, it was about two, three and a year.'

'How old are you Cathy?'

'Twenty-nine. You?'

'Eight?'

'Don't you think you should be tucked up in bed by now if you're only eight years old?'

'If you were tucked up with me, yes, that sounds like a good idea. How about it after our ice-cream?'

'Sounds good to me, but who's bed, yours or mine?'

'Hmm, well mine's not too glamorous.'

'A typical blokes room is it?'

'Ah, maybe, but it's more that it's at the back of the aquarium and it consists of my double bed, a small table and basin, and the toilet and shower are down the stairs - it's up on the first floor. So if you wanted a pee you'd have to walk down the stairs, and there's a lot of them, or manage with the small basin.'

'Sounds like a challenge.'

'What about your place?'

'It's up the hill.'

'Here, in St.kilda?'

'Yes. It's a very nice apparent and you are most welcome to come back to it with me, however I fancy the idea of something a bit different, in keeping with the whole night, so how about your place?'

'Okay, if you reckon you can manage the toilet arrangements.'

'It should be fine, I can see when I get there, and besides, aren't you supposed to the gallant chivalrous young man, my knight in shining armour who will escort me down the perilous steps if the need arises?'

'I'll definitely escort you, but as for all those other things... I hope I live up your expectations...'

‘It’s not about any of that. You just be yourself and we’ll see what happens. And if it works, it works; if not, we’ll either be friends or hate each other.’

‘I wish I was so sure of things as you seem to be. I seem to wishy-washy compared to you.’

‘It’s probably that I’ve had more experience in relationships than you have, and having been let down so often and promised so many things none of which have come to fruition, I’m just being a realist. I can assure you, even taking into account what Rosa said, I have no expectations. It’s a moment by moment proposition. If I want to be with you I will, if not, so be it. That’s how I’m taking life now. I’m no longer going to get all carried away with all that fantasy stuff with my head spinning around in the clouds like some young girl on her first date. My first date was rather dull and my fantasies have continued to fail over the years so far as men are concerned, so now I have no expectations. I probably still do of course, but I’d like to think that I don’t. And it’s all very well to say all that sort of stuff, but if I do happen to like you, and I *really* like you, then that will start to complicate matters. However for the time being, and at least for our first night together, I’m prepared to just see how it goes. Is this the ice-cream shop you had in mind?’

‘Yes.’

‘Well, this is it - my pad.’

‘Hmm, I see what you mean, it’s not much is it?’

‘No.’

‘How long have you lived here for?’

‘About six months. I have an arrangement with the owner of the aquarium. He lets me live here and I work a couple of unpaid days. He’s a nice bloke - a new owner. I used to work at the aquarium full time, I did so for three years, but the boss was an arsehole. Then thankfully he sold it to Joe, and he’s great. But I’d had enough with full time work there, it had become rather boring, so I left. I got him to sack me so I could get the dole, giving me time to think about what I wanted to do. I help him and the manager Pete two or three days a week so he can find his feet with the whole business.’

‘And he’s getting the hang of it?’

‘He is, quickly.’

‘You don’t have any air-conditioning, shit it must have been hell during summer. How’d you cope?’

‘I didn’t. I went and stayed at a friends place during the hot spells. But other than being rather noisy with the traffic and the madies of St.Kilda who yell and scream at all hours of the night, it’s all right, at least for the time being.’

‘Are the sheets clean?’

‘They are! Incredibly I changed them this morning. Oh yeah, I forgot to say, and there’s a small fridge, so, would you like a drink, I’ve only got cans of beer; or a smoke, I’ve got some dope if you’d prefer that?’

‘Both would suit me fine.’

‘I like how you drink beer Cathy, none of my other girlfriends drank it - and you like a smoke too?’

‘Yes. Why do you like it?’

‘Hmm... I don’t know. Ah... no, I don’t know - I just do.’

‘Does it have something to do with the idea that I’m like one of the boys, that I’m not so intimidating if I have a beer, I’m sort of like a bloke?’

‘Intimidating... hmm, do I find you intimidating... I’ll have to think about that one. Well yes, come to think of it, I do.’

‘That was quick.’

‘Yes it was, I suddenly felt it, and I think actually I do. You are very beautiful you know and that is a little confronting - a lot confronting.’

‘Why?’

‘Because you’re something of a dream come true, I didn’t think I would ever be able to be with a girl like you. You were always with the successful men, the sporting good looking guys, handsome and rich looking ones, I’m poor, and not sporting, I would never have thought I’d be your type of bloke. So yes, I suppose I am feeling a little overawed and intimidated by you. I don’t feel nervous - at least I don’t think I do, and I hope I’m up to your expectations in bed, that worries me a little because what if you find I’m a dud in bed compared to all those other men... oh boy, it’s too much to talk about, half the time I feel like I’m just rambling on. Shit I’ve never said any of this sort of stuff to anyone, never to any of my past girlfriends. I don’t even think I’ve thought about such things. But you asking me these questions -’

‘Does it worry you? Would you rather I didn’t?’

‘Shit no! I’m enjoying them, it’s challenging, difficult, yes, but it’s good. It’s what I want. Like you said from the reading, I want to bring myself out more, and perhaps this is what is happening, you’re already helping me to do it. God, yes, that’s right, you are, you’re already helping me to express feelings, how incredible. Gee, I feel so grateful to you already. I feel so good again, like my head is about to blow off. But what about you, I wish I could do for you, what you’re doing for me.’

‘You’re doing fine for me Mark. I’m enjoying myself. Like you, I’ve never really done this before either. I’ve wanted to ask such questions before, and occasionally I have, but I’ve always been rebuffed, whereas you take me seriously, and you try to answer my questions, and that I like. That makes me feel good. It makes me feel like you want me and respect me, like you think I have some value, that I’m not just a good looking sheila you’d like to fuck and carry around on the end of your arm showing off to all your mates. This is new for me, I don’t want to be treated that way anymore. I feel I’m more than that, that I’ve a lot more to give and I want to give it. I want a go at giving it. And so far you’re allowing me to. And that makes me feel very good. These are new good feelings for me. I’ve never felt like this, and I feel stronger. Yes, you help me to feel stronger within myself, and help me to support myself more, sort of be more of a friend to myself rather than always telling myself to shut up and to not say what I really want to say. And so far with you tonight I’ve said all I’ve wanted to say. I haven’t held back, I haven’t edited or deleted any thoughts, I’ve just put them all out there, given them all to you. And you haven’t baulked, you haven’t objected, and you even seem to enjoy them, you seem to enjoy me being this way, and that is so good, it truly is Mark, you have no idea.

‘I feel like you do consider me of value, like I said, and that means a lot, a hell of a lot to me. And even though you’re poor and live in a shitty little oven like this, who gives a fuck. So long as the sheets are clean, at least on the first night, and my mother can be happy with that knowledge: “Catherine, always make sure, if nothing else, that the sheets are clean on your first night”, then I’m happy to go with it.’

‘What would you have done if they weren’t clean?’

‘I’d have turned around and walked back down those stairs.’

‘Seriously?’

‘Nope. I might have asked you if we could change them, I do like the idea of clean sheets on the first night, so we can both start afresh together.’

‘I’ve never thought about it like that. Shit, I wonder if my other girlfriends wanted clean sheets. Oh well, too bad.’

‘Yes, too bad for them if they couldn’t speak up and ask you. But that’s what I mean. When I was younger I couldn’t speak up. I can now, and I enjoy it. The first man I slept with never had clean sheets and I hated getting into his bed, it stank - stale. But I couldn’t say anything. I wouldn’t have dared, I was too scared to, he’d probably have told me to fuck off. And I was so much ‘in love’ with him. Oh Mark, you have no idea, he was my dream come true, my first Mr Right, I had such expectations, everything was going to be so good, and we’d get married and have children and live happily ever after -’

‘And the sheets stunk.’

‘Like something had died in them.’

‘Oh, God, here, have a smoke. At least I do my laundry regularly...’

‘Thanks... What are you thinking about?’

‘Being intimidated by you. The longer I’m with you, the more I like you, and if I am intimidated by you, I think it’s fading.’

‘Can I ask you a question Mark?’

'Can you ask me a question, what sort of question is that, of course you can. The more the better.'

'I feel kind of funny asking it - a bit embarrassed.'

'Embarrassed, you feel embarrassed, gee, I'd have never thought that possible.'

'Sometimes I do, and I do a little now -'

'I'm sorry, go ahead.'

'Do you really think that I'm pretty?'

'Shit yes, yes I do, I think you're very pretty - beautiful. There's something about you, about your looks that totally captivates me - it always has, right from the first time I saw you.'

'Really? But what is pretty?'

'Well, it's pretty for me. Do you mind if I be really honest with you? It's hard to speak about such things with women, but seeing as though you asked...'

'No, I insist you always be honest with me.'

'Okay, well, I wouldn't say you are pretty as in Julia Robert's way, or blonde bimbo pretty, and possibly other men might consider you Barbie Doll pretty, but I don't; although when I first saw you some years ago, there was a touch of that, but... well, for me, you're really pretty, very attractive and alluring. As I said, which I don't think I'd be able to begin to explain, you captivate me, you make me feel good, good deep inside, and you make me feel like I want to be with you. I don't know why, but I just do. I mean, by most standards I suppose you are attractive, pretty is probably not actually the correct word. Interesting, intelligent, yes - a touch arty; I love how you do your hair, and you've got a fantastic figure - no doubt about that; great legs and I love your walk and the clothes you wear and how you look in them - I'd say you've got good taste and natural style... And you're different to most women who I've met at gatherings like this evening at the pub, yes, very different... how's that, want me to keep going? Why do you ask anyway, I'd have thought you'd know how you look better than what I could say.'

'Oh I don't know. I think I'm attractive in some sort of way. I like that you think I am - it's nice all you've said. It's just that I've always been called pretty by men and even my father, but... oh, I don't know... I've just never really felt it myself.'

'What do you feel about yourself?'

'I don't know. Sometimes I look in the mirror and I feel okay, I even think I look good. And then I chastise myself for even caring. Why do I care, or more the point, why do I want to be attractive and alluring to men. And I ask myself, do I - do I really want to make men look at me. And then I think, it's all for fucking men, so what about for myself. Do I want to make myself look good just for myself, because it makes me feel good to know that I am good looking. Enough people have told me that I'm pretty, I even dyed my hair black at one stage, and some of my friends said I looked prettier and more attractive, but it's a difficult one for women. Of course we all want to be told by every man that we're attractive and good looking - pretty, beautiful, gorgeous, adorable, alluring, seductive - whatever, and yet it's such a bore, and such a worry. It's so hard continually worrying about whether you're acceptable or not, whether you'll be approved of or not, and at times I just wish I was ugly and so didn't have to worry about it at all. But then as soon as I say that, I'm so glad that I'm not ugly, and yet then I feel so bad for all those women who are ugly. Argh, at times it just about drives me mad.'

'What about me, how do you think I look?'

'Handsome in a soft kind of way. Yes, I think so, you're not the usual look that I have been attracted to in men before, but I like that. I like your hair and face, and your half green and brown eye is different, I keep wanting to look at it, but then I think you'll think I'm staring at you, so I quickly look at your other eye, but then I get all muddled up looking too much at just your eyes... and I like the shape of your body, however your height is new to me, but so far, it seems okay, I like

snuggling in under your armpit -'

'Bit so long as I keep my underarm and sheet clean - it can get a bit smelly at times under there - I'll be okay, I'll be acceptable?'

'I'm sure, but hey, you are a man, and there is a certain element I like about that.'

'One?'

'Well possibly a few, I don't know yet, it will depend on what happens *inside* the sheets.'

'All my girlfriends have had difficulties with their looks, it must be hard on women with such importance placed on beauty and your looks.'

'It is, it can be hell, and I just wish I didn't have to care about it. I've known some women, both attractive and unattractive, who never think about it, they couldn't care less, it being the last thing in the world to have any importance in their lives. But I do care. I work in fashion selling shoes to women, I've worked all my working years selling clothes and make-up and fashion accessories. All I deal with is looks and women wanting to look good, and very few I've met have been happy with their looks. So few have been natural, but I would like to be natural one day.'

'You mean, like not wearing lipstick and make up?'

'Yes, and not putting tips in my hair, not that they are in it now; and not doing my nails, even though I have to for work, and all that sort of thing. You know, just be how God made me, hairs on my face, legs, and under my arms, and all. But I can't do it. I shave my pits, legs, and other places, as you will see... and I worry that I do look good, the clothes I wear, and all the rest of it.'

'You know Cathy, and I hope you don't mind my changing the subject, but this speaking openly about going to bed like this, is very new for me. It's very exciting, I'm enjoying it. It's so casual - natural. Is this what you did with your other men?'

'Oh God no, nothing like this, it's all new for me too. No, they just couldn't wait to get my clothes off me, not that I could wait to get theirs off them either, but it was just at it, sex, sex, more sex. Nothing was said about it before hand, yet we both knew what was going to happen. Nothing was ever really said about it. But I like it so far not being the great thing, the special thing, the big dream, with you Mark. I hope you don't mind, but I just feel like it being like going to the toilet - something you don't ordinarily speak about, and yet we all do it every day, so why not bring sex out into the open and just include it as being like going to the toilet -'

'Well, personally, I hope it's not just like going to the toilet... but I understand what you're saying. And I like it to, just to make it natural - normal - and not a big deal.'

'Yes, it's going to happen, we both want it to, so let's speak about it, let's get it out in the open and be real about it. And it will happen when we feel we want to do it, and so yes, what's the big deal about it. I'm on the pill, I started taking it again after seeing Rosa just in the off chance that she might have been right, so you don't have to worry about anything there. And I don't get the feeling that I have to worry about venereal disease or AIDS with you, and you don't have to worry about it with me, I've had all my recent check-ups, so we can just take our time and enjoy it all. And quite frankly, I don't even care if we don't have it tonight, that in itself would be another first.'

'Yeah well I don't mind either. As far as I'm concerned, just having you here sitting on my bed with me is beyond all my expectations. To be able to hold you in my arms all night long, is well... way beyond my wildest dreams, and to then have sex with you... now that's almost intimidating... but not quite.'

'No, I'm sure you'll cope.'

'Would you like another beer?'

'Please, and another smoke if that's okay.'

'Fine. It's so nice - so very... pleasant - perfect, with you here, I couldn't ask for more. You are great Cathy, just how you are - how you look, all how you are - everything about you is perfect. You are perfect. And I *do* love you liking a smoke as well as a beer.'

Cathy and Mark

a novel introducing Feeling-Healing

‘Thank you Mark.’

‘And that was very pleasant too.’

‘Yes, it was, wasn’t it. Thank you Mark, thank you for being so gentle and tender with me. It was what I needed. I didn’t realise that I wanted it like that, not a wham bang thing, but something soft and caring - intimate, loving I guess.’

‘I’m glad you feel that way.’

‘Yes, it was very lovely, sensual, and that’s what I need. The so-called sporting types as you called them didn’t really see the female form as something just to be held, gently caressed and made to feel warm all over, inside and out.’

‘But surely you must have liked having sex with those sporting hero’s, it couldn’t have all been bad.’

‘No, you’re right, it wasn’t all bad, and mostly it was great. And at the time it was exactly what I wanted, but not now, not at this moment, not with you. How it was with you was just how I wanted it to be. Maybe I’ve changed, I don’t know... maybe I will want it with more excitement, more vroom, more passion... maybe I won’t, I don’t know. And quite frankly, I don’t care either. I’m quite happy to settle for tenderness.’

‘It’s nice how it’s all happened, none of the usual dating, the build up, the lust, the wanting and needing, the animalistic lunging and tearing each others clothes off and fucking all over the place. No, I think that’s all in the past. I don’t know, I seem to be going through a lot of changes at the moment. Rosa said it was my Saturn-return, that my values are being brought into question, that things I used to like I won’t anymore, and other things that I didn’t like I will.’

‘I was afraid that you’d find me too boring.’

‘And you’re probably right. I would have back then, but back then I wanted what I thought was the big thrill, all the passion, the romance, the excitement. I wanted the whole package: to be swept off my feet, to be thrust down hard on the bed and to have the life fucked out of me. I wanted it hard, I wanted the intense feeling, but now I can see that I actually missed out on a lot of other subtle stuff. And that’s what I want now. I feel like I don’t want sex to be a football match, I want to just do what we did, lie together, hold each other, talk, fuck, smoke, talk - definitely the talking, like now, is the biggest new part for me. There was never any talking, just sex and then off onto doing the next thing. But I like this, talking, speaking about whatever we want to, just lying here talking. I mean I used to lie in bed and talk with my other partners, but it wasn’t the same talk as we talk. It was... just the usual sort of stuff, and I no longer want that anymore. I’ve talked about all of that, over and over and it doesn’t get you anywhere, doesn’t do anything for you. Now I want a different sort of talk, and it seems so far to be that way with you Mark. And as I keep saying, it feels good. It all feels very good. And you have very nice sheets, my mother would be impressed.’

‘They’re new in fact. Well, not actually new as they are second hand, but new for me. I bought them at the opp shop. And I like them, I was very lucky, it’s so hard to find pure cotton ones and not the usual half cotton and polyester; and then to find a matching pair of queen-size, and one with the elastic still in good shape on the bottom sheet. But unfortunately the colour...’

‘Yeah, a bit too dark maroon.’

‘Beggars can’t be choosers, but at least you can’t see it in the dark.’

‘I like you kissing me Mark.’

‘Right, what’s for breakfast, I’m hungry?’

‘Toast?’

‘You can’t do better than that?’

‘Sorry, no.’

‘How do you live, cook; what do you live on?’

‘I have, as you can see over there on top of the fridge, a toaster, kettle and sandwich maker. Breakfast is toast: peanut butter and Promite; lunch is from Helen up the road at the takeaway, my one big treat for the day, and Joe shouts me lunch when I’m working; and dinner is the sandwich maker, various fillings with Asian pastes - not much room in the fridge. And that’s it.’

‘Then what do you do all day?’

‘Walk, visit cafes for coffee, think, and write. On my iMac I write, that’s what I do - write and think.’

‘Write and think about what?’

‘Myself, life, my future. I read stuff on the Internet, all kinds of stuff, but mostly to do with the childhood repression stuff I was telling you about. I try and write about my feelings, but I’m not very good at that - what I’m feeling and why. And I think a lot about what I’ve been reading. And I was longing, which is sort of like paying, for someone to come into my life so I can be close to them - and look what’s happened!’

‘So, in that case, how about we go to my place for breakfast - I guess it will be lunch by the time we get there. I’ll cook you bacon and eggs and we can pick up some tomatoes and mushrooms on the way.’

‘Walk you mean?’

‘Yes, it’s only up the hill, not far. So what do you reckon?’

‘Sounds great. I don’t care what we do, I just want to be with you. It was so nice last night, it’s so nice now... I still can’t believe my luck.’

‘And I take it today is not one of your work days at the aquarium?’

‘No, the weekends I have free at the moment. Tuesday and Wednesday and lately Friday as well I work. And you?’

‘I’m rostered to having weekends off for now, very appropriate indeed. So, let’s go.’

‘Mark, can you tell me more about this website to do with feelings you said you’ve been reading? What is it, who runs it, it is some psychological thing or organisation to do with that?’

‘No, nothing like that. It’s just one guy, he writes it all. He has a partner who he is doing what he calls his feeling-healing with. Feeling-healing is the name given by him to healing ones childhood repression, all the feelings one was never allowed to express during ones early childhood that are apparently fucking us up as we keep them repressed within us. His name is James and she is Marion and I think I read that she’s ten years older than him and he’s forty-eight; and they are Australians living at Phillip Island. And can you believe this, he actually worked at the aquarium some years ago before me. I emailed him a few months ago asking him if I could come and meet him and Marion, but he said they didn’t want to see anyone regarding all this stuff until they have finished their feeling-healing. For the time being he’s putting all he understands it to be based on their healing experiences on the net to see what people think about it, and if what they are saying is of any help to anyone. He said he’d prefer it if I gave it a go, tried to do my feeling-healing first, then if I was able to do it, then possibly we could meet to discuss it if I still felt the need. So really that’s what I’ve been trying to do, trying to do my Feeling-Healing.’

‘Which is what exactly?’

‘Well, I’ll try to explain it, I’ll try to summarise it how I see it. I haven’t read all he’s written, and there’s a whole spiritual arm to it which I’m slowly working my way through, but I think it goes something like this, this being the bigger picture. And I’d like to hear what you think about it. I’ve had no one to talk to about it. He doesn’t have a forum or anything, and I don’t know if anyone else is doing their feeling-healing, he said very few people have shown any interest so far, and no one has said they are trying to do their Feeling-Healing.’

‘Apparently, according to him, and I’m not sure how he knows this, but everyone past and present has been conceived and so born into a negative state of mind and will. And what this means is that because of this we’re all living untrue to ourselves, we’re all denying parts of ourselves and right from the very beginning, from conception. And so because we are - and it’s mostly our bad feelings we’re denying - we’re denying ourselves the capability of uncovering the truth of ourselves and life through our feelings. And because of this we’re all living the wrong way. In fact, according to James, *all* we do is wrong, *all* of us, that as we’re all in a negative and not positive self-accepting state of mind and will, we can’t do anything else, we can’t be any other way but wrong. And I can see what he means and tend to agree with him. But if he’s right, and everything we do is wrong, then shit, life is one big fuck up... and the more I think about it, the more it sort of fits and explains a lot of things.’

‘Am I going too fast? Is it too much?’

‘No, I’m hanging in there.’

‘Then he goes on to say that to heal ourselves, to get ourselves out of our negative state, we need to do our healing, that being, we need to do the opposite to what we’re doing and accept all our feelings, particularly our bad ones, and seek to uncover the truth of them. And if we could do that, then we’d be living a naturally true and pure life, and things - life - would work for us the way they have been designed to.’

‘And then -’

‘I’m paying, I’m cooking.’

‘Okay, thank you... and then, because of this negative state we’re all in, when it comes to having children, parents bring their children into the same negative feeling-denying state of living as they

are in, thereby passing the whole thing on generation after generation. And because as children we're not allowed to freely express all we feel, then we have to keep a lot of our bad feelings inside us, we suppress them, and there they remain repressed forever, or at least until we do our feeling-healing. Then as adults we're constantly affected, mostly unconsciously, by all the stuff that's been locked away during our early childhood. And also negative beliefs and patterns of behaviour from our early life still affect and determine our adult life, again with us mostly being unaware that they are. So we're fucked as adults because we were fucked up as children. So, that's about it, the overall bigger picture.'

'Wow, it is a lot. But it does tend to make sense, doesn't it. It's certainly a new way to look at things.'

'It is, and it is a lot, that's only a brief summation, what I've told you. He has some books he's written that you can download for free and I've been reading them. But my difficulty is, that if what he says is right, then all my life is shit, everything I have thought and believed to be true and good and right is all wrong and that is a big mouthful to swallow. I just can't reconcile it. He even goes so far as to say that all we call love is not really true and pure love because it's heavily tainted by our negative state, and that in fact we don't really have any idea what love is.'

'I thought I knew what love is, but over these years, I'd have to say that I don't really know. I do know that a lot of what I thought it was was based on fantasy, and I've come to see that living fantasies hasn't helped me... so possibly he's right. But as you say, to consider that all you've done and been through might all be not as you've thought it to be, that is a lot to swallow. It kind of makes you wonder, well, why bother, what's it all for then. Does he say anything about that?'

'He does, in a little that I've read, and that's where it takes you into the spiritual side of it, which as I said, I'm only getting into now. But I agree with you, what is it all for, what is it all about, and if all I thought life was about, it isn't about, then really I'm a very mixed up and frustrated person, and that's about how I've been feeling lately. That's why I wanted to take time out from work, from just doing the same thing day in day out, the thing that I believe and think I'm meant to do.'

'But it's been hard, my mind goes this way and that. So that's what I've been thinking about, trying to make sense of it all. But where I keep coming back to, which is really what James keeps saying it's all about, so far as healing your negative state goes, is trying to accept all my feelings, speaking about them and longing to find the truth of why I'm feeling them. But to do that, and as I've not got very far speaking to myself - hence my writing, I need a partner, someone who is willing and wanting to do the same thing, someone I can speak about all I feel to.'

'And having said that, now I have a slight bad feeling, it's just slight but it's there, sort of in the back of me somewhere, and it keeps playing on my mind a little. And from what I've read in James' books this is the sort of feeling that one needs to speak about and not let escape, not push it aside and ignore, so if you don't mind Cathy, I'd like to speak to you about it, as it involves you.'

'Of course Mark, you don't have to ask me, just speak any time. I want to hear all you have to say. It's what a relationship should be about if you ask me, so what's on your mind, what are you feeling?'

'This is where it's hard for me, I feel a little weird, so that's why I asked if you minded, but you're right, and I will just try and say what I am thinking and feeling, I do like the idea of it.'

'Well... it's a bad feeling... sort of a downer, and I think it's along the lines of: what if we don't get on well together... what if today you decide you don't really like me that much. Shit, that was hard to say.'

'Why was it hard?'

'Well, admitting it. I guess I'm -'

'Admitting that you're scared? That you're scared I might not like you.'

'Yes. I've never said anything like that before, and yet with each of my girlfriends it's been there

at the beginning of the relationship.'

'It sounds perfectly reasonable to me.'

'Do you feel scared about it not happening, us not liking each other?'

'No. It goes around in my mind that it might turn out that way, but all I feel is to keep taking it one step at a time. The future will take care of itself, and besides, if it's not going to work there's really nothing I can do about it. The one thing with you Mark, well not just the one thing, but one thing, is that I'm entering into this relationship with you without any of my previous expectations. I suppose I'm not expecting it to work. I wasn't wanting a relationship, and it was only seeing Rosa the other day and how confident and sure my meeting you would be that opened my mind to the possibility of having another relationship. So I just want to take it moment by moment. And I do know that if that feeling of it not working comes up in me, the same feeling I've had that's ended my past relationships, then that's it, it won't work no matter what either of us tries to do. In all my past relationships I've had that feeling well before we've actually split up but I did all I could to try and hang on, yet the harder I tried the worse the relationship got. So now if I feel that feeling, then it's going to be goodbye, I'm not going to stick around putting myself through hell by compromising myself in the vain hope that I can make it work.'

'But you tell me more about your bad feeling. If what this guy, James, says is true, then it's very important that we should both try and tell each other all our bad feelings. And the more I think about that, the more I like the idea. I've felt bad so much in all my relationships at times, especially when they've started to break down, but I've never spoken up and talked about all the bad feelings I've had, not even to other girlfriends or my family. I have spoken a little about some of my bad stuff to my girlfriends and mother, but only what's acceptable, the usual stuff, and nowhere near all I felt; and I certainly haven't spoken to any of my partners about how I felt, when from what you say, I can see that of course it's your partner who's the first person you should speak to when you feel bad. And if you can't speak to them, then really, what is the point of your relationship, what's the point of being together. Ha! - I've never seen it so clearly.'

'I agree, that's exactly what James said about his relationship with Marion. That if they can't speak about all their feelings good and bad with each other, then why bother having a relationship.'

'Yes Mark, gee it does make sense, and it's so obvious. It's like, well of course I've known that, we all know that, that is what a relationship is all about, isn't it - sharing yourself with each other, but I've never done it, that I'm well aware of now. I've never said all I've felt and wanted to say. I think that had I, the men I've been with would have run a mile. I've been too afraid to, scared of their reaction, of their leaving me. But with you it's not about that, I don't want you as I want them, which was all fantasy crap, so what do I have to lose. At least we're starting out this relationship together by wanting to speak about all our feelings, and you're a guy and you're leading the way in it, so I guess you do want me to really say all I feel, so I will. And I can tell you Mark, that makes me feel really good. It's as if some sort of barrier or restriction has been lifted off me. In some kind of way I sort of feel freer, much more so than ever before, which is what Rosa said would happen.'

'But sorry, you go on about your bad feeling - feeling scared of us not working out.'

'No, that's all right, I love listening to what you say. It all sounds very good. And I do want to be able to freely say all I feel to you. I too have never done it, that's for sure, and it's a challenge, I just don't know if I'll be able to do it.'

'Well if I can, I'll help you.'

'Yeah I'd like that. Okay, so I'll try and talk more about my fear. And it is a fear, I hadn't properly acknowledged that. I'm afraid I won't be up to your expectations again, that you'll get bored with me after a while. We might go along all right for a while but then you'll leave me. Yeah, then you'll say you've had enough and leave me, and oh god, that thought makes me feel bad - really bad.'

‘Why does it make you feel really bad?’

‘Because I don’t want to be alone. I hate being alone. I do - shit, I’ve never actually admitted that, not even to myself. But it’s true. I don’t want to be alone, and after last night, that’s what I want, for always, for every night. I want to be with you, with someone, who’s all warm and soft, loving and kind, I want to be able to snuggle into them and for them to snuggle into me. Oh I can’t tell you how much I want that...

‘Oh god, but now having told you that, I feel like that will put you off, you won’t want someone who’s clingy, that I’ll suffocate you. One of my past girlfriends accused me of that, I just wanted to cuddle and have sex all the time, and she said it was too much, that I was too needy, too dependent on her, and maybe I was, and maybe I will be with you too, and you’ll get sick of me and tell me to piss off like she did. And I don’t know if I can face that again, it was too painful. I felt bad for weeks, it took me a long time to get over it.

‘Still, I have to keep going with you, being how I want to be, I can’t stop myself, and I want to be with someone, so I hope you don’t find me too needy and dependent on you... yes, that’s what I’m worried about, scared about... and oh shit, I feel like I’m about to blow up and throw up, I’m so hot... that was hard work. I feel like I’ve make a huge confession, I’ve owned up to how bad I am and because of that you won’t like me. And so I will have ruined our relationship before it’s even got going. So it’s okay if you don’t like me anymore. You can say so, I won’t mind, I expect it... oh god, I don’t want to be saying all this stuff now, I hardly know you, it’s not even as if we’ve agreed to have a relationship, it’s all too much... is it all too much for you Cathy?’

‘No, not at all Mark. I like it. You’re being very honest and it’s good. No, it’s not too much, truly it isn’t, actually, it’s what makes it all interesting. You know, all you’ve just told me about yourself helps me to get to know you better. I know more about you in nearly one day than I did my past boyfriend, Matthew, in Sydney, and I was with him for over three years. And yet what was there to know about him. All he spoke about was the horses, stock-market, property prices and the bank. He wasn’t interested in sharing his feelings with me. And that’s what I got to, a dead end, and I didn’t want it anymore. Suddenly one day I looked at him after we’d made love and it wasn’t there for me, that ‘special feeling’. And not only wasn’t it there, but it had fled and I just couldn’t get out of there fast enough. I thought if he told me what was a good bet at Randwick once more I’d slit him open with the kitchen knife. So keep going Mark. You and your fear is like a breath of fresh air. It’s good. Really, don’t think I’d leave you because you said something that made me feel bad, and besides, if you did, we would talk about it first, right, that’s what we both want isn’t it, that we speak about what we feel, I wouldn’t be walking out the door on you without saying a word. And if after it all we still didn’t feel like it was working, well, at least we would have known we tried, and shit, as far as I’m concerned, there’s not much else you can do other than that.

‘Yeah, I guess you’re right. I like the sound of it. It is hard but I’ll keep trying to speak about what I feel.’

‘And as far as I’m concerned, you’re doing very well, you’re not used to it, that’s all. You’ve read about something you want to do on the Internet. But for me, and probably because I am a girl, it’s more natural for me, not that I’ve had much doing of it with the men in my life. But to a certain degree I do it more with my girlfriends, my sisters and mum, so it’s not new to me, it’s not as hard. You’ll have to practice and I’ll help you.’

‘Yeah, I will... I like it how you put it, it makes me feel a lot better. I suppose it’s not so scary, and like you say, if you don’t feel happy with me then we can speak about -’

‘And the same goes for you, you might not feel happy with me.’

‘I doubt it.’

‘Here we are, this is my place.’

‘Oh boy this is very nice, gee what a nice apartment, and it’s so big.’

‘Yes, it’s great, I love it. Open and light.’

‘And what a great view, all those trees and that Morton Bay fig - what a beauty!’

‘And all the fruit bats that come for the figs, and their screechy noises at night... but you get used to them once you’ve been frightened half to death.’

‘And... what, three rooms?’

‘Yes, plenty of space.’

‘And it’s yours, you’re not renting it?’

‘No, God, I’d never be able to afford a huge place like this if I had to rent for only myself. No, it’s all mine. Paid for by myself and my partners, a sort of compensation as I see it, for having to put up watching all those bloody football matches on T.V. Tim, the guy before Matthew, said I should buy - invest - in this part of St.Kilda. He was into property development and real estate and so helped me get it, and helped me start on the payments for it. Then when we split up and I went to London to get some fresh air, I rented it out. In Sydney Matthew bought me an apartment, he paid for the whole thing out of a good win at the track -’

‘Some win that must have been!’

‘He was good at it, he had lots of money and bet heavily. Then when we broke up, he bought the apartment from me as it had great views of the harbour, so I had enough money to pay this off, have it painted and get it all decked out.’

‘Yeah, it’s a nice paint job.’

‘Another friend did that for me. So, what’s say I make breakfast and we can eat it out on the balcony, the sun looks just perfect - not too hot, then we can have a shower together... or perhaps we should one first.’

‘A shower *together* sounds great to me!’

‘Now Cathy, I have to tell you again, you have the perfect body. I mean it, it’s in such good shape and you don’t exercise.’

‘No, I’m just lucky I guess. I never think about it. All the men say it’s nice.’

‘Oh come on, you don’t have to be modest with me, it is nice, very nice.’

‘Yes, well I hope you like me for more than just my body.’

‘And I want to keep touching it - you.’

‘First things first, so let’s have breakfast -’

‘I’ll help you cook.’

‘Okay thanks, and what about a smoke? I haven’t had a joint for months, Matthew was strictly beer, no drugs, so I only indulged at friends places or parties, but it was nice last night with you, very soothing, relaxing, in keeping with the whole feeling of being with you.’

‘Yeah well, that’d be nice, but I left it at the flat.’

‘Oh well, perhaps after breakfa... no it’s lunch now... you can go and get it... and, come to think of it, while you’re about it, why don’t you move all your stuff in here.’

‘What, move in with you?’

‘Yes.’

‘Really, so soon?’

‘Why not. Look Mark, can you honestly see us sleeping in separate beds for the foreseeable future. It was too good last night. And I like being with you, a lot, so why not. You can live here and we can see how we go together, I mean, what are you wanting to do - take me out on a few dates before we get serious; take me to meet your parents to see if they approve of me. And around the back are my two parking spaces that I never use, so the Alpha can move in there.’

‘Well fuck me, why not. What a great idea!’

‘And on your days off you can drive me to work, and you can do the housework, the vacuuming and so on, and that would about take care of your rent. And if you want you can have one of the spare rooms, you can make it your boy room if you need one.’

‘I don’t know, I’ve never felt the need. But then again, I’ve never seriously thought about living with someone.’

‘So it’s time you did. And once you’ve brought your stuff around and settled in, you can use that table, I don’t use it, for your computer and printer, mines over there but I hardly use it; and once you’ve made yourself at home, then we can go and have some spaghetti down the road in Fitzroy street. I don’t usually go down to Ackland street and your way much.’

‘Great! That all sounds fantastic. Shit, incredible! And now I understand why I haven’t seen you around. Which is lucky really as I would have died from stress had I known you’d lived in the area.’

‘And it didn’t look like you’d have much to move, you can put the bed in the other room for the time being if it will go on the Alpha’s roof, or we can get it some other day -’

‘No worries there, it’s not my bed, it stays where it is. It won’t take me long at all to bung everything in the car. God how exciting, to move in here, with you. Oh Cathy you are too much, you ARE my dream come true. And then we can live happily ever after...’

‘And then we can see how it goes. You might want to move back to your hot-house above the aquarium after a week.’

‘God I hope not, and I doubt it. So you’re really sure about this, I mean you’ve hardly had time to think about it.’

'I know there hasn't been much time, but I have thought about it, and it's all to do with my feelings. I felt I wanted to ask you if you'd like to move in. It might be good, it might be great, it might be wonderful - the best thing that's happened to me; and it might be rat-shit, but it certainly wouldn't be any worse than what I've already gone through. So I don't need to give it any more thought than that. And somehow I don't get the feeling you'll be moving in and taking over the place.'

'No, I don't think so either. I wouldn't want to do that anyway.'

'Good, but I do want you to feel at home here. You treat the place like it's yours. And you can have my spare key and I'll get others cut, and if you want to put a fish tank by that wall that's fine by me too, it would be nice to have some little fish - more colour and life in the place.'

'Really?'

'Yes, I meant it Mark. I feel like making it a bit more homely. I've only been treating it like a motel room, I'm hardly here at all, mostly just to sleep, so it will be nice to know you're here more, and that we're both making our own little nest together.'

'Oh God, next I suppose you'll be wanting marriage and then children.'

'Some fish first if anything, I don't think we need to go too fast.'

'Thank God for that, I think I've got a million issues I'll have to work through before I consider or I'm ready for anything like that.'

'Okay then, we'll consider it our psych-pad, and we'll come together more as a sort of working relationship, a place to help each other do this feeling-healing you've been speaking about - how does that sound?'

'Good to me. Great! Fantastic! It would be so good if we do it together, there's so much to it, I don't know where to begin.'

'I don't think you have to worry about that either, I have the feeling we've already begun. So we'll just see where it goes. I like all you've said about feelings so far, I really do, and I'd like you to tell me all you know about it. But first, let's get settled in, it's a big step for me too, and if either of us feel bad about it at any time, then let's make sure we speak about those feelings - you agree?'

'I do! Jez, Joe will be surprised.'

‘So Mark, how do you feel now you’ve settled in to your new home? You’ve had a big day.’

‘And so have you.’

‘Yes, I have, and how do I feel? It’s a little strange having you and your stuff around, but other than that, so far so good. I feel good. I like it. And you hardly take up any space. Yes, I feel really good. I’m looking forward to it, to seeing what happens, even if we don’t work out together. But the best part is, that so far, we’re talking about it. It’s all out in the open and I like that. I find it exciting, I’ve never lived like this. During my past relationships nothing was really talked about in any great detail. Things sort of just happened. “So how about it, you want to move in with me?” “Yeah, I’ll move in.” “Okay, so when do you want to do it?” “How about on the weekend.” “All right, I’ll hire a truck and get my mates to give me a hand. Right, that’s settled then.” And that would be about it. I’d move in on the weekend, we’d go out for dinner, over the next week I’d move things around and settle in, we’d go to work each day and life carried on, one thing after another. We never said, okay, stop, now, how do you feel about this new arrangement? Are you feeling okay? Do you feel happy, unhappy? Nothing. And then there were the inevitable little petty arguments but mostly we tried to avoid any confrontation both parties trying as hard as they could to avoid ruffling the feathers of the other. And sometimes he’d go off in a huff or I’d sulk, but we always left each other alone - to get over it. And we would, eventually, and then it would be back to normal nothing said about it, as if it never happened. But over time the tension would rise, all that went unsaid would build up, and we’d both fight even harder to keep it all under control. God I can see it all clearly now. And then we’d reach bursting point, and one or both of us would explode. Then we’d try and make up to each other, have more sex, go out for more dinners, go away on holidays, anything but actually talk about what was going on and bothering us. And then the fateful day would come and he or I would walk out, going to stay at a friends place. And then that would go on for more or less time until it was: “So, when do you want to move out?” “I guess on the weekend.” “All right, I’ll hire a van and get my mates over.” And he would, and I’d go, and that would be that, onto the next useless episode in my life.’

‘I know what you mean.’

‘But just from living by myself for these past months, and then with what you’ve been saying about feelings and trying not to avoid the bad ones, and just how important and significant they are - God, I can’t believe I never saw it myself. Feelings are important, shit they *are* what a relationship is all about. What my past relationships were all about I now have no idea. They just seem like one big waste of time. And all those years with me believing that mostly it was my fault they didn’t work, putting myself down, giving the men the benefit of the doubt as if they knew better than I; and yet I was the one with the feelings that were screaming to be spoken about, they weren’t. Or at least it didn’t seem like it. So how are you feeling now Mark?’

‘Like I’ve just moved into heaven. Pretty good really, all things considered. I feel great, FUCKING FANTASTIC, my life suddenly taking a huge turn for the better. However, I still have that nagging little doubt and worry about it working out. I’m still a little apprehensive that you’ll get sick of me and turf me out. So I guess there is more there to speak about.’

‘So why don’t you?’

‘Well that’s the hard part, I don’t really know what else to say. I am inclined to just wait and see, hold my breath, hoping like hell that we do make a go of it.’

‘Yes, but that’s no good is it, as you’ll never be able to relax and be yourself.’

‘No, you’re right, I won’t. So I guess I have to keep trying to speak about it, trying to bring up

exactly what it is I am afraid of. James says in his writings that from his and Marion's experience that is all you can do, to keep trying to speak about your feelings, and to keep longing to see the truth of what's really going on. He says for him to do that was very difficult, that Marion was easily able to do it, so I guess I'm more like him and it's going to be hard. Ha! I just thought then, going by what he said, that at least I can accept that it will be hard. I think I've been secretly thinking - or hoping like hell - these past months that in some way it won't be hard for me, I haven't wanted to accept that it might. And taking it even further, now I can see that I haven't wanted to even admit or accept, to own up to that fact, that I might not even be able to do it. And shit, that scares me. And shit, shit, shit, you know Cathy it links up, this links up with my fear and worry about you not liking me, that I might fail or be a failure at both things. Yes, I can see it, that if I'm not able to speak about my feelings to the degree you can or want me to, then you won't like me and kick me out. Shit I am worried about that. I don't want you to throw me out now that I'm finally here with you. I don't, I don't, I don't.'

'It sounds pretty intense for you. It's a big worry, isn't it? And I do want you to speak about your feelings, but not to any degree - that's up to you. You have to want to speak about your feelings for yourself Mark, not doing it for me so you'll think I'll like you more. I'm not scared that you won't want me, at least not to the degree you are, and I don't think any of my boyfriends were scared I wouldn't want them. None of them ever showed that, not out in the open like you are... I wonder why it's such a terrifying thing for you.'

'Oh God, this is all that I'm worried about. That you won't want some snivelling worrying pathetic man. That I'm not strong and dominant like those other men you know. That I'm too mixed up in all this shit, too... too, too much like a mummy's boy I guess. Too emotional, too mixed up in it all. Too much like a girl. Not assertive enough. And that is what you'll end up hating -'

'I see, so you think that to show your feelings is unmanly?'

'Yes. Yes, that's right, I suppose I do. I don't really know what showing my feelings is, but yes, somehow I guess I thought I should be able to show them but not be a pathetic snivelling wreck, because that's about how I feel. You'll probably hate me for saying this, but I even feel like crying, crying! for God's sake. Can you believe it. You won't want a bloke that's crying all over the place, like some snotty-nosed kid. Someone you'll have to spend all your time trying to hold up and nurse and pamper. Oh God, I hate the thought of it. I don't want to be like that.'

'What do you want to be like?'

'I don't know... like someone who is strong, one of those strong men, a... a... footballer, someone like that, someone like the men I've seen you with, big and strong, fearless and not snotty-nosed, that's for sure.'

'Someone who's so shut-off from his feelings that he's like a fucking rock, impervious, and only interested in fucking football, horse racing and the bloody stock-market. Yes, sure Mark, that's just the sort of man I want to be with. No way! No way in hell do I want to go back there. NEVER! Never, never again. Give me some snotty snivelling little baby-man any day, that's what I want now. I might not want him at some point, but if that is how he has to be so he can speak about his feelings and allow himself to show them, then that is what I want. So I want you just how you are now, snotty nosed and all. I don't want to be your mother for Christ's sake, but I can be your friend, like your brother if anything. But I also want you to be more than that too. I don't want to feel like I'm fucking my brother. And I don't know what a feeling-expressive man is like. I can't say that I've ever met one. So it's new for both of us, and as far as I'm concerned, all you need do is keep speaking about it all and we'll just see what happens. And as I told you before, I like it, it's good to hear you say such things, it really is - it's different, and you're not being too emotional, you're no way near that, that's for sure. And if you feel you have to cry, then cry, that's all right by me, and I assure you if I feel I need to cry, I will.'

‘But girls are meant to cry.’

‘Girls are *allowed* to cry, and why shouldn’t men be allowed to cry also. It’s not unmanly to cry - to have real feelings and depth to such feelings.’

‘Really, you’re sure?’

‘Yes, I would never have known that you were feeling such things had you not spoken about them. I’m not a feeling-reader, that I hardly know what I’m feeling. And to think those blockhead guys I lived with must have had feelings inside somewhere too. But God knows how they will ever come around to bringing them out. At least you want to.’

‘Yes Mark, I do, I find it exciting, as you don’t know what might come out and where it’s going to lead.’

‘Well I’m glad you find it exciting, I think I’m petrified of it all. I’m scared shitless and precisely because I have no idea about where it will go and what will happen.’

‘And that’s all right. It’s only because you feel you won’t have any control over yourself like you’re used to having. I can see that. And I’m scared too, even though I say I’m excited, but I’m prepared to go with that, to see what happens and to speak about it all. Yes, I too am scared because not knowing where anything is going is scary, but that’s what life is all about, we can’t control it even though we think we can or would like to, at least that much I have learnt.’

‘Yeah I know. I agree, but it’s fraught, the whole bloody thing. I don’t know one moment to the next what I think or feel. I feel so all over the place, I have been these past months. Today, moving in here with you, has been the only decisive thing I’ve done. And you came up with the idea! The rest of the time I’ve just been in a haze, not knowing what’s going to happen. And that has scared me a lot too. I have no future, what am I going to do. There’s nothing I want to do. I have no money, no ambition, no career and that too worries me. And it worries me that all that too will make you not want to stay with me. All those other guys you were with, I bet they all knew where they were going and what they wanted to do. I bet they didn’t feel lost and useless most of the time.’

‘No they didn’t, they all knew it was time to go to the pub, to the track, to have the next root. They all knew that they wanted: three houses, one at the beach, one in the city, one in the country. They all knew they wanted the latest BMW. They all knew exactly their next career move, and look at them, that’s all they knew, and really, what good does it do for you. They were never happy, I could see that. They were never satisfied, they never stopped for a moment to even consider if they were. They couldn’t afford to stop, always having to push on, ever higher, bigger - MORE! And they never asked me what I was feeling. I could see the shallowness of their money and power-driven lives. More and more money all because they believed it gave them more and more power. But I don’t want to be with them, they can be how they want to be, they can have it all, but I want none of it. I want someone at the other end for a change, a real person, someone with feelings they want to share, and so look what I got. You popped up right out of the blue!’

‘I wouldn’t have popped up if it hadn’t been for that clairvoyant. Had it not been for her you wouldn’t have given me a second glance.’

‘That doesn’t matter. Clairvoyant or not, that’s how it was, and look what’s happened. So cheer up, I want to be with someone who’s poor and with no career ambitions.’

‘Someone you can feel sorry for.’

‘Is that what you really think?’

‘I don’t know. I don’t know what I really think. I don’t want to be a charity case. I just want to be left alone to do... to do... oh God, I don’t know what I want to do.’

‘I tell you what. I don’t want any charity case, that’s not my sort of thing nor is being a mother or even motherly. And I don’t get those feelings from you, that it’s what you want and how you want me to be with you. Sure like you said, you might be more dependant and needy, but what’s wrong

with that, that in fact makes me feel good, I feel wanted by you and not just like I'm some sort of cute baggage to be tossed around all over the place. I think we're all needy. I need you to want and love me and allow me to be myself. I want you to respect me, and a part of that I can now see, is for you to just let me speak all I want to say. That would be a great start, and as you do that, then we're starting off well, and that's about as far as I can go at the moment.'

'I do feel I need you to want me - a lot. God, I've never said that to anyone before. I've never wanted to admit it. I think I'm supposed to be totally self-sufficient, independent, able to satisfy all my needs myself. I've liked having girlfriends, but I haven't exposed my full neediness to them. But it's true, what they said, I am needy. But maybe if you need me to need you and you don't see it as a bad thing like you're saying, then it might be all right, it might not be too bad after all. Yeah, I hadn't seen it that way around before.'

'So okay, I can accept that. Yes I can. I can be needy, a bit needy anyway. Actually, I like the feeling of needing you to want me, it makes me want to get close to you and not just physically. I want that too, shit do I want it, to snuggle up with you and hold you and be held by you, but there's also more. It's the first time I've really felt that, felt these feelings. And I like the feeling of them.'

'I do too, and I like you holding me and wanting me to snuggle up. None of my other boyfriends did. Sure we'd sit on the couch together and cuddle and snuggle but within a matter of moments they'd be wanting to undo my buttons or whatever and get my tits out and then it would be on. And there were a lot of times I didn't want to have sex. But I would. I felt that if I didn't they'd stop liking me and wanting to be with me and then it would end. I had all those stupid worries, and yet really I didn't want to be there with them at all, that I can see now. And what I would much rather have done is talked, like this, just how we are. Snuggling, holding each other, and talking, talking about all this sort of stuff, or talking about whatever. I've never done just this with a man. With my girlfriends yes, except the snuggling and holding part, but not with a man. I didn't even know you could. And now if you wanted to get my tits out and kiss and caress and squeeze and suck my nipples I wouldn't object to that, and in fact I might actually like it, all so long as we keep talking. God, I feel like I've been denied talking, almost as if I've never talked before.'

'Well I would like to get your tits out, in fact I think you should just have them out all the time, however, what say we leave that until after dinner, how about we do as you said earlier and go down the street. Shit, I can't believe I'm the one saying that. Usually I was the one wanting to undress my girlfriends always wanting to have sex with them, but here I am, you've made the offer, and I'm saying let's wait - shit something must be seriously wrong with me.'

'I hope so as I'd much prefer it this way. You know, I've never led in sex. It was always me having to say yes or no, or having to put the brakes on. But I've never wantonly suggested it. It gives me a bit of a thrill, it makes me feel horny. And I haven't felt like this in a long time. But yes, let's go, my tits can wait. And I like that too, something to look forward to, it all doesn't have to be done now, does it. Things can happen in their own time.'

'I hope so, as I hope we'll have plenty of time to do all those sorts of things. We'll probably end up bloody talking about doing them and never actually doing them - yeah, that'd be just my luck.'

'Oh I don't think you have to worry about that. However, if you feel you'd like to speak about it all, then by all means do so.'

'Shit no, I'm sick of speaking about my feelings, I've done enough of that to last a life time. Let's go. I'll roll one for the road, and what say we go to Toppo's.'

'You know that side of St.Kilda too do you?'

'A little. I love their seafood spaghetti marinara - it's the only place I go to in Fitzroy street. Unless of course you had somewhere else in mind.'

'No, that's fine, and what say we buy a couple of bottles of wine on the way, it's BYO isn't it.'

'It is, but the money, I'll have to go to a handy-bank.'

‘No you won’t as it’s on me, I’ve got plenty.’

‘Oh shit, another thing to talk about. God, I’m the man, I’m supposed to pay.’

‘Not anymore you’re not. Equality now my young man. You just relax, you’re poor remember. I’m the working girl, you’re staying rent free in my flat, so don’t you fret your little dark curls. And it’s just how I want it to be. As I’ll tell you over dinner, a little expenditure like this won’t break the bank. And besides, it’s nice, and again it’s even a change for me. All my other boyfriends paid for us, credit cards, it wasn’t even an issue. But I like it to be like this with us, more real, down to earth, nothing being so easy. And yes, more to talk about: who’s going to do what. I’ve never just talked about these sorts of life things, all the simple things. So let’s go.’

‘Tell me more about feelings and all you’ve read. It’s very interesting. Bits and pieces of what you’ve said keep going around in my mind -’

‘Yeah, like what?’

‘For instance, the simple fact that we deny so many of our bad feelings. And I can see we do - I do. So much of what I’ve done in my life, if I boil it all down, I’ve done because I haven’t wanted to feel bad. Just being with those types of men was one thing - a huge thing. It was so easy being with them in so many ways, like the money, they just took care of it all.’

‘I’ve thought a lot about it too. As I said, James reckons we live in what he calls a negative world, meaning one in which everyone exists in self-denial, in feeling-denial. And that no one is positive, no one has a truly positive mind and will. No one is truly expressing all they feel all the time. That we’ve all been turned against ourselves, made to dishonour ourselves, being unloving with ourselves and so with each other. And this all being done to us first by our parents. That our parents being unloving don’t love us as we need to be loved, even though mostly we believe they do and have - and that part I’m still struggling with; but that because our parents didn’t love us how we needed to be loved, then we didn’t feel loved and so formed our mental, feeling and behavioural patterns around this unloving state. And so as we’ve grown up, and as adults, we then live still according to these patterns. so we live in ways, all by our own doing, that are self-denying. We do all sorts of things to ourselves, like all our addictions, like you saying you had to be with those guys, all because you can’t do anything else, it was what happened to you, how you were treated during your early life and so how you keep treating yourself.’

‘So you’re saying that what our parents did to us we are still doing to ourselves, sort of like having taken over from them?’

‘Yes, exactly. And I can sort of see it in my life. Only vaguely mind you, but it does make sense. And that’s the trouble with so much of what he says, I can only just get a vague idea about it, but I feel or sense he’s right.’

‘Yes, well I can see a little of that in my life.’

‘He says that our soul in fact, or God if you want to include Him - who by the way James says is a Her as well, but that’s more on the spiritual side of things - sets up our life experiences according to our patterns, those formed during our formative years, from conception through to around six years old. And so we keep unconsciously repeating these patterns, we somehow, and I definitely don’t understand this part, outwork our patterns through our life, over and over, all with the aim, if we want to see it, to see them, to understand all that’s going on, and so I guess, all that went on when we were young, which of course we’ve mostly forgotten about.’

‘Hang on a moment. So what you’re saying is that once our patterns are set, those we’ve formed when we were young, and those that are mostly feeling-denying and so self-denying, then they keep happening to us, all through our adult life?’

‘Yes, and because of that, this being something I’ve just realised speaking with you now about it, we can use what’s happening in our adult life to understand what happened to us during our early life. We can sort of analyse our adult life shedding light on our early life, all being done through our feelings. Yes, James says that, but I hadn’t really understood what he meant there.’

‘And so how do you do that, how do you analyse it? Do you have to do some kind of therapy, go into analysis, see a shrink?’

‘No. I mean, you can do that if you want, but what James says - and this is what he and Marion are doing - is you can do it all through your feelings, by doing your feeling-healing.’

‘Yes, the feeling-healing, can you go over that again?’

‘Simply, it’s the speaking about all your feelings, good and bad, to a friend, fully trying to express them, all whilst you long for the truth of them. And that if your longing to know and uncover the truth of them is sincere, genuine and real, then the truth will come and you’ll be able to make the connections. Somehow by focusing on our adult feelings now, we’ll be able to go back into our child feelings in the past, the feelings being the link, because the feelings are the same. In some way, and I don’t know how as yet, as I haven’t experienced it, he says you sort of - this is what I understand from his writing - sink back into yourself, into your early life, sort of re-living it in some way. So you sort of remember all through your feelings what happened to you, and you can see who was doing what to you and why, and how what they did to you made you feel. It all comes to you, this being the truth, or as I understand it, the understanding about it all. And it’s in seeing the truth - uncovering it, that in some way you can heal or change these negative unloving and self-denying patterns, thereby fixing - healing - your negative state of mind and will, becoming positive.’

‘There’s a lot to it.’

‘There sure is, and it’s like nothing I’ve ever heard about. I don’t know much about psychology mind you, but most of this is new to me.’

‘I’ve heard about our early childhood being important, and that people with deep traumas, like sexual abuse, suffer because of what happened to them during it, but I like what you say about feelings. I can understand what you’re saying, but as to making the connections by using them to link up with your early life, that’s new to me. Gee, I wonder if you really can?’

‘James says that not only can you, but at some point in our existence we all have to. And that really we don’t even have a say in it. When our time comes, when our soul says it’s time, then we’re pressured into it. And it can happen any time now during our life on earth, or after we die, in spirit. He’s big on life after death.’

‘Reincarnation?’

‘No, he says that’s all bullshit, but life in the spirit worlds after you die.’

‘I’ve never known what to believe about that. I’ve met lots of people who believe it and all that Eastern and New Age stuff, a few of my girlfriends have been into parts of it at times, but it’s never really interested me much.’

‘No, me either. Anyway James says, but you shouldn’t quote me on this as I’m only new to the spiritual side of what he says - what he calls *Divine Love Spirituality*, that most of all that is rubbish and will only help you further deny your bad feelings taking you further away from yourself deeper into your negative state. But as I say, I haven’t gone into all of that yet.’

‘Do you intend to?’

‘I don’t know. It’s a lot to grasp concerning feeling-healing without all the extra God and religious stuff. I don’t know. I might, one day, perhaps, but for now I feel like just sticking with the feelings. Are you religious or spiritually inclined, you don’t seem to be?’

‘No, not much. But as I said, I try to keep an open mind. Look what’s happened this weekend, so who knows. But I guess if what James says along those lines is in keeping with all you’ve told me about feelings and our denial of them, then like all of this, it would probably all be new to me also, yet make sense.’

‘Yes, I guess so. I hadn’t thought about that way. It would make sense. He says that *Divine Love Spirituality* is entirely new, taking some of the old and combining it, or moving it on, with a lot of new revelation. And that it’s all feeling-based and not of the mind like he says everything else is.

‘You choose the wine Cathy. I like drinking it, but I’ve had little experience about what are good ones, and I’m sure you’ve had more experience with them than I have.’

“Are you ready to order now?”

‘Yes. I’ll have the fetacinni with chicken and mushrooms please.’

‘And I’ll have the seafood spaghetti marinara. Thank you.’

‘You know Mark, another thing we haven’t properly done yet and which I’d like to do, is speak about all the usual stuff, you know, like our families and what they are doing, school years and so on. I’d like to know about your background - where you come from. And I’d also like to know how life has been for you. So what do you say? You go first, then I’ll tell you about myself.’

‘All right, but isn’t it good manners for the man to allow the woman to go first. That’s what I was taught.’

‘Okay then, if you insist. I’d be delighted to.’

‘My mother and father’s names are Doris and Richard - Armstrong, which you already know. They’re somewhere around their late fifties, early sixties and still going strong. Dad’s a doctor, and mum was a nurse but now does a lot of charity work. They still live in Kew. Not in the old family house in which I grew up in, but in a smaller unit. I have two older sisters and a younger brother. Mary is the eldest, she’s married to Denis with three children and live in Brisbane. I won’t go into what they all do... too much to take in all at once?’

‘Sarah and John have one little baby boy and live in Perth, and Robert and Sherrie live in Sydney - no children, yet. So as they all live so far away I don’t see any of them, however I did see Rob and Sherry, as we call her, quite a bit when I was in Sydney. I lived with them for a while after Matthew and I broke up.’

‘The three of us girls went to MLC; Rob went to Scotch. I passed VCE, didn’t mind school, but as I told you, I got a job in fashion, and I’m still in fashion. I worked at David Johns in the city for a couple of years, and because of that they took me back managing their women’s shoe department at Southland when I came back to Melbourne to live after separating from Matthew. Which is okay. It’s only a small section of the store, easy work, and for the time being, I’m happy with it. It pays reasonably well, and as I don’t need to pay anything on the flat, all the money I make goes into the bank - on term deposit.’

‘Saving to buy a car?’

‘No. I can drive, but I’ve never needed a car. And I don’t mind catching the bus to work. And now that I’ll mostly be chauffeur driven...

‘No, I don’t know what I’ll do with my money. I think I’ll probably by another apartment, more property to invest in - rent it out. But I’m in no rush.’

‘So you don’t have any great ambitions? Don’t want to start your own clothes shop or something like that?’

‘Oh God no, I couldn’t bear it. I like being free. There will always be work for me, so I have nothing to worry about in that area. No, I don’t have any ambitions along those lines. I don’t really have any at all. And as I said, I don’t feel in any rush to have babies, really I feel like I’ve just come out of a fog, my past being just a blur, and so I’m quite happy to let a few years tick by while I see how I feel. I didn’t want to go back into the same pattern, meeting and being with another one of those men. I wanted something new. And so far, all you’ve presented to me Mark, is new. So that will do just fine for the moment.’

‘And I have two grandparents left both on mums side, but I don’t see them much only at Christmas when we go over to mum and dads.’

‘So, that’s about it, all very simple really.’

‘What about any serious illnesses, life and death stuff.... childhood traumas... car crashes, great holidays?’

‘No illnesses, no childhood traumas that I’m aware of - the abortion I had with Tim was horrendous, no car crashes, yes, some great holidays: America - Hawaii, Fiji, Bali, London of course and some of Europe, I liked Paris, that’s about all. Mum and dad had a holiday house at Rosebud we used to go to when we were younger, and when older, one at Lourné, we had good fun during those school holidays, but that’s about all.’

‘And you didn’t want to go to Uni?’

‘No, it never appealed to me. I liked English at school and sport, but that was about all. I liked boys and they always seemed to be doing things, so I just went along with them.’

‘So what about love, how has that been for you?’

‘It’s been good, or so I’ve thought. I was madly in love with all my boyfriends when we first started going out, but then it petered out. And lately, as I told you, I’ve begun to question it all. And all I’ve been seeing is that really it has all been just one big fantasy trip of mine. So what about love, has it been good for me?... now I’m asking myself, was it really love, or just something I made up in my head - something I believed I felt. I don’t know. I thought I was in love with these guys, it was wonderful in the beginning, but then... then what... where did all that love go. And if it was true love, surely it would have remained true love, I don’t think love just comes and goes. I think, or at least it’s what I believe, or possibly want to believe, that if there is love and it is real and true, then it would always be there, you’d always be able to feel it no matter what. But now I feel nothing for those guys, in fact if anything, I feel the very opposite, I hate them. I don’t even want them as boy friends. Matthew comes to Melbourne a lot and for the first few times I let him stay with me, and he’d want to fuck and we would, but it wasn’t the same. I thought that maybe we’d have both changed and being in a different situation we might be able to feel for each other what we initially did, but I didn’t feel anything except loathing. The sex was okay but I hated being with him. So I ended it for good. I no longer want to have anything to do with him. And the further I go, if I think about him, the more such thoughts make me sick. So what was it all about? I mean really, how can you love or think you love someone so much, and then hate the same person so much. I’m just so glad we didn’t get married and have kids, that would have been too much, as I’m sure I’d be here now as I am but also as a single mother. And I’m not ready for that, that much I know about myself.’

‘Do you think you might have children one day?’

‘I don’t know. It’s the open mind thing again, but for now, I don’t think about it. There’s too many other things I’d rather think about.’

‘What you said about love, that reminds me about something I read that James wrote about love. He says, following on from what I told you earlier, that as we’re all of a negative mind and will state, then all we think is love isn’t love, it’s all untrue, and it’s only something we create with our minds - something like that.’

‘Yes, well I think I’m going that way too, believing something along those lines, as I can see it in my own life. Mind you, it’s still hard to believe. You know the other morning I woke up and suddenly it dawned on me that all my relationships have been false - bullshit - fantasy. So where is the love in that. If they were all false then the love was also false, so as you say, as he says, perhaps I did make it all up in my mind. I don’t know how or why, but I can live with that. And as much as it hurts to think about it that way, I can’t deny the truth, and that is that I no longer feel anything for these guys. I’ve changed. Matthew is still the same as he was, did my being with him have any impact on him - has he changed? And I saw Tim a few months back for dinner and he’s the same as when we were together, but I’m not - Tim even said so. And whatever it is I’ve changed into or I’m changing into, I like it. I like it a lot. So I feel like I’m making something of a fresh start. I sort of

feel like I'm a computer and I've just trashed all my last boyfriend relationships and I'm hitting the delete button. And then they will go and the little trash basket will be empty - I'll be empty, cleaned out, ready to start all over again. But not to go in the same direction, to go in a new one. And all this stuff about feelings is very appealing. So I think whilst you're in my life I'll go along with it and see where it leads me.'

'What about your boyfriends, you haven't told me much about them?'

'I don't want to. I don't want to think about them. I have no reason to. But I can tell you, if you want to know.'

'Yes, I'd like to know. It will help me put things in perspective.'

'OK. I lost my virginity to a guy called Geoff. He lived next door to our family home in Kew. He was the only child and his parents were very rich. They had a huge house, swimming pool and tennis court, so we'd all - us kids - go over there. It was a standing invitation for us all to come and swim and play tennis whenever we liked, his parents were hardly ever home.

'Geoff, so he told me, and he liked to tell me often, fucked all three of us girls. He convinced me to let him fuck me when I was sixteen. And we fucked on the couch in the family room one Saturday afternoon. He was eight years older than I, confident, used a condom, and we fucked on and off for remainder of my time at school. During those years I fucked a few other guys, but they weren't as good as Geoff - he knew what he was doing. I think my sisters knew we were fucking but we never talked about it and still haven't.

'Once I left school I fell in love with John a boy from Scotch College, a mad keen sportsman, good at football and wanted to play in the league. I went out with him for three years but fucked other boys behind his back. I was a bit of a root-rat. It was good fun. I loved the sense of power I had over them. The boys would do anything for me for a root, so I used them to my advantage all I could. They'd take me out, buy me things, and it was all so easy. I didn't have to do anything with them other than spread my legs and let them jump all over me. It was good fun actually and I loved every minute of it with them. It was all I was interested in at the time. I worked and fucked, it was the sum total of my life back then.

'Then John and I broke up, and after him I got serious with Tim. I didn't root around with him. It was serious love with him. I only wanted to be with him. Then we broke up.'

'Why did you end it?'

'He did, met another girl he liked better than me, and that was a bit of shock - a big blow to my ego.

'Because of that shock I had to get away, right away, so I went to London as I told you, and there met Matthew.'

'ANZ man.'

'Yes. And the rest you know. He bought me in a round-about-way the flat; he bought me my Mac air and iPhone; he bought me the washing machine, the jug, toaster, bed, and just about all the other things and furniture in the flat, and gave me plenty of money to decorate it. He was, to his credit, very generous with his money. But he has heaps of it.'

'Pity you didn't get a car out of him as well.'

'He wanted me to have one, but I don't really like driving.'

'I could drive it, get rid of my old bomb.'

'No. We'll just have to put up with your Alpha, it still works, what more do you need.'

'A brand new BMW would do nicely.'

'Yeah, well you'll have to start work.'

'Humph.'

'Exactly, that's what I think too. Matthew would probably still give me a car if I asked him for one, but I don't want to have anything further to do with him, and if I did, he'd only get the wrong

idea. And besides, I'm not that sort of girl. Not anymore at least.

'Now, that's enough of me, what about you?'

'Me, well, okay, mother and father's names are Elizabeth and Harold - Lizzy and Harry. I'm the eldest, with two younger brothers - Edward a solicitor, Harry junior, starting out as a dentist, so if you need your teeth done... They both live here in Melbourne. We all grew up in Mt. Waverly, dad's business, commercial painting, mostly did really well enabling him to put us into Carey Grammar for our final years. Before that we went to the local High school.

I hated school, wasn't much good at sport, although I was in the first rowing and football teams, and somehow we managed to win the Head of the River, which was unheard of for Carey Grammar. Dad had high hopes for me going to Latrobe uni. I went, studied politics for a year, but dropped out. And looking back God knows why I thought I wanted to be in politics. I worked in dad's business painting during a lot of my school holidays, and then did it again after I'd finished with university.

'Really I didn't have any idea what I wanted to do. I just painted, commercial and residential, linking up with another guy from school and setting up our own little business. The Alpha is a hand-me-down from dad. He fancied himself as the smart sporting car type at one stage. Now he and mum have retired and live at Ballarat. They said they wanted a quite place, which they've got, it's just out of town, a few acres mostly bush land. They seem happy enough up there.

'Edward is married two kids, Harry has a steady girlfriend, and I don't see much of either of them. We all sort of went our separate ways after school. Occasionally I go see mum and dad, but there's not much to do up there, so once the usual hello-what-have-you-been-doing-with-yourself are over, as I usually don't have much to report, I can't wait to leave. Usually I just drive up for the day, and I haven't seen them for about three months now.

'Oh, and I don't have any grandparents - all dead, which I guess is rather needless to say.

'So I worked painting places since I left school and I think dad was disappointed with me in that. He wanted all his three sons to be professionals, having a trade being something lesser. But it suited me fine, I made good money that I blew on trips overseas: Africa, South America, Europe, South East Asia, with Paul - my mate. We bummed it around. Financially I have nothing to show for those years, however I no longer want to go travelling. I saw and did all I needed to do, which wasn't that much, but it seems to have satisfied some need in me.

'That all happened up to about three and a half years ago. I got sick of it and got a job working at the aquarium, as you know. I kept tropical fish when I was a kid, I had a four foot tank and lots of big fish, South and Central Americans like Oscars, who were cool fish-pets. The first owner of the aquarium, as I told you, was an arsehole, just a thief, always ripping off the customers - and staff - every way he could, selling them all sorts of stuff they didn't need; but the new owner is on the customers side, as much as a business owner can be. He says he has big plans, he wants to open up a string of aquariums across Melbourne, with me as one of the managers, but I don't know about that. I don't know that I fancy being stuck in a shop all day long anymore, and being answerable for everything. He also has another alternative idea which is to build a huge freshwater public, retail and second-hand aquarium with a cafe and restaurant, so people can come and have a huge fish experience, somewhere in the outer Eastern suburbs, which is much more to my liking. I hope he goes that way. He seems to have plenty of money behind him and I could drive out there and be involved in all the different aspects of it. I think it's a really good idea in fact and have been giving it some serious thought these past months helping him out with ideas. He's finding out about costs, land, tax, building and so on. The freshwater tropical fish of the world are gorgeous and there are so many, they are so beautiful, and if people want to keep them - something that I'm still wrestling with: do I actually want to have anything to do with a place that sells fish to live in tiny tanks; to have a big public display aquarium giving something of an idea of their beauty, would look

fantastic. We don't have many species of freshwater hot and cold fish we can legally have in Australia, but we have more than enough, and there are a lot of great Australian natives which are gaining in popularity. So we could set up some great displays, like how it would be for them in their natural habitat. And it doesn't take much to look after them. If you get the basics right, the water chemistry and keep the maintenance up, which isn't much and can all be just about automated anyway, they can live for years. Anyway, I am very enthusiastic about that idea, but it's a big one, and well, we'll just have to see if Joe likes fish that much.

'As far as my relationships have been, nothing's lasted for more than a year, and I've had quite a few short term ones, and a few very short term - one nighters. Their names were, Gina, Shirley, Helen, Diane, Mary, Phillipa, Jean, Brenda, they were the main ones. But as I told you, I was apparently too dependant, too needy, and I must have picked girls that I needed to be with who would ultimately reject me. Phillipa and Diane, I ended it with, and thinking back now I don't really know why, it just felt like a good thing to do at the time - they weren't too happy about it. They liked my neediness and were talking marriage and kids, the others for various reasons, dumped me.

'So that's about it for me.'

'What about love for you?'

'Oh yeah, love... what's that? Sure, I thought I was in love with them all when we first met and went out. And for a couple of months it was great, but then it started to taper off and then... well, it was like you really. You've summed it up perfectly for me. I hadn't thought of it in that way, but it was the same for me, I can now see that quite clearly - all fantasy. Yes, a big hot rush of male hormone, blasting off into fantasy land. Oh I was going to be someone, going places, building a huge painting business like my old man - he ended up selling his by the way, and we - me with my latest girlfriend, were going to buy a tropical island and live happily ever after. Real fairy-tale stuff. All crap, nothing but stupid childish dreams, all of which amounted to nothing. And finally with the end of Brenda, which coincided with the Joe buying the aquarium and my change of attitude about life, I gave it all up - at least I hope I have.

'So that's it about love for me. Other than one other thing...'

'Oh yes, and what is that?'

'Well... that's the greatest fantasy of them all, but incredibly it seems to be coming true.

'You see, there was and has always been this one other girl. And it all started with her after I'd left school. I was invited to a school friends twenty-first and that's when I first saw her. She had a very pretty blue dress on and there was something about her that captivated me. I couldn't rightly say what it was, and I still can't, it was and is something about the way she moved, her cute pretty looks, her eyes, her smile, how she was with other people - boys: how she was with her solid looking blonde-haired boyfriend. Anyway, she did something to me on that first night and because of that, truthfully, I'd have to say that really my heart never was totally in it with the other girls. When I was with those girls in the beginning of our relationship the intensity of 'new love' blocked her out for a while, but when I saw her again, a glimpse here and there over the years as I did a few times, that same initial spark of something was re-lit and up would come all those dreams and good feelings again.

'I don't suppose you remember a certain night at the Hardware club, very late, the dance floor empty, a tallish man sitting on the bench, his mind in a druggy fog; another guy, his friend, lying on the floor beside him, very much the worse for ware. And this lovely beautiful girl suddenly sits down beside him resting her head on his shoulder, and they stay that way for about ten minutes not saying anything, the music too loud. Then she was up and dancing with her girlfriend again, and the man had to go and get his friend home to bed. And then I don't suppose you were aware that that same man having deposited his friend, tore back to the club in the desperate hope that she would be there and that perhaps by some fluke and stroke of good luck, they'd just go off home

together and... and well... and, live happily ever after.'

'And that was me, that's what you're saying. That I put my head against your shoulder?'

'Yes. And it was wonderful, you have no idea. You fucked up the rest of my relationships with women, all until... now.'

'No, no, I don't remember. I regularly went to the club over a period of time. I was always pissed and pretty stoned. I went with girlfriends, boyfriends, that was all during Tim's time.'

'Yes, that'd be right.'

'No, I don't. I'm sorry.'

'Why are you sorry. How were you to know. And it was wonderful. I didn't think at the time you knew me, I mean, how could you we hadn't met. And I wasn't the sort of guy you'd be interested in, I knew that. But it was so wonderful to smell your hair - and it still smells the same - and to feel it brushing against my face. It was so nice to just have you there sitting with me, using me to prop you up. You were my fantasy, the biggest of them all, but you were always way over there, elusive, unobtainable, just out of my reach. Occasionally if I saw you at a party or a pub I thought about being introduced to you or just going up to you myself, but no, it never seemed right, and you were always with some other guy. So I just left you there on the periphery of my mind, someone to dream about when things weren't so good, which they often weren't and which I often did. You were my dream-girl, and in a way you were a great comfort to me. Funny isn't it, it's as if in some way I've been having a relationship with you all along - that's what it feels like anyway.'

'And now, here you are! It's only been one evening, a night and day, and yet here you are, my dream girl, my fantasy manifested in flesh. You and me, together at last, shit I couldn't have thought it up for a novel any better. You've been a huge thing in my life Cathy, you have no idea. I've completely blown you out of all proportion, only not in a way that now that I've actually met you, you can't live up to expectations. It was as if that dream Cathy was someone else, a stand-in sort of person, because you the real person are much more than she was, much more alive, more real, your own thoughts and feelings, and I like you much better this way.'

'Well that's a relief at least.'

'Yes, I guess it would be. Hard act to follow having to be put up against your dream-self. But no, you don't have to worry about that, that's all fading away with the more time we spend together. And as I said, I much prefer it how it's going - how you are in real flesh and blood. But don't you think it's amazing, don't you think that possibly it's how it's meant to be? And what with you seeing Rosa and her telling you about me, and... and us... and... and I find it all just so incredible; so... so Cathy, will you marry me and let's get it over and done with?'

'Yes, okay, why not. I've got nothing better to do with my life.'

'Are you serious?'

'Yes, but first I suggest we have the other bottle of wine, and wait a few years before we act on it, how about that?'

'Another bottle of wine and I think I'll be wanting to act on it tonight. Anyway that's my story - hey, it's sort of a love story, don't you think?'

'One half of it is - yours. I've got to catch up. You're way ahead of me. You've had your eye on me all those years, and yes I have to admit, you were kind of familiar to me. I did know that I'd seen you around, somewhere, when I caught sight of you at the pub yesterday, but I didn't know who you were - I asked one of my girlfriends, she knew your name. And my coming up to you was all thanks to Rosa.'

'Hey, what's say we don't open the bottle now, we take it back with us and drink it at your flat, and we get two gelatines to take with us and have on the way?'

'Good idea, it's getting a bit stuffy in here - too many people. And you know, that's another thing that's been happening to me. I've started to want to be more on my own lately, not going out so

much. I've been declining invitations and I think my friends are getting a bit sick of me. But I don't care, I feel like they're all fading away too, all part of my old life. I've been really enjoying coming home, watching a movie or even reading a book; surfing the net - just doing nothing.'

'And now you've got me to keep you company twenty-four hours a day.'

'Yes, life's a funny thing isn't it? And yet it feels good this way. I don't feel like you're intruding on my space, actually I feel the other way, you're giving me good feelings coming into my life, into my home. Let's go.'

‘For our walk back, tell me more about feelings Mark.’

‘What would you like to know?’

‘What about our denying bad ones, anything more about that side of it?’

‘Sure. The part that intrigues me the most is the part that it’s all been done to us when we were young, apparently from conception to around six or seven years old. And that at any time during those early years, if anyone didn’t allow us to express all we felt, then those feelings have remained suppressed and then repressed inside us. It goes something like this, this is what I think anyway.

‘Imagine you’re a little child, and say you’re playing with something and suddenly your parent takes it away from you. You don’t want it to be taken from you, you feel affronted, hurt, that suddenly your thing has been taken from you without asking you - without considering you, your feelings. I know you probably can’t ask a little baby or very young child if you can take it from it, but you can get the feeling: how does it feel? How does it feel to suddenly have something that is yours, something you want, to suddenly be taken away from you - it makes you feel bad. You feel all sorts of bad feelings, you’re not aware of what they are being so young, but these bad feelings make you react, they suddenly well up inside you and you naturally want to express them. You might have felt suddenly shocked, the thing is suddenly taken away from you, and you can see it on little children’s faces. I’ve watched them in the supermarket and opp shops, suddenly their mother takes the thing away from them and they don’t understand. They start crying, reaching out for it, they want it back. And mostly they are told “NO YOU CAN’T HAVE IT!”, in what amounts to a rather unloving way. And then they cry even louder, and are often told not to, and to behave, and they cry even louder feeling unloved, and then the real pressure comes to shut them up, to stop them crying. And usually it’s the anger and determination of the parent that shuts them up. But in shutting them up, what happens to all those unexpressed bad feelings the child has been feeling? The child is forced to shut them off somehow, to bury them, to stop being how it wants to be. It’s forced to stop expressing itself, and fuck, it must feel really pissed-off about that. But what can it do with its anger. If it keeps protesting it might get smacked or yelled at, something which only makes it feel worse. And the physical pain, something it wants even less, soon makes it learn it has to shut up, it has to stop crying, so it does. It learns to shut up, but still, what happens to all that pain, all that anger, all those bad feelings? Where do they all go? Do they just go away? No, I don’t think so, and this is what James says, they all get buried as ‘light’ in our soul. In some way, which I don’t understand, all our unexpressed bad feelings get stored away inside us, waiting, waiting until the day when they can come out. And over time, some of them become manifested in our physical body causing all sorts of problems, illnesses and all the bad things that happen to us; and it’s all because our parents stopped us from expressing our bad feelings. And what’s even worse, it’s our own bloody parents that make us feel bad in the first place, then they abuse us for daring to express all the anger we feel - all the anger they are causing us to feel! It’s fucked, mega fucked, and it’s put me off parents; and for the time being, being one, because what’s to say that I wouldn’t be like that with my children, because I know my own parents treated me that way.

‘So the little child who is completely dependant and reliant on its parents to love it, which means, allowing it to freely express itself, are the very ones telling it to shut up, stopping it from feeling bad. So right from the beginning we’re controlled, not being allowed to express all our bad feelings. And so of course we then learn that this is how life is for us, it’s how it’s meant to be. And being so small we don’t know otherwise, so it becomes a part of our established pattern, so forevermore we suppress and then keep repressed certain feelings, particularly lots of bad ones.

And then as we grow older, new patterns are added over the top of the older ones, until in the end as an adult we have no idea that we're doing it to ourselves - denying many of our bad feelings. And we may think we're highly expressive speaking about all we feel as an adult - I don't, but some people might - however what they'd fail to realise is that there's a huge amount of their bad feelings - of themselves - that is still hidden and buried away inside them. They won't be aware of such hidden patterns. And so a part of our feeling-healing is to bring to light all those patterns and to express, or liberate I suppose you could say, all that pain, hurt and anger, all those bad feelings.

'And when you think that during a young child's life, during your own young life, during the course of one day, you might have experienced many such times that your parents pissed you off and did things to make you feel bad, all of which they then made you bury the feelings of. So from what I understand, we are probably full of such repressed bad feelings, tonnes and tones of them, all of which we have no idea about. James and Marion have been doing their healing for years, he said he's been doing it for about fourteen years with endless bad feelings coming up in him every day, and all stuff that's been hidden away in him that he's had no idea about.

'And you can't have any idea about them. We can't remember what happened to us in each moment during our early life, so we have to use feeling-bad-as-an-adult as the way in and back into feeling-bad-as-a-child, which so he reckons, we can do, and it's the most amazing thing if you can.

'To think that you might be able to feel bad now about something, say I'm pissed off with that person over there walking their dog because they never stop to allow the dog to have a proper sniff at a tree. Then - this is the theory so far as I understand it - I can use that anger I am feeling at that person to understand the truth about anger I felt when I was a child. And I do this by speaking all about it to you, by fully accepting and expressing it, and admitting that I am angry to begin with. And all while I'm telling you all I feel, I'm longing to know why I'm feeling that way, how it all connects with and links back with my early life, with what happened to me back then, with what my parents or some adult carer person did to me. And I don't know how it works as I haven't as yet experienced it, but somehow, again from what I can gather, if you want to use your feelings now to help you connect with your feelings back then, then the speaking about them all whilst longing for the truth, is somehow like getting on an elevator and descending back down into your past. So the bad feelings I'm feeling now will be the same bad feelings I'm feeling back then, time sort of being irrelevant - like no past or present, all what's happening to me now, and I can see who's causing me to feel that way. Apparently the truth comes to you, to show you somehow. And so you see who did what to you, the affect it had on you, and then how you've been made to take it on yourself - how you're then doing it to yourself as an adult. And how you were made to repress it all and all the rest.'

'So what you're saying is that life now as we live it, is something like a mirror for us showing us our past young life, if we care to see it, or look at it that way?'

'Yes, I guess something like that. I haven't thought that part through properly yet, but yes I suppose so. Anyway, it's because we are still living out all our early childhood patterns now as adults, so they are still manifesting. So being angry at that person, how they are treating their dog, I think I could use such angry feelings to take me back to see who I'm angry with and why when I was little, the anger I feel now being the same as the anger I felt then - the feelings are the same, just different circumstances manifesting them. And so yes, I agree, you could say life is a mirror, and will keep showing us or making us feel bad if we want it to, and I suppose even if we don't want it to, all in accordance with our early patterns, all so we can find the truth of what's really going on within us. It's certainly a mind jammer. I find it hard to hold it all in one concept and run it through, but I think that's roughly most of the pieces.'

'And all of this you've got from this guy James?'

'Yes.'

'Is he or Marion trained, are the professionals, psychotherapists or something?'

'No, I think I told you, he's nothing like that, it's come as a result - according to him - from his own feeling-healing.'

'Shit, it must be pretty powerful then.'

'Yes, I think it is, and as he said, no one has any idea. There is one Swiss psychotherapist Alice Miller who writes about childhood repression and says and gives lots of good illustrations how all that's wrong with us comes from our early childhood, but from the couple of books I've read by her, James seems to have taken it much further. His approach seems to be one of total healing, hence your feeling-healing. Whereas Alice Miller is more about, from what I can gather, just healing specific traumas, fixing yourself up so you can get on and function more happily in the world. But as James points out, this is only fixing certain parts of yourself so you can get on and keep living, albeit more 'happily' and more 'fulfilled', in your negative life, still denying other deeper aspects of yourself and feelings. He is setting out to heal all of his negative state, to do the whole lot. Which if we can manage do, somehow, or in some way, we'll end up living a completely different life, one the very opposite to how we've been trained to live. So what he's advocating is a huge process of total inner change, a massive amount of self-growth, a huge life commitment to this thing: the search for truth. And it will change every part of us. Every part of us has formed in the negative so is self-denying and that's a huge concept to swallow. But if it's true, then we do or will have to heal every part of us, and that means we've got a shit-load of healing to do.'

'So we'd better get on with it, hadn't we?'

'Are you really serious about that Cathy? Do you think you would like to give it a go?'

'Yes, I would.'

'But aren't you daunted by it, the magnitude of it, if he's right.'

'No. Yes and no. I don't know. I don't really understand it all, but I can accept that all of me is wrong. Why not. Just because I've been told I'm right - and yet look what my life has shown me, that I'm full of shit and my relationships were all based on a shit-load of fantasy - doesn't mean that I am right. I feel more to go the other way for the moment. Yes, to even consider that I'm all wrong.'

'And you can do that, just so easily, just like that - you admit you are all wrong.'

'Yes.'

'That everything you are, everything you do is wrong, that none of how you are is right - nothing!'

'Well, I don't about it all for sure, but yes, why not. Something might be right, I don't know, and how would I know, and yet, then again, it might all be wrong. And if what you say is true, that the world is all fucked up because we're all wrong, because we've all been born into a negative state, then how could anything that I am and anything I do, be right.'

'But if that's so, doesn't it make you feel bad, to know that you're all wrong?'

'No, not yet.'

'Well it scares the shit out of me. I don't know if I can handle it, to think that all of me might be wrong. I mean if it is, what can I do, what can I do about it -'

'But what are you supposed to do about it. You can't do anything about it. And if you've been wrong for this long without even knowing it, it's not going to hurt you to keep being wrong for a little longer, is it?'

'No, I guess not - that hadn't occurred to me.'

'And so from what you've said, the feeling-healing seems to be something you have to work at, it's not just going to magically happen, so God isn't going to suddenly say: "Oh Cathy, good work, now you've seen that you're all wrong, I will make you all right". That's not going to happen, is it?'

'No. It hasn't happened to James and Marion. From all he's said, they've been through a very hard time. And I don't know if I want to feel bad day after day, year after year.'

'Well, you're not going to have much of a say in it, are you. I mean, you can't control it, can you - we can't control our feelings. I understand we can deny them, but we're still feeling them, and I reckon if you start to allow them to be, then you are going to feel bad a lot of the time, and probably very bad at times. But if that is what you have to go through to bring them all up out of you, then that's what you've got to do. And I don't know, but with this feeling-healing, can you take it one step at a time, a little bit at a time?'

'Yes, I think you. It seems like, the more you commit to it, the more full-on it gets.'

'Right, so we can start off slowly and see what happens, see if we can handle it and where it lead us - right? Do you want to do that?'

'Yes. With you I do. Facing it on my own I couldn't do that, it was too much.'

'God I don't blame you, I don't think I'd want to do it on my own either.'

'But what happens if we start and then we don't like each other anymore, what will we do then?'

'I don't know. We can worry about that if it happens. There's not much point worrying about it ahead of time. The future can take care of itself - that's what my mother used to say. So we can deal with that when and if it happens.'

'Gee I love how pragmatic you are about it all. I'm much more airy-fairy.'

'You've just had too long to think about it all, and all by yourself. And I who've had hardly any time at all are prepared to take the plunge not having any idea what I'm getting myself into, just as I did with my relationships. And if it all turns out that I'm a complete idiot and it's just a total fuck-up and I'm a complete wreck, well so what, it won't be any more than I've already been.'

'What if you go nuts, if all your repressed shit comes surging up and fucks your mind totally, what will you do then?'

'You mean if I'm wandering around like a baby shitting in my pants and dribbling all over again... well, I guess you'll just have to clean up the mess.'

'Me! Shit, what if while you're wandering around dribbling, I'm sitting on the floor rolling around in my pooh, drawing with it over the walls and banging my head repetitively on them?'

'Then at least you'll know how to re-paint them, won't you.'

'Yeah right, with my bib and nappy on.'

'Yeah, finger painting, I'd like to do that again. I remember that was fun. Come on, let's do it now, have you got any old paint left?'

'No.'

'Oh well not to worry. Let's drink this bottle and have a few more smokes and then root, that sounds like a much more grown up thing to do, don't you think?'

'God yes, anything but ending up in some godforsaken clinic somewhere going mental.'

'I think we've just found quite an area for us to talk about, lots of hidden fears and bad feelings in there - wouldn't you say, Mark dear?'

'Shit Cathy, don't 'dear' me either!'

'Ah! Do I detect another sensitive area - possibly yet more bad feelings?'

'Yes, you're right. Too many bad feeling already! Argh! So, what say we drink, smoke and have sex all to keep such bad feelings away and start our feeling-healing tomorrow - we don't have to rush into anything you know.'

'I agree, yes, what a good idea. Let's do those things to hide our bad feelings to make us feel good. More good feelings, that's what we want - MORE GOOD FEELINGS! ALWAYS GOOD FEELINGS! ONLY GOOD FEELINGS! MORE DOPE, MORE DRINK, MORE SEX - YES, YES, YES, MORE!'

'Shit, I'll drink to that.'

‘The most difficult part I’ve had with all of this is thinking about my relationship with my parents. When I started to work for myself painting I left home and I was glad of my independence, it was great to be able to do whatever I liked without my parents having a say in it or even knowing what I was up to. And my later years with them before I left home, I think were pretty much like most peoples, we fought, I wanted more independence, they still wanted to tell me what I could and couldn’t do - just the usual teenage stuff from what I could tell. And having left them, were you to ask me if I loved them, I’d say yes, my word I do, they were very good to me, they did so much for me, and if anything, I was a pain in the arse to them at times, and I even felt guilty about this from time to time. I thought I had been ungrateful to them, they giving me so much and I just taking it, hardly thanking them, and then just wanting nothing more than to leave them, to get away from them and be out on my own. Then, having started to think about this childhood repression stuff, I’ve started to feel other feelings, and many of the things James said - which he says mostly come from Marion - have made me question a lot of stuff bringing up many new feelings about it all, none of which I like very much.’

‘What sort of things did James say?’

‘Things like the obvious: that they are the parents and should provide everything for me, me their child whom they should love and adore. And they should love and cherish me unconditionally - and I agree with this. Being the child you didn’t have a say in it, our parents had all the say, they brought us into being, they wanted us, they made us, so it’s all up to them to give all of themselves to us - to unconditionally love us, but did they? Mine didn’t, they loved me conditionally. I can see it clearly now. Provided I was a good boy then they were happy with me, loved me, but if I wasn’t good, if I didn’t do what they wanted me to do, then they punished me until I did do it. So how loving was this treatment of me? What really was their ‘love’. And I am the child and it really wrankles when I think it through that they are meant to be there for me, NOT me there for them. I am the child, they are the adult, the parents, and yet they made me feel like I should have been grateful to them, they were doing me the favour by having me. And that because of that, I should forever be beholden to them, always feeling guilty if I’m not down on my hands and knees worshipping their greatness. I hate feeling guilty if I haven’t seen them for a while, and if I don’t phone them each week, mum always reminds me I didn’t when next I speak to her. And I don’t want to live always feeling guilty, and that I’m being mean and selfish, if I don’t do what they want. I don’t want to be always under their control and subservient to them. If anything, I want to be equal with them, and yet they didn’t allow me to be. They fought with me, and I fought with them. But I only fought them trying to maintain my independence which they should have unquestionably given me. It shouldn’t have even been an issue. I being the child should NEVER have had to fight with my own parents. And now that I’m saying this all out loud to you Cathy, I feel very angry about it all, very angry with them.

‘It’s true, it’s right, the child should never be placed in a position where it feels it has to fight its parents, that’s fucked, so fucked and so wrong and it certainly isn’t loving. So what about all this love I feel for them and all their love for me, when I feel like this it’s non-existent, there is no love. It’s all bullshit. I don’t feel love for them having to fight for my own say and rights. They are the badies, I’m having to fight them - my own parents, and that’s not right. And it’s so not right I feel like I’m about to explode with anger, with rage, and I want to rage around to them and kill them, to tell them what fuckers they are and how unloving and mean they have been to me. All that shit they put me through, all those times they made it seem like I was the bad one, when I was only wanting

to express myself as I felt to, but they wouldn't let me. And that's all when I can remember, later, during my late teens; so what about all the times I can't remember, when I was younger, when I was a little baby, or young child. How many times did they stop me then, how many times were they so 'loving' to me that they stopped me expressing myself freely.

'And so I have recently discovered that I have a huge - no vast - amount of repressed anger and resentment against them - a enormous amount. It feels like there's gallons of the stuff stuffed away inside me, a whole volcano full, which if allowed to come out all at once would probably destroy me - and them too if I were with them. So I've been a bit scared of late to go and see them, because what if they said or did something to me that triggered off this rage in me, I might say things to them that would hurt them and upset them and I don't want to do that. They're getting on, and it's all too late now anyway, what can they do, take me back to when I was shitting in my pants and say they are sorry. No, so I feel it's better if I just keep away from them, for the time being at least, at least until I've been able to come to terms more with this anger that I feel is seething away inside me.

'And from all I read on James' blog and website, the only thing I can do is keep speaking about it all, and so to you, so that's what I'm going to do if it's all right with you, if you don't mind. But I'm also afraid, like now, that if I begin to speak about it, then I'll open the flood gate and it will all pour out forever drowning us both in it. And then I'm back to the worries and fears I spoke about earlier with you, that then you'll hate me, you'll get sick of it, you won't want to be with a bloke who's always going on about his anger at his parents, and how badly they treated him. And I feel like if I start speaking about it, it will never end, there's just too much, and I don't know what to do. I want to do my childhood repression healing but also I don't want to let the lid off, because if I do it's all going to come spewing out.'

'Mark I don't mind. At least I don't think I will mind. If it's all in you then it all will have to come out, and if I can help, if I can be there for you, then, well, we can just see what happens - how it all goes. I can't know what the future will bring, and as I've told you there isn't any point worrying about it at this stage, we must do what we feel to do, and if you've got to open up letting it all come out, then do so. And it will probably be the same for me. I can relate to all you've said. I haven't thought about in that light, but as you were saying it, I felt as if you were speaking for me in a way. So I too probably have lots of repressed anger hidden in me, and so I will also have to at some time bring it all out too. So we'll be a fine old pair, feeling very angry at our parents, yelling and abusing them, but at least we have each other. And if you don't feel like seeing them, then don't - it's your life. You have to do what you want to do, that I firmly believe, and you're not beholden to them. Sure they are your parents but as you said, they should be happy you are out on your own doing your own thing, and really they don't have any right to disapprove... or approve for that matter. It's got nothing to do with them, that's how I look at it with my parents. And when they start to tell me what to do, I say no, no you don't, it's my life and I'll do as I please. And so what if what they say will happen to me - all those horrible things because I'm not listening to them, does happen to me, so what, it's my life, and I have to find out for myself. I'm not them, they've lived their lives, they went through it all so I have to too. They've got no right telling me what to do and I don't mind telling them where to get off.'

'I suppose that's where you and I differ, I tried to tell them to stop but never got anywhere. Mostly we just yelled at each other. But I never got anywhere and I felt like they won in the end, even if I did end up doing what I wanted to do. You at least seem to be able to stand up to your parents being an individual in your own right, I wish I could be like that, be that brave.'

'I don't feel brave, it's just how it is.'

'Yes, probably because they weren't so controlling when you were little. You probably were able to stand up to them all the way along and they let you, possibly even wanted you to be more your

own person and to say what you felt, compared to mine. I feel they have some sort of power over me, and always will, and I'll never be free of it. It has always been there and so always will be, and I hate that it makes me feel very bad, like I'm trapped, forever trapped and I'll never be able to get away and be totally free.'

'The more you say, the better I understand what you've been telling me. I'm beginning to see what you mean. I think about being with my parents and I ask myself, do I feel loved by them? And similar thoughts and feelings come to mind as what you said. Without thinking, just as a quick answer and reaction to that question, I'd say yes, of course, of course my parents loved me and I love them. And then I move on like you said to thinking about all they did for me: the house we lived in, the schooling, all the holidays, everything they gave me, but these are all things. So then I think about it from an emotional point of view; so love, did I feel completely loved by them, and I'd have to say no, no I didn't. I can remember times, and even times when I was quite young, I must have been about six or seven I suppose, when I felt very hurt by them, by things they said to me, and things they did to me - how they treated me. Very hurt, yes I can remember it now. One time I can remember that I wanted to wear a particular red dress to a party, but for some reason, which my mother explained to me, I wasn't allowed to, I had to wear the one she wanted me to, a dull blue one. And when I complained she said it matched my eyes better and that it would be more fitting for me to wear to the party. More fitting, what did she mean by that - that it would fit me better? I didn't know she meant another definition for fitting. And I remember that she ruined the party, I was so upset I had a miserable time. I didn't feel happy in what I was wearing and I remember one of the other girls had a red dress on and I kept thinking to myself, she's allowed to wear hers, why aren't I allowed to wear mine. That experience hurt me a lot, in fact it did a lot of damage to my relationship with my mother. It was never the same. I think in some way I never forgave her for making me wear that other dress, and I suppose I still haven't now that I'm thinking about it. You know, I haven't thought about this for years, I'd forgotten about it until just now. So my parents didn't love me all the time, that's for sure, but I think I've just erased those bad times, maybe I've done what you said and buried them somewhere in me, in my soul if I have one, who knows; but yes, like you, I feel a lot of resentment, bitterness and anger at them, at mum in this experience, that's for sure.

'I think I loved my father more than my mother. I've always been more close to him, but that's probably only because he wasn't as forceful with me as she was. I remember suddenly thinking about this one day years ago, it just flashed into my mind, I can't remember what I was doing or thinking at the time, but it suddenly struck me that I liked my father more than my mother, I liked being with him more. But over the years I've also come to understand that he had an easier time with us children than she did. Looking after us was left up to her, he was always working, on call and having to go off at all times of the day and night. But she kept her nursing job and looked after all of us, I don't how she did it - I wouldn't want to do it. So even though I haven't been as close to her as I might have been, I've come to sympathise with her more. It's all right for the man to go off to work all day long while the woman looks after the kids, and then by the time she's fed up with them and they're fed up with her, home he comes all smiles and wanting to have fun. That I remember was a lot of how it was for me. Dad would pick us up throwing us in the air, we'd all be running around laughing and yelling, "dad's home, dad's home - yeah!" And he'd take us out, take us all out, and he was always the happy one. But now I can see it was totally unfair on mum, how could she compete with that. And I do remember when I was about fifteen looking at her one day and feeling sorry for her, sorry for all the work she'd had to do, having been there always for us. And I wondered how much life she missed out on, how much she put aside for us. But then when you were saying that I suddenly didn't feel sorry for her as I have done, I felt angry that she didn't love me more. I would have much rathered her not do all the bloody housework and spend more

time with me. I was with her but she was always having to do something around the house. And it never stopped, even when we three girls helped her, she still seemed to have endless things to do. She was always busy and I wanted her to stop, to just stop and be with us, for us to go out, go to the park for a picnic or something, anything, just to sit around and have a cup of tea and talk. But she couldn't sit still, and now I feel angry like you were saying, yes I wanted more, I wanted to be loved, loved more than I was.

'God, this stuff is all about opening up a can of worms, isn't it! Like you said, I too can feel it all down inside me, and I never knew, I never knew it was all there. I have felt these feelings before from time to time, but I've never known what they are, so I just dismissed them and they went away. But again like you said, I reckon if I kept speaking about it, I too would blow my top like a volcano and then what, then what would happen.'

'Yeah I know, and we're back in the clinic, two fucked up people who let the top off their anger at their parents. I don't know if I can handle that, I really don't, it scares the shit out me.'

'Yes, I see what you mean, but what can you do about it, either allow it to come out or keep it buried just as we've done all these years. So our relationships with our parents aren't as we thought or wanted to think they were, they weren't as loving as we wanted them to be... that can't be so bad, surely?'

'Can't it? What if it is. What if it takes us years and years of feeling angry at our parents, could you go through something like that?'

'I don't know.'

'What if you got so angry at your parents you never wanted to see them again, could you handle that? 'I don't know if I could. It's too hard to even begin to think about. James said that when he started to wake up to his anger and hatred of his parents he had to turn his back on them, which he did, and hasn't gone back, he doesn't see anyone in his family.'

'And what about Marion, what was her relationship with her parents like?'

'I don't know, mostly it's all about him, she doesn't seem to want to write or be directly involved in any of it in a public way. But from the few things he's written about her, it sounds like they were very unloving to her, leaving her with no doubt as to her hatred of them. Hers are dead now, his mother is apparently still alive, but he doesn't see her.'

'Well I guess if he did it, then we might be able to too. I think it's just one of those things, if we go down this road and we get to the point where that is to happen, where we have to make a discussion about it, we can then, and then based on our feelings at that time. Marion and James obviously felt very strongly about it, it's not something you'd do or take lightly is it, so if our turn comes, then we'll know what to do, we'll feel what to do.'

'At least it sounds good. God I can't tell you how good it makes me feel Cathy being able to finally speak about all these things to someone. This stuff has gone around and around in my head nearly driving me crazy. But to speak with you about it, and then to hear what you have to say, and you're so cool and clear headed about it all, it helps me a lot. I feel much better about it, not so alone in it all. James goes on about having a friend with whom to speak about everything with, and I can see what he means. It's so good just being able to get it all off my chest. It was horrible having no one, lying on my bed at night thinking about it all having read more of James' writing. I'd have such disturbed dreams, it was hard work. I tried to write about it all, but it was too much, I can't write fast enough. And I thought if ever I did happen to meet someone to speak about it all with, I'd just open mouth and out it would all come non-stop like verbal diarrhoea. But at least that's not happening. It seems to be happening in a way that I can deal with it, and you're not feeling to overwhelmed with it, are you?'

'No, as I said, not at all. I'm enjoying it all. It's very stimulating that's for sure. And it's such a surprise, to have you, a man speaking about such things, I would never have know it could be

possible. So keep going Mark, just speak about it all as it comes. Don't worry about me, I'll tell you if I've had enough. And so far, as you said, it seems to be coming in spurts that I too can handle. It's not too much, not too overwhelming, no, far from it. In fact I feel like I could stay up all night speaking about it.'

'That's okay with me.'

'But don't you want to go to bed for another little screw?'

'Sure, but I'm no rush. I just like being here with you, close to you, holding you, that's more than I could have asked for. Do you want to go to bed for a little...?'

'Later, I'm comfortable here as we are, also. Another smoke wouldn't go astray, and how about a beer, I've got some more in the fridge.'

'Ha! What a start to our relationship eh, gee it's a first for me. Smoking dope, drinking beer, sex and childhood repression and feelings. What a combination!'

'What more could you ask for. By the sounds of it we'll need the drink, drugs and sex to help us deal with all the shit from our early childhoods.'

'Yeah, you're probably right about that.'

'However, I do feel it's just an indulgence for the time being, we have after all only just met, believe it or not. And I'm liking it, I haven't done anything like this for a long time. It's good, it's making me feel happy, very happy, to be here with you Mark Davies.'

'Well it's wonderful to be with you too Cathy Armstrong... I think I like Armstrong better than Davies, can I be Armstrong too?'

'You can be whatever you want my boy. Why don't you like Davies, I like it?'

'It's probably that I'm just too familiar with it, a change would be good.'

'All right, you can be Mark Armstrong and I'll be Catherine Davies.'

'Right, so you can have my parents and I'll have yours.'

'Hmm, I'll have to think about that.'

‘Where are you going to do your writing, in the other room?’

‘Well, yes, possibly, I hadn’t really thought about it, it’s the spare room - so yeah, in there.’

‘Why don’t you move that little table out and put it over there, against the wall, and then you can look out the window while you write.’

‘I look at the screen while I write.’

‘Yes, but surely you’d like something nice to look at when you’re not writing.’

‘True, I would. Okay then, I’ll move over there tomorrow.’

‘Move it now, so we can see what it’s like. And what are you writing anyway, I haven’t even asked you that yet?’

‘I’ve been trying to write what I feel, but that’s been hard. What I think I will write about is us - what do you say about that, sort of a chronology or diary of us: how it goes for us being together.’

‘Sure, why not. It might be fun to read back over it. What would you say?’

‘Oh I don’t know. Maybe I’ll write a book and I’ll put all this stuff we’ve been talking about in regards to childhood repression in it. I don’t know. Maybe I’ll just fart around and not write anything, just surf the net looking for other stuff on childhood repression and feelings and more of James’ stuff. I’ve down loaded some of his books, he offers them for free but they are unedited so they’re a bit rough, but you can easily get the drift about what he’s saying. They’re also a bit repetitive, but that’s okay too, it’s all so new for him too and I like that. His books are as I see it, an expression of all he’s going through. How about you read them too?’

‘Na, like I said before, not just now. I like you telling me everything about it. I’m not much of a reader and I hate reading it off the screen, it hurts my eyes.’

‘I’ve already printed them off, they’re in this box.’

‘Na, I still think I’ll stay with you telling me about it all. Maybe you can read some of it to me someday. But I like us talking about it. I don’t want to be sitting here with us reading, we won’t have much time together with my working full time.’

‘I know what you mean. No, I don’t want to be reading it all to you when we’re together, talking is much more fun.’

‘It’s life, it’s happening now, reading is too personal, you have to shut yourself off, be alone, and I don’t want that. Yeah, that looks better, look, it’s a perfect fit for that corner of the room. And then you are in here with me. If you do ever want to write or be on the computer, we can still be together. I’d much rather that than you having to go into another room.’

‘Yeah I agree, I don’t want to do that either.’

‘And you’re more than welcome to use my laptop, set it up to suit yourself.’

‘I’ll try it out. I can use my wireless connection on it, so we can use it anywhere, my only worry with it is, with all the laptops, is how small the screens are. I’ve looked at them in the second hand Apple-Mac shop, and I nearly bought one, but I wanted a bigger screen... but you never now, it might be just a matter of getting used to it, and I like its keyboard. Why did you go with Mac’s?’

‘I didn’t, Matthew bought it for me, it’s the only computer I’ve had. He showed me how to use it, but I don’t use it much.’

‘I can download other programs for it if you haven’t got them and want them, but I suppose if you’re not really using it much, there’s no point.’

‘Why you and Mac?’

‘A friend I worked with introduced me to them. They just looked pretty, and I don’t know, there’s just something about them, some feeling they give me, and I like that. I’m drawn to them,

not to PC's, and you don't have to worry about having firewalls and all that protection. But I can never afford the latest so I'm always years behind the technology, but as I only want to write and look a little on the Internet, that's okay. They've got a new thing coming out that allows you to read e-books easily, it's small so you can have it on the couch with you or wherever, it might be good to have to read James' books and Alice Miller has a free e-book, but I don't know. More money, I probably don't need it. It's probably just another toy.'

'I wouldn't mind having a look at it if you want to.'

'Yeah okay, it comes out in a few months, it's called an iPad.'

'That's a cute little printer.'

'It is, I love it. It hasn't fucked up once in all the time I've used it. I used to have second hand Apple laser printers, but they always caused me problems. Always paper jams, they'd been flogged to death I think, and they weighed a ton. But this little Brother is so light, fast, and I only want black and white. I not a big one on pictures, don't have a camera -'

'No, me either. Matthew did all that, put the pictures on the computer, but it's never been a big thing for me. So that's all you've really got, isn't it?'

'Yes. I did have more stuff, but when I moved into that little room at the back of the aquarium I got rid of most of it. My clothes are just a pile on the floor; I have a knife, fork and spoon, tooth brush and shaving stuff, the jug, sandwich maker, the fridge wasn't mine, yeah, I travel light.'

'There's a chest of draws in the spare room that's half empty I'll take my stuff out of it and you can have it, and there's space in the wardrobe in there, or in the bedroom, if you want to hang things. And the bathroom cupboard has plenty of space in it, or you can leave your shaving stuff and toothbrush next to mine. And I'll show you how to use the washing machine, you can do the washing - there's a line out the back, and the vacuum is over there in that little cupboard along with other cleaning stuff.'

'You're going to trust me washing your clothes?'

'Some of them.'

'Okay, I'm looking forward to it. I'd like to be the wife, and you can be the breadwinner man of the family.'

'Bit of a role change, eh?'

'Yeah, why not. Shit it's the least I can do in payment for your allowing me to live here rent free.'

'Oh I don't care about that. If you start to make demands on me, taking over and taking me and everything for granted, then I will care. But until such time, I'm pretty easy about it all.'

'So how often would you like me to vacuum?'

'Oh, once a day will be adequate.'

'Once a day! Are you serious, do you really want me to do it once a day?'

'No, I'm only teasing. I don't know, when it needs it. I used to do it religiously once a week, that's what my mother did, but I remember one day it came as a huge revelation that I didn't need to do it once a week as the carpet wasn't dirty. Then I just started to do it when I felt like it or saw it needed it. So I don't know, with you here it might need it more. I've been doing it about once a month I think. I don't really think about it, just do it when I feel like doing it. It's very easy, the carpet is great, as is the vacuum. It's very light and has a good suction - horrible noise tough, it sounds like a jet engine or something.'

'Yeah well in that case, I'll do it when I feel like it, and you tell me when you feel like it needs to be done - we can see if we coincide. And what about cooking, do you want me to cook? I can cook a few things, but not much.'

'I don't know, too early to tell. I like cooking, although I don't usually cook much. We can do it together or you can do it, we can work it out as we go. And we can go out, there's still some cheap

places around here.'

'Do you like pizzas, fish and chips - oh yeah, you like them, all of three chips and a tiny bit of fish -'

'There was too much going on. I was hungry, but you know how it is... love. Oh, I was so in love on our first romantic date that I just couldn't eat much!'

'I wish you were so in love.'

'Do you Mark, do you really? Is that what you'd like me to be: so in love with you?'

'Oh I don't know... yes... yes I think I do. I just said that, it just came out of my mouth... now thinking about it, yes, I suppose I do - is that so bad?'

'Bad, why do think bad? I didn't mean it as a bad thing, I was just curious.'

'Would you like me to be in love with you?'

'I don't know. It might be nice. Yes, yes, I suppose I would. Being in love, feeling all those good feelings would be good - bloody good! But only so long as they *are* really true feelings of love. I don't want any more of that fantasy love, all that false passion stuff. Thinking about it, what I really would like, is that you really liked me for being me - yeah, even loved me. I've never actually known with the other guys if they did really just like me. I mean, if you took all my looks and figure away - yes, I admit they are okay - would they have really liked me? I don't know and I don't think so. And I don't know if I really do want to know. I used to occasionally ask them, but really, what could they say. I realise now such questions were pointless. But I would have liked to have known.'

'Why?'

'Because... because I would. I don't know actually. It's a strange thing isn't it when you think you know something but when someone asks you a question about it, and you actually have to think about it, you're flummoxed, you can't go anywhere with it.'

'I would like to have known and I wouldn't. I think I was scared to know because what if they said no, "I only like you for your looks and your body."'

'But there's no separation between your looks, body and you. I mean your body and your looks are a part of your personality, it's all you. Someone can have great looks but you don't want to be with them, you're not attracted to their personality, that much I know.'

'Yes, I know, but it's more than that, it's hard to explain. What if I was ugly, would you be attracted to me then? What if I was deformed in some way physically, would you want to hold and touch and be with me physically?'

'But you're not. If you were you'd be a different person altogether, and I don't know, maybe I would be attracted to you. A friend of mine was attracted to a thalidomide girl he met in India. She was English and was travelling with her brother, she had no arms only hands he said. But he loved her, wanted to be with her, and went all the way back to England to be with her.'

'And what happened?'

'I don't know, it didn't work out, something happened in England, she didn't want him, I don't know, he was a bit vague on that and I didn't press him. But for him she was the most beautiful woman he'd ever seen, so you just can't tell. I think there is someone for everyone. Of course I don't know about it for sure, but it's a nice idea I have, something I want to believe.'

'Do you believe in finding that perfect person?'

'You mean, as in soul-mates?'

'Yes, do you believe we have a soul-mate?'

'I want to, I'd like to believe that we do, it's kind of romantic, however I'm wise enough now to not hope each new woman I meet is going to be her. I don't know about it. James says we do, that in fact you need your soul-mate to help bring all your personality into being.'

'Into being, what do you mean by that?'

‘From what I’ve read so far, it’s like we have this soul and it has a personality. Or maybe the soul and personality are one. Or the soul is the soul and personality is something bestowed individually on the soul by God, the creator of that soul.

‘Anyway, James reckons the soul exists in its own place, not in Creation, in ‘soul-land’ or something like that, and that when we start our incarnation on earth, it’s our soul that organises it all, in that it’s our soul that is bringing us, it’s personality, into being. Or it’s bringing itself into being, being expressed by its personality. I’m still a little hazy on all of this.

‘So we are our soul and our soul is manifesting itself as expressed by our personality into Creation, so with every experience, our soul is manifesting a bit more of us - of our personality. So as we grow in truth we’re expressing more and more of ourselves, of our personality in life. And that to fully bring our personality into being, which will take the rest of eternity, to fully make our existential soul experientially expressed, we need our soul-mate because our soul is really of a dual quality; meaning, it actually has two personalities it’s manifesting in Creation, one part as represented by the male aspect and the other the female. And so for the soul to wholly express all of itself, it needs to do so by the ongoing interaction of its two personalities, or halves. And if this is true, then it means the whole soul-mate thing is far more than we’ve ever imagined it to be, and it’s one hell of a relationship. To think that you might conceivably be with one other person of the rest of your existence, which means forevermore, is huge... at least I find it huge. One person... now that is having a perfect partner and a perfect relationship!’

‘I think it’s all a bit beyond me, but I like the sound of it. Why not, why not have one perfect other half. And for always. I do like that. I hadn’t thought of it in those terms. If soul-mates exist, then I’d be happy just finding someone I liked and got on well with. I hadn’t looked at in the light that you’d both need other, need each other as you say, to actually help each other become fully expressed. But I like that. It gives me the feeling that if it is real, then it’s right that you do or will meet your soul-mate because you have to, you both need to be together to keep growing, that’s what you’re saying, isn’t it?’

‘It is, exactly, gee I love how you just take it all so easily, and seem to grasp the meaning. I’ve been thinking about these things for months.

‘Yes, each half needs the other half, and no one else, and I find that very romantic, very soothing really. To think that you look and look, you meet different people, girls, boys, and you try to be with them, but the relationships don’t work out, and why - because they’re not meant to. They are not meant to work because they are not your other true half. We do all we can trying to make them work, trying to make our partner be our soul-mate, but it’s a lost cause if they aren’t our soul-mate, so why bother. I mean, why not just wait until you meet Ms or Mr Right.’

‘But you can’t tell when you meet them, when you meet your soul-mate... or can you. Ha! I’ve never thought about that, perhaps you can tell... Lot’s of people say they know and are soul-mates, that they feel it, so maybe you can.’

‘Yes, but do such people always stay together?’

‘Ah... I don’t now about that. No... well shit, I only have to look at myself and my own relationships. God I thought I’d met my soul-mate in Tim and Matthew. But that’s fucked. And of course now I remember other girlfriends thinking the same thing with their boyfriends, some of them got married and had kids, but they’re now divorced.’

‘See, so it’s not so easy, is it? What are these feelings that the other person is your soul-mate, and are they real and true or just fantasy ones like you’ve been saying you felt with your boyfriends, all contrived in the heat of passion?

‘And consider this, something else James says, God every second thing I say is what James says -’

‘That’s okay, I don’t mind, and it is coming from him.’

‘Yeah well, the fact that we’re all supposedly living in a negative feeling- and self-denying way means that we can’t have perfect relationships anyway, which when you think about it makes sense. So here we all are, setting off into life believing we’ll be able to find our perfect partner, get married, have children, and all the rest of it - live happily ever after; and because none of us are living perfectly true to ourselves, it’s an impossibility anyway.’

‘Yes, but some people seem to be very happy together and stay married their whole lives. My parents seem pretty happy.’

‘Yeah I know, so do mine, however now when I’m with them I can see how they both make lots of compromises with each other, and that really if they were able to live exactly how they wanted to, they wouldn’t be together - so what’s that? I asked mum the last time I was up there, if she was happy, and I mean really happy and had she always been really happy with dad, and she said, “well you know, as happy as I could be I guess”, so what’s that? I asked her what she meant, was she in fact not so happy, didn’t she want to be living in Ballarat for example, but I could see she avoided the issue, quickly deflected me by saying how much she loved living up there. But does she really like it, it always seemed more dad’s idea to get away from it all, but I don’t know, maybe she does like it. So who knows. Here I am coming from these two people who can’t even be open enough in their relationship with their son to speak openly about their own relationship, and yet I’m supposed to use them as my role model. I’m supposed to look at them and say, ah yes, I can see that because my parents are happy and still in love, then I will do the same and it will be like that for me. I will find the woman I can be happy and in love with, and live like they are - and that’s what I did. And what a rude shock and severe awakening to that bullshit dream I got. And from what you’ve said, the same happened to you.

‘So what is their relationship really all about? It must have some sort of love in it or surely they wouldn’t have been able to stay together all this time. But what sort of love is this love when you both have made heavy compromises to enjoy it or have it together. It’s not love in my book, I don’t know what it is, but it’s not what I call perfect love. I feel that at least with you Cathy, in the short time we’ve been together, I’ve - I am - experiencing something very different, nothing like anything I have before, and I like it. I feel more for you than I have felt for anyone, and I’ve only known you for a little over twenty-four hours - not counting all those years dreaming about being with you, so what does that mean. Is this love that I’m feeling for and from you? I don’t know. But whatever it is, it sure feels good. However, will it last? How will I feel, and what will I feel about you in one month’s time, three months, a year and so on? And I know I can’t possibly know, but you know what I mean?’

‘Yes.’

‘So here I’ve been trying to have the perfect relationship with my past girlfriends when we’re all imperfect, when we’re all fucked up, when we’re all full of childhood repression, all stuffed full of repressed feelings we’re not expressing; all having been brought into life by parents who are the same yet who are pretending to love each other. And I believed that I had half a chance in being able to have a good, long and successful relationship with these women. Yet no way, they were doomed to fail and it was only a matter of time. One of James’ spirit channeled books, included a lot about the spirits relationships, and it was interesting to read accounts of these people and how their relationships went once they died and woke up in spirit. None of them carried their relationships on successfully. Many tried. But mostly death showed in one way or another that their relationships were untrue, false and all based on dreams and fantasy - that they were crap. Whereas, if you were to meet your perfect partner, your soul-mate, then as you would probably die at different times, and surely as you only wanted to be with that person, you’d wait for them and then re-unite in spirit and keep living together forevermore. You wouldn’t meet someone else in spirit, and then when your dearly beloved wife or husband comes over expecting to be with you

again, you give them the good news that you've met someone else and no longer feel the same way as you did about them back on earth; see you later, thanks very much - here's one big slap in the face. So there's a lot more to it, and I do enjoy thinking about it all beyond the accepted norm. Really we're all so retarded in our beliefs and concepts of life. We can't even begin to conceive, let alone accept, that there might be life after death in the spirit worlds, and if so, what's it like, and then try and find out by speaking with those over there who know. That's something I really like about James, he said he wanted to know and he looked to spirits for help, and a lot of what he's come up with he attributes to their telling him.'

'Gee it sounds interesting, all this about spirits and life after death. I've never given it much thought, I just thought I'd deal with it when it happened.'

'And I think a lot of people think the same way. As there is no real way you can tell if there is life after death other than let's wait and see. But fuck, that's all right if you are free, but what if you are married and you're desperately waiting to meet back up with your partner, who in the mean time having died, let's say ten years before you, has met someone else and it's tough-luck-Charley, welcome to your new wonderful life in spirit. You read so much in the New Age stuff about spirits and the after life, not that I've read much mind you, and it all points to life in spirit being a whole new exciting and wonderful adventure. But what if you arrive over there only to find your beloved partner says that it's over, that was only marriage for earth, and all that stuff at the altar about about until death do us part was real, we've died, we've parted, so you're on your own, go find someone else to fall in love with, I have.'

'The more I think about soul-mates and understand it, the more I think it's the most incredible thing and yet we're so ignorant of it. Look, what about this: you and I could even be soul-mates, however because we're living in a self-denial state of mind and will we'll never know. We might love each other, and let's say we develop such a passion about each other that we just can't be, or being, separated, always having to be together, and so much so, that we fulfil each other needs in the relationship sense so much so that we don't need to even have any friends, yet we still won't know if we're soul-mates. And we can believe all we want to about it, the truth won't, as it can't, come to us, because we're still too dysfunctional in all aspects of our personality. We can't express all we think and feel freely, so really we'll never be able to know if we are soul-mates until we are fully self-expressive. So if we are to know it's vital that we heal our childhood repression - all that's within us keeping us imperfect. And if we do, then we might find out.'

'How would you find out?'

'I don't know. I imagine that you'd just know, the truth would come up in you and you'd just know. I don't understand that part about the truth, but it's what James says happens as you start revealing the truth to yourself of yourself through your feelings. Somehow it comes up in you, you apparently just see it and you know that what you see is the truth - the truth for you.'

'Gee Mark you seem to have a good understanding about it all, it all sounds very impressive.'

'But I want to live it, it's all just in my mind that which I'm telling you, it's just stuff I've read and worked out for myself with my mind, it's not coming to me as truth, and that's what I want to know. And it's what James says, that we can take all he says and choose to believe it or not, but really it's all about finding out for yourself if it's real or not - finding out the truth for yourself, and that's what I want to do. And I want you to help me do it.'

'How, how can I help you do it?'

'By being as you are. I don't know exactly, but again from what I understand it's just by having a friend, someone who wants to be with you and get to know you and wants you to express all of yourself, even all the rotten, evil, ugly bad bits. And all you've shown me so far is I can say whatever I want to you, and you take it all, you accept it. You don't come down hard on me telling me I'm full of shit. You don't patronise me. You don't act as if you're the wise parent and I'm just

the dump kid. You don't treat me how my parents treated me. My other girlfriends always made me feel dumb when I started to speak about something outside the norm, and yet with you, all we've been speaking about is outside the norm. And if we want to do this thing together, we're going to move way beyond the norm, life won't be the same for us, all our values, beliefs and behaviours are going to change. All that we are and do based on or negative and wrong patterns is going to stop and be replaced with new stuff based on positive patterns. Gee, I am a roll here, aren't I?

'Keep going, don't let me stop you, and while you're about it, roll another joint.'

'Yeah, good idea, how about other beer?'

'I'll share one with you.'

'Gee I like you Cathy, you know, just you saying that, that little thing, "you will share one with me", that makes me feel so good. Oh God I feel like I'm about to cry, shit I must have had too much to drink and smoke. No girl has ever said that to me, it's always you be on your side and I'll stay on my side. But you want to link right up together in so many things, and it's just naturally how you are. It makes me feel so good, it's what I've prayed and longed for, a woman who'll want to be with me, and with me in all that I do. And not just in doing things in the world, but more importantly emotionally, mentally and spiritually. And I don't even know what I mean, or what it would feel like as I've never experienced it, but that's what I feel I want. And that small action of yours, that we'll just share the beer, is something very new for me. I don't really know what I'm saying, I think I'm just babbling now, so I'll shut up and roll one, here, you can pour.'

'No, you're not babbling, I like it, keep going if you want to.'

'Okay, then I will... so where was I - oh yeah, soul-mates. So you see, I think soul-mates, the whole soul-mate thing, is very important. And for us to reach our full potential, we need to be with our soul-mate, that is how we've - it's - all been made. God has set it up that way. And to think that we'll be with one person when we meet them, and when we're perfect, for countless trillions and zillions of years doing all kinds of stuff together - shit it's a really big thing. I mean to spend that amount of time together, it's got to be more than what you feel when you first see someone down the pub. However that little feeling, that little good feeling you might feel for someone, might be the first little beginning of something that may last forever - and that excites me, it makes it all incredibly amazing, one huge unknown. And imagine if that's so for us, then our soul knows that, and we have the same soul, wouldn't that be amazing, and so it will be orchestrating life for us, bringing about all we need in our lives so we can have maximum life experience together, all so we can grow in the truth from it and express fully our personalities. And all along the way we'll be getting to each other more and more as we also get to know ourselves, or more rightly, as we get to know ourselves we'll be able to get to know each other. And then from that base we can move out into the world, into the universe, getting to know other people and nature and all creatures, and then I imagine, God, and all that there is. So it stands to be one hell of a journey, of which we're only just setting out on. So who knows, we could be meeting for the first time as soul-mates, or we could not be soul-mates, and so will spend some time together doing what we need to do with and for each other and then separating -'

'Or we might be soul-mates, but have to separate as well to do other things to help us heal ourselves before we can come back together properly.'

'Yes, possibly, I hadn't thought of that. Who's to say?'

'Anyway I like what you say about wanting to be perfect, that is something that sounds really good to me. I'd like to be perfect, just to know that I'm no longer wondering what it's all about and why my relationships don't work. I'd like to have a real, true and perfect relationship, and so I guess from what you've said, I want to have one with my soul-mate, if that is the only person I'm really able to have that with.'

'Gee. it sure is a nice idea, but really, it's still only a dream. I can't make it happen, I can't tell if you are or are not my perfect partner Mark, or if the guy over the road is.'

'No, but what you can do is long for it, long to have what you desire, what you want, and that is apparently very important. You might not get what you want immediately, but if your longing is sincere and true it will come - some time. I'm longing for it. I've been longing for my soul-mate and true perfect partner for years - everyone does don't they?, but really only truly or seriously - at least I think I'm being serious, I probably aren't, and in ten years time when I've grown up more I'll look back at this time and see I was not being serious... but as I can only do what I can do - I'm longing, and hard.'

'Will you keep longing now that you've met me and we're together?'

'I don't know about that. I'll see what I feel I guess. Shit there's always so many things to think about isn't there. Your questions always provoke so much stuff in my mind, I can feel it wanting to go spinning off down that track, I can hardly keep it together. It's probably the dope helping me along to, it tends to do that when I've had a lot, and I haven't had this much for quite a while.'

'No, me either - good fun isn't it?'

'I sure is, bloody good fun. Oh I do like being with you. How amazing, what a way to meet. And for me to have my eye on you all those years, and I still had my eye on you at the pub, and then suddenly, there are you looking at me and asking me if I'm your Mr Right?'

'Well, are you?'

'Oh god, I don't know - yes, I hope so, yes, yes YES! Please be my Mrs Right, or should it be Ms Right. I don't know about the whole marriage thing.'

'Ms will do for the time being, and as for marriage, I think it's okay but I'd want to be very sure of the relationship before I made that commitment.'

'But how would you be sure, what would it take?'

'Don't know. But so far I just haven't felt it. I sense as though I've got this door inside me and it's closed, and one day when it opens, then I'll just know that the person in my life will be Mr. Right. But like everything seems to have been so far, it's probably only a part of my wishful thinking.'

'I can see the point of getting married for legal reasons, but that's about all - practical reasons, not romantic ones. If you're soul-mates, then surely you'll just feel married or a part of each other, and I reckon that would be enough. And as it goes way beyond life on earth, what happens, do you go and get married again in spirit, or start a new church that marries people forever, including spirit life.'

'Yes well I don't think we need to worry about that just yet. Help me take my jeans off will you, their getting too tight... ah, that's better.'

'I'll agree with that!'

'Look all you like, and touch all you like.'

'And how about kiss?'

'Of course, that goes without saying.'

‘Ah that was nice - perfect, you’re a good root Mark, you know that, you know how to make a girl feel good.’

‘Don’t stop, say more, it’s good for my ego.’

‘It feels so good to be treated like a person, like it’s me you’re relating to, that you actually care about me, and that I am more than a body and something you can take and have and do what you want with. I’ve been treated like that by so many men, and it’s such a pleasure to be with someone who is more sensitive, more sensitive to my needs, and not someone who’s just wanting to get his rocks off and doesn’t give a dam about me.’

‘But surely your boyfriends were nice to you.’

‘They were, and I enjoyed the sex with them, but it was still more about them. I always felt like I was there for them, not the other way around. They used me, that was how I felt a lot, and not knowing it could be any other way, I accepted it all, it was how it has always been right from my first sexual encounter with Geoff. It wasn’t until Matthew’s and my arguments that I realised that he didn’t actually see me as a real person, not one as his equal. He considered himself superior to me, to all women, and believed that we should know our place, that being to serve the man, to make him feel happy. We had one real screaming match, and it all came out, he got really angry, I’d never seen him like that and he said those things and more. I was shocked, I think he was too, but that finally did it for me, it all hurt me too much and there was no way I could go back after that. But now looking back I am very grateful to him for saying those terrible things, as it certainly served to shock me awake. And I realised that I didn’t want to be treated like that ever again.’

‘Weren’t you scared that I might be like that?’

‘Yes a little, but you’re not like Matthew, and so I was prepared to take the risk. I’ve been on my own long enough, and I do feel lonely, so I’d thought I’d give it a go with you. But so far you seem to be working out - better than expected.’

‘Oh thank God for that. I hope it keeps going that way.’

‘Well you don’t have to do anything different, just keep going along as you are. It’s nice, very nice. It just such a nice change to be respected and that’s what I feel you do. It’s in how you touch me, you’re gentle but still firm, and you allow me to lead, which is really nice. You don’t just get on top of me and fuck me as if I’m anyone and no one, just some doll or something, you go with me and you go this way and that, and I’ve never felt in control in this way in sex before. I know that with sex I’ve always felt like I’ve had the final word, it is after all my body, and thankfully I’ve never been raped; that would be very frightening to be totally disregarded, abused and humiliated like that, but still really it’s been my going along with the man, he’s the one calling the shots, and it’s all for him as if everything in his life and the universe exists solely for him, and he can take it when he wants... and leave it. And it gave me the feeling that I should be grateful for his mighty presence, that he wants and keeps me, and I don’t want to feel like that. But I didn’t understand, and when I spoke to my girlfriends about it, they sympathised with me but said what can you do - that’s men for you. So how was I to know there was something else. But now I do, all thanks to you, so thank you Mark, thank you a lot.’

‘It’s my pleasure and I thank you too Cathy. You are my dream come true. I don’t feel unworthy with you. I feel like I have power. I always felt like it was the girls who were doing me the big favour lying back spreading their legs, and really they’d rather not do it, and were just waiting until I’d hurry up and get it over and done with. I felt like they always wanted something I couldn’t give them, but I never asked them what it was. I never spoke to them about anything I felt, nor they to

me. We didn't gel I guess, whereas with you we seem to.'

'Yes we do, and it's so nice. If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times - it's so *nice*.'

'I don't mind, say it all the time, I like hearing you say it. It's nice to be here so close to you, to just be lying here on the couch - luckily it's so big, and talking like this. It's as if something has changed in me somewhere during these past six months, as if I've jumped tracks and I'm on new ones now, and all how it was in the past is no longer how it is -'

'Yes, I can relate to that, that's how it feels for me too. And it's so good to know we can just lie here, we don't have to go to bed if we don't want to. We can stay up all night, not having to do anything tomorrow. Usually I organise something for the weekends, that's when I feel the most lonely, so I want to go out; but this weekend, I don't know what happened - just forgot. Someone else or something else obviously had other plans in mind.'

'I was thinking of possibly driving up to see mum and dad.'

'Mark, do you think having sex is making love?'

'I used to, but not anymore. I've come to think of having sex as having sex, it's fun and all, but it's sex. And that it's not to be confused with love, as in 'making love'. I don't think you can actually make love. Love is there or it isn't, it's not something that we can control. And I think that making love as such, doesn't just have to be said to relate to sex, it can just be how you are together all the time, like now, or brushing your teeth at the same time, more of a spiritual thing I guess, and sex can be apart of that or even not a part of that.'

'So you think you can love someone without having sex, have a full-on close intimate relationship without having to do it... or wanting to do it?'

'Yes, and that always makes me think about Jesus, and from what James has written, it seems like Mary Magdalene is Jesus' soul-mate (or he is her soul-mate), which puts a whole new spin on the whole Bible thing. But in something I read of his, Mary and Jesus didn't have sex, they didn't need to, and yet theirs is the most perfect relationship we can aspire to, apart from God's - the Mother and Father. So I think you can have a deep love without sex, however, as to whether us mere mortals can have that; whether it's something we might only be able to have in spirit when we don't have physical bodies; or, it's something that might happen as or when you've completely healed yourself, I don't know. Why?'

'Oh I don't know. Sometimes I have this feeling that as much as I like sex, that really I could go without it. Often around my ovulation time I feel horny, but it's only for a short time, then I don't really think about sex. Sometimes when I'm on my own I do, something or someone might give me strong feelings of wanting it and I masturbate, but still I think that maybe I could get by without it. Could you do without it, or is it something you must have? All the guys I've been with have had to have it, and regularly. And if they didn't, then they all said they'd either have to have it with someone else or go to a prostitute. They couldn't conceive of a life without sex.'

'Did you talk to them about it?'

'Occasionally, but only a little. Mostly they said such things to me.'

'I don't know. I wank too when I haven't had it much, yet this time alone it wasn't so important to me, however I was probably preoccupied with all this childhood repression stuff. But I might be able to do without it. Why, don't you want to keep having it?'

'I do still want to have it with you, I think it helps us to get closer quickly, but I also don't want it to take over and be the primary focus of our relationship. It was with the other guys, it was as if it was sex first then everything else, including me. All so long as they got their quota of sex each week they were happy. But it's not like that for me. I want to have it when I feel like it, but not as a drug I need, and if I don't get it I start to go cold turkey.'

'Yeah, well that suits me. I don't think I need it as a drug, and I sure don't want to put it first. I mean it is great, sure, and it's fantastic with you Cathy, but I agree with what you're saying, there

has to be more to our relationship than just sex. And I hope that the love we have for each other will be based on more than just sex.'

'Do you think you love me Mark?'

'Honestly?'

'Yes, you have to be honest.'

'I don't know. I like you a lot and more every moment we're together. Is it love, I don't know. Quite frankly, I don't know what love is anymore. I used to think I did, but all that's gone up in smoke. I've thought a lot about it, and James writes a lot about it too: how can there be any real true love when we're living lives of untruth and self-denial? And yet, what is it when you feel love for someone, for your children as obviously a lot of parents do. And for each other, as people in relationships do. And for pets - and God. I don't know. Maybe it's something of love or some sort of love that we can have and feel in our negative states, but it's not true or pure love. I don't know. So, do I feel love for you? Yes I do, as in I love being with you so far, and you seem to openly accept me. You aren't controlling and don't make me feel like a stupid little boy, so yes, I do in some way I suppose. But honestly, I don't know. Is it just infatuation, us being together and it all being so new, exciting and different - and such a surprise, I don't know. I think it needs time - I need time. And do I believe in love at first sight, did I love you the first time I saw you all those years ago. I sure thought you were the most sexy girl I'd seen, but love. I don't know. It's an elusive thing to pin down that's for sure. And something else I read by you know who, was, that for there to be real and true love, you need truth. And as we all exist denying truth, then we're also denying love. So the love we feel, we only think or believe we feel to be love, when really it's just a product of our mind. Feelings we call love because of associations from our early life, but ones produced by our mind, and not feelings based on love that comes spontaneously from truth. Do you love me Cathy? Boy, that was actually hard to say.'

'Why?'

'I don't know... I think I felt a little foolish, asking you if you love me on our second night together. Most of my girlfriends would ask me from time to time if I loved them, and I could never say anything other than yes. I thought that just being with them was enough to show them that I loved them. I even got irritated with their need for reassurance, if that's what it was. We were boyfriend and girlfriend, we had sex, we *made love* together, so wasn't that enough, wasn't that love, weren't we all about love because we were together. But I suppose they didn't feel loved by me, for if they did they wouldn't have needed to ask, would they?'

'I don't know.'

'Why did you ask?'

'No reason, it just struck me to ask - just curious I guess as to what you'd say. I mean for me it's too early to tell, too early to bring love into the equation, it's all too new. And I'm dubious about love at first sight and all that sort of stuff having fallen for it myself. But still I don't know, I've only had a very limited experience with men, all very narrow as being with you is showing me. And I couldn't pretend to imagine what another person feels as love.'

'So you don't love me?'

'No, not yet. I like you more and more too, but love -'

'Oh no, now you've done it, now you've ruined it all, now I'll have to go away and *shoot* myself. Are you sure you don't love me just a little bit, even if it's just a very tiny weeny little bit.'

'Well, maybe a tinny weeny little bit.'

'Oh phew, that's all right then, I can carry on. Don't scare me like that, it's all to fraught this life thing as it is, I need more reassurance than that.'

'Bullshit, you just need more sex!'

'Probably - you offering?'

'Yep, but when we go to bed. I don't want to move from here now. It's very nice and cosy and I like seeing you having to walk around naked to get everything I want. Such as another beer and another smoke. I like how you roll joints, not too strong, mixing the dope with so much tobacco.'

'It's more a money saving thing, having to stretch it out, it costs so much and going up all the time. But also I don't like having joints packed full with dope, it's too much, too strong, and it makes my head go all blurry. I don't want to be a dope-head who rips down the pipes and then sits staring at the walls like a stunned mullet for half the day. And I really like the actual smoking and the whole preparing, rolling of the joint, and only cigarette sized ones, not those huge cigar types. I like the ritual, breaking a little up and mulling it with the tobacco, and this way you can have more joints without getting too stoned.'

'Yes, it's always been too strong for me, like you said, passing big joints and inhaling huge amounts of smoke, then too strong a rush to my head. And yes, that: let's-all-get-stoned-and-sit-around-looking-at-the-walls wasn't any great turn on for me. I couldn't bear that scene, it was so boring and I always felt like going to sleep - just bombing out. Your way is much better.'

'And it's nice to have sex after a few smokes as it makes everything, you, your body, seem more sensual or something.'

'Do you smoke otherwise - cigarettes?'

'No, I can't bear them. I like the roly tobacco with the joints, it's more moist and not as stale as cigarettes. And you don't, as I can't see any evidence of them around here, and your flat smells really nice - of you.'

'No. I used to smoke when I left school and for a few years, but then I gave it up. I can't stand that stale smoke smell on people and in their hair.'

'I used to smoke as well when I left school, but same as you, just gave it up. And then I used to smoke a lot of dope, I always had some each day, but then that eased off over the past years. Now I rarely do, actually, this is the first lot I've bought for a couple of months.'

'How do you get it?'

'A guy comes into the aquarium, a customer, he lives down the Elwood end of St.Kilda, and I get it from him.'

'Do you like living in St.kilda?'

'Yeah. It sort of just happened. I like being near the sea, I love walking out along the pier. And the different types of people are interesting; however, other than the aquarium, I don't have much to do with anyone else.'

'Are you a bit of a loner?'

'I suppose so. It's just happened too, over the years. I don't know, I haven't felt the need of company and friends, and with all this stuff I've been reading and thinking about lately, it's all I want to talk about. And as yet, until you, I haven't met anyone who's wanted to speak about it. I've tried to discuss some aspects of it with some of the guys I work with, and even, some of the customers, but no ones very interested. I think it puts them off, they seem scared of it, too close to the bone I guess, however that's probably only my subjective judgement of them. Anyway I gave up trying to discuss it. It's become my own private interest, and unless anyone happened to ask me something about it, I won't be opening my mouth.'

'You said before, you'd been longing for... what was it... someone to share it all with you?'

'Yes, someone who could help me express myself, help me bring out all my repressed yuk. Someone who I could discuss it all with... someone just like you.'

'How did you long, did you say a prayer or something?'

'No, I just wanted it - someone. I had to work out exactly what it was that I did want, and then I used to long each night before I went to sleep. It was I suppose a sort of prayer, but not with words. Well I did say words, but it was more just a deep wanting, or desire, as I don't know if there is such

a thing as a 'wanting'. However I'd long with my feelings and say with my mind at the same time what I wanted.'

'Did you long to anyone, like God, to help you?'

'No, only to myself. I was sort of telling myself it was what I wanted. James says you can long to God, but I'm still not so sure about God.'

'What do you mean?'

'Whether or not I want to believe in Him or Them. Or even if it's about belief. I don't know - shit I say that a lot don't I. I feel like I want, or have to resolve, all my shit before I can start to relate properly to God. But like every thing else, I probably only believe this because of how it was for me during my early life. God wasn't part of our family, we weren't religious, and I didn't have to do much with it at school. So God's still not a part of it.'

'Some people I've spoken too, one of the customers in particular, said she just puts it 'out there' into the universe, that the universe is abundant, and so should give her all she wants. However if that is so, and it may well be, I don't understand why she then has to ask for it, why isn't it all just coming to her. Anyway, I just long, I want it, desire it, and just allow myself to have these feelings.'

'I think I've always longed for it... or although, not always longed for it, but wanted it, wanted someone with whom I can fully share myself and my life. I didn't understand that it was really all about sharing my feelings, and that's how you share yourself and so your life with someone else, but that's what I'm understanding from all you're saying. And I like that, it makes me feel good. And I can see it's what I didn't have in my previous relationships, they were all but devoid of speaking about feelings, they were all about avoiding the bad stuff as fast as you can.'

'Yes, so I have wanted it, I don't know that I have longed specifically, but that sounds like a good idea.'

'And now that you have me, you don't need to long so much for someone to come into your life to help you express your feelings, so you can start to long for the truth of them, wanting to see what they are all about - why you have them. That's what I'm going to do, I've just now realised. I no longer need to long for anyone anymore, you're here, that longing, that prayer has been miraculously answered, so now I just have to get on with it. Now I have to try and express my feelings so I can uncover the truth of them, and that will be the hard part.'

'So this feeling-healing, how do you actually do that, that's what you are meaning by saying you want to express all your feelings: to express them so you can heal your early childhood stuff by finding the truth of it?'

'Yes, that's right, that's what I want to do.'

'Hmmm.... so how do you do your feeling-healing.... hmmm... well, from what I understand about it all, it's all about feeling expression and having the freedom to do it. Of course you've got to want to do it, you've got to have the motivation and intention to do it, then it's about focusing on all your bad feelings - all your feelings really, but as it's mostly the bad ones we don't want, so deny, you concentrate on them - and speaking about them.'

'Yes, but how does that happen, I mean I can understand that, but surely there must be some right way to do it?'

'I don't know about that, James says it's *your* way, that's the right way, however there are certain, what you might call - guidelines I guess, that you can adhere to. In fact I've been trying to write a list of them so that were I ever to meet the right person I might be able use it to help us. It's over there, shall I get it?'

'Na, I like you here lying next to me, I feel all warm and cosy. No, I'd rather you tell me, can you remember it?'

'I think so, most of it anyway, but there's a lot to it. Will *you* be able to remember it, is more to

the point.'

'Probably not, and I don't care. I just want to listen to it, no doubt we'll have plenty of time to go back over it all. I don't think I'd be able to remember half of what you've been saying tonight, but I like hearing it. It triggers certain things in me and I like that.'

'Well it's great for me. I'm amazed at myself for being able to remember it all to tell you.'

'Amazed at yourself are you?'

'Yes, yes I am. I am amazing to have remembered it all, I don't mind patting myself on my back, no one else ever does.'

'No? Oh that's a shame, but at least I can now. Mark you are amazing how you remember all this stuff, I've never met anyone who can remember it all so well - how's that?'

'Well don't stop. I'll just get out my mirror and kit and have a bit of a preen, my hair must look a state?'

'I should be the one saying that sort of thing.'

'Your hair looks wonderful, just how I like it - sticking out all over the place, all mattered up, it's... it's, very artistic.'

'Yeah well I can't be fucked doing anything about it. You'll have to take me as I am.'

'Hey, I'm not complaining.'

'Good! Now tell me more about how you do this feeling-healing.'

'Okay, let me think... I'll try and give you some examples of how I think it's done, that would be better than reciting the list. And of course it's all based on what James has written -'

'Of course.'

'Okay, the first one, imagine that we've been together for some months and the so-called honeymoon period of our relationship is over, and we've settled in nicely. And now that we've got to know each other better, and are not trying to please each other so much, we're relaxing and able to be more ourselves, so things, and they may only be little things, start to bug us about each other, making us feel bad. Okay, so far so good?'

'Yep. I wonder what will bug me about you?'

'Probably millions of things. But nothing about you will ever bug me, you're too perfect.'

'Yeah right, I wish.'

'Okay, so let's say that I use your computer and I keep leaving it here on the couch, and every time you come over wanting to sit down, the bloody laptop is there and you have to move it. Okay, what do you do... go on, you tell me, what would you do if that was a real thing - how would you be?'

'Well, I'd be angry.'

'Okay, and what would you do with that anger assuming that it's happened so many times now and each time you've just moved it out of the way, but now you're fed up.'

'I'd probably yell at you for leaving it there again.'

'Okay, so what would you say, role play, try to imagine it being for real.'

'Mark why do you leave the computer on the couch all the time, it's so annoying, every time I want to sit down it's in the bloody way.'

'And you're angry right, not just saying it nicely?'

'Well I might say it nicely to begin with.'

'Sure, and you might even ask me nicely before you even got to that point, before you got angry.'

'Yes, that's probably what I would do.'

'And if I kept leaving it there, then you'd be angry.'

'Yes.'

'Okay, so what the feeling-healing is all about it trying to express your bad feelings, and in this scenario it's mostly your anger. Now the whole idea about why you're angry is because you don't

want the thing happening that's making you feel bad. You don't want me to leave the computer in your way on the couch, and naturally you want something to be done about that - me to stop doing it, all so you can then stop feeling bad - right?"

'Yes, that sounds logical.'

'Okay, now from what I understand about the feeling-healing is that the fact you are feeling angry is what is important - your bad feeling. And it doesn't actually matter whether you get me to stop leaving the computer on the couch or not. What does matter is that we understand, that's both of us, that we're doing our feeling-healing, that we're fucked, that we're full of all this repressed anger and other bad feelings we're not aware of, and we want to use what's happening now in our life, this problem with computer, to help heal us.'

'Now the thing about the computer is really that I have all rights to leave it wherever I want, just as you have all rights to not want it left there. But something I am doing is making you feel bad - angry, so we have a problem in our relationship. And we can do what we've done in the past, just try to ignore it, you keep moving it out the way hoping that I'll stop leaving it there, or you'll complain hoping I'll do what you say; you can ask me nicely to stop doing it; you can even yell at me. And I can do what you're asking, or I can tell you to go to hell, I'm doing what I please, it's my life and I want to live it how I do. And if I treated you like that then you'd feel bad and pretty soon you wouldn't want to be living with me. And if you just kept denying and burying your bad feelings and not saying anything, then slowly all that anger and resentment is going to build up in you adding to what's already down inside you, until you can't bear being with me anymore, or you get sick, or something else happens to show that you're more fucked than you were.'

'So do you see that the computer is just the trigger to make you feel angry, and the anger is really coming from your early childhood, because you could live with me leaving the computer on the couch and you having to move it out of the way all the time, yet without it ever making you angry. So you're getting angry for a specific reason and we have to find out why. You have to want to know why you're getting angry, and why now, in this very moment, when you weren't angry before.'

'I might have been angry before but just not have reached the point of saying anything.'

'True, however it's best if you can act spontaneously with your feelings. We have agreed that this is how we want to have our relationship: that as soon as you feel irritated or pissed-off in any way, you say it, you voice and so express your bad feeling. So you don't even let it go on, denying yourself until you explode.'

'Yeah okay I get that.'

'I mean this is all that I've worked out, you have to remember that actually I have no idea how it will be until we start doing it if we want to. I've tried to do it with things that made me angry when I was in the aquarium flat, but all I could do was speak out loud to the air or write about it.'

'Well whatever you've done you sure seem to have a good understanding of it all, not bad for someone who hasn't had anyone to do it with, I'd say.'

'Thank you.'

'And I'm enjoying this, I've never thought about any of this... never broken it all down, it's quite incredible really. So much does go on between two people, and like you said, over such a small thing.'

'That's right it does, but it's not a small thing really. It's the tip of an iceberg because this small thing in our life now is really the tip of a huge thing that happened to you all those years ago and has remained buried within you. It is a part of you, meaning it's all tied up in your beliefs and behaviour patterns, it's all a part of how you are. How you are is that this computer being continually left on the couch is making you angry, and you can either leave it that way or try to make the bad thing stop so you don't have to feel bad anymore - which is really stopping and

denying yourself feelings, you're stopping yourself from feeling bad; or, you can do the feeling-healing option, which is to try and speak about all you feel with the intention of bringing up all that it's connected to from your early childhood. And in doing so, so the theory goes if I understand it correctly, once you have expressed all the bad feelings out of you, once you've got to the point where you see how the anger at me about the computer is the same as the anger at something to do with your parents during your early life, you've uncovered the truth. Apparently the truth comes to you, helping you to see how it all fits together, making sense of it all. So you can see how the past is controlling your present. And when the truth comes, then you're able to change the past in effect by seeing that it's with your parents you are actually angry, at something they did to you, how they treated you, and that you're not actually angry with me and the computer. So you see it's all about them. And the more you can express all those buried and forgotten repressed feelings, the more you are healing yourself. Sort of like, as far as I can see, letting yourself out of the prison you've been trapped in, your self- and feeling-denying state. And so once all the truth comes up about this thing, you won't have any more anger to do with it, and you may find that you are never bothered by my leaving the computer there again. Or, something else might happen so the the computer isn't on the couch anymore when you want to sit down. For example, your speaking about to me, might make me think about my actions and I might change them, I might stop leaving the computer there. Or the computer might break down and we get rid of it, it no longer being in your life to be a problem. I don't know, I'm only making things up based on examples James has written about his own healing experiences, but somehow and in some way you will no longer be bothered by the computer.'

'So you mean that the only reason I'm actually getting angry with it and you anyway, is because of stuff from my early childhood?'

'Yes exactly. It's all to do with back then.'

'Do you really think we've got a lot of stuff from back then repressed within us?'

'I do, and the more I read about it, it seems very obvious, even to the point that everything that's wrong with us personally and with the world is being caused by our childhood repression. And that we've got no idea about how much we've got tucked away inside us. And we've got no real idea about childhood repression, how it comes about, the fact that we are so repressed, and all the problems it's causing us.'

'But what about psychology, isn't that what it's all about?'

'Well no, apparently not. I don't know what it is about, but only Alice Miller seems to be outspoken about it in regards to childhood repression and saying that all our troubles stem from how we were treated as children. And that all our mistreatment, and all the bad feelings it caused us, are still locked away inside us. She says locked away somewhere inside our bodies, but I prefer James' version - inside our soul. He takes a much broader look at it all including the spiritual aspect, whereas she seems to be anti the spiritual saying it's all just part of our delusion, the same one that makes us believe we're having a good happy life when we're stuffed full of repressed feelings that are really calling the shots.'

'But what about all the therapy. I've read and talked with people who say it's all about their early childhood, and it's about going into it all and bringing up the traumas.'

'Yeah I know, and some of the websites about all of that I've visited speak about repressed childhood trauma, and their psychotherapy is all based around early childhood and even using bad feelings to go into it. And certainly dealing with all the bad feelings that one unlocks, which of itself can be very traumatic, to suddenly have all this anger and pain raging up in you -'

'And won't that happen to us, what if we tap into some hidden place in ourselves where it's all locked away, won't it be too much for us to deal with? Don't you think it would be better to have professional guidance about it, to do it with someone who knows what they're doing?'

‘Possibly, I don’t know about that. But the difficulty is where you do you find such people, and they’d have to be therapists who’ve done or are doing their own childhood repression healing to know how to go about it all with you. And from what I can see, such people just don’t exist. It’s all too new and a lot of people don’t even take Alice Miller seriously, and she’s right out there.

‘And then if you are able to find someone to help you, you’ve got to pay for it and I can’t afford that. So what am I meant to do, just have to put up with all my childhood shit affecting my life, and tough luck, too bad, because I’m not on a good wage or rich so I can’t do anything about it. I don’t think that’s fair. Do I have to live the rest of my life on earth not being able to help myself because I’m poor, having to wait until I get into spirit before I can start working on myself? And that’s why I like James, he and Marion are poor, they can’t afford therapists even if they were able to find one. They’ve been doing it all themselves, with no help from anyone, and they *are* doing it, they have been working on themselves for years. So if they can do it, I don’t see why I can’t do it too.

‘But for some people who do have obvious early childhood traumas that are affecting them, perhaps they might need more professional help, I don’t know. I don’t think anyone does know and won’t know until people at least give their feeling-healing a go. Even James says he doesn’t know if what he and Marion does will work for others. We’re all on our own, and it’s all too new, we’re like the first pioneers forging their way across the Great Plains.’

‘It does sound a bit scary, what if we run into difficulties?’

‘Yeah I know, I’ve worried about it a lot, but all we can do is talk about all our fears - keep talking and longing for the truth. It’s what James keeps emphasising, it’s always and only about expressing all you feel. And he points out that it’s a whole process, it’s not some hit and miss affair, that if you take it on seriously then you’re working hand in hand with your soul to heal yourself, and your soul will only liberate so much at each time for you to work on. So although it might get pretty tough and there might be a lot of pain, it will be no more than what we’ve already experienced, that being, what we’ve already experience through our early childhood.’

‘But if it’s so important, I still don’t get what psychology is all about - all these years, Freud, Adler, Yung, all the greats, why haven’t they concentrated on early childhood if everything stems from that. How come we don’t all know about it? How come people haven’t been working to heal their childhood repression for years? And why is there only Alice Miller as you say, and then this guy James - he’s not even a psychologist is he?’

‘No, he’s nothing to do with any of that. It’s come about for him really from Marion and from the spirits, as I understand it.’

‘So this guy is writing about all this stuff because spirits are telling him about it.’

‘Yes, and Marion, she has apparently had a lot more to do with psychologists and therapists, I think she’s had breakdowns or something, she’s been in psychiatric hospitals.’

‘And they’ve been working on themselves for how many years did you say?’

‘About fourteen I think?’

‘Fourteen years, shit, then there must be a lot of stuff buried within us.’

‘Yes.’

‘Gee it does all sound amazing, but I don’t know if it’s amazing in a good or bad way. To think that we’ve all had this shit in us for so long making us all feel bad and we’ve never known. I still can’t understand what psychologists do then with people if they don’t deal with all of this stuff.’

‘I think it’s like the computer, in that, they try to use certain psychological techniques to solve the problem, to make all the bad feelings go away, to stop me putting the computer on the couch so you don’t have to feel bad.’

‘So you mean to just help people to further avoid and deny their bad feelings.’

‘Yes, over all, that is what I think. I think some people do make progress and do liberate some of their early childhood stuff, and enough to make them believe they are okay and able to have

something of a normal and happy life, but it's still a life in the negative, and overall they are still denying the greater part of their childhood repression. It's like they might fix some of it, bring out some amount of repressed feelings through therapy, but not all, not all in the way James and Marion are intending to do. They want to fully heal all of themselves, heal their whole negative self- and feeling-denying state, and to live a true relationship with themselves and each other. They want to be completely perfect, with a positive functioning mind and will, living true to all their feelings; to be completely self-expressive and not just selectively so. They want to be truly loving, and they want to live the truth - the whole truth. And to be able to do that, they first have to live the truth - reveal it to themselves - of their negative state, so their childhood repression.'

'So Alice Miller and other professionally trained psychologists and psychotherapists only go so far with people, but not the full way, not the full according to James and Marion - is that what you're saying?'

'That's right, that's a easier way to say it, yet, that's how I see it. I may be wrong of course, I know little about therapy...'

'Shit I'm busting for a piss. Throw that off and let me out will you.'

'Very lady like.'

'What are you talking about, I'm a good ol' Aussie sheila, and when you need a piss you need a fucking piss. And what are you doing? Aren't you coming with me?'

'I don't need a piss.'

'So, you can still come and talk to me - you can sit on the side of the bath. You have watched a girl piss before haven't you?'

'Ah, once or twice.'

'I want our relationship to be open, so that means doors too. God it infuriated me with Matthew when he'd be in the bathroom having his morning pooch and he'd lock the door. I needed to go in and get myself ready for work, but no, I had to wait for him. He was very funny about that, he didn't mind being naked and rooting all day long, but as soon as he had to go to the toilet the doors would close and be locked. And it didn't matter what I said, he wouldn't change his ways. Pity I didn't know about speaking about and expressing all my anger then. So with you Mark, unless you have any objection, I want to be able to come into my own bathroom any time, whether you are sitting on the john or not.'

'That's fine with me. I had that sort of relationship with a couple of my girlfriends. A couple of other ones were a bit strange about all that sort of thing, requiring their privacy, their 'private time' as they called it. But I like the open everything attitude. It's certainly a new experience for me, sitting here watching you piss - just talking about things.'

'Yes, and I can see it has another effect on you too, kind of turning you on too, is it?'

'Well hey, what can I say?'

'Come on, more of that later, let's get back to snuggling on the couch, I want to keep talking about it all. Another beer?'

'Yes, and I'll roll another smoke. We should have bought something to munch.'

'Munchies eh? I'll have a look in the cupboards. How about a tuna and mayonnaise, or as the Americans always seem to say it, a "tuna-fish" sandwich - you don't say a snapper-fish or trout-fish dip, do you; or peanut butter and jam - toast!'

'Yeah, anything would be good. I'll help, then I'll roll another.'

'Beauty!'

‘Okay, that’s better, now please, carry on with all that you were saying about this feeling-healing business.’

‘Okay, so where was I? Ah yes, so the whole thing about it is to keep focused on your feelings, just to speak about them with the intention of wanting to uncover the truth of why you’re feeling them.

‘So in regards to your feeling angry with me about the computer, you would just have to express all your bad feelings - your anger. So you might say something like, “Ah, you’re leaving the computer here on the couch gives me the shits. Shit it makes me angry. I hate it being here” - that’s the start, and then you keep going, trying to bring out all you feel. And it’s my job to listen to you, to want you to express all your anger. It might be hard for me to have you yelling and abusing me, and if you make me feel bad, then I have bad feelings to express, but really the whole idea is that I am to support you, be your friend in it all, be on your side, and want to help you bring out all your anger. So I might ask you why does it make you angry, so you have to work harder at bringing up your anger and saying why it makes you feel angry. Such as: “It makes me feel angry because it’s my flat and yet every time I go to bloody well sit down you’re stuff is in the way. I can’t do what I want. I’ve always got you in the way. I can’t just sit down where and when I want to. I first have to move the bloody computer. I first have to do something I don’t want to do. I don’t want to have to be bothered with moving the computer, I hate it being in my way, if it wasn’t in my way then I wouldn’t have to move it and I wouldn’t be angry.” And you keep going saying wherever it is your feelings are making you say. And when you can, during a pause say, you long for the truth: why am I feeling this way, what is the truth of my anger. And then you keep going speaking and expressing all you feel. And I can add my bits if I need to. I can help you say more, such as I could ask you: “what’s the big problem about having to do something you don’t want to do?” And of course you don’t want to do something you don’t want to do, but that’s not the point, the point of asking you the question, even though it might have an obvious answer, is to keep you talking more about it. “I hate having to do something I don’t want to do. I hate it more than anything in the world. I only want to do what I want to do”, and so on, something maybe like that.

‘Now while you’re in the thick of it, you can also long to know the truth of how it all relates to your early childhood. But you can’t use your mind to try and work out why, you just have to want to know, and allow the truth and insights to come of their own accord. And from what I can gather, you’re bad feelings will increasingly lead you back into your early childhood, so for example it might go like this:

“‘I hate having to do something I don’t want to do, I really hate it’.”

“‘Why, why do you hate it, and does it relate to anything in your early childhood, does it ring any bells?’”

“‘Yes, it does, I hated it when my parents made me do something I didn’t want to do, I hated it when they said do this or do that and I didn’t want to that. And then when I said no, they said I had to, and if I didn’t, then I’d got punished”, something like that. And if you didn’t naturally keep going, I could ask you a question like: “What would they do to you, what sort of punishment?” And you might say, “They’d deprive me of something, they would say, well Cathy, if you don’t do this for us, then we’re not going to do that for you, so how’s it going to be, do you want us to do that for you, and if so, then you’ll have to do what we’re asking you to do.” You know, some shit parenting thing like that. Where it’s complete abuse of you, fucking you over, fucking you up, and all with you having to be under their power and control, never being free to have your own say, and

with them always getting their way. You're made to do what they want or else you can't have life how you want it, and that sucks. That's fucked, parents have no right to treat their children that way, and yet it's the sort of shit you hear all the time.'

'Yes, I hate that when I hear parents saying that to their little children.'

'I know, me to, and the more I understand about my childhood repression, at least the theory of it anyway, the more I get angry when I hear it, and the more I want to stop them being mean and so bloody controlling. And because I feel this way, I guess I've got a lot of anger repressed in me about it all, which means that it probably happened to me, my parents probably did all that sort of shit to me when I was young, only I can't remember.'

'But possibly you will if you do all you've been saying - expressing all your anger and bad feelings.'

'Yes, that's what I hope.'

'Gee Mark, you say it all so easily, making it all up, I don't think I could do that.'

'It's what I've been writing about, taking examples and pretending that I'm doing my healing, based on similar experiences James has written about.'

'It seems a very creative thing to do.'

'Hmm, I hadn't looked at it that way. I only had myself, so I had to use my imagination, that's all. But as I said, it's all very well doing it all in my head based on things I've read, but what will it be like in real life. I'll probably be lousy at it, with so many blocks, and unable to remember what to do when the pressure is on and I'm feeling really bad.'

'Oh well, at least it's giving me a good idea of what I might be in for. But so far I like it, nothing you've said has put me off. I've felt a little apprehensive at times, but still I can imagine it working from what you're saying and it doesn't seem too bad. And actually it all makes a lot of sense, who would have thought that you could use your feelings now to go back into your early childhood ones.'

'Yeah I know, it's incredible. And so the idea is to just try and stay focused in the present moment, to keep going with all the bad feelings you feel now, and not to worry about or even try to consciously connect up with your past. It will come of its own accord when the time is right. And it might take time, even years apparently, before it comes, as there will be levels higher up within to be dealt with first. It seems to me that to begin with we really need to focus on just trying to acknowledge that we feel bad, and then to accept that we do and not push the bad feelings away, not do anything to block them out. Which will be hard to do, as our patterns of denying our bad feelings are all so fixed and well ingrained in us. But I think we'll be able to help each other. If I can see or sense or think you might be avoiding a bad feeling, I can ask you, and you can do the same with me. And then we can practice speaking about them, just expressing them. And we can long to see and uncover the truth of why we're feeling them, and long to see how it all relates to and connects with our early life - and then see what happens. How does that sound?'

'Yeah, good to me. All right, I'd like to do that, at least give it a go and see what it's like.'

'Good, I was hoping you'd say that. We can start now, but I feel we'll probably be wanting to feel good, all of this being new with each other, so we probably won't get angry with things about each other for a while.'

'No, and that's okay, I'm in no rush.'

'But I'm sure there will be things outside of us, say at your work and mine that might make us feel bad, and we can bring those things back and speak about them here together.'

'You mean if say a customer at work makes me angry, I should what, try and allow myself to be angry with her; or not, and instead be angry with her when I get home... I don't -'

'You should be as you feel to be. If you get angry, then allow yourself to be angry, however it's probably not a good thing for you to abuse your customer, so just say nothing but feel your anger,

keep it to yourself, and you can still be 'nice' to your customer. I've done this, and then if you need to speak about it because you are still angry when you get home, we can. You can put yourself back with your customer telling me all about it and expressing all your anger.'

'That sounds okay, I think I could do that. Sometimes I get so furious with some of the women, especially the snobby ones that have plenty of money and think they are above everyone else and that I'm only their slave. They treat me like shit getting me to run in and out of the back bringing more and more shoes out for them to try, and then they shit in my face and don't even buy anything. It's just like they're on some kind of power trip or something. I don't mind someone trying on every shoe in the place, and even not buying anything, provided they give me some respect.'

'And all of that, when it happens again, when you feel that way, you can bring back to me, and we can talk about it. You can go on and on venting and expressing all your rage at them, and you can long for the truth of why they make you feel upset, and we can see what happens.'

'Yes, okay, I will. I like that. That would be great. Gee Mark, what a nice thing to be able to do. Oh I often feel angry at work, but I have to put it all aside and keep smiling with nothing I can do about it. But now to think that I'm not all alone, that I can come back here and speak about it all with you... oh I can't wait! I'm looking forward to it. Yes, I can see, I can come back and shit all over them, bring it all out, all I really feel, and say all those horrible things that go through my mind, "You fat ugly old cow, you rich bitch, you..."', yes, that will be great!'

'Yes, it will be good to see what you really do feel.'

'Yes, oh yes, Mark, I can't tell you how excited I am. What a great thing. God I used to want to speak to Matthew about work, but he was never interested, and I suppose it was the same for me about his work, I was never interested, so it was just: "How was your day at work?" "Oh you know, the same old stuff." And then we'd go out for dinner. And all those bad feelings I'd had during the day, what happened to them, where did they all go?'

'Exactly, where did they all go. And then you think about how many times you've been angry or felt bad and not expressed those feelings because you can't, the situation isn't right, you're at work or something... where do they all go. Do they just go away dissolving into thin air?'

'Oh it would be so good, just to be able to do that, to be able to go through the day knowing any bad feeling I can save up and bring back to you.'

'We won't have much time to watch the televisions, shit, think about all that sport we'll be missing out on.'

'Fuck the sport. Think about all those fucking bad feelings I can get off my chest. Oh Mark, do you really want that? Could you bear me coming back day after day with more and more bad things to speak about? And what about you, what will you do, having to listen to me all night long?'

'I'll have to start work too, just so I have my share of bad feelings to speak about. No, I don't care, I'm sure one way or another I'll have lots of bad feelings to speak about. And besides, if I don't, and you do, and I get sick of listening to all your bad feelings, and you start to drive me mad with them - then I will have bad feelings I can speak about!'

'Oh you know, it helps me to feel just how alone I've actually been and felt all these years. Living with those men but so alone. Just to be able to go to work knowing I have a friend - you Mark - waiting back here for me, just here for when I come home. And being able to speak about all that's pissing me off makes me feel so good. A friend. You said a friend. Yes, that's what I want - a friend. And you Mark, you are my friend - my new friend.'

'I am.'

'Yippee, I have a friend, possibly the first real friend I've ever had. He - my friend - wants me to come home and tell him all about my shit day at work. He will be here wanting to listen to me and not wanting to go off to the pub and be with his mates. A friend, a truly honest to goodness friend. Someone who actually likes me enough to want to hear about my bad day at work, and to really

hear about it, and to hear about it so I can speak about it all wanting to find out what's really made me feel bad. Gosh Mark, do you really think we can find out why we do feel bad. I mean really find out, not the obvious superficial reasons, but really why, how it all relates back to our early life. Wow, what a big thing this all is. It's all so exciting.'

'I hope so, and I'm glad you're keen on it all. To me now it all seems like hard work, it's going to be bloody hard. Not the being here with you and wanting you to speak about all your stuff, but feeling bad so much. I just feel or sense that once we start to allow ourselves to get into it, it's going to keep coming, and it won't stop until we've healed it all. And if it's going to take years and years of hard slog, shit, are we even going to be together that long?'

'Ah, don't worry about that now Mark. There's no sense to it... although, as it is making you feel bad, perhaps you'd better start speaking about it all now.'

'No, not just yet, I don't want to have to strain my brain just yet. I think I'll deny myself a bit more and roll another one, I'm feeling a little tired having told you about it all.'

'Do you want to go to bed?'

'Oh no, not really. I'm tired, but I love it here with you like this. I never want to go to sleep, I don't want now to ever end.'

'They'll be plenty more nights like this.'

'But we can't just stay shut up inside for the rest of our lives speaking about our bad feelings.'

'Why not, what else is to do that's more important. If it is as you say it is, then what's the point of going on if we're full of childhood repressed bad feelings and our life is crap. Don't you want to do all you can to stop it, to fix yourself?'

'Yes, I do, but there will be so much.'

'Oh well, we'll just do it as we feel to. We can still do other things you know. We can still go out.'

'But what about seeing your friends and family?'

'Ah, who cares about them. I'm more important than them. I'll still see them, just not as much. And besides, now that I have a new man, they'd expect not to see me as much. And if it just so happens that I love being with my new man, then they'd just say I'm love struck and write me off. Then I won't have to bother anyway.'

'So you could be quite happy to just have me as your one and only friend in life?'

'Yep.'

'But what about if you stopped seeing all your friends and then we split up, then what would you do with no one?'

'I'd ring them all up again and say, hi, remember me, well it ended with Mark, it was great while it lasted, but it ended up a total fuck-up, so what's new - how about catching up?'

'Just like that?'

'Yep, just like that.'

'Yes, well, if you're game, I am. I'm not about to chicken out. Shit, I've only just met you.'

'Yes, but we will have to get you speaking more about these fears of the future you have, and hopefully you'll be able to find out the truth of why you feel that way.'

'I would like to. I have wondered how they relate to my early life.'

'Don't wonder, well, do wonder, but don't try and work it out with your mind, isn't that what you said?'

'So you were listening!'

'Yep, to every word you said. Isn't that what a friend is supposed to do?'

'Yeah, I guess so. Shit Cathy... you astound me!'

'I don't think I can be fucked fucking. Mark, would you mind if we just cuddled and talked more?'

'No, that's all right with me. Do you want to go to sleep?'

'I thought I might, but now that I'm here in bed, I don't think so. It's nice just being close to you in dark and with the moonlight shining in.'

'It's a great bed, so comfortable.'

'Another of Matthew's presents. He paid for my stuff to be moved from Sydney.'

'You were lucky he didn't just piss you off.'

'I know, but he was good like that. It was his duty, to look after the woman, which he did financially very well. But I no longer need that sort of looking after, this is what I need, emotional looking after, like you and I being here holding each other, looking out the window at the night and talking about whatever. I need lots of this. This is what I've never really had.'

'I want it too.'

'I know, I can tell. And I love the fact that you won't have to be going off to the track early, or having to go to sleep at an unreasonable time because it's a big day on the markets tomorrow, or something like that. It's so good to just be in and share our own little private world - just you and me. It's what I've always wanted really. And then to do this feeling-healing, that will really take us into our own little world.'

'Yes, I suppose it will.'

'And that makes me feel really good.'

'Yeah?'

'Yes.'

'Why?'

'Because I've always felt too exposed, too much like I'm all out there, and not enough of me is private. I mean, I know my feelings are private and I can keep them all to myself, but my life has been in a sense very public. With Matthew and Tim we hardly ever stayed at home. Just about every night we went out somewhere, to movies, dinner, friends houses. We never just did what we did last night, go for a walk, just the two of us along the pier. We were always with other people. I had lots of friends - acquaintances I guess they really were, but I never had an actual friend who just wanted to be with me - just ME. And I've always wanted that. I don't want to always be with my intimate friend and with everyone else as well. I used to think that the guys feared being just with me, and that sitting in the movies or a restaurant was about the most private we'd ever get. We were private at home but we spent so little time there. We always had to go early to work, then home late, and weekends were taken up with parties and seeing friends and more going out. We never just did what we've done, not even when we first met, just sit around talking, lie around talking, holding each other, cuddling, caressing, kissing, just being quite and together as one - and talking. Oh I do like the talking, I think it's really what a relationship should be all about. Those people who have been married for years and he comes home and she's got the dinner ready, and they eat in silence and sit watching the TV then go to bed, and do the same the next day and the next - that's not what I want. Oh shit Mark I couldn't bear that, I need to talk, and this I've only just realised with you. I actually like talking, feeling free to say whatever I want to say, and not having things that I'd better not say, or shouldn't say, or fear saying because of this that and the other thing. I feel like I want to talk and talk forever, but not just me actually talking, but us being together talking - you know what I mean?'

'I do.'

‘I don’t want to go madly rushing off to see all my friends and family showing you off. No way, I want us to be together, doing our own thing, with no one else intruding or interrupting. I don’t want to have to go and see my parents because it’s what I’m expected to do. I’ve always done that, and the same with my friends, having to do the rounds keeping in touch with all my girlfriends. No, fuck that, I want to be entirely selfish, keeping you all to myself, just the two of us. I want to do that for now anyway. I might change later on, but for now, I want us to have our own secret little world and for no one else to know about it.’

‘That sounds good to me. And I’m in no rush to tell anyone else about it, it’s none of their business.’

‘See, it’s easy for you, that’s how you see it, but for me it was about everyone else’s business, I was about their business. So I’d have to go running over to their houses and telling them all about you, having cups of tea and coffee and telling them about how good a root you are, and all we talk about, and what you look like. I mean I could take you with me, but it’s not the same gossiping with my girlfriends. But I no longer want to do that because every moment I’m with them I’m not with you, and fuck that, I want to be with you, to have my life with you, not with them. I’m not having intimate relationships with them, I’m not going out and living with them. I’m going out with you, and that’s what I want. So they will all just have to wait and make do with telephone calls. No doubt they’ll call me.’

‘How many close girlfriends do you have?’

‘There’s about six of us in Melbourne currently. I’ve got about twelve, but the other six are scattered over Australia and overseas. And of those here, two have recently returned from Sydney, and I was seeing them almost once a week, which was okay when I didn’t have anything better to do in my life. But now with you, now I don’t want to keep being like that. And for some reason I don’t want to tell them all about you. It’s as if I want to keep you my secret. I found you and I want to keep you all to myself. And I don’t think they’d be interested in all this feeling stuff, they are all still pretty much how I was. But I’m no longer like that. It’s a funny thing to realise that you’re no longer the same as you’ve always been, and that in fact you like yourself much better the new way. I wonder if that happens to many people. But something has happened to me, and it seems to have taken place since I saw Rosa. Maybe more went on with her than I understood; maybe there is something in the spirit thing after all. I don’t know, but being with you seems to be bringing it all out in me, changing me, or helping me to change. And I guess it’s all this talking, and more importantly, just being free to talk, feeling free to say whatever it is I want to, such as all of this now. I wasn’t wanting to say any of this, I didn’t even know I was going to say it all, but here I am and it’s all very important to me. I feel it’s helping me to get to know myself, and it’s all because of being with you Mark. You are helping me. I don’t quite know how, but it’s good - I like it, as I said, you’re helping me a lot.

‘You know, I kind of get this feeling as if it’s an energy thing, like yours and my energy, how it goes together, is having this effect on me,, well it must be mustn’t it, but what I mean is like there’s something else going on, on other levels or something I can’t quite put my finger on it, it’s only a vague feeling, but something. Something is sort of bringing us together, yes, that’s it, like it’s meant to be or something, and being together is easy. I don’t have to do anything, I don’t have to work at it, and I certainly don’t have to play my role. Yes, that’s it, I don’t have act or be any way, and a way that you are requiring or demanding of me. I guess it’s because you place no expectations or demands on me, or least so far you haven’t. I don’t have to be a certain way, say all those right things, act how the cute little girl is meant to act, or be the strong bossy type taking control; or, the assertive young woman about town. None of the old roles do I have play with you. So it’s a new role in a new play with you Mark, and one much more suited to my liking, that’s for sure.

‘And I feel like I don’t want to do anything to jeopardise it, to interfere with us being together, I just want us to flow along together, seeing what happens. To make no plans, to not think about the future, to just see what happens and what turns up. And I definitely don’t care that you’re poor, that you’re not working, that you have no career aspirations; God, all that shit I don’t care about at all. I’m happy to keep working at my job and my salary will keep us both, and now that I have something new to look forward to doing each day, and better still, to look forward to coming home to... Oh Mark, I just can’t tell you how excited about it I am, it gives me a thrill each time I think about it, to be able to come home and talk about my day with you, good or bad, and just here, in our little nest and not at the pub or some restaurant, and not rushing off to block it all out with a movie; and not even to sit here watching DVD’s all night - just talking and seeing what happens. We might want to watch a DVD but that comes after talking, taking always having the priority, that’s what I want, that’s how I want to live. Yes, to always make sure we put speaking to each other about all we feel our main priority. How would that be with you?’

‘Perfect. It’s exactly what I want too. James and Marion have done it, so James says. He says they’ve have difficulties doing it, but I reckon that’s to be expected.’

‘And I’m sure we will too. But at least that’s what I feel I want. It might be totally unrealistic, and once things settle down into us living together the old patterns might assert themselves, but at least wanting to put our feelings first will be different. So, if that’s all right with you, that’s what I want to do, that’s the sort of relationship I’d like to have with you.’

‘Fine by me. Shit, as I’ve said, you are my dream come true and the more you say the more I can’t believe my luck.’

‘Yes, well it’s not all just me you know, it’s you as well. It’s because of you, how you are, that I can feel this way. This wouldn’t be happening to me and I wouldn’t be saying these things if you weren’t here.’

‘So I must be good for something.’

‘A couple of somethings I reckon. But you’ll just have to let it go down again, because I don’t feel like doing it just now. I don’t want sex to disturb how I’m feeling. I feel so perfect lying here with you. You can touch me by all means, and I’m going to keep touching you, but if you don’t mind I don’t want to go any further just yet.’

‘I don’t mind, I don’t mind at all. You don’t even have to ask me, I like it any way with you. The fact that you do touch me, that’s wonderful enough in itself. So many of the girls I was with I had to ask them to touch me, they just didn’t do it naturally. But you do and it feels great, but like you say, it doesn’t have to go into sex. I’m in no rush, we don’t have to root all day long, we’ve got time, and I do feel better about that now, especially after all you’ve been saying and how it’s been going with you. I feel much more relaxed about all of that.’

‘Good. And I do like touching you, it’s nice to touch and be touched. And I want you to feel free to touch me wherever and whenever you want to. And if I don’t want you to go any further I can say, and I know you won’t push me, and that too gives me a good feeling. The others always pushed and pushed, even got angry if I didn’t comply with their wishes. And in the end I’d have to give in, put myself aside, let them fuck me, just to make them stop. Then over they’d role off to sleep. I don’t know how many nights I lay there, angry, really angry and frustrated that they treated me that way. It was all their way, well a lot of the time anyway, and I couldn’t say no. And I definitely couldn’t have spoken with them about all I felt, all they were making me feel.

‘And every moment you respect me - like now, you’re aroused, it’s nice and hard, and yet you’re not pushing me to have sex with you - I feel stronger within myself. And as I’ve asked you not to, you’re relaxed about that and I don’t feel threatened in any way. I don’t feel like I have to battle you to get my own way, you’re too respectful of me for that. And oh Mark that is such a big relief, I can’t tell you.’

‘Gosh, I would never have known you’d felt those ways. It makes me feel bad about some of the times with my girlfriends, I think I probably pushed them a lot, and what if they felt the same way as you did. God, now I feel like I was a right prick, making them have sex with me when they probably didn’t want to. And like you, they probably couldn’t speak up, might have been too afraid to, too afraid that I might dump them. It’s not a nice situation to be in. I feel sorry for them now. Oh god I hope I wasn’t too bad.’

‘I don’t think you’re capable of being too bad Mark. I don’t think it’s in you, not at least to the extent of how those guys were with me.’

‘Yeah... but more bad feelings for me to speak about, I dare say.’

‘And now I feel sure there is no rush having to speak about them all. It’s too hard, impossible, we’ll just have to take it slowly, as it comes, speaking about those parts we feel we want to.’

‘I like that idea, that sounds good, I think I’d be able to cope with that.’

‘Okay then, let’s do that. It doesn’t matter if we’re still denying lots of feelings, we can’t be expected to just stop denying them all at once, and besides, we’d be swamped, too overwhelmed.’

‘Yeah, we probably would freak out.’

‘And then we’d need help from one of those shrinks that you say don’t exist. We’d be right up shit-creek.’

‘Yes, a place I don’t want to go anywhere near, thank you very much.’

‘Good, so we agree to take it easily, doing what we can. I don’t see any harm pointing out possible trouble areas, places where we have obviously got things buried, but we don’t have to act on them all, not all at once. How does that all sound?’

‘Very good. I like it. You lead and I’ll follow.’

‘Right, I will, however you have to come along too under your own steam, you can’t leave it all to me.’

‘No, I’ll try. It’s just that you’re able to speak so easily about your feelings, I can see that already, but I find it difficult.’

‘That’s all right, I’ll encourage you. And push you if you need to be pushed a little.’

‘Okay, that’s fine by me. I might need the occasional little push.’

‘Yes, just a *little* one. Oh god, now you’ve got my juices flowing, climb aboard Mark, you may as well finish me off.’

‘As you say love, as you say. Your wish is my command. But I don’t think I’m up to climbing on top just yet, how about of side on?’

‘Don’t care, just do it!’

‘Mark?’

‘Mmmm.’

‘Are you awake?’

‘No.’

‘Thanks for everything so far.’

‘You’re welcome - and thank you.’

‘Goodnight Mark.’

‘Mmmm - goodnight.’

‘Yes... that’s nice.’

‘Hello!’

‘Good morning, it is morning isn’t it?’

‘Late morning.’

‘You’ve been awake for a while?’

‘Thinking - about all that we talked about last night.’

‘Mmm. It was good, wasn’t it?’

‘It sure was. I feel like I’ve learnt so much from you. Want something to drink?’

‘Yes please, my mouth is rather horrible - oh God don’t kiss me, it would be too awful.’

‘I don’t mind, so long as it’s a quick one. I’ll get us some fruit juice and a coffee, and what about some toast; but I’ll brush *my* teeth first.’

‘No tuna though - thanks. I’ll join you brushing your teeth - what were you thinking about?’

‘My life. Looking back over it.’

‘And what did you think about it?’

‘That I haven’t spent that much time actually thinking about it - really thinking about it. But with you that’s about all I’ve done, and I like that. I realised that I don’t want to think about things that aren’t directly in or to do with my life anymore. I’ve spent so much time thinking about other people, the men in my life, how they are, their lives, their families, my family, their work, their interests; shit I’ve spent so much time thinking about football and cricket and I don’t even like them. And I don’t want to do it anymore. I don’t want to watch the news on TV, I don’t want to know about other peoples lives who aren’t in mine. I don’t want to concern myself with anything that’s not in and a part of my life. I only want to think about things directly related to me, like you and me - how we’re feeling and what we think about what we’re feeling, and what our feelings make us think about. I feel like I want to come in, sort of back into myself more, and not be so out there, following on from what I was trying to say last night.’

‘And I was thinking about how much I really like all this stuff about feelings, I do, I really do. I had no idea that I would, but I really do. I love it, and I want us to talk about it as much as we can. Because as we speak about our feelings, we’re speaking about ourselves. I mean you can’t get much closer to yourself than what you feel, can you? In a way I guess we are our feelings much more than all the stuff we think about in our minds.’

‘Yes, our feelings are the expression of our truth, the truth being what we really are, in that we live the truth of our experiences through our feelings.’

‘Right. And so as I want to get to know myself, and I do - I realised this morning that’s all I want to do, then my speaking about my feelings is the way to do it. I have to speak about them, so they, which is really me, can get to know myself through them, because how else can it be. It can’t, that’s what I reckon, and I feel good about that.’

‘So you want to find the real and true you through your feelings, and you reckon your feelings are the way to do it?’

‘Yes, exactly, that’s exactly what I want to do. I want to find the real and true me - that’s right, I do. I haven’t been real that’s for sure. I’ve been false, all caught up in my fantasies, but I no longer want to be that way.’

‘So basically you want to find the truth of yourself.’

‘Yes, I guess so. The truth of myself - who the real and true me is. Yes, that’s what I want to do. And I need your help to do it. I also realised that this morning. I wouldn’t be able to do it on my own, I’d be too distracted. I feel like I need someone to speak to, to sort of complete the loop, if

you know what I mean. I give myself to you and you give yourself to me all through our feelings, all by speaking about them to one another. Yes, I like the sound of that.'

'So now you can long for the truth as you know what you're longing for and why.'

'Yes, I can. I will long for it, as you said. When I'm speaking about my feelings I can long to know why I'm feeling them, the truth of them -'

'Which will lead you to the truth of yourself, to knowing who you really are and what you're really all about.'

'Yes, occasionally I have wondered but not with any real seriousness. I think I haven't believed that I could ever find out. It was more of a wish, you know the sort of thing, what am I here for, do I have some purpose, what is life - and my life - really all about. I've thought about that sort of thing on and off over the years, but I've never got anywhere with it. I've talked with other people about it, but they've never got anywhere - at least not that I can see from what they've said - either.'

'I know what you mean. I've asked myself those questions millions of times, but it's only since becoming more aware of the significance of feelings that I've begun to feel that I might stand some chance of actually answering them.'

'Yes, I feel like I too can become serious about them now. I'd like to know: what my purpose is, what my life is all about, what it's to show me - what it's showing me right now, who I am, and why am I the way I am. Yes, I'd like to know all the answers -'

'The truth.'

'OK, the truth. So, what really is the truth?'

'I don't know. I think it's sort of the meaning of everything, the real meaning - the truth of it. And it seems that we grow in truth, in some way we actually grow or evolve in truth as we acquire - if that's the correct word - it. Or we grow in truth as we grow in truth - hmm, that sounds a bit obvious. But from what I've read about the spiritual side of things, our souls are what are called 'ascending mortal souls' meaning that our life is an ascension - an ascension of truth. So as we uncover more truth about ourselves and life, we grow or ascend, and we're apparently meant to ascend up through, or in through, the universe, all the way to where God actually is - to God's home: Paradise.'

'Paradise, like in heaven?'

'No, more than that. Paradise being the centre or well-spring of all Creation, or if you like, the highest heaven. The heavens of the Bible from what I can make out are really the different spirit worlds or mansion worlds that relate directly to earth, of which there are seven; but what the Bible doesn't say is that there are higher spirit worlds, the Celestial worlds or spheres that exist all the way to Paradise, and there's apparently millions of them. Paradise, the home of God, of God's Soul, is a very long way. And that we're growing in truth with the aim of one day evolving our way up through all the millions of worlds to Paradise, and once there, we sort of meet God, or something like that.'

'Do you know this from James' writings too?'

'Yes, and a book called *The Urantia Book* that he speaks about. I've had a bit of a browse through it on the Internet, it's a very big book about all sorts of cosmic things.'

'Well, I think I can handle the idea of growing in truth, and I like that, but so far as all the rest of it, spirit worlds and God's home, I don't think I'm ready for that yet. I feel it's doing what I said I no longer want to do, put my mind onto things that aren't directly to do with my life now. And now it's all about my feelings, or I hope it will be, and, yes, growing in truth - I like that. I want to grow in truth so I can find all the truth of myself. OK, so how do we do it?'

'It happens as a consequence of doing your feeling-healing, which mostly involves healing your childhood repression.'

'Just naturally?'

‘Yes, remember last night I said that as you work your way back to connecting with your early childhood feelings by using feelings you’re feeling now; and as you express all such feelings whilst longing to see the truth of them; then when it’s time, when you’re ready, when you’ve got all the bad feelings out of you that have needed to come out for the truth to be seen, you’ll see it - somehow it just comes up within you and there it is, and you know it. And as I said, I haven’t done it myself or experienced yet, but that’s as I understand what happens.’

‘Well I’d like to do it.’

‘So would I. I can’t wait to see what it’s like. How it feels and what I see about myself and my feelings.’

‘So because we need to speak about our feelings to see the truth - we do need to do that don’t we?’

‘Yes - absolutely, you can’t see or find it otherwise.’

‘And because it’s our repressed feelings we need to speak about too, then that means we’re stopping ourselves from seeing the truth of ourselves through our feelings because we weren’t allowed to express all we felt back then - right?’

‘Yes. We’re retarded in our truth grow because we stop ourselves expressing our feelings.’

‘I see. So if our parents hadn’t interfered with us, stopping us expressing all we felt, then we’d be naturally expressing our feelings and seeing the truth of them.’

‘Yes, and that’s how we’re meant to live. That’s the right way from what I understand. It would naturally happen, we’d naturally grow in truth as a natural consequence of expressing all we felt. And if we were able to live like that, then life as we know it would be a lot different, and I would imagine, a hell of a lot better. We’d naturally be growing in truth, and so by now, twenty-eight years of living growing in truth through my feelings, I’d be a very different person to what I am. And I doubt I’d be the nervous wreck I so often feel like. The lives we live are truth-denying, or anti-truth, we stop ourselves growing in truth, stopping our feelings showing us or leading us to the truth of ourselves, so we’re going nowhere fast, and certainly not to Paradise. It’s what our negative state of mind and will is all about - untruth.’

‘And it gets even worse, because if we’ve living untrue to ourselves, then guess what we are?’

‘What?’

‘Evil. We’re all evil. You, me, everyone, even the most good and kind and loving people on the world, are still all evil, all because we’re all bound up in our self-denying states and so denying the truth. Evil is the denial of truth, of all that is good, and that’s how we live. And we only have to look at how we treat nature, look at all those lovely little fish that we keep crammed in small tanks all for our own amusement - that is evil. They are not out there in the wild living a free life, living it how they want to live it. They are living their lives how we determine them to be, and that is not right. We’re not meant to be controllers.’

‘But you work selling them.’

‘I know! It’s part of my problem, I love them, I love being with them, looking after them, breeding them, looking at how pretty they are, and yet it’s all wrong. I’m all wrong and I can’t stop it. I can’t make myself hate it, and take myself away and do something else. I don’t have anything, they are my love substitute, they make me feel good, and I use them completely for my own selfish reasons. So everything I do is wrong. And what else is there to do, there isn’t anything because it’s all a part of the whole rotten thing, it’s all evil - everything we do. Even people who re-plant the forests and genuinely love nature are still evil, only I suppose they are not as evil as some - I don’t know about that. However that’s only a question of semantics, it’s like *Animal Farm* - are some people more evil or more good than others, I don’t know, as it’s all still wrong all because the people themselves doing it are still denying their feelings and living full of childhood repression, and are all fucked up. So as far as I can see, the only truly good thing you can do is work on

yourself to rid yourself of your negative state - and that's what I want to do. So I have to feel bad about working at the aquarium and treating all the fish badly, but there is nothing I can do. Yet at least it makes me feel bad, giving me feelings I'll be able to speak about to you. And I'm too chicken to kill myself and end it all, and even then what good would it do as I'd only die and wake up in spirit still full of my childhood repression, still denying my feelings and still in my negative state.

'So Cathy, there's no way out other than healing it, and that's the conclusion I've come to these past six months of studying it all seriously.'

'I see what you mean. It is all very serious isn't it. And you're right, there isn't anything we can do except heal ourselves... so I'm right with you Mark. I don't know about being evil, I don't feel evil, but I can see what you mean. It does make you think though. So, that's it, we do have to heal our childhood repression and negative state, for what else is there to do in life. I don't want to keep going making things worse -'

'Yeah - that's right, making them worse for yourself, because every time you deny another feeling you're stopping and so denying yourself truth, so you are making things much worse for yourself. Every time you deny truth you're that much more evil, or bad, or wrong, or whatever you want to call it.'

'But what about murderers, they've got to be more evil than those people who try to be good.'

'Yes, that's what you'd think, but I don't know Those murderers have been forced to be the way they are because of their upbringing, they weren't just made that way by God. We're all created to be good and of love, but we've all been fucked up, showing it in different ways. Some of us within the negative seem to be better or worse than others, but does it really matter, as we're all of it and in it and we can't escape from it. If you'd have been given the unloving childhood a murderer got, then you'd be like her, and if she got your childhood, she'd be like you - so who's really good or bad?'

'I see what you mean.'

'Yes, it's a hard one to reconcile with your mind, I've nearly driven myself crazy over it -'

'Oh, it's all too much for me, so I'm not going to think about it all, denial - yes, for the time being, I have to come back to myself and only think about myself and what I'm feeling - that's what I have to do.'

'Oh fuck!'

'What!'

'Shit, I'm sorry, I have to say more about it. I've just had a big realisation.'

'That's okay, but I'm not going to concern myself with it. But go on.'

'Following on from what I said, really you have to conclude that being a parent is the greatest evil of all. The murderer kills but still the victim lives on, they die in flesh but wake up in spirit, and sure, it's a horrible thing depriving someone of their life, doing such a horrible thing to someone against their will, but still it's only one act. And the victim, as I said, lives on. And it could possibly be even worse in some regards - I'd have to think about it some more - to kill an animal, as it doesn't live on, it dies and that's the end of its existence. At least we keep going.

'But to parent, to take a newly emerging soul - person - and corrupt it, to turn them completely against themselves, to really fuck them up for good by making them live in a self-denying negative way, that is wrong, totally wrong - that is fucked big time, evil at its best.'

'God I don't think parents would be too happy with that.'

'I know, I sure wouldn't want to be the one to tell them, not that they'd believe me anyway, but it's just how it is, how wrong it all is. To think that we consider the family sacrosanct, parents can't do a thing wrong, it's never the parents fault always the child who is wrong. And it's their own child, the very person who they are supposed to love and adore above all else. And the parents say

they are loving their child, doing all that unloving shit to their own child is loving according to them. We've got no idea. It's all so tragic. The very people who are supposed to love us are screwing us up all the time. Shit it couldn't be worse, everything is so fucked.'

'Yes, well I can't worry about that now either, I can only deal with myself. You can worry about the bigger picture. Keep saying whatever you want to, don't let me stop you Mark.'

'Oh, I feel too blown out by it all. I need to have something to eat. To think the greatest evil ones are our parents, our very own parents, and the tragedy is: no one fucking knows. Who's going to face the truth of that, it's too much.'

'We can face it, if indeed all you say is true. And we can face it as you say, as the truth comes to us through our feeling-healing. If it turns out that we have been parented so wrongly, then we'll know, we'll feel it, and that's about all I can face for the time being. The rest of it is just too much, especially having just woken up. So what say I make us a big omelette with all the left over stuff from yesterday - the eggs need to be eaten anyway.'

'Oh that would be great Cathy - I'd love it. It's so nice to have someone looking after me, someone to cook for me.'

'I don't mind doing a little cooking every now and then, but I don't want to do it all.'

'No, no, that's fine with me. And if you show me how to cook then I'll be able to cook for the hard working girl every night.'

'Sounds good to me.'

'Yeah, why not, I think I'd actually like to do that. Shit, something is happening to me that's for sure, me wanting to cook - ha, I've never wanted to do it before, and it was always the girls doing it. But yes, it's a new thing for me, seriously, I can see myself cooking while you tell me about your day at work. It would be good - I like that idea.'

'Good. And you can do the shopping -'

'Yeah, why not, the shopping for the two of us. Oh god, you know it's amazing, what have I been doing all this time. I lived with my past girlfriends as if I was staying at the hotel, but I don't want that - they probably didn't want it either. But I worked so much, I just slept and showered at their places, I never made it a home with them, I never considered it more than a half-way house, a stop over joint, and I liked it like that.'

'Avoiding the responsibilities, that's what you did, that's what most men do so far as I can see. Just expecting us women to look after them like their mother's did. Well I can tell you I'm not going to do that for you Mark.'

'No, and I don't want you to. For Christ's sake kick me up the bum if I start treating you that way, taking you for granted.'

'Oh I will, you don't have to worry about that. That is something I've firmly settled within myself. Why don't you go and have a shower while I make it.'

'No, I'll help, I want to start learning now. I know how to make omelettes, but I want to see if it's the same way you do it. And besides, I want to have my shower with you.'

'Yes, of course, me too, I want to have it with you too. Okay, we'll have it after, and then do you feel like going for a walk. I feel like getting some fresh air.'

'Sure, shall we go back to the pier?'

'Yes, good idea, and a look at the shops in Ackland street, I hardly go down that way.'

'So you don't want me to roll you another joint - hair of the dog - and all that?'

'No thanks, I've had enough for the time being. Later, when we get back... do you want one?'

'Yes, and no. I mean, I don't, but if you said you did, I would with you. No, I like the idea of waiting until later. I don't want to get dependent on it, having it with you every day.'

'No, nor do I. Just every now and then.'

'Yeah okay.'

‘Hey Mark, while I was lying awake listening to the birds, I started to think about living more in the country, more with nature, I don’t know that I want to live in the city all my life.’

‘Sure, it’s all right with me. I don’t care where I live and I’ve always wanted to live in the country. But I don’t think I could live there by myself. But if we work out and we do become committed to doing our healing... well, who knows.’

‘Why were you thinking about that?’

‘It is all a part of my living in my own world, withdrawing from the outside world, the world I have lived in. And my thoughts went along the lines of feeling like that, wanting to get further away, away in reality, not just away in our own little world in this apartment, but right away, into the country. I’ve love to have the bush around me, to hear and see all the birds, all the beautiful native trees and shrubs, see the flowers, and all the other creatures that you don’t see in the city.’

‘It sounds good to me.’

‘Yes, but what about if Joe wants to build this bigger aquarium you spoke of, and you wanted to be here in Melbourne working on it.’

‘Now I can say, why worry about the future until it comes. That won’t be at least for one or two years, it’s still going to take him another six months to see if he likes the whole aquarium business anyway, then to feel comfortable in it, and then to see if there is further business to be made in that to justify such an outlay. And then to find the land, and then to get permission to build, and so on, three years maybe. And if I have anything to do with it, I’ll be suggesting he builds it out toward the Dandenongs somewhere, out the east of Melbourne as that’s where the Asians live like at Springvale and they love all the fish. Somewhere say like out near Gardenworld, and if that were to happen, then we’d that much closer to the country anyway, and we could live say in the Dandenongs or Berwicks or out that way somewhere. I wouldn’t mind driving an hour to work if it was something I really wanted to do. So I’m sure if we’re still together by then, well who knows.’

‘And by the time that happens, if we are set on doing or feeling-healing, we might want to cut out and piss-off from everyone and everything, to really go away somewhere, so even going up north, to where it’s warmer, that would be good.’

‘I hadn’t thought about that. Yes, we could go anywhere. I know I’ll always be able to get a job in retail somewhere if I need to work.’

‘We both might want to live on the dole, really having nothing to do with the world.’

‘Yeah but the government would make us work, their not going to pay for us to do our feeling-healing.’

‘True, but you never know, we can be on it and say we’re looking for work, as that’s all you need to do, and if we live where there isn’t anyway, then...’

‘Gee, imagine if that is what we want to do, really give up everything and go away, just the two of us, to live where nothing is familiar and we don’t know anyone. It scares me but it’s also kind of thrilling.’

‘I agree. It’s easy to talk about it, but actually doing it. To pack up and move - to go.’

‘What do you have to pack up. Your whole life fits into your car.’

‘Yes, well, that’s true, but now with you I have responsibilities. We have to think about moving the bed, the fridge, the furniture, and that’s a lot of planning.’

‘No we wouldn’t. I’d rent this place furnished. Tim would get me a corporate tenant if I asked him, he’s already suggested it. And this area is only going to become more trendy, which was part of the reason I thought about moving to the country. So we wouldn’t have to do anything but pack the car with our clothes and a few other things, the rest we can buy when we find a place.’

‘Sounds even better.’

‘Oh I like the idea of it, it sounds so appealing, just to go and to look at different places around

Australia. I've always wanted to see more of the country.'

'Yeah me too. I've only been up the coast to Brisbane and over to Perth, I've always wanted to go right up north to the top end, and even over to the Kimberly's.'

'Argh it gives me shudders up my spine, to just be so free, to have no other responsibilities. Yes, to just travel and check it all out, so see where we want to end up. It can be our dream, and even if it doesn't work out, even if we don't stay together, at least we can work towards it. It makes me feel better about going to work every day, at least I can save my money and put it toward that.'

'Yeah, we could even stay for a year at a time in places, get a feel for them, we could both work, I could find something I'm sure. I can always paint houses, and I wouldn't mind doing that if there was a real incentive to do it. We could just have fun - fun! Isn't it ridiculous to think that we can't do - have fun, now.'

'I'm having fun.'

'Yes, well so am I come to think of it - but you know what I mean.'

'I do. It's about feeling fulfilled in life isn't it. Doing what you want to do.'

'And that's been my problem, I've never known what I want to do. Being stuck here in Melbourne, I don't know, and the trouble is I do feel like I am stuck here. I mean it's ridiculous really because I'm free to go, nothing's holding me back, I could pack up and drive up to Darwin now. There's plenty of work up there from what I hear, but I can't. I can't go anywhere, here I am, living at the back of an aquarium with hardly the sight of a tree - only a few sparrows, pigeons and Indian mynahs for company.'

'But don't you see, you've had to stay here for us to meet.'

'I could have met you in Sydney.'

'No, because I wasn't ready, and nor were you. You've had to study all this stuff about feelings and childhood repression, to get to the point of accepting it all and then wanting someone to come into your life to share it with. And here I am - I'm that person. I know that now.'

'You certainly did have a big night.'

'No, it's logical, I only have to look at my life and how it's gone, just as you only need to look at yours. It's you whom I'm going to do my feeling-healing with, if anyone. You can't tell me that now having met you, and you having told me all about it, that next I'm going to leave you and just happen to meet someone else who knows all about it and wants to do it. That's not going to happen, but it is going to happen with you.'

'Did Rosa say it would?'

'Not exactly, but the few things about the future with "the man" she did say, I can now relate to in this context. How we are going to help each other and all that. And she said it was going to be like no previous relationship, a whole change but more of a spiritual one, which I didn't quite understand then as I'm not really into spiritual things.'

'Doing your feeling-healing is actually the most spiritual you can be. The rest of what we call spirituality, according to you know who, is just mind-delusion and serves to only make you stay or go deeper into your negative state. And the most spiritual thing you can do for yourself is to find the truth of yourself, and as we both now understand, the way to do that is through your feelings. So you're setting out to be spiritual as you grow in truth, without really being spiritual, which is actually how we're meant to live. This way is being truly spiritual and not a part of all the delusional systems and their erroneous beliefs saying they are spiritual and religious.'

'I don't know what being spiritual is, I don't really care, but all of this, what you've been saying has definitely been having some sort of uplifting effect on me. I really like it. I feel like I'm seeing myself in a new light already, so many things have slotted into place about my past life with my boyfriends. So if this is all a part of being spiritual or what real spirituality is, then I like it. And I want more of it.'

‘As we’re all living in a negative state, then anything that doesn’t deal directly with that through the acceptance of feelings to uncover their truth, is not spiritual. It’s all part of the negative just taking the person further from the truth. The truth is the key to being spiritual from what I can see, so when you start to grow in truth, then you are spiritual, you can’t be anything else - you just are. And it’s what we are, spirits in flesh, only we’ve been made to live against ourselves, so to go the other way, is to just be how we’ve been created to be. You don’t have to ‘be’ spiritual, or think spiritual thoughts or have spiritual beliefs, that’s all a part of the mind delusion. All you have to do is live true to yourself, just be naturally who you are, and you’ll be as spiritual as the truth you are - you can’t be anything else, you can’t not be it.’

‘So if we do our feeling-healing and become truer and less false, we’re really awakening to our own natural spirituality... which is what - kind of dormant in us?’

‘Yes, I guess so, shut off, blocked, something like that.’

‘Gee that all sounds great. I like that. I am spiritual without even knowing it. Well, that certainly was easy. And I don’t even have to go to church or do meditation.’

‘Nope, you just have to live true to yourself - true to your feelings. And to begin that, we have to live true to our negative state, which means we’ve got to bring it all out so we can see what it’s all about - and that’s going to be very hard.’

‘Okay, so I won’t get too carried away just yet.’

‘No, wait till we start, and then you can.’

‘I will, that sounds good. Let’s eat out on the balcony.’

‘The pier or Ackland street first?’

‘Don’t mind Cath.’

‘Cath eh?’

‘Do you mind?’

‘No, I like it. How about the pier first and then Ackland street, we can get something more to eat there or buy more groceries for tonight. We’ll have to make out a list for the week and you can buy them tomorrow.’

‘We could have something to eat on the pier.’

‘Fish and chips again?’

‘They have lots of other things.’

‘Yeah, okay, we can see how we feel. By then I might have had enough of being out and want to go home, being all quite and separated from the world again.’

‘That’s fine with me - I like that idea. Maybe we could by a pizza or other takeaways, and I’ll roll us some more joints, and we can get some more beer or wine.’

‘Do you like Asian, Indian, Chinese?’

‘I don’t care, I like them all.’

‘And I’m paying - remember. You can save your money.’

‘But I want to contribute something.’

‘We can work that out as we go along. It is only the second day of our relationship after all. So it’s still my shout. And besides, things will balance themselves out, I’m sure of that. They will because we both want them to. You’re not going to just use me, that I know now, so we can see what happens. Okay?’

‘Sounds good.’

‘Mark, do you mind me being the organiser?’

‘No, I like it. I’ll say what I want and if I don’t want something. But I’m pretty flexible, so I’m more than happy to go along with you.’

‘I like that. It’s never happened to me before, as I’ve said. I don’t want to get or be too bossy, so tell me if I’m overdoing it a bit - okay?’

‘Yeah, all right I will. I’m used to being told what to do by women, not that I allowed my previous girlfriends that luxury too much. I think with them I was trying to break away from being at home with mum, but lately and with you, I don’t seem to mind.’

‘Am I like your mum?’

‘Yes and no. I don’t know yet, I don’t know you well enough. However I suspect you probably will be, at least certain aspects will.’

‘And you’ll probably be like my father, even though I can’t see much similarity in you at the moment.’

‘Yes, I guess so, I don’t know. I know one does a lot of role play through ones healing, being ones parents and early carers for each other, but how that all works I have no idea. It involves, from what I read, a lot of projecting and transferring of oneself onto the other person, my projecting mum and dad onto you for example, but I don’t know. I need to experience it all before I can really start to understand it.’

‘I’ve read a little about such things to do with psychology, but I don’t know how they work either. How are you feeling now?’

‘Good. I think I’m still recovering from yesterday and last night, the whole shock of being with

you is beginning to sink in. And the whole thing about doing our feeling-healing is a lot to deal with. Things are happening so fast. I think I need a bit of time to catch up. I feel like in one way we've been together for months, I have to keep reminding myself that we only met on Friday night.

'Actually now having said that, I think that I feel a little down -'

'Do you want to go to the pier, we can go back to the flat.'

'I still want to go, but I'll see if I can speak about what I'm feeling. It's sort of as if now the euphoria has worn off I'm scared that it might never come back. I mean what if we settle into together and I... oh I don't know, this sounds kind of stupid, but I still feel that feeling of what if you don't like me, or what if I'm not up to your expectations. I don't think I can bear to face it if we don't work out, if I was to go back to living above the aquarium. It's actually been very lonely with no one to talk to. But I'm afraid that if I don't make you laugh and keep you happy, then you'll find me a boring old fart and won't want to have anything further to do with me. Yeah, that's it. That I'll be too boring, not being like those other guys you've been with who were always doing something.'

'Always doing something they wanted to do and hardly taking me into consideration. No thank you, I want you to be at home every night with me doing nothing if that's what we feel like doing. I want to do nothing, just talk. Not even watch the TV or listen to music or read the papers or be on the Internet or on the mobiles - nothing. How it was last night will do me fine, just the two of us sitting together and speaking about whatever.'

'But won't you get bored if I'm always speaking about childhood repression or feeling-healing or what James has written?'

'No, and if I do I'll say. But there's a lot to learn about it, that's for sure, and you'll probably have to go over all you've already said about twenty times before it all sinks in, so no, you can speak about it all you like.'

'And look Mark, don't feel you have to entertain me, I don't need entertaining. I can do that for myself if I need it. I want you to be exactly how you are.'

'But what if I turn out to be a miserable lump that sits around your flat all day long doing nothing but feeling bad.'

'You can do that, all so long as we speak about all you're feeling when I get home. And if you feel bad, and that's how it is because of all your repressed childhood yuk inside you, then that's how you are, and I'll probably be the same.'

'So you don't think that I'll way you down - make you depressed and miserable if I am?'

'That you'll make me feel bad because you feel that way? No, I don't think so. I don't know, but I don't see why.'

'It does help me to feel better having spoken a little more about it, that's for sure. As I said, I've never said such things to anyone, and actually I'm surprised that I can, that I even know how I feel, that I can even say I'm feeling bad. I had my doubts about that.'

'Well you seem fine to me, not that I'm any kind of expert. And this Mark, as I told you, is exactly what I want, how I want us to be together. To keep speaking about ourselves, all we're feeling - you suggested it and I love the idea. I don't want us to speak about anything else that isn't about us unless we have to.'

'You seem to be able to take it all on and accept it all so easily, I guess it's all new for me - the reality of actually doing it.'

'I think it's what I've always wanted only I haven't been aware of it. It gives me a good feeling in here, deep inside me, deep in my chest, and that's what I like. That's what I want now that I've felt it. I don't want to loose that good feeling. And each time you've mentioned you're feeling bad and some fears, that good feeling in me has only got stronger, not any less. I don't understand it, but it's sort of like it's telling me that yes, feelings and speaking about our bad feelings, is the way

to go. So don't feel worried about me. Speak about your worries, and I'll be able to look after myself. You don't have to try and ensure that I'm happy and having a nice time.'

'I think I've always done that, I did it a lot with my girlfriends, I can see that now. I wanted us to always have a good time, for them to be laughing all the time. I didn't want any bad feelings that's for sure. But with you saying all of this, it makes me feel better. In a funny kind of way I sort of feel like you're letting me off the hook, and it's a relief to not have to entertain you and keep making you happy. Yes, a relief.'

'Or is it perhaps that you're letting yourself off the hook?'

'Possibly. Yes, I suppose I am. Yes, in fact you're right, I can feel the awareness growing in me, that's right, it's as if I'm saying to myself that I don't have to be how I was, I don't have to be the life of the party, I don't have to keep making my girlfriends like me.'

'Why do you think you did?'

'To keep them liking me? I wanted them to think that I was special - that I was worth being with. I needed them to want to be with me, liking me, thinking I'm funny or whatever. I needed them to... oh shit... something I read now makes more sense and I can see it applying to myself... I can see that I needed to control them, I needed to make them do what I wanted them to do, all so they wouldn't surprise me, dump me unexpectedly... yes, that if I kept them entertained then I knew where I stood, I was in control, and that's how I feel with you. Yes, I can see it, I think that with you because I'm not doing my usual things of trying to entertain you, that I think you'll dump me, so I'm scared because I'm not in my familiar control mode.'

'So if you don't do all the things you think I'll like you'll feel out of control?'

'Yes, I think so, but more like powerless, without any control at all. I feel like I won't be able to have a say in anything, that you'll take over, and as I'm no longer amusing you, you'll dump me. Shit where is all of this coming from. This is all new to me, I've never thought like this.'

'So what do you think is happening to you Mark?'

'I don't know, what do you mean?'

'Well, what was it that you wanted to experience, that you told me last night?'

'Umm... I don't know... what?'

'The truth, you wanted to experience seeing the truth of your feelings.'

'Shit, that's right! I did, I do, and yes you're right, I guess this is it, this is what it must be like. Fuck, it's great. It comes up so fast, and all this stuff is there and you suddenly do know, and it does make sense because all I've said has rung true. I'll have to think about it more and talk more about it, but I can see it is true.'

'Wow, to think that it is true that my feelings have led me to some truth about myself, gee to think this is what it is like... Ha! I've begun my feeling-healing!'

'I think we begun it when we met.'

'Really, you think so?'

'Yep, I do. I think we're under way, whether we like it or not.'

'Shit, I guess you're right. I'm too caught up in my mind thinking about it all. Ha, well fancy that then, shit I feel a lot better now. I do feel like some sort of weight has been lifted off me. I feel lighter in way, sounds funny, but I do. And it's true all I said, I can still see it all clearly. I wanted to have power over my girlfriends to stop myself fearing they might get bored with me and no longer like me. So I had to control them making them like me. Oh, shit... here's more of it, now I can see that I don't really know if they did like me, me, just me. They might have only liked me because I was making them like me. Oh shit, I was so false with them... oh God what a creep I was. Now I feel bad again.'

'Tell me more.'

'I was a fraud... oh God it feels so bad saying that, me, a fraud. I was con, a bullshit artist, I just

said all those things so they would like me. I didn't mean any of it, just a showman, oh God I hate myself. What a horrible person I was to them and I don't want to be that person with you, I don't - don't let me be it.'

'You're not like that with me. I wouldn't stand for it anyway. But you don't have worry, you're not like that.'

'Why not, why aren't I? I must still be that person, what's happened with you, why aren't I like that with you?'

'Maybe I'm not like those girls -'

'You're not, not in anyway.'

'See, so there you are, obviously with them you felt you needed to be a certain way, yet with me you don't need to feel that way. That's interesting isn't it, I've never thought of it like that.'

'I think you're right, you must be right. So, wow, that is interesting, to think that I can be so different with different people.'

'I think we all can, and we all are, only mostly we're not so aware of it. I'm very different with you as to how I was with the other guys, you are different to them, so I relate differently to you.'

'Ha, I guess so. So I wonder if I went back with those previous girls I'd be that way again?'

'I don't think you would be able to go back with them. I think you've changed since them.'

'I think you're right. By the way, does it bother you my talking about my past girlfriends?'

'No. What about you when I speak about my ex-lovers?'

'A little. I think I'm a little jealous of them. I want you all to myself, as if you've never been with anyone before.'

'You mean a virgin all to yourself, oh great one. Do you?'

'Yeah, something like that. I want you to want me and no one else. I don't want you to ever look at another man. Oh God - poor old bloody God, how many times have we said His name in vain - here I go again sounding like a real prude, me, who am I to talk.'

'You just want to control me too, like your girlfriends.'

'Oh shit you're right, I do. Fuck what is this, expose Mark for the shit he really is - the controlling bastard.'

'Well you said you wanted to see the truth.'

'Argh don't remind me. I do... but -'

'But what?'

'But, but I don't want to feel bad. I don't want to see what a controlling user I am.'

'But it's the truth.'

'Can't you be a bit nicer about it.'

'Oh Marky-poo, it's not very nice you know being a controller, you naughty little boy, how's that?'

'Yuk! But I am a naughty little boy, that's how I feel, like I should now get punished for being such a shit to those girls. Oh God I can see myself, hear some of the things I said, being the show-off, the know-it-all. I want to puke. How could I have been like that? Oh God I was such a fuck-wit. What an arsehole I was to them. How did they put up with me?'

'They must have liked you as you were, they did go out with you.'

'Yeah, but what did they see in me?'

'Probably some handsome spunk they wanted to be rooted senseless by.'

'Yeah right, in my dreams. Ha! Is that how you see me and what you want?'

'Might be. I'm not saying. You'll have to work it out.'

'Just you wait until we get back.'

'Is that a promise?'

'Might be. I'm not saying, you'll have work it out.'

‘Touché!’

‘Oh but how am I going to live with myself, now knowing that about myself?’

‘I think it will make you a better person. I like it, that you can say it all, that you can come out and come clean. It’s quite amazing, quite a confession.’

‘The truth eh... well I did want to see it, and I knew it wasn’t going to be fun. But I didn’t expect it would be like this, like being hit over the head by a base-ball bat.’

‘A bit of a blow to the ego is it?’

‘It sure is. You can say that again... oh God... and I wasn’t even longing for the truth!’

‘You’ve been longing for it so much these past months, and that now you’re finally trying to find it, now that you’re speaking about your feelings, it will rush out.’

‘I hope so... not that I like what it shows me about myself too much.’

‘No, but it’s you, it’s a part of you, isn’t it? It’s you in your evil, negative, truth-denying state. And you can’t deny it.’

‘No, that’s the trouble, I can’t. I mean, what could I say, that I wasn’t like that when everyone except me could see that I was. You would have been able to, wouldn’t you, had you been watching me?’

‘Probably.’

‘I don’t want to be false Cathy, I don’t want to put on a show. I don’t want to have to entertain you or anyone else. And it’s so much work, it takes so much energy. I feel exhausted by it... now at least I feel like I can rest. I can give it up, at least I hope I can.’

‘What was it you said: that when you see the truth then you’re healed of the problem.’

‘Yes, that’s right, gee you’ve got a good memory and grasp of it all.’

‘I like it, it all made sense. I can see you’re doing all that you said would happen.’

‘Yes I am, aren’t I. Ha, fancy that, I wouldn’t have believed it. It was only a dream, a longing, to actually start working on and healing myself. And to think that I might have actually healed a little bit of myself. Of something to do with my negative self anyway. It sure would be nice if I was never like that again - how I was with those girls. But that would be too easy, I’m sure there’s still a lot more to it.’

‘No doubt, but you’ve made a start.’

‘I have, a start on my feeling-healing. Yes, I have... but what about you, you’ve got to make one too?’

‘Oh it will come when it’s ready, I have no doubt about that. And things have been happening anyway, I can feel that. I’m changing a lot. All of this is new to me, it’s all happening too - it’s very exciting.’

‘Wait until you feel like a shit, then see how exciting it feels. Although you probably weren’t like me, you probably didn’t have to put the show in anyway, you would have known those guys liked you.’

‘Oh, I’m not that pure. I put on my show, and my time will come. And I want it to, but when it’s ready, when I’m ready. And all you’re saying is helping me, helping me to understand myself, you and others. And I think that’s what it’s all about - understanding ourselves and each other.’

‘Yeah the truth.’

‘Yep - the truth!’

‘Cath, do you like working with feet all day long?’

‘Yes, I do. They’re not that bad. I get to see all the rich feet, you know those that are well groomed, pedicured and painted - in summer anyway, not rotten old smelly ones or anything unpleasant like that. My feet come in all sizes and shapes and I like that. I didn’t think I would like it when I first started there, but it was all David Johns could offer me. They said I could move once I’d been there three months if another position more to my liking and experience came up, but I like it where I am. It’s small, yet with a reasonable collection of good women’s shoes, some practical, other’s fancy, but mostly it’s the customers I enjoy. I’ve got to know some of them quite well, you’d be surprised to hear how many shoes some women have, a few of them come in almost every week for a new pair.’

‘Gee they must have money, those shoes cost, what, two or three hundred a pair?’

‘Yes, and money is no object. They say they enjoy the whole shopping experience, and it’s the service they like. I think they like to talk. One older Jewish lady says she likes to come in just to have chats with me. She sits in “her” chair and we chat if it’s not busy, she even chats away when I’m serving others, and they don’t mind. Most people seem to like sharing how they think and feel about the shoes and other things.’

‘Is she lonely?’

‘I don’t know. She’s always talking about her sons and daughter, she’s always telling me about everything she does during the week. I don’t know, maybe she is.’

‘Maybe she just loves shoes.’

‘Yes, some of them are beautiful, all the different designs. If you had loads of money I could see the temptation in wanting to collect them.’

‘I suppose so, just like people wanting to collect fish. Do they ever wear them all?’

‘I don’t know, but I don’t think that’s the point.’

‘What is the point?’

‘Just having them, having them where you see them.’

‘It sounds a bit sad to me.’

‘Yeah I know, but we all want things like that, to make us feel good, that much I know.’

‘We do, and I suppose if you had heaps of money, then why not. I can see one might collect things just for their beauty, or because you liked having them around. Like cars, a huge collection of Rolls Royce’s, or old vintage ones, or whatever. I’ve never been much of a collector.’

‘No, you’ve had girlfriends to fill the gap.’

‘Yes... I have. I’ve never thought of it that way. I suppose I did kind of collect girlfriends - oh, that sounds great. Have you collected anything?’

‘Only bad feelings from my relationships. I think I wanted them just as much as the Jewish lady wants her shoes.’

‘Bad feelings eh, but that surely didn’t make you feel good.’

‘No, but I wasn’t aware that I was actually collecting them, but now I can see that I was. I believed I was collecting good feelings being with the men, but how wrong I was.’

‘So you don’t get bored just trying shoes on people all day long?’

‘No. Occasionally it gets a bit trying with a trying customer, and as I told you, I get very angry, but mostly I enjoy it and the day passes quickly.’

‘What’s DJ’s like to work for?’

‘Really good. Because I did my training with them in the city before I went overseas, they know

me and that helps a lot. I got on well with the head manger in women's fashion, and she got me the position at Southland. They want me to move further up being able to be more of a floor manager, to coordinate the organising of a whole floor, which will be good. I'm just waiting for such a position to come available. They prefer you being older in my area, and I enjoy working with the older women. They know what it's all about, no fuss, you just get on and don't step on each other toes. Less falseness as they don't have to impress anyone like the younger staff feel they need to do. So there are less personality hassles, we all get along well.'

'Do you sell many pairs?'

'About five to ten pairs a day, sometimes more, other times less. It is pretty consistent though, as it is in most retail shops.'

'So that's a few hundred a month at two hundred bucks a pop, that adds up to quite a bit in a year.'

'We do all right for such a small area.'

'They must be happy with you.'

'They are, we've been selling more than they did, since I started there.'

'I can see you being good at selling. You don't bullshit, people I would imagine can trust you, so respect you.'

'That's what I'd like to think. If I don't think a shoe will be good, if it doesn't fit properly or the person doesn't like it as much as I think they should, then I try not to sell it, and I think women like that. It's always been my approach. I don't want to just sell it to achieve big numbers over the quota, I can't sell like that, I hate it. I hate been sold to like that, and if anyone does, I don't go back. So I treat the women how I like to be treated, and it seems to work. And I've never had to worry about making sales targets, as I always have. It just happens, and having had enough experience about that now, I just enjoy it instead of worrying about making the target like some of the younger girls do.'

'I don't think I'd like to work selling to meet targets.'

'It's bullshit really, but it keeps the bosses or someone happy to think they're in control. People are sellers or they're not, and there are sincere ones and insincere ones, and over the time I've been in sales, I've seen that in one way or another, the insincere ones might make bigger gains up front, but it doesn't last and they have to always move on. Whereas being sincere and respecting the customer, over the distance pays off, and it's far more enjoyable developing relationships rather always having to rely on new customers so you can rip them off.'

'I saw that with the old boss. Had he not had a constant flow of new customers I don't think he'd have survived as long as he did. He burnt all the longer term customers we'd try to develop, they all got pissed off with him. They'd come into chat with us staff as they enjoyed the shop. Some would even ask when his days off were so they could come in without him being there and chat, but they didn't spend any money with us - they hated him. And we didn't care, he was such a prick. They'd go and buy at the other shops. It was funny really, the stupid fool, and he thought he had such a good business and was the greatest seller there ever was. He could have had a much bigger and better business if he wasn't such a thief, always ripping everyone off. The customers weren't dump like he thought they were, they'd get burnt once and then never come back, and he never wondered about it. He sure opened my eyes. And thankfully Joe is the exact opposite, and we're getting a good lot of return customers thankful they can come and spend with us without having to endure the old boss' bullshit. It's amazing how much people value the relationship with the staff, first, in so many cases, and it's not always just a matter of price. That's been new for me, to see all that.'

'I know, it is, and that's what I like about it all. Mark, I feel like I've had enough of being out in the world, would it be all right with you if we skipped looking at the shops and went straight to

Safeway on the way home.'

'I couldn't think of anything better. I can't wait to get back to the flat and lie again on the couch, that was so nice last night - so, so nice.'

'Yes, it sure was.'

‘Mark, what say we have a treat now: the cheese and biscuits, and I’ll make a salad to go with it, and then we can indulge ourselves with drugs and drink until later on, when we can walk down to Fitzroy street for a pizza which we can have back here while we carry on drinking and smoking - how’s that sound. I do feel like splurging with the cheese. I get the urge every now and again.’

‘Sounds great.’

‘But you’ll have to finish the cheese off through the week, I won’t want anymore. You know, got to look after the figure and all that.’

‘I understand, no worries, it will do for my lunch. I’ll buy some rolls and have it with other stuff.’

‘Good. I do like all the different cheeses.’

‘And so you’re going to be little mouse and only nibble at them?’

‘Yep.’

‘I thought so, glad we didn’t buy too much.’

‘So, how are you feeling now Mark?’

‘Good, nothing bad going within me, now that we’re back. I feel better actually, being here with you. It’s good on the pier, it’s probably my favourite spot in Melbourne, being near the water, but it’s nicer here. It is good to be together, just the two of us - isn’t it?’

‘It is, it really is, and it keeps feeling better and better. It’s all I want to do, I don’t want to go out again and sit in a restaurant for dinner. No, the idea of a pizza and having it here, our being together talking and doing nothing, it is so good. It’s making me feel like I can relax for the first time in my life. It’s a strange feeling, one I’m not used to, and I keep asking myself, what did I do all the time. I don’t know, it’s all very weird - the feeling of changing, of being different to how I’ve always been. And I’d probably be freaking out were it not for the fact that I keep feeling better and better about it.

‘I was wondering Mark, if you felt like making up another scenario about the feeling-healing, that was so good last night, giving me something I could relate to.’

‘Sure, I can try. I’ll probably say all the same stuff over again -’

‘That’s okay, it would be good to hear it all again.’

‘Okay, let me see... what sort of scenario... let me think... okay, what about... yes... okay, say we’re sitting here together and suddenly a noise starts up outside, say... something like men coming and digging up the road or pipes on the nature strip, or something like that. And it begins, and it’s a bother, and we try to block it out. We rationalise to ourselves that it must be important, something needing to be done by the council or whatever, and we carry on. But the noise of the drilling and digging, and the voices shouting above it all, goes on and on and on. How’s that?’

‘Good. So, what do we do?’

‘What do you think we do?’

‘We speak about our bad feelings... okay bad feelings... anger at the noise if it makes us angry.’

‘Right. And we must try and speak about them as soon as we feel them, not putting them off until we can’t bear it any longer. So it could go something like this.... we’d be just sitting down with a cuppa and then we hear the drill start, and if it made me angry, then I could say something like, “Oh fuck no, that’s a horrible noise - no, I don’t want it. I hate it, no, no, no, shit it makes me angry”, something like that.

‘Now trying to remember what James said, the point is first to accept that we feel bad. Okay, and then to speak about our bad feelings, to tell each other if we both feel bad, or for the one feeling

bad, to tell the other. And then to long for the truth, to want to know why the noise is making us feel bad - angry. And to want to know right back to our early childhood, to want to know what the noise represents in our early life, why has it come into our life now making us feel this way. And really, I guess, who the noise is from our past life as a child.

'I tried to do this when the council came to dig up a pipe just below my room above the aquarium, and the bloody noise went on all day, and the vibration nearly drove me crazy. I made myself stay home for as long as I could trying to see how bad I felt. As soon as they started rolling up and it became obvious they were going to dig, I wanted to get of there, right there and then. I wanted to split all so I wouldn't feel bad, but I realised this and so decided I'd stay and see how I felt about it all. And I went and spoke to the guy, who said it would take about five hours to do the job, so I sort of knew what I was in for.

'So we could do the same in this scenario, we could leave, go out for the day, get away, even though we don't want to leave the apartment. If they weren't drilling and digging we wouldn't go away for the day, so we should stay for the purpose of not being made to do something we don't want to do, and to see how it all makes us feel. Because we are wanting to do our feeling-healing, then when something bad happens to us, such as this, we try not to run away from it, doing what we can to prevent and stop ourselves from feeling bad, and instead we use it to make us feel bad, and this brings up another important point about the healing. I just remembered it.

'In setting out to do our healing this way, we actually want things to make us feel bad. We *want* to feel bad, and this is a big thing, to actually want to feel bad when all we've been taught is to not want to feel bad, and that feeling bad is very bad and we should do all we can not to feel bad. So it's to go against our programming, which you can imagine, is not only going to be very hard, but will no doubt be very stressful.'

'Yes, I hadn't thought about it that way. To want to feel bad. To even encourage bad things to keep happening all so you can feel bad. Yes, that would be hard to do. So if we have an argument and we're making each other feel bad, then instead of doing and saying things to make things "all better" - all nice again, we should even try and stir each other up more, with the intention of making ourselves feel as bad as we can.'

'Yes, that's the idea. But personally I can't see it happening, it would be too hard, too much, particularly when we're just starting out.'

'True, but I can see the benefit in it, not to just always try and pretend with each other to be nice and caring and loving, all that usual falseness you do in a relationship, but to allow yourself to be angry with the other person and to speak about it all, not hold it in; and I suppose to allow yourself to fight, all so you can get it out, all so you can find the truth of why you're feeling that way.'

'And how do you know all this Cath? Have you been secretly reading up on some of the things I've printed out from James?'

'No, it's just coming to me. I see pictures and then speak the words they make me feel. I can see it because of what you're saying. And I feel it's all very important. It's doing the exact opposite of what I did with Matthew and Tim. We never just had it out, brought out all our bad feelings, we always did all we could to stop ourselves being angry with each other. God I was too scared to do that, they might have not wanted to be with me.'

'Yeah, that's how I was with the girls.'

'So it would be great if we could do it. If we could speak about all the things that make us feel bad in our relationship. If you do something that pisses me off, then I could say so, and vice versa. It would be such a different way to have a relationship, so much more open. It would be great. I'd really like us to try and do that Mark, do you think we could?'

'We can try. I'm sure you'll be better at it than I will, but I'm willing to give it a go.'

'Great, oh I can't wait to get mad with you.'

'I can.

'So long as we don't see that as soon as we get angry with each other it's the end of the world, as long as we see we must allow ourselves to be angry, all so we can bring the anger up and out of us, all so we can use it to uncover the truth of why we're feeling bad, it should be okay. I don't want us to just be having yelling matches, but it should be okay if we both want the same thing - to use our feelings to find the truth of why we're feeling them.'

'Shit Cath, you've got it, that's it. Boy you've picked it up fast.'

'I am a fast learner. You didn't think I was listening, but I am.'

'I didn't not think you were listening, but shit you've sure grasped it fast.'

'It's only because of the sexy teacher I've got.'

'Do you really think I am sexy?'

'I do. I like your arse.'

'What about my nose and ears?'

'Yeah, not bad. Don't know that I'd call them sexy, but...'

'Okay, enough of that... so we try to allow ourselves to feel whatever bad feelings we feel, even if it means ripping each others throats out. And all so we can uncover the truth of them, with the truth hopefully taking us back - or whatever takes us back; taking us back to our early childhood so we can see the truth of them. So we can see how we're feeling now relates to how we felt back then - the same feelings.'

'Got it. It sounds good. Great. I'm all for it - except the throat part. So keep going with the horrible noise outside... Oh I feel so excited about that way of having a relationship. It would never have occurred to me. To simply allow yourself to freely express all you feel, all bad and good feelings - everything. God it sounds so natural, so obvious, and surely it's how we're meant to be. And I can feel how it doesn't necessary mean it will be the end of the world. That's the best part for me. You know Mark, I hated it so much when the guys would yell at me, shit it was bad, the worst thing, and I never knew what to do. But now to understand, that you can yell at me and I know what to do, makes all the difference -'

'What do you do?'

'I would allow you to yell at me - all provided you were doing so to find the truth of your anger. And if your yelling made me feel bad, then I can speak about those bad feelings - I can yell too if that's what I feel to do. And we can both yell at each other knowing that we're really only angry with each other because of stuff deeper within us that we're triggering off. And that really we might not be angry with each other, if we didn't have all that stuff within us. But we have to keep yelling and wanting to know the truth of it, so we can find out what our anger is trying to tell us. Yes, that's it, isn't it. Our feelings are trying to tell us something, that's why we feel. So what are they trying to tell us. Yes, I like that, pretty profound if you ask me. So what are my bad feelings trying to tell me. What is the truth of them, why am I feeling them; what's going on in me now and in the past that has the same feelings, that's making me feel the same way. That's it, isn't it, I'm not seeing it the wrong way, am I?'

'No, I don't think so. It sounds good to me. And hey, don't look at me to know it all. I've only read some stuff and telling you what I've read. We've got to work it all out for ourselves, and as James says, he's only a guide, his experiences are his, and aren't definitive. They might not even apply to other people he reckons, he's only putting it out there to see if helps, and if anyone can do anything with it.'

'Okay, so what you're saying is there is no right or wrong way to do all of this.'

'That's right, we're not him and Marion, so we can only take what he says, and if we think we can relate to it, see if it's relevant for us. And it might be, but it might not be. And if it's not, then I guess we'll find out. I don't know how. I suppose like anything we'll decide that it's not for us, or

it doesn't work for us or whatever. However, judging by my experience earlier and what you're saying now, I think we're on the right track. So if you feel these things and understand them this way, then let's go with it - we've only got ourselves.'

'Yes, all right, that sounds good. In fact it sounds great. We really are on our own. We don't have anyone to help us.'

'No, James doesn't even have a forum with people sharing their healing experiences. He says he doesn't want to do anything like that at least until he's finished his healing. I don't think we want to wait around till then.'

'No, I want to get into it. I think it fantastic. The more you tell me, and the more I understand it, the more it gives me goose pimples thinking about it. It's just so different from anything I've read or been told about before. To use your feelings to find the truth of yourself: to find out what you're really all about; who you are as a person, and what life's all about - it couldn't be more brilliant. And so obvious, it's so simple.'

'Simple yes, if you're not doing all you can do deny your feelings.'

'That's right, but we can deal with those barriers when we get to them, and I'm sure we will.'

'And James says you just do what you do, that being keeping on speaking about how bad you feel, keeping on expressing your bad feelings so you can uncover the truth of them; and slowly you should see the truth of your barriers like everything else. And when the truth is seen, they will no longer be barriers.'

'Brilliant, so you don't have to change the basic principle, you just have to concentrate on expressing all your bad feelings.'

'Yes, honouring them, accepting them, and allowing them be. Then speaking about them. He says expressing them more than just speaking about them, bringing out all the emotion of them - speaking with the emotion of the feeling, not just using your mind to speak about how you're feeling. So you speak with the feeling you're feeling, you allow your feelings to speak - to speak for you I suppose.'

'Yes, I can see what he means. It's not just a mental exercise, like a robot: I HAVE A BAD FEELING, SO I WILL NOW SPEAK ABOUT IT... I AM ANGRY, I FEEL ANGRY. No you allow your anger so speak, you put the emotion you're feeling into it, I'm fucking angry! Angry! Fucking angry! That sort of thing, put you're whole being into it. All of you feels angry not just your mind, so you speak your anger with all of you - that sort of thing.'

'Shit, I think you put it better than he does.'

'Well I don't know, it's just what I feel. If I imagine being angry, I want to say fucking hell I'm angry, that thing really pisses me off! That fucking noise outside, that fucking digging and drilling is really fucking pissing me off - that sort of thing.'

'Please keep going, you've got the idea, you say it better than I would.'

'Okay... I'm so angry about that noise! Why do they have to come around here and make it! They won't shut up! Go away! Fuck off - shut up, stop making the bloody awful noise! I hate that noise, it's the worst god dam noise I've ever heard! It makes me feel like my head is being drilled, my teeth are rattling, and that scares me. The noise is scary, I feel so scared; scared that they are going to come in here and drill me. Fuck I'm freaking out, I hate it, I can't bear it, it scares the shit out of me. I feel like I'm going to wet my pants. How about that?'

'Perfect I think, couldn't do better myself.'

'Oh I can't wait until I hear such a noise, I'm going to really go for it if I feel angry about it.'

'Okay then, so you feel so angry, and that's all you do, what you did, and you long for the truth of why you are angry, and you can say it out loud, "I want to know the truth of why I'm angry, why am I angry, what happened to me in the past when I was younger, to make me feel this way" - something like that.'

‘Oh, so you’re longing doesn’t have to be silent.’

‘No. Well, actually your true longing is silent, it’s not said with words, it’s an intent, what you want or desire, and you long to know the truth of your feeling. But you can back it up with words, like I did. But as I’m saying the words, I’m also longing with all my heart and soul, with all my being to really know the truth of my anger, to want to know it more than anything else in the world. Our longing has to be that strong apparently, as it has to be stronger than our minds intention of stopping us from knowing the truth.’

‘I see. Okay, then I’ll try longing next time I’m feeling bad.’

‘And you can do what I’ve been doing, longing all the time - whenever you remember - for the truth. The more you want the truth of yourself, the better. It’s what it’s all about, and the more determined you are to want it, the more you’re healing will happen, so I reckon.’

‘James goes on to say that our feeling-healing is really our will-healing, that it’s our wills that have been stopped from freely expressing themselves. That it’s on the will level that we’ve been fucked around the most, as we’ve been forced to use our will against ourselves, this being seen by using it to deny our own feelings. So to reverse this we’ve got to have a strong will: a strong desire, a strong intent, a strong longing to find the truth; to allow ourselves to express our feelings. So to do your feeling-healing you’ve got to be pretty determined about it. And that’s what I’ve been trying to do these past six months, really get determined about it. Decide that it is something I really want to do for myself. And I’ve been longing determinedly for someone to do it with - and look what happened. You popped into my life, so I must have been doing something right.’

‘From what you said, I can feel that determination growing in me. My excitement is being matched by it. I want to do this thing, my desire is growing. And that too is a good feeling. Gee, all these good feelings.’

‘Yeah, probably building you up for the fall. You’ll suddenly be plunged down into your bad ones, and then see how much you want to do it.’

‘I guess you’re right. It’s one thing feeling good and excited about it, but yeah, when I start to feel bad... I suppose that’s when it really counts, just how serious are you, how much do you want to push ahead with it all. I can see it would take a great effort, to want to keep feeling bad when all you want to do is not feel bad.’

‘Exactly. It’s not a fun thing nor a game. It’s a serious business. We’re completely fucked, and to bring all of that up so we can see it, is not going to be a pleasant experience. And to then express all the bad feelings that are associated with our fuckedness, it’s going to be fucking hard. It was fucking hard for us as little children to be forcibly turned against ourselves, and then made to believe that was the right way for us. That being untrue to ourselves is good for us, all because it’s what our parents told us. To become evil, because we believe it’s good, and the right way to be, and the truth. We were made to believe our untrue state was true and good for us. So we’re going completely in the wrong direction using all our will to do so. And now to put on the brakes and to say no, not that way, wrong way go back, is going to be fucking hard.’

‘I see what you mean. So I’d better enjoy my good feelings while I can.’

‘I would. Now, one of the things that James stresses all the time, and which he’s had great problems with - and I think I might have some of the same problems, but from what you’ve already shown, I don’t think you’ll have anything to worry about - is that when you are angry, for example at the noise outside, you stay on your side, meaning you don’t dump your anger on the men making the noise, you stay true to your anger expressing how it’s making you feel. You don’t go yelling at the men, even in your mind or even in here. You just stay focused on how the noise is making you feel, speaking about all of that and wanting to know why you feel that way. To yell at the men is only trying to take your anger out on them, which really is only you trying to have power over them, to make them go away, to make them shut up and stop the noise, all so you no longer have to

feel bad. And during those hours at my flat I dumped all over them. I was yelling at the top my voice at them to fuck off, to stop making the horrible noise, and as the noise was so great, I don't think they heard me. God I was angry with them, and it was all to try and shut them up, trying to make them stop so I didn't feel angry anymore. That part of the exercise I could well and truly do - pity it was the wrong thing to do. The other true part, just me saying to myself, to the walls, to God, the air, that I feel angry, very angry with the noise, and to just keep expressing the emotion and angry feelings like you did before, was very hard. I didn't know where to go with it. I was trying to use something James had written that Marion had said, as she seems very easily able to speak about her feelings, but it was hard. I think you'll have to help me there. And if you can see that I'm trying to dump my bad feelings onto someone else - like you, trying to make them stop all so I don't have to feel bad anymore - that I've gone off the track, then stop me - please.'

'I'll try to. I think I see what you mean. I think it's what most people do when they are angry, or feel bad. They try to take it out on the other person or thing that's making them feel bad, taking it out on them by, as you said, trying to make them change. Rather than not doing that and just allowing themselves to feel bad, speaking about it all and longing for the truth. I see what you mean by staying on my side. Yes, I think I might be able to do that. If I think it's all about me, not really about the men and what they are doing, then I might be able to stay with my feelings and not try and take it out on them. It's keeping yourself separate in a way, not getting directly involved. Yes, I can see that if I was so angry at them making that noise, I'd want to go down and yell at them to go away, to punch them until they stopped doing that horrible thing to me. But I don't want to do that, I don't want to do anything to them. And really they have all rights to make the noise, I can't expect to have the whole world being how I want it to be, to have everyone being how I want them to be. But I can speak about how bad I feel. It doesn't have to have anything to do with them, and that fits perfectly into what I've been feeling anyway. I don't want to have anything to do with the men or the world. They are my feelings, the men just happen to be doing something to make me feel them, but they are mine and I want to deal with them myself. I want to allow myself to have them, to feel as bad as I can, as they - the feelings - are making me. Yes, that's what I'd want to do in that situation, I can feel that. So, for as long as the noise makes me feel bad, then I will try to keep expressing such bad feelings, all while I long for the truth of them. And in that light, I can see that in a way I'd even be grateful to the men for making me feel angry, all so I can use it to find out more truth about itself. Hmm, it sounds good in theory... but in practise... I think I'll settle for killing them all.'

'That's something, to think about being grateful to them for making the noise. I could just see myself going down to the men that day and shaking their hands for making such a racket, me who is fuming with anger and rage at them for making such a horrendous noise, for subjecting me to something that's so bad.'

'And that's it, isn't Mark, it's more to the point and I guess more to the truth, that you believe they are doing a bad thing to you, that they are making you feel bad deliberately, that they are not taking you into consideration, not asking you if you mind if they make a bad noise. They just come along and start, and you have to suffer it or go away. You feel... what... arrr... you'd feel powerless, that's how I'd feel if I put myself in that situation, I'd feel powerless that I can't do anything about it. It's all being done to me and I'd hate that. Yes, I can see and feel that. So I'd want to go down there and smash them, to vent my anger on them, to smash them to pieces, so even kill them if I really let myself go. God yes, I'd be so furious I'd be screaming like a mad woman, but I don't want to do that. I don't want to go out there and abuse them all, they'd probably just laugh at me; and besides, what could they do, pack up, say they were sorry and come again another day, just for me when I was out at work. No, I don't think so. And as I said, I don't even want them to know I am angry, I don't want to show myself that way. I do with you, but not with strangers. I so much

like it as you've said it, that I don't have to. You know I used to think that I had to stick up for myself no matter what. Women's lib and all that. That I should be able to go down there and stick up for my rights, and not only that, but make sure they do stop, to be even more powerful than men. But it scared the shit out of me all that sort of stuff, and I never really wanted to do it. I have done it, but all I ended up doing was shaking a lot, so scared they'd all laugh at me. Mostly men are very nice about it when being abused by an irate female, but still I don't want to do it. And now you're telling me that I don't have to, and shit what a relief that is. I can leave all that sort of thing to those powerful women who want to fight for their rights that way. But I don't want to have anything to do with any of that. I just want to sort out my rights with you Mark, not the whole world. And so to just keep my feelings between us, to be able to speak them out to you, that would be fantastic, and to not have to worry about anything or anyone else - oh what a relief.

'Oh and that makes me feel good too, really good. I like all these good feelings, such great insights. So many things I thought I had to be like, so many things I thought I had to do, and now you're telling me I don't. After all that, I don't have to do anything. You're like a gift from God, or rather like we spoke earlier, you're like my father saying that I no longer have to be this way, and that I can be free to be however I want to be.

'What a fucking relief, I can't tell you. I don't want to be that woman out there fighting against all men for her rights. I want to be in here with you struggling along trying to express my feelings to you - yes, that's what I definitely want to do. Oh Mark, what a great scenario, what a great picture you've given me, I can see it so clearly, I thank you so much. You have no idea what you're doing for me. Rosa said you would do a lot for me, that we'd both do a lot for each other, but I had no idea and so fast. What a great weekend it's been, all of this - meeting you in the first place, you and I talking about taking on this adventure together. It's better than planning a holiday.'

'I wish it were a holiday.'

'We'll see, but it's so important Mark. I do see that. You're right, it is all very important. And if it's the only way to be truly happy with yourself and with another person, then I'm at least willing to give it a go. And what a relationship it could be. Just think, you and me working our way along, working on ourselves, working to heal ourselves of our childhood repression, that which I still have no real idea about.'

'You know, when you were saying that you felt powerless by the men and the noise, and that's what made you angry and like you wanted to hit back, that reminded me of being with dad, and times when he made me feel powerless. I can remember feeling very angry about that. I can remember him yelling at me and how bad that made me feel, and I used to feel angry, and now from what you said, I can see that I did feel angry because he made me feel so powerless.'

'That he wasn't respecting you, respecting your rights, respecting you as a person.'

'Yes, that's right. Not respecting me. I've read that in James' stuff so often, but now it's just hitting home.'

'Now you've got something personal to relate to, it's not a mind thing.'

'That's right, and I'm starting to feel a bit bad.'

'What like?'

'Down, a sort of sinking down feeling.'

'You don't feel angry with your father?'

'No, not at the moment. When you were saying that and I thought of him I felt angry, but that's gone, now I just feel... what do I feel... how do I feel... I don't know.'

'Can you tell me more about the feeling, maybe that might help.'

'Tell you, what do you mean?'

'Describe it more, you feel down, down, how does that feel? Do you feel like you're sinking down, and if so, down into what. And are you falling - down, as in falling down, or falling over,

falling down that way. And are you going down fast or slowly. If I try to imagine sinking down I feel heavy, a heaviness, like there's a weight on me and it's pushing me down. And what feelings would that heaviness be... arrr, probably sadness, like I'd feel sad that my dad didn't respect me and treat me well. Miserable, that he was unkind and unloving to me - that sort of thing.'

'Yeah, I can relate to that. Both sad and miserable and definitely a heaviness. Sort of in here, in my chest, a pulling down, as if something is almost pushing me to the floor, or I want to lie on the floor. Yeah sad... oh god, now I feel like I want to cry, a sort of crying feeling, like I want to curl up on the floor and cry.'

'Cry if you want to, don't mind me.'

'No, I don't really feel like tears will come, but it's as if it's inside me, something is crying - perhaps it is me from long ago. I don't know. It's kind of faint. But miserable, crying, sad, yes that's how I feel, that he didn't treat me right, all what you said. I feel all those things. That's incredible, I do, I really do. And in a vague way I can sort of somehow sense that I'm back with him. I can't remember anything specifically, but it's as if he's just treated me that way and now I feel miserable about it all.'

'I think you might be touching on your childhood repression, how it was for you when you were young.'

'Yeah, I think you might be right. Ha, fancy that. What a day. Well I guess I've got what I asked for. God I don't feel good. I feel bad, miserable, and it feels like I'm in a sea of it, like I've sunk down into it, into the waters of misery - not a place I want to be.'

'Yes, but don't fight it, just let yourself go and feel it.'

'I'll try. But I can feel that I don't want to. I don't want to go into it, not just yet. To touch on it, that's okay, but I don't want to go right down, there seems too much.'

'Well you don't have to, and not all at once, anyway. How about rolling a joint for us - a bit of bad-feeling denial.'

'Yeah, that sounds good. But I think I can still allow myself to feel sad. You don't mind, do you?'

'Shit no, of course not. Feel as sad and miserable as you want. That's what it's all about. I'm your friend in it. You just tell me whatever it is you want to say. I'm here and listening, speak or don't speak, do whatever you like.'

'I will, thank you Cath. That in itself makes me feel better, just to know I have a friend.'

‘James speaks a lot about having a friend, how important it is, and how difficult it’s been for him to accept Marion as his friend.’

‘Why?’

‘I spoke to him about it in one of my emails to him, and he said that he’d been parented to accept his brother and sister as friends, together with his parents and grandparents, and then the whole world - everyone being his friend. And how he had friendships was simply being with people. So with Marion, as he is with her, living with her, then she was his friend, and he wasn’t meant to do anything else in the friendship other than just be with her. Sort of be there for her, help her if she wanted anything, do what she asked, but mainly to try and make her life as comfortable for her as she wanted it to be - it was all for her. And so long as she wasn’t too demanding or critical, he would stay with her like a good house guest. She was the leader in the relationship, he fitting in and going along. He wasn’t his own person in his own right, with his own life and integrity, he was something more like a shadow of hers, which made it very difficult for her as she didn’t want to live with another one of herself. She wanted a friend, someone who was entirely different from her. When she felt bad, she didn’t want him to feel bad because she was feeling bad, almost feeling the same bad feelings as her, she wanted him to feel what he felt, being separate to her. So she could feel bad and speak about it all to him without him getting affected if he didn’t feel bad himself. But as he would get affected, then she’d end up having to help him speak about his bad feelings, putting hers and herself aside.’

‘He said it all came about because of how his mother treated him, to the effect that, for him to be with her and not make her angry with him, he had to sort of become her. So he merged himself with her in a way, putting his own feelings aside. But in doing so, he lost himself, he could only exist vicariously through her, and so that was what he was projecting onto Marion. He wasn’t separate from his mother, she didn’t allow him to be, so he wasn’t a separate person to Marion, making it very difficult to be her friend.’

‘God it sounds complicated.’

‘Yeah, doesn’t it. I don’t know how they’ve managed to work it all out, it must have nearly driven them mad.’

‘Does he say that, that they were nearly driven mad?’

‘Yes, they’ve been near breaking point often, which sounds scary.’

‘How do they know that they were near it?’

‘Marion’s broken a few times apparently in various ways having to spend time in various hospitals, so she’s more familiar with the edge.’

‘Oh yeah, you said that. And they’ve just done all this on their own?’

‘Yes, it all coming about because of their spiritual interests. They came together interested in the same thing, which came down to wanting to live true to themselves; and as Marion was more aware that her bad state was caused because of her early childhood, they started to try and uncover the truth of it, and this has all come from there. Some years into it, apparently they came across an Alice Miller book, and as her work confirmed they were on the right track, they kept going. They don’t know where they’ll end up, but they can’t stop, it’s their whole lives, there is nothing else for them, so he reckons. Life hasn’t given them any real fulfilment, their parenting meant they were failures in the world and society, which was why they both sought the truth - they wanted to know why.’

‘What do you mean by failures?’

‘You know, the usual stuff, they never found something they liked to do, so never made any money; their careers never happened, things thwarted them, and their relationships didn’t work long enough or weren’t false enough to get married, have kids, a house - all the usual stuff, so they turned to the spiritual side of things for help and answers. He came up through the New Age; she more the Eastern way.’

‘Which presumably they found.’

‘Yes, they are way out there on a limb in no-mans-land, but I think they like that. And when you consider that they see the whole world, all of us - including themselves, from the worst to what we consider the best, as being evil and negative, anti-truth and self- and feeling-denying, then they’re taking a big stance, pushing the whole world away and saying it’s wrong.’

‘So they’re not wanting any outside friends?’

‘No, I don’t think so. Although James seems friendly enough, and more than willing to answer any questions, so long as they are relevant to ones healing.’

‘The whole idea about their approach to life is that life is all about relationships, and if you can’t get the relationship you’re having with your self, and then with your partner, right to begin with, then why bother with anything or anyone else, as it won’t be right anyway. They want to live true to themselves, then be together this way, and see what that’s like, as it seems no one has demonstrated it on Earth for a very long time. They want to heal all their childhood repression and then see what life is like, as it should be - how it’s meant to be, in that, as it’s been designed to be with a positive mind and will.’

‘So how do they live, what do they do, how do they survive?’

‘They’re mostly on the dole. Marion’s ten years older than James, and he’s coming up on forty-nine. They haven’t been able to work because of all the misery and bad feelings, all the pain that’s been surfacing in them over the years. It’s been very difficult from what I gather, and now James is doing a little casual work at a Fishing Park. They’re living down at Phillip Island. They couldn’t afford to live in Melbourne anymore, the rents being too high.’

‘So, what’s the gist of their spiritual stuff?’

‘It’s pretty simply, but it too is out there. It’s based around the fact that we’re living in a negative state of mind and will because of higher spiritual influences that came to bear on humanity a long time ago. And as a consequence we’re all living under the delusion that how life is, is right for us, yet it isn’t, it’s all wrong. And so all the religions and spiritual systems are wrong, in that they are helping people advance their negative state and are anti truth, because they’ve been evolved within and out of our negative minds.’

‘And that we pass our negative state onto each other by default, meaning, we don’t know we’re doing it. Parents don’t have any idea that they are fucking up their children, and how we parent we believe is right. But the result is we’re all full of childhood repression, and you know about that now.’

‘And so too, do you know the way for us to heal it: feeling-healing. And if we were to do that, then in theory we’d be living with a positive mind and will, and so in our perfect natural love state. And then the higher spiritual side to life comes in.’

‘According to Jesus, via a guy called James Padgett - an American, who automatically wrote messages from Jesus and other higher spirits early last century, God is offering us His Divine Love. But as James says, which I’ve already said to you - God is a ‘Their’, as God is both our Father and Mother of Heaven, being the two personality manifestations of the one Soul, which is neat having God as soul-mates, and which if you ask me, makes a lot of sense, so we can then take after Them. And if we choose to long for Their Divine Love, it will change our soul from being of the image of God in our natural love state, to becoming of the essence of God in a divine love state, or something like that.’

‘So we can long to God for Their Divine Love as well as the truth. And you can long for it anytime, as it’s available to us. So we could start doing it now, or when we’ve finished our healing... I don’t have any feelings about that yet. I’m still reading about it all, and, as I said, I don’t have any real feeling for God.’

‘And the other part is that Mary Magdalene is Jesus’ soul-mate, and together they are our real spiritual parents, whereas the Mother and Father are our Soul Parents, and of course our own mothers and fathers are our physical parents. So his *Divine Love Spirituality* brings in the feminine in various ways being represented by the Truth, as in Mary Magdalene; and the Love, as in the Heavenly Mother, so it kind of balances out everything. So our unbalanced and bias toward the masculine gets brought into line.’

‘So what about church, and having to go, and praying, and all that kind of stuff?’

‘There’s no need for it. It’s all personal. People can get together and long and pray for the Divine Love, and I guess speak about it all and help understand things about feeling-healing and all the rest, but so far, and as far as James is concerned, at least until he’s done his healing, there’s no need for it. It’s just a matter of getting down to doing your healing, with or without the inclusion of the Divine Love, that’s what I see it all boils down to, as he says.’

‘Well it sounds okay. I like it actually, especially the part about the feminine, Mary Magdalene and Jesus, and the Heavenly Mother with the Heavenly Father. The church wouldn’t like it much.’

‘No, particularly the Catholics as they are so consumed by their worship of the Virgin Mary - the wrong Mary.’

‘Typical, God what a laugh, what a joke, all those people worshipping Jesus’ mother, when it’s Mary Magdalene who they should be focused on.’

‘Yes, which is all a part of the whole evil state, with our negative minds staying in control of us, as we have been made to believe all the wrong things. I can’t see those people wanting to do their feeling-healing and uncover the truth of their childhood repression.’

‘So that’s why James and Marion don’t want to have anything to do with the world in that way.’

‘Presumably. Why would you when it’s all wrong, false and serving evil.’

‘So the church is evil?’

‘Yes, as is everything man has created, as we all are, whilst we live denying parts of ourselves.’

‘God, it would have a fit if only it knew.’

‘Yeah, but I don’t think they’d listen. James would be called evil because he puts shit on parenting so much, saying we’re all wrong how we do it - and he talks to spirits. And the church needs as many children in its ranks as it can, all so it can keep indoctrinating them to all their shit. That’s how it all keeps going, because as children we’re subjected to it and made to believe it’s right. And it’s very hard to let it go - you have to do your healing.’

‘Shit, I’m glad mum and dad weren’t religious, I’d hate to have all that religious stuff going around inside me as well.’

‘Me to. Luckily my parents weren’t interested in it, just left it up to the schools which weren’t interested in it much either.’

‘I went to a Methodist school, but nothing they said grabbed me. I couldn’t see the point of it all, all the God and Jesus stuff, and as you said, it was all to male orientated, but I did like what you said about the inclusion of the feminine. God, if the church took that on, it would be the end of it.’

‘That’s right, and so as those people who are in it for power and control over others want to keep that power, they’re not about to consider, let alone welcome, any fresh ways of looking at things, or any new truth. That’s why it has to all be about the Bible and only it, for if you start to think outside the box, it all falls apart. Mind you, it’s always fallen apart inside the box for me anyway.’

‘It all makes me feel like I’m on the right track, wanting to withdraw from the world in my little way. To concentrate on trying to find the truth of myself, that’s what is appealing to me. And all

you've said Mark, and the small experiences we've had of it so far, I feel it's the right path for me. And like you, I don't feel any connection or need to have one with God yet. It's enough to know God is out there or in there or wherever. And it's kind of comforting to see God as both a Father and Mother, I do like that, but when I'm ready for God, I'm sure I will feel it.'

'Yeah, that's how I feel about it. And really, it's first things first - the healing. I did try longing for the Divine Love, but I think you've got to have some sort of connection with God before you can long to God for it. But as I didn't, I didn't get anywhere with it. But still I like reading about it all as it sheds a lot of light on the healing, and *Divine Love Spirituality* is all based around the healing, because we can't live as Mary and Jesus do, until we've done our healing, so there's really no point worrying about what they say until then.'

'It is interesting though. It's not like I would have expected it to be. I can't stand all the church stuff, all having to go and do the group thing. It's not my scene. This, what we're saying, is far more up my alley. Just the two of us concentrating on trying to sort ourselves out.'

'I agree. All that other stuff is just doing all you can to avoid your bad feelings, so far as I can see. It's subjugating yourself to someone or something - like the Bible and Church - having yet more control over you, and I sure don't want that. My parents control over me is enough. It might all sound like good fun in those revival churches or whatever they're called, but na, it's not for me. I did go along to see what it was like, but I couldn't get into it. It all looked too false, too controlled. It wasn't my scene. And everyone was so extra nice, all those false smiles, no, I couldn't get away fast enough.'

'Oh no, I couldn't bear all that. No, the more we talk about it, the more I'm becoming convinced that James and Marion are on the right track, and I want to go down it too. To do what we said, taking it easy, and at our own pace. So we can work ourselves out and hopefully then have a really good and true relationship together.'

'So we can be friends.'

'Yes, that's right, just the two of us. And we can go along until it all fucks up like any relationship or whatever. It will be interesting to see. And the whole notion of speaking about all you feel to each other, that might work to add another dimension to the relationship, something that I've never had before. And as none of my past relationships have worked very well, then maybe we'll have a better chance at doing it this way.'

'Exactly how I look at it. Oh Cath, it's so good to hear you saying these things. For you to come to the same conclusions I have, to want the same things. It's great, it makes me feel really good.'

'I like the idea about being friends for each other, helping each other to express our bad feelings. And being there wanting to listen to all the bad stuff. That in itself is amazing, just to know that there is someone who does want to hear all your bad stuff, who wants to be in your life with all the good and bad stuff, not just wanting only the good. It's such a change for me, I can't tell you -'

'You already have about twenty times.'

'But it's true! It's as if I'm stepping through a door into a whole new way to look at life - a whole new way to live.'

'And it will be, if all James says is right, he even says that.'

'Yes, well I'm beginning to see why. It's a huge thing, dealing with the very fundamentals of life. For someone to come along and say it's all wrong, and why, that's a big thing. I know other people, lots of other people, have said that all through history, but what's happened, nothing much by the look of it.'

'That's right, only more of the wrong. Look at how many offshoots of Christianity there are now, and they're still all wrong'

'And to think that it's all about, that it all comes down to denying feelings, it's all as simple and as complicated as that. Gee, we are a sad lot.'

‘What type of pizza do you like Mark?’

‘I usually go for the lot - you?’

‘That will be fine. I’m hungry.’

‘Where’s the shop?’

‘Not far, down the end of this street and along Fitzroy street a bit.’

‘Good, so it won’t get cold walking back with it?’

‘It shouldn’t, but we can always put in in the oven to warm up. When we get home I’d like you to think up another of those healing scenarios, do you think you can?’

‘Yeah, I reckon.’

‘Good, I really enjoyed the other two. I was wondering about how it all happens, our childhood repression I mean, is there more you can tell me about that?’

‘Sure. What part in particular?’

‘Oh I don’t know - anything. I like hearing you talking about it all, it doesn’t matter what part, just start, it always seems to lead somewhere and it gives me lots to think about.’

‘Okay... let’s see... well what about this. Apparently, we’re all perfect to begin with, that is, before we incarnate. We, as a soul with it’s dual personalities, are waiting to come into Creation, and the union of the two sex cells on the physical level, signal it’s happening. And when that happens, our soul can start to bring us into being. And it begins with our will. Our soul manifests our will in Creation so it can then use it to manifest the rest of us. And if everything went according to plan, it would keep manifesting us, all the attributes of our personality, forevermore. Which is quite incredible to think.

‘However, in our cases, right at that first moment of incarnation - our conception, we are negatively influenced by our mother and father’s wills, causing our will to effectively change or re-focus itself, making us form how they are - into the negative.

‘And right at that first moment, we receive not only the full genetic or physical compliment from our parents, but the whole lot - mental, emotional, spiritual and psychic, only it takes time for it all to manifest, just as it takes time for us to grow into a fully mature adult.’

‘So what you’re saying is that right from the very first moment, it’s all laid out for us?’

‘Yes, that’s right, that’s how I see it. The rest is simply a matter of outworking. And so as we grow, our parents bring to bear upon us their negative self-denying wills, unlovingly influencing our will, all so we too can develop a negative mind and will like theirs. Our parents are our whole world, we know nothing else, and so we become literally of them, and all the other influential people in our lives during our forming years. And all of this goes into forming our foundation which concludes around six to seven years old. By then all that’s been done to us, lovingly and unlovingly, has set our patterns, and we just keep living them as we grow old, going around in circles as we’re not growing in truth. Yet were we growing in truth, then we’d be ascending with it, but as we’re not, a lot of us, those of us not happy with all life has to offer us, that being all our parents offered us, feel unfulfilled in some way, and are usually looking for something. And we try all sorts of things in the hope that we’ll find it, but of course we can’t and never will, as it’s all too late. But for many other people, they believe they do find it, and become happy in some aspect of their negative life, but still it’s all still part of the negative.

‘What we’re all looking for is of course love, the love our parents didn’t give us. And we look all over the place, but will never find it. And the only way we can get it, so I understand according to James who’s come up with all of this, is by doing our feeling-healing. The act of doing our healing

being the actual way we love ourselves. The act of accepting our feelings and then speaking about them and finding their truth, is self-loving, for as we slowly heal ourselves by growing in truth, so with that truth we are able to love ourselves. And then, of course, each other.'

'I see, so the best way to do something to help yourself, is to do your feeling-healing.'

'Yes, it takes care of everything. Because it deals with only feelings. And as you grow and change through the process, your life apparently changes. So for example, you don't have to worry about your diet, deciding whether or not be a vegetarian, you just keep expressing all you feel, and if it's meant to be that you become vegetarian, it will naturally happen; and conversely, if you are already a vegetarian, but for reasons to do with your healing you have to give it up, then you will, you'll feel to. So you don't have to make yourself do anything. Not like how so many of the religious, spiritual and self-help practices say you do by applying your mind, using a lot of will and energy to make changes. Nothing like that. All that you want to stop, because that's how you were treated by your parents, they applying pressure to you, and you then applying it to yourself, to make you change your natural way - your natural behaviour. So we try and do the opposite, and that is not to fight it, not to fight yourself but to give in, to yield to your feelings, yet all the time expressing your bad feelings - always speaking about all you feel and seeking the truth of it.'

'Right, so for example, as to whether or not I should go to the gym, as I've been trying to decide this for months, I do what?'

'What you feel, always what you feel. And now you can talk about those feelings too and seek the truth of them. So what do you feel?'

'I feel, if I'm honest with myself, that I don't want to go. I can't bear being with all the other people. And I'm not disciplined enough to do a workout regularly at home.'

'And you see, there, you said you're not disciplined enough, and there you have it. See, you believe you should be, but it's wrong. In having to be disciplined you are having to force yourself to do something, and if you were honest with yourself, you'd have to say you don't want to do it. You only believe you should do it.'

'That's right, I do.'

'And that forcing yourself, is done with your mind. You have to use your mind to apply your will to discipline yourself, and it's fucking hard work. And if it was something you really wanted to do, it wouldn't be hard, you'd love doing it and want to do it with little effort, and definitely not having to make yourself do it.'

'Yes, so really I have to admit to myself that I don't want to do it, or I'd be down the gm every morning.'

'Yes. However you also have to be aware if you did want to do it, if you really do want to do it - is that a true desire. It too might be based on beliefs that you do think you want to do it, even love doing it, but were you to strip them away, you may uncover the truth that you are still forcing yourself. So it's not as easy as you might think to work out what's right and wrong. And as a rule of thumb, you take the approach that everything you do, even if you love doing it, you're probably doing for the wrong reasons. Then there is plenty of scope for speaking about your feelings. For example, you should really speak about why you think you should go to the gym, and what would happen to you if you did go, and what would happen if you didn't go. What are your fears about it all. Do you feel guilty about anything, and so on.'

'Right, so it's not really about whether I do it or not.'

'That's right, it's not about the outcome, it's all about what you're feeling. And you might find that the more you express your bad feelings, the less you want to do it, or the more you do. And if you can, always you do what you feel. And another part is you can always change your mind from moment to moment based on your feelings. James has gone through things were one moment he doesn't want to do it, so talks all about that, then the next he does, so talks about that, then the next

he doesn't, so talks about that, and so on. Which he said has been very difficult for him as he was parented to believe that there was only ever one way, and when found, you stuck to it no matter what.'

'There is a lot to it. It's not straightforward is it?'

'No, it all sounds very dementing if you ask me.'

'But so long as we just try to speak about all we feel, we can slowly work our way along.'

'Yes, and it's going to involve every part of our life, from the big things to the smallest.'

'I suppose it has to. If as you say, all we do is wrong, then there's a hell of lot we'll be talking about.'

'Yes. And it seems as though it all comes up systematically. When you're ready for the next bit, up it comes, the next lot of bad feelings for you to feel and focus on. In the beginning it might all be a bit overwhelming with so many bad feelings all coming at once, but as you work through them, it apparently becomes more streamlined, thereby showing us that it is our soul that is in control of everything.'

'So everything is planned - fated.'

'Yes, it would appear so, and contrary to what people believe. It seems like we have total free will, but I can see in my life that that's not exactly how it is. I think I can control everything and decide what I want to do in every part of my life, but really that's only my wishful thinking, and I often get the feeling that something else, so I guess my soul or God, is really controlling things. Like for example meeting you. I didn't decide that on Friday night at that particular pub I was going to meet you, it just happened, something else had a say in that, I certainly didn't - even though I have been wanting someone to come into my life to help me with all of this. And then when I think of all the things I did that led me to being there at that time when you arrived, and then I think about all those things I've done going back all the way to my conception, so it's all much bigger than we might think it is.'

'It is amazing when you think like that. I've had those similar thoughts occasionally, but they only muddle my head.'

'Mine too. I don't think you're meant to get anywhere with them, they are just there to show us that it's not as we think it is.'

'You might be right.'

'So you can say that the whole thing, our whole negative experience, is highly orchestrated for us. It's not just a random affair, and we're going along with it, with all our so-called free will decisions, being taken into account, with us always choosing the right way no matter what we choose. The right way to either keep moving ahead in our negative state, or healing it.'

'It sounds like we're one big experiment.'

'We probably are. Apparently there aren't too many earth worlds that exist in rebellion and default like we do.'

'Too many earth worlds, you mean there are more than just Earth?'

'According to *The Urantia Book* - a lot more, thousands more, hundreds and thousands.'

'Gosh imagine that. How long did you say you've been studying all of this?'

'For some years now on and off, about five, but only seriously with James' stuff the last six months. It's why I stopped working full time, I wanted to give myself the time to really come to terms with it. There's a lot to it and it's all so new, so mind expanding. I've had to wrestle with a lot of it, however the more I go the more it seems to add up, and that's what I like about it all. And it covers so many aspects of our lives... all of it really.'

'I know, one minute you're speaking about the soul and our incarnation, the next, me at the gym, and then other worlds like earth. It won't get boring all of this, that's for sure.'

'No, which is another thing I really like about it. It's very challenging, the only drawback being

that as so few people are aware of it, there's very little to go on other than what James says.'

'But where has he got it all from?'

'From himself, Marion, some books, and the spirits he writes with - that's where a lot of it has come from, or they have helped him put it all together. It all amounts to what could be called a new revelation, and it sure is that to me. It's opening my eyes to things I have never thought about. And it all comes back to the person, that too is what I really like about it. I've read on *The Urantia Book* forums people who have a great grasp of the book, it's a mighty piece of work, but they aren't working on themselves, not with their feelings. They can understand a huge amount of information, so big deal, what does it do for them - nothing other than inflate their ego giving them feelings of self-importance. But it's all only helping them further their negative mind state and they are closed off to anything else, just like those people who adhere to the Bible, and so it goes. There is a lot of good information out there but what does it really do for you - nothing, it's only mind food. James' work also has a huge amount of mind food, and you can take it or leave it, but as always he comes back to whether or not you want to know the truth of yourself and through your feelings. And if you do, then he assures us that in time we'll find out and come to understand all we need to know as we move along. So not everyone needs to know about it all up front.'

'I couldn't do what you've done Mark. I couldn't sit down and painstakingly go through it all. Shit you must have read a lot.'

'I read as much as I could. I've been something of a hermit these past months.'

'Sitting up there in that tiny room all by yourself.'

'Lying mostly, on the bed. I've nearly read all James has put on his websites, however he keeps adding new stuff. I think he's got lots of stuff he hasn't published, he must do nothing but write.'

'And speak about his feelings to Marion I would imagine.'

'Yes, that to. So no wonder he needs to be unemployed for he'd never be able to do it all.'

'I wonder if the government is happy that they are funding, what is it: *Divine Love Spirituality*?'

'Yeah that's a laugh, I hadn't thought of it like that. I don't think they'd be too pleased. They want the corruption and untruth to keep going as it is - full steam ahead. Most people think it's right how we live destroying ourselves and nature. So to be told they're all wrong, they wouldn't like that, it would be like telling the church it's barking up the wrong tree... na, better he keeps his head down.'

'From what you've said it sounds like he and Marion are recluses also... I'd like to meet her and talk to her about all she's been through.'

'Yeah so would I. She doesn't write, and tells him that he only writes as a part of his delusion, that there aren't any spirits talking to him, that he makes it all up, and that one day he'll come to his senses and give it all up - it all being just another part of his healing.'

'And what does he say about that?'

'That like everything, she's probably right.'

‘Ah, that was nice pizza - perfect. Now, how about you roll us one, and I’ll get some more beer, and then you can tell me the next healing scenario - have you got one ready?’

‘Yep, all ready to go.’

‘Beauty, I can’t wait. Start whenever you’re ready.’

‘How about a real personal one, one that’s really in your face and how we might go about dealing with it?’

‘Sounds good to me.’

‘It might be somewhat confronting, just thinking about it makes me start to shudder. It might be very embarrassing for you.’

‘For me, why, what do you have in mind?’

‘Ah well, it might be a bit much, perhaps I should think of something easier, we have only been together for a short time, this is probably for when we’re further on in our relationship - years maybe.’

‘I’m willing to give it a go. If it’s too bad we can stop. And we may as well plunge in the deep end. If it helps me gain more of an idea of what to expect if we do our healing, then I may as well see if I can handle it.’

‘Well you do seem a very open minded and liberated “I can take it all” kind of girl. So you might be able to handle it.’

‘Ha! Is that how you see me?’

‘Yeah, why?’

‘Oh I don’t know... I think I like it. I’ve never seen myself in that light before.’

‘Actually, it’s probably going to be harder on me than you, the more I think about it. It came to me one day, thinking about healing examples, or rather things I would have liked to have been able to do with my girlfriends, but were never able to. So I would like to try it with you.’

‘Okay, so let’s do it.’

‘Right.... now, what would be the best way for us to go about it... oh fuck it, I’ll just plunge straight in and see what happens. You’ll only hate me forever. And by the way, this actually isn’t how it is with you, not yet anyway, okay, so it’s not personal, it’s just a made-up example based on prior experiences I’ve had. There, that should soften the blow.’

‘God I have no idea what you could say that would be so horrible.’

‘Okay here goes...’

‘So, let’s imagine that we’re both naked here on the couch, like we were last night. And we’re having a bit of a kiss and a cuddle... okay -’

‘So far so good, you’re giving me ideas.’

‘I hope so... Okay, so I’m kissing you and then think it might be nice to kiss you on other areas of your body other than your face. Your stomach, inner thighs... and you’re...

‘And so, I’m about to kiss you there, but then I smell a smell and I say “YOUR CUNT STINKS!” So how does that make you feel?’

‘It makes me want to burst out laughing.’

‘Really?’

‘Yes!’

‘You’re not meant to be laughing, you’re meant to be mortally wounded by my horrible comment, by my outright and callous rejection of your womanhood.’

‘Fuck me Mark, if you were to say something like that to me, I’d fucking marry you on the spot.’

‘Serious?’

‘Yes. Shit that is EXACTLY the sort of relationship I’d love to have with someone. I’d love them to feel so free and for our relationship to be so open that we could say such things to each other. Oh God you have no idea how many times I’ve been in that exact situation, not with cunts mind you, but with some horrible body smell with the men I’ve been with, and I’ve have to bite back my feelings, which like you, I just did. I’ve wanted to scream out, and I’ve just had to get on with whatever it was... oh God it was so bad, I hated those times. And so now - shit you are a surprise what you come out with!, now to hear you say that, fuck, if we can both do that, shit that would be all my dreams come true in a relationship. Not quite the reaction you were expecting eh?’

‘No, to say the least.’

‘Are you disappointed?’

‘Well funny you say that, but yes, I think I am. I was just thinking that I feel bad, and what bad feeling was it... and yes, I do think I feel let down. But also, I feel great, great that you don’t feel bad, that you even feel good about it all. I think I feel very confused.’

‘What were you expecting?’

‘I was expecting you to be very upset... hurt... and to hate me. To hate me for being so uncaring and insensitive.’

‘And yet in that situation, what are you meant to do, take a mouth full holding your breath, be the brave hero man and get on with the job. Fuck that, if that were me I couldn’t bear it. I can’t bear it when I smell it, when it’s a bit on the nose. So God, Mark, don’t ever feel you can’t speak up about something like that. Maybe you don’t have to yell it loud for the whole world to hear, but you could ask if I minded having a wash. That would be all right. But then again, maybe I would like you to yell it out - that would be fun. And I can yell at you, “PHEW YOUR COCK STINKS!”’

‘Yeah well that would be okay.’

‘And *you* won’t be hurt if I said something like that?’

‘No, I don’t think so. I mean it’s natural isn’t it. It happens particularly if you’re having a lot of sex. However I don’t think I could handle it if you did yell it out too loud, I don’t think I’d be able to show my face in St.Kilda if everyone heard.’

‘Bit too sensitive for the old ego is it?’

‘A bit. So, so, that’s it then. I thought we’d be having to speak about it for days. That you’d be plunged down into countless bad feelings, that you’d really take offence, that you’d think I was so unkind, and that you’d never speak to me again. That you may have even walked out or hit me or something, some violent reaction. But no, you just laugh and think it’s the best thing anyone could have said to you.’

‘No, Mark, not just anyone, I know now - only you. I wouldn’t take it from anyone else... unless we were intimate and on the same footing in the relationship as we are. So your other girlfriends would have taken it badly, would they?’

‘Yes... well, I think they would have. But, shit, what would I know. I thought you would, maybe they’d have taken it like you did. Fuck my relationships with them might have been so much better had I just been brave enough to at least broach certain subjects, I might have got a surprise.’

‘You might have, but still for you to have such an expectation, you must have got that from somewhere, some girl.’

‘Well, yes, yes I did. I can remember with Shirley, she was one of the first girls I was with - it didn’t last long, and one of the first that I went down on to kiss, and she smelt down there, and it was horrible, and I didn’t know what to do. I tried to speak about it subtly with her, I made subtle hints, but she was so hurt, so hurt that I dared to even suggest anything like that. But she smelt and it wasn’t just once, it was all the time. In the end I had to end it with her because of that. And I just couldn’t understand why she couldn’t smell herself and do something about it. The next girl I was

with, Helen, well she was the very opposite, she never smelt down there and it was joy. The two girls were so different.'

'It might have been a reaction to you, to your semen or something'.

'Possibly, I don't know. But I hated hurting her like that, but what could I do if I couldn't even be that open with her in our relationship. I mean, I can understand it from her side of things, shit it would be bad and I don't think I'd like some bloke telling me I stink if I was a girl. I wouldn't want them to tell me any bad things about myself.'

'But that's as if you are the girl. And you're not. How do you know what a girl might think.'

'True, but you know how women are... and I suppose some men come to think of it... always so fussy about how they look, always so sensitive to criticism of a personal nature. I always had to say "you look nice, that dress or that new hair style makes you look so pretty" when it didn't. I had to lie. I would have been dead meat had I told the truth. Our relationship would have been over in a flash. The girls were always so touchy about all of that, I learnt very early on to avoid that area in the relationship like the plague. Unless I could say a good positive thing, forget it, it wasn't worth it. And they'd never forgive you for it. One slight oversight was a slight on their person, and their self-esteem came under threat, and that was it - run for the hills.'

'Those girls must have lived in fantasy land.'

'I don't know, but that's how they were. You are a breath of fresh air, so open minded and accepting. A huge part of the feeling-healing process, as you can well imagine, is being able to be critical of each other. But because so many of us were so heavily criticised as young children, it's the last thing we want or can tolerate. That's what I put it down to with these girls. They couldn't handle it, and I don't blame them, I don't know that I can much either. But if it's true, that we have so many things wrong with us, then it's possible that we're going to be criticising each other a lot, and even in small moment to moment things like that about smells. If I have bad underarm odour, and you didn't like the smell, and it makes you feel bad, then you'd have to speak up about it. You would say for example: "You underarms smell Mark"; or, "You're a bit podgy"; or, continuing on about smelling, "I hate how you smell so much. I hate it, I hate it, it's so hard to be with you, you stink too much, you stink all the time", and so on. And even though you might just be expressing your bad feeling, I might take it as you are criticising me, and that I might have to do something about it, like wash myself more or wear more deodorant. But really I don't have to do anything at all, not unless it did become too much for you, and we talked about it and came to some conclusion about what I was going to do about it. But I don't know that I'd be able to take your bad feelings objectively if they are about me or about something I've done.'

'I see what you mean. So what you're saying in regards to the actual healing is, that, say I did smell your body odour and it made me feel bad, then I should talk about those feelings irrespective of whether you do anything about it. That in fact I can just talk about it - how bad you smell and how I hate it, yet without demanding, or I guess, even wanting, you to do anything about it. As the smell might only be bad in the moment, and as you don't smell all the time, I only want to voice my feelings now I'm smelling it. And I guess if you did smell all the time, then we would talk about it and see what we wanted to do - if anything. And if you didn't want to do anything about it, then I'd be faced with possibly leaving you if I couldn't bear it any longer. Something like that...'

'Shit Cathy you catch on quickly! Exactly, but I think that I would have to do something about it, something to change myself, to stop myself smelling, just because you mentioned it. But that would be wrong. I should just allow myself to be as I am, as I want to be. And only change myself because I want to. And if we talked about it and I decided I would try and stop it, then that's still my choice and I'm not reacting to it like I'm four years old and you who is mummy is telling me how to be - to go and wash my underarms or face or something.'

'So the idea is to just speak about whatever you're feeling, but not with the expectation that the

other person should stop being how they are.'

'That's right. We are to be how we are. If we don't like something, we can speak about that. But it's all to only express all we feel, and not with the intention of changing the other person, or with even the hope that they will change. It's to still speak up, but always respecting the other person. Our parents spoke up all right, but disrespected us. They told us we were bad in some way or another, and that wasn't acceptable, so we had to change ourselves. And often they made and even forced us to change. And that's what has really fucked us us badly, so far as what I can make out.

'And it doesn't take much to put yourself in a child's place, to imagine being a little person, and you want to do something or be a certain way, but your parent says no. And it's final, you don't have a say. You can try to have a say, try to voice your anger, try to protest or whatever, but mostly that only gets you into more trouble. It's shit, being a little person and "Getting into Trouble", that sucks. "Into trouble", it just shouldn't happen when we are young. I haven't been able to feel it myself, as to how damaging that is, to be treated like that, but reading about it, I can easily put myself back into imagining myself as being little, and mum and dad doing such things to me, and how angry and pissed off with them I would feel. And then to get punished more because I dared to complain, fuck I want to hit them, punish them - smash them. It really makes my blood boil.

'So we need to be able to complain, and even be critical if we need to be, to do whatever we want to do, and for both of us to say what we feel. And I might feel bad, but I may not. And I won't know until it happens. I could say at another time that your cunt smells and you might be devastated, you might collapse in a heap of bad feelings. And you might hate me with a vengeance - really hate me. And it might even be the end of us, or we might be able to work through it, speaking about it all and finding out the truth of why we have reacted how we have. Of course I don't really understand it all, but it seems that our soul puts us through it as required, and so it's always different for us in each situation, even if the situation might appear the same on the surface. And when it's time for you to feel bad about something, time to use those bad feelings to help you uncover the truth of what's really going on inside you, then you feel bad, even if before that same thing didn't make you feel bad. And when you have expressed all your bad feelings and seen the truth of it all, then no longer will that thing make you feel bad in any situation. You would then never feel bad if I said, that's a horrible dress, or shit you look ugly today, or your feet smell or I hate you, or you're a shit, or the most evil person in the world.'

'Do you think you could be brave enough to say such things to me Mark?'

'Oh God I don't know. I would like to be able to if they are in me to say. I think I'm packed full of horrible things I need to say, and so say all to you. But can I, I don't know. I think maybe not just straight out to begin with. It's all right in a mock situation like this, it's not serious, but in real life... I think I'd have to be more gentle about it, feel you out sort of thing... I don't know, maybe now having spoken about all of this, I will be more willing to do it, not being so scared about your reaction.'

'I hope you can. I sure want to be able to. I know I can, but for you to allow me to, for me to feel free enough with you that I can say anything no matter how bad, and that you won't chastise, humiliate, patronise, or put me down in any way - or try to shut me up, would be so good.

'And really, I think that's all I want in my relationship from you Mark. It's a big thing for me, for you to completely accept me, to let me be how I want to be, to allow me to be free to say and speak about anything I want to. If you could or would do that, that would be a dream come true. That's what I want, to be accepted fully by you.'

'Unconditional acceptance.'

'Yes, exactly.'

'I think that's what we all want. It's what we wanted as young children, for our parents to

unconditionally accept us, and to not control us and stop us being how we wanted to be. I'd love to be able to be that way with you, but... I don't know. When you've been controlled so much, and then been made to become the controller yourself, to then let it all go, and to not control, to just unconditionally accept, to not want any power... that's going to be a hard one.'

'In that case, then it's what I long for. It's what we can aspire towards in our relationship together - how's that?'

'Definitely, I agree with that. I think that possibly by the time we finish our healing we might be unconditional with each other. It is a nice thing to aim for.'

'Yes, and from what you've said, I'm sure in many ways I'm equally as controlling as you might be. My parents controlled me a lot, that much I know. So I guess that's all within me, even though, if I say it myself, I don't think I'm a controlling person.'

'I know, you don't seem it, you seem assertive and to know what you want and feel, but I don't know about controlling. I think we need our relationship to have been going much longer for us to know. You don't seem like you're controlling on the surface, but what about what's going on underneath.'

'You never know Mark, I might turn out to be a real Mrs Hitler.'

'God I hope not.'

'Well there's not much we can do about it. Well just have to wait and see.'

'I reckon so.'

'Okay, how about another healing scenario, that last one was fun.'

'It sure was a surprise not going how I thought it would. Okay, give me moment and I'll see what I can do. I'll roll us another smoke while I apply my brain.'

'A very good idea. I'll see if I can think of one too.'

'I know, I've got one, unless you want a turn.'

'No, it's okay, I couldn't think of anything anyway. Go ahead.'

'Another personal one. Let's say we're well into our relationship, feeling very comfortable with each other. All our deeply buried hatred is surfacing and we're expressing all our hatred to each other and probably all about each other. Yuk, it's going to be such hard work. Anyway, let's say we're in bed and you do this thing whereby I'm just about to drift off to sleep and you start talking, or suddenly you do a loud fart, something to wake me up. And I hate being woken up with a shock like that. You know that state you're in when you're drifting off to sleep and you're nearly gone falling into dream world, then suddenly you're startled awake and it feels like something within you is ripped apart, as if you're literally being torn back into conscious - you know that feeling?'

'Yep. And by the way, I don't fart.'

'No, of course you don't Miss Prim and Proper - a real lady! Sure! Okay... and as we've been together for a long time - and I'm fully aware of your bodily functions, I'm nearly asleep and suddenly you talk, and in that state everything seems so much louder so it sounds like your yelling. And suddenly I'm very angry with you, growling, "Don't do that, don't talk to me when you know I'm drifting off to sleep, it's too bloody jarring, it's shocks the shit out me, I feel like I'm being ripped apart, so don't do it!". Okay, so now, you tell me what's wrong with how I've said that.'

'What's wrong?'

'Yes, there's a point here, a very crucial point I want to make about expressing oneself. We've already talked about it earlier but I want to make more of point about it. So what's wrong with how I've said this to you, how does it make you feel what I've said, or the way I've said it.'

'Well... it sounds like you're just giving me instructions, you're just telling me how to be. And that rankles me, it makes me want to fight you. To respond by saying something like "shut up, don't tell me what to do."'

'Doesn't it make you feel like you've done a bad thing and you shouldn't do it again?'

‘Well it does, but the other part, you telling me what to do and how I should be, makes me angry more, so I don’t want to do what you say, and I don’t care that I might have made you feel bad.’

‘That’s great! As far as I can tell, that’s exactly how you’re meant to feel. Where you to just feel bad and apologise and not do it again, then you’d be like how I’d probably be, just being the naughty child being told off yet again by his parents, and so having to stop doing what he’s doing, to stop annoying them. Really, how I expressed my bad feelings was wrong, and that’s what you’ve rightly picked up on. I have just lashed out at you, I want to stop you. I’m not being considerate of you, doing as you said, being unconditionally accepting of you, far from it. Really I just want to smash you on the head, to take out all my anger on you, to stop you doing this bad thing - bad so far as I think and believe it’s bad - to shut you up. I just want the whole world to be my way, for you to be how I want you to be. And you have to comply. You have to do as I say, and nothing else. But of course that’s not the way to have a relationship, at least not a loving considerate caring and sympathetic one.’

‘Yes, I can see that. I see what you mean. You want it all for yourself, you want me to be exactly how you want me to be, and not how I want to be. You don’t want to be with me so I can be myself. You don’t want to just love and adore and appreciate me as I am.’

‘That’s right, I don’t. I want you to exist on my terms, which really the truth is that I want you to be some kind of fantasy person, the one that never does anything wrong, never makes me feel bad, is always good, so I can just get on and live my life all how I want it to be, and you never cause me any grief. You’re always there for me; me, me, me.’

‘Shit that sounds like the relationships I’ve come from. That’s what I hated. Exactly like that. I might be making some noise in the kitchen cooking and Matthew or Tim, they were both the same, would yell out for me to stop making the noise because they couldn’t hear the television. There was no consideration of me. I was just supposed to do as the king said. They wanted dinner, but I wasn’t allowed to make a noise getting it. I used to get so angry sometimes, but I’d always chastise myself, put my own feelings aside and try to be quieter. And now that we’re speaking about it, shit I felt angry, really, really angry at times. That really used to piss me off. I was just meant to carry out their orders, yes, I can see that now, just change myself. I was meant to stop what I was doing and be how they wanted me to be, and so long as I did, everything was good, but if I started to protest, *they* got angry. I used to think I was nothing more to them than the hired help, the housemaid, or their mother’s. And when we went to their mother’s places, they’d order their mothers all over the place, to do this and that, and their mother’s wouldn’t even flinch, they’d just do it. “Get me another beer will you mum”, and off would go mum to get it, no complaints, and she’d hand it to them, and would get no thank you, nothing. They never asked saying pleased, and they were both the same. I’d sit there fuming wanting to tell them were to go. I said something to Tim about it once but he said that she loved it and didn’t want it any other way. So what could I do. I told them to say please and thank you or to get he beer themselves depending on how I felt, but now I can see they were just selfish pigs.’

‘They didn’t know any better. They’d been trained to be that way by their parents, and so their mother must have wanted it to be like that, it probably made her feel needed and necessary or something.’

‘Yes, but I’m not their mother and they can go and get stuffed. Shit now looking back I can’t believe how much I allowed them to get away with. We did have arguments about it, how I didn’t want to be treated that way, but that was a pointless exercise because all they said when they got angry was “Well if you don’t like how things are you can leave”, so what was I to do about that.’

‘Leave.’

‘I know, but I didn’t want to. I just felt that I’d have to keep quite, it always seemed like everything was my fault, so if I shut up, then it would all be all right.’

‘Yeah, it was all your fault because life was all their way.’

‘I can see that clearly now, but shit it used to annoy me. I never knew what I should do, either just put up with it or fight them on it, stand up for my rights. But in the end it was too hard doing that, and they were never going to change, I learnt that much, so I had to change, which I can see now meant, I had to keep denying my bad feelings. But no more. Fuck that, I’m no longer that person thank god. So beware Mark, if you tell me how I should be, I’ll kick you in the balls and you can go and get fucked. I’m going to fart all I like and as fucking loud as I like, so you had better watch out - you hear!’

‘Ah, just speaking about your bad feelings will be sufficient enough.’

‘Okay, I’ll try.’

‘So in this scenario, how do you think I should have expressed my bad feelings?’

‘You do it.’

‘Something like this... I should have stayed true to my feelings, staying on my side, and not trying to dump my anger on you. Really it’s about my expressing my anger, saying I’m angry, telling you that I am, but without the intention of wanting you to do anything about it. To leave you as you want to be, and if you want to change of our own volition, you are free to, changing using your own will and not being made to by my will. So we’re always maintaining our will integrity. So I could have said something like, “Shit I hate being woken up like that. It makes me feel so angry. I’m so fucking angry, your speaking sounds so loud and it’s so sudden jarring me awake. I hate been jarred awake like that, it makes me feel like I’m being ripped apart. I hate it, I hate it, I feel so angry, so angry”, and I keep going for as long as I feel angry or bad. And I can long for the truth of why I’m feeling this way and see if anything comes.’

‘Yes, I would prefer that. I don’t feel like you’re taking your anger out on me. You’re just saying how much you hate this thing.’

‘Exactly. I am, that’s right, that’s all I’m doing.’

‘And I can listen to you, and I don’t feel like you’re telling me off or that I have to stop doing it and change myself. But listening to you and being able to relate to what your saying, knowing that I too hate it, makes me feel more sympathetic to you, so I reckon I’d be more inclined to consider you before I spoke if I thought you were dropping off to sleep.’

‘That’s right, that’s exactly right. Perfect. You’ve now passed with flying colours “Feeling-Healing 1a”. Good job!’

‘Do I get something, some reward for passing?’

‘Yes, you do, you get your smelly cunt kissed. So take your jeans and knickers off and spread em?’

‘Oh you are romantic darling, aren’t you?’

‘I hate darling.’

‘Do you darling, and why is that now?’

‘Yeah I don’t know. I’ve always hated it. It sounds too contrived... darling... but then I’ve heard some people calling each other darling and it’s sounded fine - I’ve even liked it. I don’t know why I don’t like it.’

‘The reason must be buried away inside you somewhere.’

‘I know.’

‘So do you want to talk more about it, more about how it makes you feel?’

‘No, not at the moment.’

‘We’ll never get there at this rate. We’ve got to start speaking about all these things.’

‘Oh I know, but can’t we get to know each other a bit more first.’

‘Speaking about all these things *is* getting to know each other.’

‘Yeah well, can’t we have another indulgent night doing all so we don’t feel bad before we start

to get serious about it.'

'It's okay Marky we can do whatever you like.'

'Oh thank Christ for that, that's a relief. You're so good to me Cath, I like being with you, even though I hate Marky more than darling.'

'And why is that?'

'Oh fuck no, I don't want to talk about it, I don't know, it makes me sound stupid, you're ridiculing me and I hate that, but I don't want to go into now. I just want to have a smoke and...'

'And kiss my cunt.'

'YES!'

'Okay then, let's do it.'

'But what if it smells.'

'Then you know what you have to do'

'What. Wash it for you?'

'No you clot, speak about it.'

'Oh yeah I forgot. But I wouldn't mind washing it for you too.'

‘How about another scenario, I do like them. It’s so easy to put yourself back in situations and feel what you felt. I’ve never thought of doing it before, but it’s amazing how clearly it all comes back to me. Can you think up another one Mark?’

‘Sure. Give me a minute.’

‘I can’t tell you how much I’ve enjoyed this time with you Mark, it’s been so wonderful. So decadent, just sitting around, smoking, drinking, rooting, talking about all of this stuff. And I do love the whole idea about how open we can be with each other in our relationship. To be able to speak about anything and everything, every little thing. All our bodily functions, all the things that are usually taboo, all the things we’ve been afraid to even mention, anything. Oh I can’t wait to get into it all, to see what comes up between us, and to speak about it all. And I hope there will be lots of stuff, I hated those times with the guys when there was nothing to say, we’d sit and watch the TV - usually sport, I’d be so bored. I’d even be forced to read a book. But now knowing there was a huge amount to speak about; that there’s always a huge amount to speak about, and that my relationships could have been so much better than they were, so much more fulfilling, not the empty feelingless things they were, oh thank God I met you, that’s all I can say.’

‘You seem to be able to say a lot more than that.’

‘I feel like I want to speak and speak and speak forever, like I’ve never spoken before in my life. It’s as if it’s the first time I’ve opened my mouth. It feels so strange, so strange to be able to just speak. And it’s so fucking simple, to open your mouth and speak. And to know that having a good relationship is all about speaking about your feelings, that it’s your feelings that count. That’s really the big eye-opener for me, that’s what’s done it for me. To know that I can speak about my feelings and that in doing so I’m not going to get frowned upon or into trouble. I’m not going to get rejected or thought to be some kind of weirdo. Feelings. And to think Mark, you’ve opened that door for me, and I can step through it. Which I intend doing.’

‘And you know you don’t have to only speak about your feelings with me. I mean you won’t be able to do your feeling-healing out in public or with your friends unless they understand what it’s all about and want to do it too, but you can still try to live true to all you feel and express what you feel when appropriate.’

‘No, I hadn’t thought about it, but you’re right, I can. And I will. Often I have held back, just in little things, but I don’t want to do that anymore. I don’t want to go right into it as I am with you with other people, no, I can see that; I don’t want to start expressing my anger all over the place at work if I feel angry - that I know I can bring back to you; but in other things I can say what I feel and feel good about that. And I can even imagine it might help my relationships with the customers and the other staff. I’d like to be more honest, that’s what I’d like. To be more honest in what I say, and not be as false as I have been. I don’t like being false, not saying things because I might hurt someone’s feelings. I don’t have to be brutally honest, but I can see where there are other ways to say things, to start to bridge the gap and see what happens. I’ve got nothing to loose, have I?’

‘No.’

‘Oh to think of being so open, honest and straightforward about everything in our relationship together Mark, doesn’t it give you a thrill?’

‘I don’t know about a thrill, but I do like the sound of it. I like it already, it’s a million times better than anything I’ve experienced.’

‘Me to. It gives me a thrill. It gives me a more open feeling, like I can come out of my shell or something. Like I can breathe. I can be free to say what I feel. And it’s that simple. So simple, I

still can't believe it. And to think that for aeons so many people in relationships together have not said all they've felt to each other. There must be people who do, but I've never heard about it. And all that Victorian stuff of never saying what you feel particularly if it's bad stuff, no wonder so many of those women went mad. I can see that were I not allowed to speak about any of my bad feelings, I'd probably go mad too. And now I know why I hated reading so many of those books at school, the characters didn't say what they felt a lot of the time. They thought it, but it never came out. No, that's not for me. I'm an expressive girl, I want to get my feelings up and out. Fuck all the business of being good and not saying what you think and feel, holding it all in. And what for, what good does it do for you, what good does it do for anyone. Look at my shitty feeling-less relationships with Timothy and Matthew - fucked, that's what they were, totally fucked. They might have enjoyed them, but I didn't. And I feel like with every passing second I'm waking up to how much I didn't like it with them. Yes Mark, more and more, the more I speak about it - see, there you go, proof; the more I speak about how bad I felt with them, the more it's helping me to see just how fucked my relationships with them were. Fucked Mark - fucked. Do you get it, do you understand me - F-U-C-K-E-D, that spells well and truly, fucked. I've only known fucked relationships. All my relationships with men have been fucked. Fucked, fucked - fucked. Shit, fucked is a good word, isn't it. It says it all - Fucked. And it's so enjoyable to be able to say it. Fucked. Go on Mark, you say it too.'

'Fucked.'

'See, now wasn't that enjoyable?'

'Oh yes, very.'

'But Mark, I hope you don't mind me going on, I seem to be on something of a roll here -'

'Mind? I love hearing you talk. Talk away my dear, say it all, and don't ever stop. It's probably all the smoke, drink and sex.'

'Probably, but I won't stop. You can't make me stop. They made me stop, the fuckers, they made me hold my voice. I was made to keep quiet, to not say certain things, it wasn't lady like, I had to be a good little girl and with good little girl manners - ha! Mark, do you hear this, I'm speaking about my childhood -'

'Yes, keep going.'

'I will, fuck them, how dare they tell me not to speak, how dare they shut me up. And how dare my parents punish me for saying certain things. Oh shit I can hear my mother's voice now, "Catherine, if you say that dirty word I'll wash your mouth out with soap". That dirty word, I wonder what it was, I can't remember. It was probably fuck. Fuck. FUCK. FUCK you mum, how dare you treat me like that you bitch, "I'll wash your mouth out with soap", who the fuck does she think she is. Imagine washing a little child's mouth out with soap, all because she said a 'bad' word. And what the fuck is a bad word. A bad word, like fuck and shit which children aren't allowed to say, and yet all the fucking grown ups say it. And shit it's all so pathetic, isn't it Mark. I mean to say, then you grow up and become a fucking adult and you are allowed to say fuck and shit, so what was it all about. Why put your own dear little child - and I was a dear little child, my granny said so - through all that shit. What's it all for, what good does it all do. Did it make me a better person. Fuck that, who the fuck would know. Fuck I feel like us going over to mum and dad's place now and saying FUCK, FUCK, FUCK, FUCK to her, just a million times in her face and she what she says.'

'Oh fuck Mark this is good, this is really good, I can't tell you how fucking good I feel. I am so fucking angry, I feel like strangling them both. I want to rage and scream at them "How dare you treat me this way" - you fuckers. Oh I want to hit them both, they smacked me and I want to smack them back. They smacked me - SMACKED ME- for fucks sake, me, their own little adorable little child - and I was adorable Mark, my granny told me that also. Oh fuck Mark I am livid, I haven't

feelings I can't deny. I'm not making them up. I hate them. OOOOOH I can feel it right down in here, right down deep inside me, inside my chest and down deeper in there somewhere, anger, deep, deep anger of them. Hatred of my own fucking parents. It's burning away, deep inside me. Hatred. I can't say anything else - hatred. Fucking hatred. Yes I can feel it, I've never hated my parents Mark, at least not like this. Not like I despise them, I hate them so much, and I never want to have anything to do with them ever again. OOOOH I feel like running a knife through them both, hating them with a vengeance. I want to take the knife and carve them up into little pieces. Shit, listen to me Mark, I've never even felt or said anything like this before. But it's what I feel, shit I do, I really do. I can hardly even believe that I'm feeling these things, yet I know, and I know with all my being, that I'm not making them up, they are real, oh too bloody real. They are the truth, ha! Mark, the fucking truth. Can you believe it, the truth, and who'd have thought that the truth might be that I hate my fucking parents this much. I can feel it so clearly, hate, hate, hate, I hate them, hate them, I hate them, it's right in here, the feeling, I hate them, I hate them, I feel like I'm some sort of witch making a spell standing over her cauldron saying "I hate them, I hate them, I hate them".

'Shit Mark, how amazing, I hate them and I know it's true. I can sense and feel my mind trying to say I don't, that it's not that bad, that I don't hate them that much, that it can't be that true, but fuck off mind, what do you know, it's what I feel that's important, that much I can feel. I can feel it and I know in this feeling Mark that all you've been telling me about all of this stuff is real and true and that's good enough for me. Fuck everything else, this is it, this is the truth I want, and I want more of it. And I don't care how much it's going to hurt, fuck that, it's all in me, all this pain, all this hatred, all this anger, and I want it out. And if this is what I have to do to make it come out, not that I've done much, well it's what I want.

'So yes Mark, you mark - ha, ha - sorry about that - my words, it's what I want. And I want us to share it together, just like this.'

'That's fine with me, the more you're jumping around without your clothes on the better, so far as I'm concerned.'

'Good, because I intend doing a lot more of this. And if jumping around naked is all a part of expressing my feelings, then that's what I'm going to do. Fuck that, fuck mum and dad, they can go and get stuffed. They had no right treating me like that. I know that know. Shit I know that more than anything. I know it, I can feel it being so true, I know it more than I know my own body.

'Fuck them, fuck the lot of them, I say. I want to live true to my feelings speaking about all I feel, all the good and bad ones. And if this is what it's going to be like - I think I just said this, but shit who cares, I can say it again and again and again a million times over - then it's what I want. I want it Mark, more than anything else. That too I know. You said it's good to long for the truth and to really want to be true, and to want it, and develop your desire, well I feel like I've never desired, never wanted anything more in my whole life.

'I want the truth Mark, you hear me, I want the fucking truth and I want all of it, the whole fucking truth of my whole fucking life. Well I guess I can't have it if I haven't lived it yet, but you know what I mean - I WANT THE TRUTH TO THIS FUCKING POINT!'

'I do, and it sounds great. I want it too.'

'Good, because it's going to be you and me Mark, and fuck them. They can all go fuck themselves and fuck right off. I don't want to have anything to do with them. I don't. I don't want to go and see them, I don't want to talk to them. I don't - DON'T, you hear me Mark?'

'Loud and clear.'

'Good. Phew, I'm fucked again. I feel like a jack-in-the-box, up and down. Move over, I'm coming back in.

'Ah, that was good, that was amazing too, so much anger in me, and the hated. It's settled down

now again, but I can still feel where it was, I can still feel those feelings. You'd better roll another one, it could be a long night.'

'Yeah, and you've got to work tomorrow.'

'Yeah I know, and it's too late to call in a sickie. Oh well, fuck it. Just the good old days out dancing all night, home, a quick shower, change my going out clothes to work clothes, and out again to work all day.'

'I'm glad it's you and not me.'

'Yeah, you can sleep in all day. But I don't care. This is more important than work. And fuck it, it's just like everything else, trying to stop me. But fuck it, I'm going to do what I like.'

'Yes, fuck it, I'm going to stay up all night talking about all I feel, if I feel like it. And you're going to stay up all night listening to me.'

'I wouldn't miss it for quids.'

'Wow Mark, I'm so excited. I did it, I actually did a bit of my feeling-healing. I did do it, didn't I, do you think that's what happened?'

'Yes, I think so. Something happened, that's for sure. You felt bad, you spoke about, expressed and emoted your bad feelings, you saw the truth of them, so yes, so far as I can tell, that's it all right. And if it wasn't, I don't know what it was.'

'Yes well I feel that's it. That's how it is for me anyway, and at this moment in time. And I like it. I can't get over it Mark, how real it all was. I was in it, being carried along by it, like a river of feelings - my feelings. And they took me along and showed me what I felt, the truth of them, my anger, how much I've repressed it, how much I hated being treated this way by my parents, and how much I hated them. Gee it was an incredible experience. And all, as you've said, because I was talking. I felt to talk, and I did, and look what it led to.'

'All because you wanted to see the truth of your feelings which led you deeper into yourself, into your repressed childhood.'

'Yes, it did. It did! I have repressed childhood feelings inside me, that I do know now, that's for sure. There is no doubt about it. Yes Mark, I'm sold on the whole deal. I like it. I don't think I could take too much of that intensity of feeling for too long, but so long as I have time to recover, I should be all right. Do you think this is how it will go?'

'I don't know, no idea. We can email James and tell him what you experienced and see what he says.'

'Na, I feel like just staying with myself for the time being. I want to do it, and do it my way, to see for myself what happens and where it all goes to. It's very exciting. I feel so good about it, it was so intense, so real, like it was showing and telling me that it is real, all we've been speaking about, like a confirmation.'

'We do need to know if it's a viable thing.'

'Yes, we do. And for me I have no doubt anymore. God what a few days, so much has happened. And if it keeps going like this... shit -'

'Yeah shit's right.'

'But I don't care, it's what I want, and somehow it will work out, I feel good about that too. I don't know how I know, but I just feel sure after that experience that it will. Like you said, that it's our soul that's driving it all, and I feel like it was mine that was showing me a taste of what it will be like. And as you said, all we have to do - all I have to do, is keep speaking about all I feel, and the rest will take care of itself. I was just taken along, it was all out of my hands, and definitely out of my mind. Yes, that's what I like about it, that my mind didn't have anything to do with it. I didn't make it up, I wasn't doing anything to make it happen, it just did, all by itself. It was me, me, and all I felt and nothing to do with anyone else. It wasn't about anyone telling me how to be or what I should do -'

‘The very opposite to how your parents treated you.’

‘Yes, the very opposite. It was, that’s exactly right Mark. And that’s what I like about it all, as you said, it’s me, my will, I am doing it for me and as I want to do it, and I’m not doing it for anyone else or for any other reasons.’

‘It was such the perfect experience, to show me all we’ve been talking about is right. I just said that before too, didn’t I. And I don’t care, because I can say whatever I like and as many times as I like. Yes! I can. And no one, not mum or dad, not you Mark, not anyone else, is going to stop me. It’s vital, yes, that’s how I feel, vital that I keep speaking when I feel to, and to never not to, to always say what I feel as if my life depends on it.’

‘Gee I wish I felt it all as strongly and passionately as you do. I think I’m envious.’

‘More bad feelings to speak up about Mark my boy. Shit, you too are going to be doing a lot of talking if I have anything to do with it, that you can count on.’

‘That’s exactly what I want Cath. It’s exactly what I’ve been longing for, for help, someone, a friend to help me bring it all up, and I can see that I will need your encouragement, your enthusiasm I guess. I am reticent about it all, and I’ll need your help, pushing and prodding and encouraging to get me going, to get me over my barriers and fear.’

‘And you’ll have it, you don’t have to worry about that. It will be my pleasure Mark, I assure you of that. Because look at how you’ve helped me so far, so much. So it will be good for both of us.’

‘Phew I feel rooted now, tired. But good. I think you’ll have to take over and do the talking now Mark, it’s my turn to listen. And if you don’t have any feelings to speak about, then how about another of those delightful scenarios. Oh yeah, that’s what you were doing, wasn’t it - thinking one up.’

‘Okay, coming right up.’

‘One of the other things I have to tell you about Cath is that although we’ve been focusing on emotional bad feelings, like all that anger you expressed before, the speaking about bad feelings also includes any physical pains. So if you stub your toe, or cut your finger with a knife, or have a headache, or have a pain in your leg such as a cramp or just muscle pain or some kind of internal pain, then the same applies. The pain should make you feel bad, so it’s there to be expressed. And by longing for the truth of it, it should lead you like your emotional pain to something in your early childhood.’

‘So any bad feeling physical, emotional - everything needs to be dealt with in the same way, like for example, if I have period pains?’

‘Yes. And to express them, speak about them the best you can. Sometimes you might not feel like speaking about it as you may have had a pain in your back that’s permanent or stays there for years, but when it gets too much or it makes you feel other emotions, like being angry with it or feeling powerless by it, or if it’s making you feel miserable, then you definitely speak about it.’

‘That makes me feel good too. I like that, that I can say when I feel bad in any way. I’ve suffered period pains and cramps for years all by myself, none of the men I’ve been with wanted to know about them. Mostly I take a couple of aspirin or Panadine and get on with it. But to be able to acknowledge it like you’re saying, that makes me feel better about myself. To know you’ll support me in my pain, that I won’t be so alone... that’s nice.’

‘Good, because I do want you to tell me about anything that doesn’t feel right. And I’ll try to do that same.’

‘So if I cut myself, say my finger while chopping the vegetables, how could that be related to my childhood repression, would I have cut myself when I was a child?’

‘No, not necessarily, and besides, it’s not usually a direct correlation like that. It might be, but mostly it’s in the feelings you feel. The feelings you’d feel if you did cut yourself are the same as feelings you felt when you were young. It’s not the action or event, it’s always only the feelings. You cut your finger because your soul knows that in that moment that’s the best experience for you to have, providing you with all the feelings you need to express, so as to take you back to your early days and the feelings you felt back then.’

‘So you might feel angry that you did it, so you express that. You might feel miserable that you hurt yourself, so you express that. And that should, so I imagine, link up with miserable feelings you felt when you were little. And by expressing all your misery, you should eventually be able to see the truth of why you’re feeling it. Such as, who did what to you, and why. And then you express the feelings of what seeing the truth makes you feel, as you did earlier about your hatred of your mum and dad.’

‘Yeah I get it, it’s always the feelings.’

‘Right, the other way, to try and find some sort of direct correlation by trying to link up with the past, is only using your mind to do it, which won’t work, as your mind has nothing to do with it, it needs to be kept out of the picture. It’s feeling healing or healing with feelings, using your feelings to heal yourself by uncovering the truth of them - that’s what’s important.’

‘It’s good to hear you say it again. To make it clear. It takes a bit to sink in.’

‘It’s just there’s a lot to it, that’s all. I was reading the other day a blog post by James that was on this subject: our relationship with our body, and it pointed out how disconnected from our body most of us are.’

‘He was saying how really we just see it as some sort of possession of ours, like a car, and if it

gets something wrong with it we take it to the doctor, the mechanic, to fix. And we take the pills, and do what we do, just as the mechanic does what he does to a car, all so we can get back on the road with the problem solved and then forgotten about.

‘We tend to think we can make our body be how we want it to be, go to the gym, cut bits out here and there, add bits to make your tits stand out better, all that sort of thing. And I think that for most us that if we could, we’d probably keep trading our body in for new one, once the three years warranty is up. We wouldn’t think twice about it, throw it away and get a new one, or keep changing the one we have trying to make it perfect.

‘So we miss the point. We don’t understand that our body is us, it’s expressing parts of us, and although really we are spirits in a physical form, still whilst we’re living in flesh, we need to fully honour and accept our bodies - accepting them as they are. And what that really means is, simply to honour all we feel. So if we don’t like something about them, then it’s better to speak about all the feelings you can, rather than rushing off to the doctor for a quick fix, all so he or she can make you feel better, all helping you to deny and block out and keep buried any bad feelings.

‘So we deny our body telling us what we need to feel on that level. Which, as you can see, is what we do denying our bad feelings. So if we want to heal ourselves, like we’ve been talking about and you’ve been doing, then we need to do the same with it.’

‘So say I get sick, say I have the flu or cancer, then I shouldn’t rush off to the doctor for shots and treatment, I should instead speak about all I feel, wanting the truth of it.’

‘Yes, you do go to the doctor if that is what you feel you must do, but that becomes the last resort once you have expressed all you feel about the problem. And in a lot of cases you may find, and this is something we’ll no doubt experience for ourselves at some point, that speaking about and uncovering the truth of the pain *is* all you need to do to heal it. That once the truth of the pain has been seen, the problem will simply no longer be there.’

‘That’s sounds incredible, that you could heal your cancer by just speaking about it.’

‘Yes, it does doesn’t it, however it waits to be seen. That’s only the theory. But it makes sense. If you think that we’re created perfect, our soul is perfect, and it’s only the negative unloving influence from our parents that causes us all our problems, then it makes sense that we should get sick to show up such imperfection, to tell us something is wrong with us.’

‘But if that is right, how come we’re not all sick and sick all the time.’

‘I think that’s because we’re meant to have this negative experience, so if we got instantly sick if something interfered with us, then we’d all probably die before we got going. So I guess it must be that our soul wants us to experience such things, and to get sick is only part of that experience. So when we do get sick then it’s showing us in that way that something is wrong. I mean, God has set the whole ball rolling, and keeps it going. God that wants us to start in the negative on this world, that is if God *is* the creator of it all.’

‘But would God do that?’

‘I don’t know. I think it’s something that we’ll find out when the time is right, like everything else, but only if we’re growing in truth.’

‘Gee Mark, you know so much. You’re like a teacher. You could teach other people about it all.’

‘No, I’m only second hand, I’m only getting it from James. And besides, it’s all in my head, it’s all supposition and theory, I don’t know if it’s all true. I’d have to experience it all for myself first before I’d want to be telling anyone else other than you. Which is I guess, as it’s just popped into my mind, the reason why James isn’t too keen on seeing anyone and speaking about it all personally. Yes, I can understand that now, I didn’t know why he was so reluctant, but now I can understand as he doesn’t know about it all either, he’s still experiencing his healing, and it won’t be until he’s healed all of himself that he can say categorically that for him it has worked. So like he says, in the mean time he’s sharing his experiences to date along with all he’s worked out and come

to understand, so people like us can see what we think and feel about it, and there is more than enough for us to go on with.'

'There sure is, it will take me years to fully understand and digest all you've told me these past two days. It's just one new thing after another for me. The idea that we might not have to go to the doctor subjecting ourselves to all the terrible treatment, when we need only speak about all we're feeling, is just too much. I mean if that's true, and people can do it and then heal themselves of their diseases, that... I don't know what to say, it will be like a miracle or something.'

'It will be bloody hard work to do, that's what it will be. To have denied yourself, all those feelings, all that pain, to the point of your body having to get seriously sick to tell you, means you'll have a shit load of pain to suffer through as you speak about it all. And then there's still no guarantee.'

'True, but at least it is another alternative, something to consider and give a go, and it's not going to make it worse for you, is it. You could go to the doctor and have treatment and also speak about all you're going through, couldn't you?'

'Absolutely, that's what James and Marion do. She apparently found a lump in her breast some years back and that's what they did. They both spoke about their fears and bad feelings, and he said there were masses of them, as they went to the doctor and Marion had x-rays, and they saw lots of truth about themselves; and even though the lump was said to be nothing to worry about, they were grateful for the experience in the end, seeing so much truth about themselves. And the lump quickly went away. And all those sorts of very intense experiences together helped their relationship, he said, it helped them to become more united and close, to go through it all together.'

'Oh Mark, that is so wonderful to hear. That is what I want. I'd hate to go through something like that. I got pregnant to Tim, and went through the abortion all alone, and it was horrible. There's nothing like it, you're all alone going through this horrible thing, I had no one to talk to, Tim didn't want to know about it, he just hoped the problem would go away, and the thought of marriage before he was ready freaked him out. It was dreadful sitting there with my legs spread and all the horrible pushing and pulling and sucking, all taking away a new person, sucking the new life out of me. But to think that if that were to happen again, at least you'd be there, we'd be going through it together and speaking about all the bad feelings along the way. And there would be so much to speak about, so many issues, so much fear, so much dread, so much guilt, so much pain... oh it makes me want to cry when I think of what I suffered all by myself. And I'm sure many women and girls suffer it how I did. And then it's all over and you're just supposed to go back out there into the world, back into your life as if nothing happened. And for Tim, nothing did happen, he just wanted to have sex straight away as soon as he was allowed to according to the doctor. But for me it was hugely traumatic, all suffered in silence. Tim didn't care about me. He hardly even asked me how I felt. And he sure didn't want to know what I'd been through. I had to take myself there and get myself back by taxi. And I felt too ashamed to tell mum, and my girl friends, most of whom had been through it themselves, just shrugged their shoulders and said, we know, so what was I to do - nothing. And all the pain, all my suffering, all those horrendously bad feelings, I had to bury. I couldn't let them come up, if they did I think I would have cracked and lost it all together. But at one point I was very close to it. It was the worst experience I've been through. And now speaking about it all... but with you I feel like I want to bring back those bad feelings, so I can speak about them all and finally bring them out. I don't want to do it tonight, I don't think I could handle it, but sometime, if that's all right with you.'

'Of course, yes, you must. And I guess when the time is right for you, those feelings will come up of their own accord, just as we saw earlier with all that anger and hatred.'

'Yes, you're probably right. So I don't have to worry about it yet, I don't have to do anything about it.'

'No, you only need to focus on and stay true to the feelings you're feeling now, in this moment, the rest will take care of itself.'

'Phew, that's a relief, I don't have to worry about that all over again. Not yet anyway. But Mark, I can't tell you how much I like the idea of being able to speak about any physical pains and illness before I have to go to the doctor... and what about the dentist, for tooth ache?'

'Same thing applies I should think.'

'Gee, so just think if you were sick and you did speak about all the bad feelings, and were able to uncover the truth of what happened to you when you were little to make you be sick now... so we only get sick because of how we were treated when we were young?'

'Apparently so.'

'Shit that's amazing. So we pump ourselves full of pills and all sorts of things, have all those operations, when really all we might need to do is just speak about all we're feeling.'

'Yes, it's incredible to think, isn't it. That if we all suddenly started to do our feeling-healing we might not need the use of doctors so much, let alone all the drug companies. I see the whole medical business as a sham, just one big expression of our negative state, a huge self-denial. We're made to go away from our true selves when we're young, to deny our feelings, to shut ourselves off to what our own bodies are trying to tell us, and then to rely on a complete stranger, the doctor, to help us. We're stopped by our parents from helping ourselves, by being made to be totally dependant on them, then transferring that dependance onto the doctor. So we're made to give our wills away to someone else, which is the root of all evil, and the cause of all our problems. We wouldn't even get sick, or need to get sick in the first place, if we were living true to our feelings.'

'Yes, well I like the sound of that! If we can heal all our childhood repression maybe we won't get all those rotten diseases that so many old people get. That sure would be a huge relief.'

'I agree, but it waits to be seen, as I said, it's only the theory. And as we're new to it, pioneers, there aren't case histories ahead of us from which we can see if it's true. So it will be on a wing and pra -'

'A longing you mean.'

'Right, to see what happens to us when we reach old age. And that is assuming we do, it might be a part of our souls plan for us to die... tomorrow.'

'Oh, shit, I hope not. I mean, I don't mind about dying actually, but if you died tomorrow I'd be rooted.'

'No, you wouldn't be rooted because I'd be dead, but I agree with what you're saying, I couldn't bear it either if you died tomorrow, having just found you.'

'I do like your sense of humour Mark.'

'As I like yours my dear.'

'Quite.'

'So, all we have to keep remembering is that it's only about our current feelings, and they are the gateway back into our past.'

'So it is all because of how we were treated by our parents.'

'Yes, apparently, all of it. It's all fixed in us, and our soul brings around the experiences we need when we need them to help us see it all, that is if we want to see the whole truth of our negative state.'

'Can you give me some more examples of the sorts of things our parents might have done to us so I can see how it works.'

'Sure. Okay, this picture just popped into my mind and it's based on something else of James' I read the other day.

'Image you're at a shop - right. And there are a group of mothers with their young children, some in pushers, some free. And as they leave the shop, suddenly one of the young children

wanders out onto the road. However this road is wide and not busy, yet the mother of that child, suddenly seeing her child heading for the road, becomes almost hysterical as she calls, yells and screams at her child to come back to her. I saw this happen the other day, exactly as James described what he saw.

‘The mother has been all too distracted with the other mother’s, and there are too many children to look after, it’s all confusion and suddenly this potential disaster. So the mother drops everything and dashes onto the road grabbing her child screaming at it not to go on the road. Then she takes it to the footpath and proceeds to smack it - hard, telling it NEVER to go out on the road again. The child bursts into tears screaming louder than its mother.

‘Now what James suggests in another web site of his, is to try and put yourself in the child’s place, be that child. Okay, so let’s do that.

‘We’ve all been having a good time in the shop, now we’re outside and I want to go that way, so off I head. I’m not much older than toddling age, and I don’t know about roads and cars and life and death, how can I, I’m too young. And as I’m heading off on my next adventure, suddenly I hear this all mighty roar, this terrifying noise, and somehow I know it has something to do with me. But what it is it. I hesitate for a moment, then it comes again, an almighty ungodly bellow, an ear piecing scream, and suddenly I’m struck dumb with fear. I want to keep going as I am, toddling away, and now to get away from that God awful noise, but suddenly I’m grabbed very hard, lifted up, it’s mum, and she looks like the devil itself. She’s got that horror face on, and I know loads of bad feelings are about to hit me, and I’m going to feel pain. And sure enough hit happens, my bum is once again on fire, and I have no idea why. I was totally minding my own business, when suddenly, and for no good reason, my own mother scares the shit out of me, then belts me for being scared. I mean to say, fuck it, what is it all about, what have I done.

‘I have no idea of course if that’s what a child would feel, but that’s how it makes me feel. I mean to say, what are you as that young child supposed to think, when your own mother, the very person who’s supposed to love you more than anything in the world, not only scares the shit out of you for no reason so far as you’re concerned, but then belts you for good measure. What are you to think about life. This is your life, this is what life is like for you. Your patterns are forming to accommodate this life experience, as is your relationship with your mother. And as you can see, it’s all fucked.

‘Really we should never punish our children - never. And we shouldn’t do anything to scare the shit out of them unnecessarily, we should always be loving. So it would have been better that the mother was actually paying attention to her child in the first place, and then it wouldn’t be wandering off towards the road by itself. And then she should be hitting herself for being so unloving, not her child. And if the child got run over, then she should suffer the pain of her lack of love for her child. She’s filling her own child full of fear, the imaginary car’s not, it’s not doing anything to the child - it doesn’t even exist! She’s passing all her fear and fearful behaviour onto her child - all an example of perfect ‘loving’ parenting. And most people would probably support her - that the sooner her child learns about the dangers of a road, the better. But all the way along the child should not be punished for her lack of love, fears, and inadequacies. The child should always be free, and it’s up to it’s parents to guide it. So if there is a dangerous situation, to lovingly keep it safe, and not go yelling at it like some a manic freaking it out. And I know it’s easy for me to judge the mother, and I’m not a parent trying to deal with my kids. But the more I see it, the more the whole ‘loving parent’ thing stinks. The mother thinks she is being very loving to her child, especially ‘saving’ it and then teaching it a good hard lesson about road safety. Yes, she’s right, so she believes, all the while belting it saying, “NEVER GO NEAR THE ROAD, NEVER GO NEAR THE ROAD”, repeating it over and over like a crazed demented nightmare. And so what’s a young child meant to think. Okay, so it gets the message, and forevermore it’s scared of

going near roads, and as it's forgotten this episode in its early life, it doesn't know why it has this strange thing about roads, and all this fear about bad things happening to it to do with roads, when it's out in the world. Fears which will come to light were it to do its feeling-healing, taking it back to see how unlovingly it was treated by its mother.

'And then to make matters even worse, the next thing she does once it's balling its eyes out, is tell it to shut up, to stop crying, it's over. Yes, her panic is over, so the child is meant to stop its panic - all its mother caused. It's all about her and nothing about her child. It's all her fears and not the child's. She dumps and shits all over it, all in the name of "being a good, caring, loving mother", all because she prevented *her* child from dying. And yet if the truth could be known, had it been run over, it might have had a better more loving life in spirit, having got rid of its unloving mother. So just because she's come back to her senses a little more, re-asserted her power and control over her child by smacking it until it's freaking out, then she comes on with the big loving mummy act that the danger has passed, that there is no problem, nothing more to cry about, that it's all right, the bad thing didn't happen after all - and it's all just fucked. And none of it needed to happen anyway, because had the mother actually looked up the road to see if a car was in fact coming, she would have seen that there wasn't a car in sight either way. She just lost it. Her unconscious programming clicked in, and she freaked, probably because similar buttons from her early life were pushed, just like the ones she's now instilling in her child.

'So as she stops her child from crying, from expressing all the pain and bad feelings its feeling, because of what its own mother has done to it - all those bad feelings she's caused, it has to then screw itself around suppressing them, taking yet another huge step in forming its repressed childhood and negative mind and will condition.

'The poor little thing, in those few moments, it took all of a minute, has had to deal with a huge trauma set up by its own bloody mother, all because really she's in no fit state to mother a child, all because she's full of her own shit dished out to her by her parents that she's keeping repressed, using every fibre in her being to do so. Had she been in a better state, as I said, the situation probably would never have occurred anyway, but she would have handled it differently moving out to gently guide her toddler back to safety, not taking out all her fear on it, loving it, and knowing that it's too young to know about roads for itself anyway, and that there's plenty of time for it to understand as it grows older.

'We put so much shit like this on children, you can see it all the time. The parents treat their children expecting them to be grown up adults, and are supposed to know all they know. And they yell at and hit them for not knowing. It's mad. Shocking, and no wonder we're cot cases waiting to happen.'

'Gee Mark, you've done it to me again. I don't know what to think about it all. I can relate to all that you've said. I'm just speechless, I've never seen it that way, from the child's point of view. And you're right, the little child can't know about cars, that's obvious, and to get treated that way, and as you said, by the very person who is meant to love it... shit I'll never be able to look at parents and children the same way again.'

'I know. And the more you look the more you can see it. You only have to go to the supermarket and you can hear the screams of child abuse, because that's what it is, only we just call it normal acceptable parenting. Where torturing our children and don't realise it. We're putting them through hell. Parents are the evil ones. And you don't have to worry about the bloody Devil and all the bullshit the churches go on with, when you're born to them, Mr and Mrs Devil - you're own fucking parents.'

'Are you intending to write about all of this Mark?'

'I might do. All about you and me, "Cathy and Mark".'

'Shit I wonder what people would say about it.'

‘It’s no more than what James has written about.’

‘And what does he say people have said about it?’

‘He says only a few people have commented. Mostly encouraging, but not engaging with what he’s actually said. I think it’s a bit too extreme for most people. I doubt there’d be too many parents wanting to be told they are the Evil Ones and don’t love their children.’

‘No, I suppose not. It does make you think twice about having children though. I don’t know that I want to subject a child of my own to all my shit.’

‘No, me either. It does make you think. But what if you feel you do want to have a child, are you going to say no because I don’t want to subject it to my negative state and deny yourself the experience; or, do you have it and do your feeling-healing at the same time; or, do you do your feeling-healing hoping like hell you finish it, or at least most of it, before you’re too old to have children. And then again, what’s the big deal about having children anyway. And if what James says is right, you can easily adopt them in spirit and have the whole parenting experience over there. So you could start your feeling-healing here, not have children, complete your healing here or over there in spirit, and then have children in spirit. Or, why not just do what everyone has done for ages - have children - fuck them up, play happy loving family, and get on with it - enjoying life in the negative. Does it really matter if we fuck each other up when we can do our healing and get ourselves out of it. Provided, of course, we can do our healing like James reckons we can.’

‘But the spirit ones wouldn’t be your own if you can only adopt them.’

‘True, so what are you to do?’

‘Shit don’t ask me. Fuck it’s too much for me to think about. I don’t want to think about children yet anyway, we’ve only just met.’

‘I know, but you know what I mean.’

‘I do, I see why you’re telling me all of this, just to point out the depths there are to it all... it’s not easy is it, it sure as hell makes you stop and think about everything.’

‘And it makes you feel, and really that’s the whole point. To stir up feelings, and I guess like everything, in regards to children, if we were feeling to have them, then we’d have to do a lot of talking about it all, we wouldn’t just be forced into having them. And if we had one by ‘accident’, and we wanted to keep it or for you have an abortion, then we’d do a huge amount of talking day and night, I would imagine.’

‘Yes, I see what you mean, and that again makes me feel better. It’s not as if we can’t do anything about it, we can talk about it with each other. And as you said, talk about every little part of it, and shit, think about it, they’re be so much. But imagine if you did want to have a child and you did talk about it all, all the way through, all the feelings you’d both experience, it would be an incredible experience, that’s for sure.’

‘I agree, it would be amazing, and that in itself might be enough to want to have a child, even knowing we are fucked and will fuck it up. I mean, we wouldn’t do any worse than anyone else has over all these centuries, and if we were talking about all our feelings and brought a child into that environment, then at least it would grow up talking about all it felt, and that surely wouldn’t be too bad for it. It would learn by our example how to express all it feels to find the truth of its feelings, so I’d like to think that it might not end up with so much repressed stuff in it if we’re continuously working on ourselves.’

‘Yes, I like that. I can imagine doing that. That would be something wouldn’t it.’

‘And we might even find that if we feel we want a child and then speak about all these feelings, that the feeling of desiring it might even go away, as we heal things from our early childhood that make us feel we want it. So you don’t even know, and this applies to feelings, when you want to do anything, are your feelings to do it really true or happening as yet another result of your childhood repression.’

‘I see what you mean. Shit you just don’t know do you. It’s all so complicated.’

‘It is, but still it all comes back to our feelings. To just keep following them, because we can’t do anything else.’

‘Yes, well that’s about all I can cope with, and it sounds simple enough. Boy, it all sounds like such a big undertaking, yet thrilling also.’

‘Well it’s life Cath, nothing more than what you’d live anyway, only this way you become increasingly more consciously aware of what you’re feeling, and why you are doing what you want to do. You become true to yourself, so you stop doing all the false shit, and surely that’s only going to make life more fulfilling and enjoyable.’

‘It’s certainly going to make life be very different to what I’ve imagined it to be based on my past experiences. Wow Mark, that was all great. You are amazing how you come up with all.’

‘As soon as you ask me, the pictures pop into my mind and I know what I want to say, and as I start speaking, out it all comes. I can’t even remember what I’ve said half the time. But it’s your doing Cath, you’re helping me put it all together, to voice all the thoughts I’ve had about it, so at least this part of it is becoming real for me.’

‘So really there are countless things our parents have done to us to make us deny ourselves, deny our feelings.’

‘Yes, all the time, all the way along, and without any real idea they are doing it. It’s what we accept as being the norm. Most people believe it’s right to smack your children and to punish them, to control them and make them be how you want them to be, but what if it’s not right, if it’s actually the worse thing you can do to them. It turns everything on it’s head, and all you can do is admit you’re unloving to your children, that you don’t actually have any idea about what love really is. And you don’t have a clue about anything, and your fucked - which is the truth, if you want to accept that you’re living in a self-denying negative way.’

‘I don’t know if I can go that far personally yet, but I see what you mean. It all gives a clear and concise picture. It’s all very distressing itself, if it is right, but then, you can’t say the world is a happy place to be, so something fundamental we’re doing must be wrong, and I guess that all points to parenting, because what else could it be.’

‘Exactly, that’s how my thoughts go. There is no escape from it. I go around and around in circles trying to rationalise it all, trying to see another way out of the dilemma, but there isn’t one, and the more time I spend giving my attention to seeing it all as James is presenting it, the more sense it seems to make to me. It feels right, and that’s the whole point.’

‘Yes, it does feel right, that’s what I like about it. I might not understand it all, I might not even want to understand it all, but it feels right. Gee, I wonder how it really was for me when I was young. I wish I had a video of it all, of being at home with mum and dad and seeing how they treated me.’

‘Yeah I know, I’ve wished for one of myself. Wouldn’t it be incredible to see how it was for you. I look at the little kids being treated badly, see them crying their lungs out, and I wonder if that was me, if I too suffered how they are. And then I wonder what is that little child feeling, so unaware of its feelings and yet so obviously distressed. And so I must have also felt such feelings, and I too have then been made to shut them off, to block them out, to change myself into an unfeeling person; to become untrue to myself. And here I am now stuffed full of such repressed feelings. And like you said, I wonder why I’m not dying in agony because of sickness and disease, filled with the pain of it all. But I’m not. And I’m here with you snuggled on your couch smoking reefers and drinking beer and wine and having the best time of my life with the most beautiful girl, the woman of my dreams - Catherine Armstrong. So as the yanks say: “Go figure.”’

‘Na, I’m sick of figuring. I just want to feel, and what I feel now feels very nice and soft, and that’s just grand.’

‘Are you tired Mark?’

‘No, cruising along. How about you after all your emotional stuff earlier?’

‘I’m feeling alright. What’s the time do you reckon?’

‘Hang on, I’ll look on my phone. 11.30.’

‘Oh, I thought it would be later than that. That’s okay, that’s good, we can keep going.’

‘What time do you want to go to bed, how many hours of beauty sleep will you need before work tomorrow?’

‘Yeah right, as if I’m going to get them. I’ll be fine as I said, I don’t care. Mondays are usually quite anyway, I mostly catch up on paper work and stock management. I can drift through it if I have to. No, I just want us to do what we feel. I so much love all this stuff about feelings. Do you think it’s the right way to live, to only do what you feel to do? Do you think that’s the key to life?’

‘I don’t know about that, but it does sound very appealing, doesn’t it. I think it is the right way to live, however it’s the feelings that I’m worried about. I tried out this thing some months back when I was thinking about it all, I decided I’d try and only do what I felt like doing all day, and when I set off I thought it would be easy as I didn’t have anything planned for the day.

‘So I woke up remembering that was what I wanted to do and tried to do it. Okay, I said to myself, what is the first thing I want to do. And I found myself thinking about it. What did I feel, and then I realised that I was stumped before I’d even begun. Like now, if I asked you Cath, what do you feel, what would you say?’

‘What do I feel... I feel good, that’s what I feel.’

‘Okay, now what do you feel like doing?’

‘Nothing, just lying here with you on the couch doing what we’re doing - talking.’

‘Okay, but how do you know that what you are feeling is *really* what you are feeling. I mean what if what you’re feeling is really only something that is a result of your childhood repression and all you’ve lived to this stage in your life, and it’s really just another part of your self-denial and negative state. So now what do you feel?’

‘Yeah, I see what you mean, in that case, I don’t know.’

‘And I think that’s important to remember, that we really don’t know if what we feel is true or not, as it may be feelings contrived by our minds conditional on our childhood repression. And how do we know that if we weren’t full of childhood repressed stuff that we’d still be wanting to lie here on the couch, or that we’d even be together at all.’

‘Yes, but you can apply that to everything about life spending all your time in your mind and never actually doing anything, let alone your feeling-healing.’

‘I know, and that’s what is mostly my trouble. And then suddenly I had to get out of bed that morning and have a pee. Then I wanted to make myself some toast and a coffee. And it was doing that - following such inspiration, was all I could do. But all along the way, as to how I was feeling, I didn’t know.’

‘But by yourself it’s harder to be objective about yourself, and with your mind on yourself all the time, it’s a whole different experience than being with someone else and interacting with them.’

‘I know, but anyway, what it all came down to was my wondering just how much of what I feel, and what I feel I want to do, is untrue, it all being symptomatic of what’s really going on deeper in me, in my unconscious, all that suppressed and repressed stuff deep inside me. So I realised that we have to be careful about acting on our feelings in the belief that they are always true, and if we do, then we’ll be living on the right path. I think our feelings are in fact heavily conditioned by our

mind, not the feelings themselves as such, as anger is anger, but the reasons why you feel angry. What I feel angry about today I might not feel angry about tomorrow, if I have since expressed the anger and uncovered the truth of it. So although I do think it's right to follow your feelings, one has to also be aware of the fact that ones feelings might be being led astray by ones mind. So once again, all we can fall back on is the speaking about them; speaking about all we think and feel; longing for the truth of it, and see what happens. So the upshot of the exercise was, I gave it up, and longed instead for someone to come into my life with whom I could share all my doubts and worries and all of this stuff. And my talking it out with you has helped me Cath, as it's sort of acted as a cleaning or clearing process, and what is important seems clearer to me, and what's not has faded in relevance, and I like that. So I'm not going to think about it all too much, at least not as much as I have been doing. It's too hard and I only end up confused. And then I feel agitated and anxious and I don't like those feelings.'

'So what about those feelings, don't you think you should talk about them?'

'I do, but when I feel them again. I have thought about them, about that feeling, and I hate it. I feel spastic in it, all over the place, demented, like I'm going out of control.'

'Why do you feel like that, any idea?'

'No, not really, only that I think that I should be able to have things all sorted out, they should be logical, so if they don't add up, I start to feel anxious, but I don't know why I feel like that.'

'To feel anxious means you must think a bad thing is going to happen to you.'

'Yes, I suppose so, that hadn't occurred to me... so what bad thing, what do I think is going to happen to me... what do I fear is going to happen. Alright, I'm going with it now we've started on it, so I'll long for the truth of why I feel anxious when I start to feel confused: what was it that happened me to make me feel this way.'

'It sounds like when you were little, perhaps you felt nervous and agitated if things didn't go along smoothly for you.'

'Yeah, well I can believe that. But nothing more comes, I don't feel anything further about it. And this is the point I would get to with myself, but then nothing more would be forthcoming, and that was frustrating. This is where I need your help.'

'How, what sort of help can I give you, what should I do?'

'I don't know exactly, but from all I've read, all you really need to do is simply express all you feel. To be my friend and to say what naturally comes to you. You can ask me questions. If you want to get to know me, and seeing that I'm blocked and at an impasse, you might want to know why I can't go further, and so your natural curiosity about it all might inspire you, might make you want to know something more about me, which in turn would then help me bring more of myself out.'

'Well I do have a question in fact. How does feeling the block, feeling that you can't go on, make you feel?'

'Yes, that's a good question, I don't know. How does it make me feel... I'll try and see if I can feel anything... I'll long for the truth again, the truth to help me see and feel how I feel about this block. How does feeling blocked make me feel -'

'Do you mind if I say how I would imagine it makes me feel?'

'No, not at all.'

'Angry, pissed off, angry that it was there blocking me. And I'd probably want to smash it. That's how I reckon I'd feel.'

'Angry, well it makes sense, so... do I feel angry? I don't think so... I don't really feel anything that I'm aware of... nothing other than... nothing, like I can't go on, as if there is a brick wall in front of me and it's huge and I can't get over it or around it. It's a big solid mass standing in my way, it's preventing me from moving forward... and how does that make me feel... it makes me feel

bad, bad that I can't get around it or do anything about it... I know... it makes me feel powerless, yes, powerless that I can't push ahead.'

'And how does feeling powerless make you feel?'

'Bad, very bad, I feel low, like I'm sinking, I don't know about angry, but... down, depressed sort of -'

'Miserable?'

'Yes, miserable, I do feel miserable. Yes I feel defeated by it, it's too big for me, too insurmountable, I can't deal with it, and I feel scared, yes, I can feel that - scared. I feel really scared; scared because I don't know what to do. Yes, that seems a bit clearer, a more of a familiar feeling. I feel scared that I can't move ahead, that something is blocking my way, and I feel that if I try to push, something bad is going to happen to me... yes, something bad - very bad.'

'Oh shit this is hard work. I feel like I'm trying to draw blood out of a stone.'

'Yes, but keep going, it sounds good to me, I want to see where it goes to.'

'Me too, but I don't know if I can keep going, I feel so anxious, so scared, shit I really do feel scared now. There's this big scary thing, but it's not real I don't think. I don't think it a creature, like a huge bear or something, no I can't quite put my finger on it, but it's there and I'm really frightened of it. Oh God I feel all shaky, very nervous, something bad is going to happen, something bad is going to happen, something really bad, like any minute now something bad is going to happen, and when it does... when it does... when it does, then that's it, that's the end. I don't really know what I'm saying, but I feel like that will be the end... the end of my life? I don't really feel that, but the end of something.'

'Oh fuck I feel exhausted, it's harrowing. I feel shaky still, and so scared of this scary thing, shit I wish I knew what it was, I wish I could see it. I'm going to long again: I want so see the truth of it, to see what I'm afraid of.'

'What about asking yourself *who* your afraid of, maybe it's a person.'

'Okay I'll do that... who am I so afraid of... who is standing in my way blocking me? Who is it, who could or would make me so scared... who... oh... I think I know who... oh yes, oh shit, oh it's so obvious now, of course, who else could it have been, but it never occurred to me - it's dad!

'I feel like I'm very small and he's standing there in front of me. It is as if I can sort of see or sense his legs, and they are there in front of me and I can't push past them. Oh shit, I saw that the other day, a little boy trying to push past his father by the beach, the boy wanted to go onto the sand but his father wouldn't let him, telling him they had to go and meet his mummy, that he couldn't go on the beach. And the little boy was trying all he could to push and then get around his father, but his father kept blocking him with his legs. And the more the boy pushed, the more the father just dug in saying no. He wouldn't lift him up or move to go, he just stood there as if it were some power trip he was having over the boy. And the boy got more and more upset, he got angry. But that quickly passed as he realised he couldn't get past his father and then he sounded so miserable, just how I feel.'

'Shit Cath, I feel like I'm that little boy. I feel like I'm trying to push past my father but he's being a prick just like that bloke, and won't let me past. And I'm trying and trying and trying, but no, I just can't do it. And I feel increasingly powerless and miserable about it. And then in the end, that father just picked his boy up, who was kicking and screaming, and carried him off. The child didn't have a say in it, it was all the father's way. The child didn't matter, it was all what the father wanted. I felt so angry at the time watching them, it was at the beginning of the pier and I was sitting on the seat right near them. I wanted to tell the father to let him go, to stop being such an arsehole. I couldn't of course interfere, but shit I felt like yelling at him and beating him out of the way.'

'And now I feel angry with dad, you're right, I do feel angry, so fucking angry that I feel like I'm

going to explode. I want to beat dad out of my way. How dare he stop me, how dare he treat me so badly. I don't feel like I have to get up and jump around like you did, but fuck I feel angry. And you know, I can see that the scary thing that I'm so afraid of, is what happened to that little boy or something like that anyway. That suddenly I'm just picked up, then I'm really fucked, having no say at all. No say in my own life. No say about how I want things to be. Whilst my feet were still on the ground I felt I still had some power, albeit only a little, but once he picked me up, I was totally fucked, I stood no chance then. So I didn't die, but I feel utterly useless and powerless, and yes, that's what I'm scared of feeling. I don't want to feel that way Cath, I don't, it's too bad, and I hate feeling that way. Shit now I feel like crying again, don't let him do it to me Cath, please don't, please don't let him be so mean to me... fuck, you're now mum, and I feel like I'm pleading with her, I want her to make him stop, to make him be nice to me... I do, I can really feel it. I want mum to save me, to take me away, to stop dad being unkind to me. "Stop him mum, stop him mum, please make him stop mum", that's what I feel like yelling out, desperate for her to make him stop... but she doesn't. She's just standing there not doing anything and I feel so alone... shit, now I feel really bad, really miserable, mum won't help me, she won't save me, she won't come to my rescue... oh fuck I feel bad... so, so bad, so miserable, beaten, fucked, and what can I do - nothing. I can't do anything. I feel totally powerless, so utterly fucked - FUCKED.'

'Do you feel you hate them Mark?'

'No, I don't think so. I don't feel angry, I sort of feel like I've gone too far past it all. I don't know how I feel, just sort of stunned I think. Yes, shocked, totally defeated, and so bad. I feel like I'm dying in some way, or I want to or wish or could, but that scares the shit out of me too, because if I do, then what, then I'll have absolutely nothing. And I don't want that.'

'You know Cath, I think that blocked feeling at the start is actually my shock, me feeling stunned, so shocked that they'd treat me that way. And I think that's why I couldn't get past it, I'm just too stunned, I have no feelings, they are all fucked, I'm all blocked up. Just fucked. You're right about fucked being such an apt word. That's how I feel all right - FUCKED!'

'But I think that's all. I can't go any further with it. I don't think I can speak about it anymore.'

'That's alright Mark. That was good, really good. It all sounded so right, I could see it and how it was making you feel.'

'You know I watched that little boy, and afterwards I tried to imagine what he might have felt, but I couldn't get very far other than feeling very powerless and miserable at feeling so powerless. But now... shit, and all because of being able to talk about it. It sure brings it all to life and puts a new angle on it, doesn't it?'

'It sure does. Are you feeling tired now?'

'Yes, emotionally worn out. It's very stressful isn't it?'

'I guess it has to be coming up from deep within us, and so buried and repressed. There's obviously a lot of blocks it has to get through.'

'I can feel how I don't want my parents to be unkind to me. I want them to love me. I guess I didn't or don't want to accept that they weren't loving to me, that would also be a huge block I reckon.'

'Well who does want to feel unloved by their parents.'

'Yeah I suppose we all fight it, we all want to suppress and bury the truth, and those feelings that are making us feel it, because it's just too awful to consider - that they don't love us. Oh Cath, I can feel it strongly, I want them to love me, not hate me. I don't want them to be mean to me Cath - I don't. I really don't. Oh God now I feel like I want to cry again. I don't want to feel unloved, I don't. I don't Cath I don't. But I do! Argh it's just so bad, so, so bad.'

'It's okay with me if you want to cry Mark.'

'Thank you Cath, thank you. I don't think I will though, but it's so nice to know that you are

there for me. That makes me feel a bit better.

‘Oh God, it is all so crushing isn’t it. So soul destroying. The horror of it all. And now like you said, now I know it is for real. It’s all very serious, it’s not just some mind game. There isn’t anything more real than it. I know that James and Marion are on the right track, and if this is the kind of stuff they’ve been through, then shit, no wonder he wants to be right about it all, and won’t completely know until he’s finished his healing.

‘Yeah, I feel rather drained now Cath, would you mind if we went to bed?’

‘No, not at all. Come on, you go clean your teeth and I’ll clean all this up.’

‘Thanks Cath.’

‘Oh that’s good, shit I feel tired. I’m fucked, to fucked to fuck - do you mind Cath?’

‘No, of course not, I need a break too. It’s nice just lying here in bed together like this.’

‘I wish I could lie here with you forever. God what an experience, I had no idea. Like you said, the intensity of the anger, but it’s confirmed it all for me too, it is so real. That keeps going around in my mind, “It is, it is so real, it’s all real”. All I’ve read, all I’ve thought about, the little bits I’ve felt, all we’ve talked about, it is real, it is what it’s all about. I just know it is. I know. I know it’s the truth - it is, just as I’ve read. When you know something to be true it is true - you just know it. And I know this to be true, true because I’ve experienced it. And that was only a little bit, shit how much of that is buried inside me. It makes me shudder to think about it, all that anguish that little boy felt with his father not letting him do what he wanted to do. I can see it on his face as if I’m still there watching him. And I know it’s me. I’m that little boy and my parents treated me that same way. I know it. I can feel it, and it’s not fair. Fuck them, what right do they have, just because I’m small and can’t stand up to the, can’t fight back. It’s not right, that’s for sure. You can’t treat children that way without damaging them, you just can’t. I know that now because I feel damaged by such treatment. Fuck we have no idea, we’ve got it all so wrong. We think treating children that way is loving, but how fucked it that, it’s not loving, it’s pure evil, it’s hatred, it’s having wanton power over the child. It has no say, and you don’t have to care about it, you don’t have to care what it feels, you can just shit all over it if you want to, and what can it do, cry, say no, and what’s that. You are so big being the parent, it’s so small, so you can do whatever you like with it, and no one’s going to say you can’t. I can’t go up to that man telling him he can’t treat his child like that, he’d tell me to fuck off as it’s his child and he can do as he pleases with it. And he’s right, he can. Shit it’s such a big responsibility to have a child, and yet we don’t give it a moments thought. He doesn’t want his little boy going on the sand, he doesn’t want to have to worry about him having sand in his shoes or whatever, and so he stands there like a giant and just says no. And what can the boy do - nothing. He can’t do a fucking thing. In his world there are two mountains as legs, huge barriers he can’t get past. And it’s his own fucking father. And he wants to push past to have his way, to assert his will, but he can’t, so he feels totally powerless in his own life, completely ineffectual, he can’t make life be as he wants it to be; he can’t have things his own way; he can’t feel and have his own power. No, he has to give it up, and it all comes crashing back on him. So he feels totally rejected by his father, totally unloved, totally fucked up, and so miserable. So, so fucking miserable. And then to cap it all off his father says we’ve had enough of this and leaves with him having to follow after him. “Come on Brad”, he says to him after he puts him down, once Brad’s got the message that it’s not a beach day. And Brad’s supposed to drop everything - himself - and follow along after the great one like an obedient dog. His father’s such an uncaring arsehole and it’s just as my father was to me. That’s the crushing part, to know that that’s how it was for me. And what could I have done about it - nothing. And I still can’t do anything about it. I still can’t stand up to my father and be how I’d like to be. He still has complete power over me. I still feel powerless with him. I pretend I don’t, but I can see that I do. I feel I do. I know I do. And fuck that shits me off more than anything because I am an adult, a grown man, and yet I can’t even stand up to my own father. And all because he never allowed me to when I was young. So what a prick, my own father had to dominate me all the time, he never gave me an inch, never allowed me to have any of my own power unless it was doing something that was all right by him. He had all the say, I didn’t, and yet I’m the fucking child, I’m the new one emerging into life, it should be me who has all the say, the world is supposed to be for me, for me to discover and

enjoy, for me to flap my wings and express my power. For me to get to know how my will works, yet I do know I can't, and all because of his rock-solid fucking legs. His fucking legs are in my way in life, his legs. Not even his whole body, it takes so little to stop me. I can't get past, I can't go around him, I'm stuck in my useless state not knowing what to do. Why is my own fucking father not letting me be how I want to be - I don't get it. Why, what's going on, what's gone wrong, why is he treating me this way. Why is my own father not being loving to me, why, what did I do that was so wrong. I wasn't bad, all I wanted to do was go and play on the sand, as that's what we do when we go to the beach, but no, not this time, and I don't get it. He doesn't even say anything to me, it's just "NO!", end of story, you don't have a say, you don't matter, fuck you, you're not important, I am, you're not, so you don't get what you want, I do.

'And that's how it is, isn't it? For all of us. Our parents get what they want, they get us to behave how they want us to. We don't get to make them behave how we want them to. They have the say in how it's going to be. Some of us might have more of a say, and might even be able in some situations to make our parents do what we want, but still overall, it's all for them and nothing for us.

'And that's just fucked. We all go on about equality, and yet we aren't equal with our children. We the adults have all the power, they have very little or none. So how hypocritical is that. Fucking parents. Dad just sticks his cock in mum and they make me. And there I am, "oh isn't he a cute little baby", and they ooh and aah all over me, and then set about fucking me up. Down comes the barriers stopping me from being able to express myself in my fucking life, my life, not their life, and I have to change and fit myself into their world and way of doing things, and I'm fucked. And it goes on day in day out for fucking years. All of my early years, and on as I grow up more. And by the end of it I'm expected to come out into the world of adults and know how to survive, know how to be a perfectly functioning self-determining person who can have children of his own. And yet what really am I. Some bloke who on the surface of it can reasonably pretend that he's got a life, but I don't. I'm fucked and it's the same for my parents. They came down hard on me at times and they believed they knew what life was all about, they felt they were successful parents all because I haven't as yet thrown myself off a fucking bridge or become a drug addict. But fuck them, they have no idea what they've done to me, how badly they've fucked me up, no fucking idea, and I hate them for it.

'Now Cath I feel hatred for them. Yes I sure do. Fuck them both, what right did have to treat me so badly. No right, they just used and abused me, traumatised me, fucked me right up, and now I've got years of hard slog and fucking bad feelings like this - all my fucking repressed anger, misery and hatred of them I've got to try and bring up. What a fuck - great life. Welcome to planet torture, come and have fun setting out in your negative life, enjoy your parents well and truly fucking you over. Oh it's a real hoot, and then when you've finally had enough of it, then you can start to wake up to all the horrors you've suffered. Then you can have more fun doing your feeling-healing, feeling just how angry, hurt, miserable, and full of fucking hatred you are, for the very people you should be brimming over with love for.

'Na, the whole thing is way too fucked. And I can't do anything about it. I'm stuck in it, shit I'm of it, worse - I'M IT! It's not good Cath, not good at all, and all I can keep doing is keep speaking about it all. Fuck, fuck, fuck.'

'It all sounds good to me, all you've said. Keep going. It is all terrible what you, what we've all been through, but we can't do anything about it, we have to just accept it and speak about all it's making us feel, that much I know now.'

'I know, you're right, but fuck it feels so bad. I feel so bad. Shit, shit I feel bad. And I feel like I'll never feel good again.'

'Here snuggle closer and let me hug you more... yeah that feels good.'

‘Thanks Cath, thanks for caring about me, that feels so good, thank you so much.’

'Mark, are you awake?'

'No.'

'I don't want to have to get up to go to work. I don't want to do anything today other than what we've been doing. I so wish we could have another weekend so we could keep going talking about it all. I don't want to go to work, I don't, I don't want to have to leave you - and I don't want to have to leave the warmth of the bed. It's so nice lying here with you, that's what I want to do, it's too new our relationship, we haven't been together long enough for me to have to go now. I don't want to. I don't want to have to get up.'

'I don't want you to go either Cath. It would be so good if you didn't have to go.'

'Sometimes it makes me so angry when I have to do something I don't want to do. I wish I could just say no and something else would happen, someone else would go to work for me.'

'You can't call anyone and beg them to change days with you?'

'No, I couldn't do it to them, it's too late, I should have thought it about it earlier yesterday. No, I'll have to go, dam it.'

'Well don't get out of bed just yet.'

'Oh I have to otherwise I won't be ready on time.'

'But I'm driving you remember.'

'I have remembered and it's already too late. Fuck, fuck, fuck...-'

'That's your phone ringing!'

'Oh shit, that does it, now I have to get up. Who'd be calling now this early.... Hello?'

'It's me lov, June, I'm not waking you?'

'No June, it's all right, I have to get up anyway.'

'Yes, I know, and that's why I'm ringing you so early, I have a big favour to ask of you.'

'Yes?'

'Would it be possible if we switched days, if I can work today instead of you, and you work on the weekend. I know it's very short notice, but if you agreed, I'd hoped to catch you early enough so you could sleep in.'

'June, you are a wonder! It is VERY all right with me. Nothing could be better. I was just saying to my new friend how much I wished I didn't have to go to work today so I spend more time with him.'

'Ha! New friend eh - since?'

'Since Friday night.'

'Good on you girl, oh I can't wait to hear all about it. So that will be all right about today, Mal wants me to be with him on the weekend -'

'Yes June, that's perfectly all right I assure you, it couldn't be better.'

'Great. Well in that case, how about I work today, *and* tomorrow?'

'Even better. Oh June you couldn't have timed it better, thank you for calling.'

'Now, you're sure, it's not the sort of thing you usually ask someone: if you can work.'

'I'm positive, absolutely sure, couldn't be more sure June. Thank you June, I'm going back to bed now.'

'I bet you are. Oh well, good on you. You can tell me about it all on Friday. Bye now lov,'

'Bye June. Well shit eh, how's that!'

'It's a bloody ripper! Oh now we can go back to sleep.'

'Bullshit we can. You've got to perform - my man. I've got you all to myself for two more days,

so come on, up with it boy!’

‘Well, it does seem like you’re a girl with PURPOSE!’

‘Too bloody right I am! And see what happens when you express all your bad feelings.’

‘Bloody know it all...’