

Flower Child



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"Were You a Sixties Flower Child?"

I looked at the sad young faces around me. After Jerry Garcia, the visionary leader of the Grateful Dead, died in August '95, spontaneous communal grief birthed a full-on sixties flashback on the Pearl Street Mall in Boulder, Colorado.

Thousands of Deadheads streamed down the Mall and merged into the dense cacophony of mourning in front of the courthouse between 13th and 14th Streets where candles, pictures, albums, and flowers decorated the stone fountain on the lawn. Fresh college kids, tattooed modern primitives, and baggy-jeaned skateboarders hung out in whispering, weeping clusters Silver-haired hippies and sixties old-timers mingled with the grief-stricken youngsters, trying their best to comfort them. The cries of Garcia's mourners mingled with dozens of boomboxes screeching Dead sets and merged into one unearthly wail that soared toward the heavens. As I wandered among the crowds, tears flowed down my cheeks.

My daughter, a sixties Love-In cherub grown into a beautiful young woman, looked at me with understanding.

"I knew you had to see this, Mom," she said with a wise-woman smile.

These nineties hipsters were hungry. They were searching. They were looking for love. I'd been passing them for years on the Boulder Mall. Although I always smiled at them, tonight was different. Tonight, the distance of years had dissolved. I was one of them again. The sixties and the nineties had merged with a power that had shaken everyone out of their local mindset.

"Were you a sixties flower child?" a young voice called.

The question thrilled through me, my grasshopper mind jumping instantly back to that magic time. Turning, I looked into the softly yearning eyes of a young girl, her lovely face framed by long black wavy hair. Innocent, vulnerable, and wearing a flower-print dress, she was the mirror of myself in the mystical, magical, psychedelic sixties.

"Yes, I was a flower child," I answered with a surge of poignant pride. "And I think I still am," I added with a laugh.

"Tell us about the sixties," her dreadlocked boyfriend asked, his glance wavering between respectful curiosity and a distant cool disdain.

"There was an intense energy, like everyone shared the same dream," I said. "We recognized each other. We wanted out of our families, out of our culture. We wanted love. The rock stars sang our dreams and their music brought us together. Creativity burst free in wild, colorful Be-ins and Love-ins. It was a happening," I bubbled excitedly, the energy of the past returning in the present. Remembering the shadow side I'd been so afraid of in the sixties, I

also added, "And then there were the police, the establishment, the media, and the politicians who made sure the dream didn't happen."

Slowly a group of young people gathered around us. We sat in a circle on the damp night grass - a still center in a hurricane of sorrow.

"What about the Summer of Love?" a leather-clad girl challenged as she slouched on the grass. Flaunting a snake tattoo that ran around her neck and up her shaved head, and multiple nose and ear rings, she asked, "Was that for real?"

I sighed, "The Summer of Love was real, all right. It changed my life forever."

The longing that had carried me out of my fearful youth to the flowering richness of my present life surfaced once more in my heart. In the sixties, I was a seed longing for the sun, a flower seeking her garden of love.

"What did it feel like to be a flower child?" a street savvy youth asked, his pierced street-warrior guise a far cry from the bells and flowers of my time.

"Empty. Lonely. Hungry. The world was cold, hard, and harsh. What people called love didn't feel like love. I was always looking, searching. I was always hungry for love."

He nodded, as if to say we were the same.

Hundreds of candles flamed softly in the misting darkness. Rivers of melting wax flowed down the base of the courthouse fountain. Jerry Garcia may have passed on, but his spirit was profoundly present.

The more I talked, the more the sixties feelings flowed, and the more I remembered. When I returned home late that night, I knew the time had come to share my story.

Five years later, in the millennium year of 2000, I offer *Flower Child* to the flower children of the past, present, and future in whatever costume they choose to adorn themselves.

If you feel moved when you read *Flower Child*, pass it on with the true spirit of the flower children. Pass it on with love and a blessing, or perhaps a flower or a song.

Pass it on.

Rainbow

The jewelry and fashions were taking off. Hardly able to keep up with the demand, I worked far into the night to fill orders, humming along to the radio and watching over Love. A few times I found myself wishing I had someone to help me. A few days later, help materialized in a most unexpected way.

One stormy night around ten o'clock, Taz appeared with a shivering, scared teenager named Rainbow. He'd seen her on Sunset Strip and stopped to talk to her. Realizing she wasn't up to his scene and thinking I might need help with Love, he offered to bring her to me.

Surprised at how my wish had suddenly manifested in front of me, and amazed at Taz's unusual thoughtfulness, I welcomed her into my home.

After Taz split, I wrapped Rainbow in one of my brightly striped Mexican blankets, sat her in front of the electric heater, and turned on the flower power station. Shaking, she huddled shyly in the brilliant yellow, pink, and orange blanket, her blue eyes glancing furtively here and there, checking everything out, making sure she was safe. A wild head of teased, curly red hair surrounded her freckled face, and she was dressed in blue jeans, a T-shirt and worn white sneakers. She didn't even have a sweater. No wonder she was cold. She looked so young, my heart went out to her.

"What's your baby's name?" she asked, still shivering.

"Love," I said.

"Cool," she approved with a tiny smile.

"Did you run away from home?" I inquired gently.

"Yeah, I can't stay there anymore," she replied without explanation.

As I heated milk for cocoa, sympathy rose in my heart. I knew what it was like to want to leave your family. I knew what it was like to be alone in the world.

"Is he your husband?" she asked carefully, eyes averted.

"*Was* my husband," I responded, wondering if he had come on to her. "I've been on my own for nearly a year."

Wishful longing glimmered on her expressive face for a moment before she whispered wistfully, almost to herself, "I'd love to be able to make it on my own. I'd like to live in the country, have a garden, and weave and make pots and have babies and cook, and have a wonderful husband, and good friends who stopped in to see me."

"I'd love to have that too," I shared. "I had a hard time with Taz. It took me years to break free. You're lucky you know what you want."

"I know what I want but how do I get it?" she asked passionately.

"Questions, questions, questions. I have a lot of those too," I said, feeling like a wise woman for the first time in my life. "Even

when you don't know the answers, it's important to keep asking the questions."

"It feels good to talk to you. I could never talk to my parents," she shared with the first hint of a smile.

Sipping cocoa, warming her hands on the cup, Rainbow shared her story.

"Couldn't stay at home any more. My parents wouldn't let me be myself or have any fun. Work, work, work! That's all they thought about. Study, study, study! That's all they wanted from me. I used to love to go to school. I was a top student, but the way they pushed me, I started to hate it."

She trembled and drew the blanket around her. I waited silently, not wanting to interrupt.

A few moments later, she continued.

"They were yelling at me. I turned around and walked out of the living room. They thought I was going to the bathroom, but I kept on going down the hall and out the front door, just like this, wearing my blue jeans and my favorite peace symbol T-shirt. I didn't care about anything except getting away. I didn't have any money. I wasn't even afraid. I hitchhiked and slept in bus stations. I wanted to find the flower children on Sunset Strip."

"By the time I got dropped off on the Strip, I was already hungry and cold. I was sure I'd find young kids like myself, but there were only tourists, night clubbers, flashy groupies, and burned-out druggies. No one was interested in talking to me or helping me find a safe place to crash. I thought I was going to have to turn myself into the police and go home. I sat down on the sidewalk near the Whiskey-A-Go-Go and put my arms over my head and cried. That's when your old man appeared. When I told him my story, he offered to bring me here. I knew I was taking a chance getting into his car, but I'm glad now. Can I stay? Please?"

"Yes, you can," I laughed. "I've been wishing for someone like you, and here you are."

The next day I bought her a toothbrush and a piece of foam for a bed and gave her one of my sweaters. In the daytime, we put the foam under the welding table and at night the studio was her bedroom. Rainbow was glad to come and live with me, but she never told me her real name or where she came from.

As Rainbow eased into our studio scene, she brought magic and youthful laughter to our lives. She was my sister, apprentice, baby-sitter, friend, daughter, and helper all mixed into one. She looked up to me, and I sheltered her with an open heart. She admired what I was doing and wanted to learn, so I slipped easily into the role of a teacher.

Choo took to Rainbow the moment she lifted him up and swung him around, making him shriek with delight. Whenever she wanted to take him anywhere, he offered his hand to her without hesitation. He quickly realized that going somewhere with Rainbow meant having a good time. When she joined him on the slides and swings and bars, their laughter filled the park. Even though Rainbow loved to play games and tease and act like a child herself, she was also a natural mother who was thoughtful and considerate of my children's safety and comfort. After a time, I knew I could trust her to watch over them.

Gradually she settled in, but if she saw a police car she went into a paranoid panic and hid under the welding table, sure they were coming to get her and take her back to her parents. At night, when Love was asleep, she begged me to show her how to make jewelry. Soon she was assembling earrings while she sang along with the radio. Rainbow hung on every word of the DJs' raves. She not only knew the words to every song, she believed them. Her eyes glistened with excitement when she told me what was happening in the world of hippies and flower children.

The next time Clara came around, I introduced Rainbow.

"So, you're populating your world. Very good," Clara said approvingly.

Populating my world? What an interesting concept, I thought to myself as I took a new look at my studio. Yes, this was my world, and now it had its first new citizen. Groovy.

Turning off my head-tripping, I tuned back into Clara in time to hear her say, "You are friends and helpers to each other. This is the way it is supposed to be."

Rainbow warmed instantly to Clara. It made me happy to see Clara's wise, silver head bent closely to Rainbow's wild, red one as Clara looked over the jewelry Rainbow was putting together.

I told Clara how I had wished for a helper just before Rainbow arrived, and she smiled mysteriously.

"If you are getting what you wish for, then you really are in tune," she said, and then she was gone.

In tune with what? I made a mental note to ask her more about that the next time I saw her.

February storms blew through, bringing torrential downpours that were followed by fresh, breezy, sunshiny, smog-free days. A ten-month toddler, Love stood sturdily on her little legs, holding on to things and pulling herself around the studio. We had to watch her carefully because she wanted to explore and touch and taste everything around her.

"She's a little trucker," Rainbow laughed every time she saw Love scooting about, and soon Rainbow's nickname for Love became Little Trucker. My nickname for Love came to me spontaneously in play, as had Choo's. Every time I'd throw her up in the air, I'd call out, "Chickadee, flying in the sky like a bird. Chickadee."

With Rainbow there to take care of Love, I was able to run errands, go shopping in downtown Los Angeles, and sell jewelry to boutiques without taking her with me. On the weekends, Rainbow and I took the kids to the beach or hung out at fairs or markets, selling the jewelry. It was the first time a friend was coming along on my trip and sharing my way of doing things. Becoming the mother-teacher-sister of a sixteen-year-old flower child increased my happiness and supported my creativity. I was glad of the second chance to have a sister.

I'd never been around someone so easy and happy and good-natured. There was no resistance between us as we talked and shared and helped each other out. Sometimes I felt Rainbow was idolizing me, so I'd tell her about some of my hard times. Most evenings we curled up on the sofa and listened to the latest songs on

the radio while we dreamed away, sharing stories and playing with Love and Choo, whenever he was with us. The happiness that came from our friendship made me realize I'd never had a real friend before. One night, Rainbow looked up shyly, like she'd been thinking about something for a long time, and it was finally time to do something about it.

She said, "Thanks for letting me help you with the jewelry. I always wanted to be an artist, but my parents made me study science."

"Did you like science?" I asked.

"Yeah, science is interesting, but they way they teach it, God, what a bummer. I was good at it, but it never captured my heart the way art did. My parents said they wouldn't put me through art school, so I did what they wanted."

"Then I made a new friend. Her name was Hummer, short for hummingbird, because she always hummed when she was a child. She was everything I wanted to be. Her parents were so cool. They wanted her to do what she loved, and they all enjoyed being around each other and doing things together. I started going to her place after school, but I never told my parents. They would have freaked out. It was Hummer who named me Rainbow. She said I wouldn't have to look for the pot of gold because it would always be within me. She was always saying cool things like that. She was pure magic."

"For a few months, I got away with it. Hummer frizzed my hair and gave me a pair of her old bell-bottom embroidered jeans. I bought a few groovy T-shirts with my allowance. After school, we'd hang out at her place and listen to the flower power stations. I started making friends at school. I was on a high. Soon I was humming all the songs. My parents knew something was up, but my grades were good, so they figured it was just teenage stuff. They thought I was still coming home after school to study by myself till they got back from work. This one day, my mom got sick and came home early, and I wasn't home. When I came in, my mom went wild. When my dad came home, they both started in on me, like I was evil or something. I felt like they hated me, the way they were yelling at me and putting me down."

"What did they say?"

"They threatened me. They told me they were going to throw away all my new clothes, cut my hair, and get a baby sitter to meet me after school. God, it was like they were the Gestapo or something. But I was so cool. I pretended I was Hummer. I sat there, real quiet, listening to them, humming quietly to myself. Then, I saw it all, clear as day. My own parents didn't know me at all. They didn't care who I was. They weren't even interested in what I wanted to do," she said with nervous excitement.

A minute later, she added, "That's when I got up and walked out. By the time they figured out that I was gone, I'd already hitchhiked my first ride. I'm never going back."

"Wow, it's amazing you did that. I never ran away from my parents, even though I wanted to. When I finally left home, I went straight into marriage with Taz, and then it took me years to leave him. This is the first time I've been out in the world on my own."

"But you did it. That's what counts," Rainbow said.

"By the time I left, I had no choice. You've got courage. You walked into the night and took your chances," I said, impressed with her spunk.

"Yeah, I did, didn't I? And I ended up with you, so I must have done something right," she agreed cheerfully.

"Don't you think they're worried about you?" I asked. "Sure, they're worried all right, but I know if I went back it'd just be the same scene all over again. I can't live like that anymore."

"What about school?"

"Oh, I'm real good at that. I'll catch up later. Right now, I want to be with you and Love, and Choo. I love learning how to make the jewelry. Please don't send me home. Let me stay with you. Promise?"

"I promise. You're part of our family now," I said. After that conversation, Rainbow relaxed. The days and weeks flew by as we worked on orders and shared our daily lives. At times I'd catch my breath and marvel at the joyous, creative energy of our home and studio. A surge of gratitude would sweep through and my heart would ache with happiness. I was nearly twenty-six, and this was the first time since I was a child that I had felt so much happiness.

On the hunt for jewelry materials in downtown Los Angeles, I discovered new plastic materials: thin, flexible sheets of silver and gold mylar, and brilliant, transparent colors. After buying a dozen sheets of every color, I drove back to the studio.

"Rainbow! Look. New materials! We're going to make the greatest jewelry," I proclaimed as I threw the mylar on the worktable and reached for the scissors.

"See, we'll cut leaves, stars, flowers, and geometric shapes and gather them in bunches with these silver rings. Then we'll mix and blend the transparent colors over the silver and gold."

Rainbow dove into the action with me. We stayed up all night, singing along to the radio as we perfected the new designs. We didn't stop until we had a dozen samples for a new line of jewelry.

"I'll take them to Judith's Paper Clothes Shop and to all the cool boutiques in Hollywood and Beverly Hills. Let's call the Women's Wear Daily editor. We can sell these to department stores, too."

Judith ordered a supply for her store and also decided to use the mylar jewelry to accessorize her paper clothes on the Gypsy Rose Lee TV show in San Francisco. When Gypsy saw the jewelry she invited me to appear on her show a few weeks later.

Work was play. Play was work. High on creativity, we watched our ideas manifest in everyday reality. Flower Power energized our world.

One warm, sunny afternoon, Clara appeared in the studio doorway, surprising us with her exquisite presence. She was dressed in a pure white-on-white embroidered cotton dress, with shoulder pleats stitched down the side. One of her silver pins held a transparent white gauze scarf that floated over her shoulders. A lacy rattan hat shaded her face.

Stunned by her beauty, I managed to say, "It's so good to see you. Please come in."

Rainbow clapped her hands, "Come and see what we've been doing."

"You are happy together. This is good, very good," she complimented, laughing her joy.

Rainbow and I laughed with her, and put our arms around each other.

"When you said NO to your husband, you didn't know you were saying YES to all this, did you?" Clara asked.

As always, Clara offered a shift in perception.

"One day you realize there is no YES and there is no and that only one thing is possible - YES! Even when you don't know what you're saying YES to yet, and think you're saying NO - it's still YES, yes?"

"Yes!" we shouted. "Yes, yes, yes!" Laughter filled the studio and my heart.

Women's Wear Daily featured an article on my jewelry. Editors and journalists from Vogue, Cosmo and Harper's came to the Nemo Street studio and bought jewelry samples for photo shoots. My business expanded as orders poured in from boutiques and department stores. Passers-by who saw the window display on Nemo Street came in and ordered custom clothes.

One day Judith called me and asked me to come over to her shop. When I arrived at the Paper Clothes Store, Baroness Fiona Thyssen was trying on my jewelry. Glorious auburn hair waved over her shoulders, crowning her perfect glowing body. One of the most beautiful women in the world, she was also divinely charming. She spoke to us kindly with an exquisite melodious voice. After placing an order for her boutique in the Grand Hotel in Switzerland, she walked out wearing my jewelry.

Soon, Rainbow was making all the jewelry and I was concentrating on designing the clothes. After nursing Love, I would race away for a couple of hours to see Maria, buy materials, and run errands, glad that Rainbow was there to take care of Love. Feeling like I was bursting out of my studio, I dreamed of a store of my own.

One afternoon, when we were making jewelry and grooving to the latest tunes, Rainbow laughed, held up her arm and clenched her fist.

"Flower Power!" she shouted.

I lifted both my arms heavenward and mirrored her with my own fierce cry.

"Flower Power!" I yelled triumphantly to the sky.

Jim & Pam

One morning, Pam Courson breezed into the Conspiracy. Restless and thin, with a mane of shiny, coppery-brown hair, she wore a beaded top with tight bell-bottom pants that showed off her slender body. Pam raced around the shop, quickly choosing one dress after the other to hold up in front of the mirror.

"I'm looking for something special. I'm Pam, Jim Morrison's woman," she announced speedily, as if she were Alice in Wonderland's white rabbit and had only a moment to spare.

"Cool," I responded slowly, watching her tense, impatient search through the racks. "I've been wanting to meet you."

Spinning off, she danced through the store like a nervous colt, calling over her shoulder, "I need a special dress, something really wild."

"You can wear wild, but let me show you elegant," I said even more slowly, wishing I were a magnet that could make her stop her clockwork spinning.

Despite her hyper cool, she seemed vulnerable, even child-like. I wanted to enhance that quality rather than hide it with flashy, sexy styles, so I took her into my cutting room and showed her the dress I'd just made for Peter Fonda's movie, *The Trip*.

"It's an original. I made the pattern myself," I said, handing her the silver dress.

"See, this neckline scarf drapes in the front or in the back, or over your head like a hood. It's three styles in one. The movie won't be out for months. You can be the first to show it off."

As she slipped it over her head, she was transformed. Her tender little girl's face peered seductively out of the silver hood and the dress enhanced her slender body, revealing soft curves.

"This is primo, absolutely wild. Jim'll love this."

As she preened in front of the mirror, I showed her my line of stretch pants, tops, and jump suits. Grooving now, she tried them all on, seeing herself in a new light, watching her beauty come alive.

"I'd love to have a store and do what you're doing," she enthused. "It's so creative. You're designing fantasies, making dreams come true. That's what I want to do. We need to hang out. I want you to make all my clothes."

After Pam left, I laughed with pleasure. I loved turning people on, helping them see themselves in another way, creating costumes for their dreams. I took Love's dimpled hands and swung her around, lifting her into the air as she squealed with delight. Catching her, I hugged her fragrant, sweet softness, breathing in love.

A few days later, Pam invited me over to her Laurel Canyon house. When I admired her California garden bungalow, she made a face.

"I hate this place. We're never left alone. I want to move," she complained bitterly.

I poured my jewelry on the table.

"Look! These will be great with the silver dress," I enthused, trying to swing her off her bad trip.

The door opened and Jim Morrison lounged on the threshold, a black leather shadow against the light from the garden. He sauntered in, holding a brown paper bag in one hand. Silent and moody, his handsome face was hidden behind unshaven stubble and altered by half-closed eyes. With an indulgent grin that shifted easily into a seductive sneer, he threw himself down in a chair and lifted his lizard skin boots onto the coffee table. Taking a bottle of Scotch out of the bag, he twisted it open and guzzled a long drink.

Pam walked over and took the bottle out of his hands.

"It's early Jim, please be cool," she pleaded.

Jim winked at me and turned on the television, losing himself in an old black and white movie.

Pam took me into her bedroom. After she closed the door, she said, "I need you to make something special for me. I have a secret even Jim doesn't know about." Coming closer, she whispered in my ear, "I dance at a topless club in Westwood during the lunch hour. I make good money and it's mine to spend on clothes and makeup and jewelry, and I get to dance. I always imagine Jim might walk in and see me. It turns me on."

"Look," she said as she pulled a G-string out of a stuffed animal.

"This is what I've been wearing, but it's boring. I want something fluffier, sexier, more suggestive. Can you do it?"

I nodded incredulously while she put on the G-string.

"I almost got caught once, and was that a turn-on, but I tore it off, acting all hot to make love and distracted him," she giggled, admiring her reflection in the mirror. Then moving to her own tune, breasts rolling, reddish-brown hair flying, she beat a rhythmic undulation with her hips.

"It's the way I get even for all his running around," she added, a fierce look taking over her beautiful face.

Trying to stay cool, I took measurements. Pam took off the G-string and dressed, and we talked about fashions for a while. When I passed through the living room when it was time to go home, Jim didn't look up. He was glued to the television, slugging down liquor, lost in his river of pain.

The next time Pam dropped into the Conspiracy, she asked me to come over for lunch the next day. When I walked down the path to the house, the door was open and I walked in on a raging fight. Tears pouring down her face, Pam was pounding on Jim's chest, screaming about some woman who'd called to tell Pam she'd slept with Jim.

I stood still for a moment, not knowing whether to leave or wait.

"I told her it didn't mean anything. I asked her if you'd bought her a Porsche. That shut her up. I told her you'd sleep with anyone, but I'm the one you come home to, if you can call this a home. I want a stereo. I can't even listen to your music. The other guys in the Doors have homes and children and stereos. We have nothing."

Jim didn't answer or defend himself or make her any promises. He held her close, humming and crooning in her ear as he

softly embraced her. The next minute they were kissing passionately.

I slipped by them and went outside. As I wandered in the garden, I picked a bouquet of flowers, thinking it might cheer them up.

A few minutes later, when I was sure the fight was over, I walked back in and offered them the flowers.

Jim's face lit up, and gesturing majestically, he cried like a street seller, "Flowers for the gods. Dionysius rejoices!"

Pam laughed like a delighted little girl as Jim crowned her burnished hair with delicate ferns. In loving response, she playfully tucked blossoms behind his ears. Glad to see them happy again, I bowed my head as they both wove leaves and posies through my long black hair.

Continuing the game with a lightheartedness that eclipsed his self-destructive side, Jim raised his right hand high and chanted, "A Love-In feast celebrating the sacrifice of the Lizard King..."

Eyes widening in fear, Pamela interrupted him and begged, "Don't say that. You don't have to sacrifice yourself."

They looked like they were about to start arguing, so I jumped in. "Hey, Jim, I love your song, *Light My Fire*. Your music usually scares me, but that song turns me on," I said.

His interest piqued, he turned to me with his full attention. "My music scares you, huh? Why?"

"I'm afraid of darkness. I see darkness all around and I don't want to lose myself in it. I want to go toward the light."

"How are you gonna to do that without breaking free?" he asked, laughing at me like I was being childish.

"I don't know. I don't think about breaking free. I see everyone trying to break free all around me, but I don't like the way they're doing it. The only thing I know for sure is that I have a feeling that tells me to go toward the light. I don't want to be part of this dark world."

"What other world is there?" he said as he rose from his chair.

"The world inside me. I want to make it real. I know I'm searching for something, a path, and a teacher to show me the way. I'm searching for love. I may have to leave my body behind in this world, but I feel there is another world, a finer world, a world of spirit..."

Gesturing wildly as he paced the room, Jim interrupted me. "The City of Angels is the City of Night. You're an L.A. woman. You're out there on the Strip, night after night, with all the happening people coming into your store, offering a million temptations. I accept everything that comes. I want it all and hate it all. I take it all so I can go beyond it. What's your trip?"

"My trip? Well that's simple. I don't take drugs. I don't drink and I don't sleep around. Those things don't make me feel good. I'd rather be high on something that makes me feel good, like my children. Their love lets me know there's something greater. I never found love with a man, so I give my love to my children and my work."

Jim and Pam looked at me as if I was crazy.

"How can babies make you high? They're crying and needing all your time and attention," Pam said in disbelief. "I don't want babies. I wouldn't be able to do anything."

Jim grumbled, "Love's a lie. Love's selfish. We only love people when they give us what we want. Love is pain. Everyone leaves. You have to do what you can to lessen the pain."

Pam looked like she was going to cry.

I searched for words to dispel his dark vision.

"All the stuff that turns you on, turns me off," was the only thing I could think of saying.

"No wonder I never see you out there," Jim said, grinning like a madman. "You're into enterprise."

I wanted to leave but when Jim shifted to a music mode, I was enchanted again. He picked up his guitar, and slouched back in a chair, strumming and reciting Rimbaud's poetry, raving about Dionysius and the Greek myths, singing and explaining his songs.

I figured Rimbaud, the wild young French poet, had a lot to do with Jim's "killer on the road" complex. I remembered a line from one of Rimbaud's poems, "a long, boundless and systematic disordering of the senses." It seemed Jim was trying on that line for size.

For sure, Jim had a unique brand of courage. He plumbed the shadow lands like a snake exploring the depths of darkness. Maybe he had eyes that could see in the dark, but I didn't. I was afraid of indulgence, afraid to let all the rules go, afraid to sink into alcohol, drugs, and sex. Not only was I afraid, but I couldn't see what people got out of it. Seeing Jim on the verge of disintegration reminded me of Taz. There was no way I wanted to be like either of them. Instead, I bore the pain of my loneliness and my despair, paring down my desires until there was only the desire for love.

Jim Morrison was a rock star pushing the edges of life. I loved his music and so did the millions of fans that idolized him, but would any of them want to live his life if they knew how much he was suffering?

A few weeks later, Pam called in the middle of the night and asked for help. She was disoriented, almost incoherent. High on drugs and alcohol, she alternated between outbursts of rage and desperate tears.

"Some creep just called me. Jim's gone over the edge. He vomited and passed out. They want me to pick him up in Hollywood," she cried hysterically. "Please, please. I need someone to help me, someone I can trust."

A short while later, she screeched her Porsche to a halt outside my studio. When I went outside to get in the car, Pam was a wild woman. Yelling, swearing, crying, praying, tears running down her face, she sped wildly to a grimy West Hollywood motel. Slamming on the brakes in the parking lot, Pam leaned on the horn, angry as hell.

"I'm not going in there with his groupies and his phony friends," she spat out furiously. "They can bring him out."

A doped, longhaired freak stumbled out of a motel room and leaned over the balcony.

"Bring Jim out!" she screamed at him.

A few minutes later, two stoned deadbeats dragged an unconscious Jim Morrison down the stairs. I moved to the back seat of the Porsche as they folded Jim into the passenger seat, filling the car with the bittersweet smell of vomit.

Gagging, I held my hand to my nose and opened the window. Jim was dead drunk. Pam was hysterical. I kept talking, trying to calm her down. I wanted to help. I just didn't know what to do.

"You fuckers, you're killing him," she screamed at them as she peeled out.

"Pam, slow down. Cool it. Take it easy," I said. "It's going to be okay. We'll get him home and put him in a bath and bring him around."

It was tough dragging him into the house. He was deadweight heavy. Finally, he lay on the living room floor, totally out, virtually comatose.

"Do you think we should call a doctor?" I asked.

"No, no. Jim can't take any more bad publicity. They'll be swarming all over him. We have to bring him around," she sobbed.

"I'll make some coffee," I said and went into the kitchen.

I heard Pam pleading with him, "Wake up, Jim. Please, wake up."

As Pam slapped Jim's face and poured water over his head, he started coming out of it, mumbling, "My friend, the end," while he was groaning, and thrashing about on the floor. After I'd made the coffee, I pulled off his boots while Pamela removed his shirt.

Together, one of us on each leg, we pulled off his lizard skin pants. We dragged him into the bathroom. Sputtering, spitting, making faces, he resisted the coffee we held to his lips. Lifting him, dragging him, begging him, we finally managed to get him, naked as a babe, into the tub.

Pam was crying her heart out like a lost little girl. Her love, her hero, was receding from her in ever-ebbing waves. She knelt on the floor beside the tub.

"Jim, please come to your senses," she begged.

Suddenly Jim opened his eyes, looked at us, and spoke slowly and calmly, "I am in my senses. That's why I'm trying to get out of them."

Then his head fell and he was gone again.

Stunned, I realized he was doing all this on purpose. This was his way of checking out of his mind.

We pulled him out of the bath and dragged him into bed. Pam curled up beside him, her arms around him, whimpering, and whispering his name. After turning out the light, I slipped out the door.

Love-In

When the Free Press announced a Love-in on the seventh of July, a thrill went through me, stirring the dormant seeds in the winter of my heart. I'd tried to forget Bodhi, preferring to live without hope rather than cling to a dream that couldn't come true. Now, I was ready for the Love-In. I was ready for love.

When I awoke on the morning of the Love-In, my heart was as light as a feather. I slipped on the dress I'd worn to the Renaissance Faire, and brushed my long black hair till it gleamed. Sure Bodhi would be there, I wanted to look my best. Choo wanted to wear his buckskins and moccasins and look like a little Indian. After I tied a headband with a feather around his head, he ran around making war whoops while Love chose a flowered shift. When she looked in the mirror, she pointed to Choo's headband, so I wrapped a scarf over her hair.

When we were about ready to go, sad, silent, and somber Meadow hesitantly approached our fun-filled, dressing-up scene. She must have heard the laughter rising up the stairs and wondered what was happening, but she did not laugh with us. Her face glistened like a white mask above the black tattered dress that fluttered in the Santa Ana wind blowing hot and strong from the desert, the wind known to drive people mad. Like a specter from the underworld, Meadow leaned against the door and watched our play.

"We're going to the Love-in. Wanna come?" I invited.

She silently nodded acceptance and followed us down the stairs like the shadow of our merry trio. She was already in costume. I wondered if she ever took her tatters off, if she slept in them, made love in them, even bathed in them. I couldn't imagine her without them. They wove the dress of her soul.

The powerful energy of the Love-in took my breath away. The Griffith Park meadow surged with costumed crowds, their constant movement stirring shimmering clouds of dust into the air. On the makeshift stage, the Fraternity of Man blasted good vibrations, pulling everyone into a mystical, magical, musical realm woven of our hopes and dreams. Colorful banners flew from tall flagpoles and balloons bobbed high in the summer sky. Rough, leather-clad Hell's Angels served free soup around roaring campfire kitchens.

Holding hands, my children joined the body-painted and costumed throng. Celebrating joy, ecstatic flower children exchanged restless glances as they passed each other, seeking connection, offering flowers, incense, fruit, and hugs as they shared their version of the kaleidoscopic, psychedelic dream. Even rednecks, squares, and critics could not resist beating time to the throbbing, infectious rhythms of the conga drums.

Flags flew high over teepees, tents, and tribal encampments gathered around flower-filled altars honoring Buddha, Shiva, Kwan Yin, and Christ. Candles and incense burned before woven woolen God's Eyes, Tibetan mandalas, Chinese black and white yin-yang circles and astrological symbols. Kindred spirits laughed in

recognition as outer boundaries dissolved. Spirits flashing, we opened to each other and to love.

A clown took off his button-covered hat and offered it to me. I chose "God Is Watching, Give Him a Good Show" and pinned the button on my dress.

Meadow connected with friends and went off to get high. I took my children's hands and wandered through the Love-in. Suddenly a cloud passed over the sun and a cool, prickly sensation shivered through me. As I slowly turned, the crowd parted like the Red Sea, and there on a rise was Bodhi.

Without his biblical robes, wearing only blue jeans, he shone with quiet radiance as the magnetic power of his gaze fell upon me. An instant later, the crowds closed in and he disappeared. I stood still for a while, hoping he would come to me, but when he didn't, I wondered if he'd been a mirage. I felt excited, as if I had connected with the spirit of the day. Happiness welled up, and I welcomed it like gentle rain after a long drought.

The Iron Butterfly let loose with a set of intense songs. Surrendering to the music, I danced with my children, swinging, spinning, joining hands with others, laughing, and shouting, until we could dance no more. This was no dimly lit rock concert or alcoholic nightclub scene. We were dancing in the light of day, creating an enchanting intermingling of all our hopes and dreams.

*"Joy to the world, all the boys and girls,
Joy to you and me..."*

Faces radiated happiness. Eyes flashed brightly. Hearts merged in laughter. Finally, hot and out of breath from the dancing, I led my children toward the shelter of the trees.

At the top of the hill near the merry-go-round, I heard Bodhi's voice.

"I've been waiting for you," he said in his melodious voice.

I turned to him, heart flaming with joy, and said, "I've been waiting for you, too."

We looked at each other and melted into love. His eyes were so gentle, so welcoming, I could not look away.

"These are your children?" he asked.

"Yes. My daughter, Love, and my son, Choo."

As I said that, an image flashed in my mind's eye - a flame leaping and flowing with liquid light from a glowing fountain of fire. Surprised by the beauty and the intensity of the vision, I swayed. Bodhi reached out and steadied me, holding me.

My voice, solemnly oracular, spoke words that emerged from deep within me, "And if I ever have another child, her name will be Light."

"Light, that's beautiful, too," he said as his eyes spoke more than words could ever say.

"Light, for the flame of love and light that leaps toward the divine," I babbled, feeling faint with the intensity of the energy between us.

"I understand," he said softly, knowing me. Waves of communion lapped against my soul. His eyes shone into mine, seeking to know me.

"Let's head for the trees," he invited, as he led us to the shelter of the shade.

Wide-eyed and silent under Bodhi's spell, the children knew something important was happening. I sat down and leaned against a tree and they snuggled up against me, looking at Bodhi, then looking at me. The Love-In faded away. I was with Bodhi at last, and I wasn't going to leave him again.

"I've fallen into your love stream..."

I told him how I'd searched for him. "The Faire was cancelled, but I went to the grounds and waited by the bridge. Then I drove around the Valley looking for you."

"You went there? How wonderful," Bodhi said, openly showing his surprise. "I wish I'd thought of that. I looked for you at the last Love-In, but you didn't come," he said with a tinge of sadness.

"I couldn't come," I said, but I didn't tell him why.

Searching each other's eyes, exchanging waves of love, my shyness fell away. As the children fell asleep in my lap, Bodhi put his arm around me. I leaned against his chest, falling into his heartbeat sounds, our breath rising and falling together. At peace at last, I was with love.

"I'll follow your dream..."

Some time later, whispering voices and light laughter returned us to the day. When I opened my eyes, the women he'd been with at the Renaissance Faire surrounded us.

"We were wondering if you would ever come back to reality," a beautiful sprite giggled, her hands running through a mass of auburn curls.

Bodhi laughed wholeheartedly as he replied, "This is reality."

"They found each other," a golden Venus with tawny, waist-length hair teased as she sprang up dramatically, arms widespread to the sky as she danced in circles.

"The lovers meet," an exquisite white-blond sister exulted, her ponytail bobbing with her energetic, playful movements.

"All he's been talking about is how he might find you again," another lovely young woman confided, her glowing face framed by shining, pitch-black hair.

Bodhi and I beamed shyly at each other, rejoicing at the miracle of our love. The four ladies hugged me in turn as Bodhi spoke each of their names.

"Lola. Deva. Starry. Magda."

I'd never met such beautiful women. Yet, for all their grace, laughter, and radiance, their blue jeans and T-shirts didn't do them justice.

"I'd like to give each of you a dress," I blurted out.

The ladies laughed, "Yes. Oh, yes!"

My dress designs had emerged out of my hopeful dreams that somehow, somewhere I would live the life I longed for. Maybe now my life would match my dreams.

Bodhi leaned back against the tree. Overwhelmingly aware of him, I rested against his knees. Every movement, every word, every

touch felt exquisite, biblical, profound. His presence drew forth my essence. I felt that I had become the woman I had always wanted to be. Shyness, hesitation melted into love.

"I'll be one with you..."

"Where's the father of your children?" Magda asked.

"Santa Monica," I said, unable to say more as sorrow surfaced in my heart. Fearing judgment, I turned to Bodhi but he radiated total acceptance.

"Tell us about yourself. Where do you live? What do you do?" he asked with enthusiasm. "We want to know you."

I told them about my studio on Nemo Street, Rainbow, and the Conspiracy. Bodhi's hand in mine made the telling of the trip to San Francisco easier, but I couldn't look at him.

"I love you," he whispered as he kissed me.

Accepted, welcomed, I rested in his arms, and the ladies formed a protective circle around us.

"I'll set you free..."

The afternoon drifted by as we hung out together. After a glowing golden sunset displayed a dramatic finale to the day, a night of stars slowly overtook the meadow heavens. Fireworks exploded into cascades of silver and gold sparkles. Drummers increased their rhythms to a fast, wild pulse. Dancers leapt like black silhouettes around brightly burning campfires. Spellbound watchers, we shared the Love-In ecstasy.

Suddenly, a cry of terror, then a multitude of screams pierced the rhythm of the drums. The music stopped. A fearful silence dropped like a dark net over the gathering. A line of patrol-car headlights flashed on above the hill, exposing a menacing line of policemen wearing hard hats and holding clubs.

"...battle lines being formed..."

A few seconds passed, as fear heightened the charge between the policemen and the Love-In merrymakers; then the police linked arms and moved slowly down the hill.

"What a field day for the heat..."

Hundreds of Love-In celebrants scattered, their screams rising in one great howl. Love was in my arms, but where was Choo?

"Choo!" I screamed, panic surging in me.

My son had disappeared into the crowds of frightened, scattering people.

"Stay here! I'll look for him," Bodhi shouted as he ran into the confusion.

The rest of us huddled under the trees and watched the malevolent gestures of the policemen against the flaming fires as they destroyed the Love-In. Long lines of cars packed with Love-In refugees moved slowly out of the parking lot. When Bodhi returned without my son, I called out to an officer, my fear for my son greater than my fear of the police.

"I've lost my son. Please help me find him," I pleaded.

"You shouldn't have brought him here," the policeman reprimanded, hostility hardening his voice as he fingered his club.

I resisted the impulse to say everything had been fine until they got there.

"Where would the police take him if they found him?" I pleaded.

"He'd be at the park headquarters, if they have him," he answered with reluctance, as if he was looking for a reason to arrest us.

"Thank you, sir. I'll see if he's there," I said politely.

We walked past toward the flickering fires, stepping carefully over debris as we made our way toward the parking lot beyond the hill.

I trembled with fear for my son.

"Why didn't the police just ask us to go home? Why frighten everyone?" I asked Bodhi, on the edge of panic.

"They wanted to frighten us. Don't worry, we'll find Choo," Bodhi reassured me.

His four magic lady friends hugged me before taking off in their car. Bodhi took my car keys from me with a smile, and drove us over to the park headquarters. The scene there was shocking. The generous, free-food Hell's Angels were being roughly searched, ridiculed, and questioned. Dozens of dazed flower children had been arrested. The police had turned the Love-In into a nightmare.

"I'll find out if Choo is in there," Bodhi offered protectively.

"No. Let me go. They won't bother me," I insisted.

I put Love into his arms and, heart pounding, I feigned bravery as I walked through the crowd of flower children, hippies, and police into the office.

"Do you have a young boy here?" I asked the officer in charge. "He's nearly three and has blonde, curly hair."

The officer turned toward me and flashed a scornful, searchlight stare that violated my feminine essence.

"We have one young boy here," he stated reluctantly.

"Wearing buckskins and moccasins?" I asked, hope rising in my heart.

"Yes. What's his name?" he demanded roughly.

"We call him Choo. Can I see him please?" I asked impatiently.

The policeman opened a door and there was sweet, adorable Choo talking to three policemen.

As soon as he saw me, Choo's face lit up and he ran over and leapt into my arms.

"Hi, Mom," he said with open relief.

I caught him and held him tight, and whispered in his ear, "I was so worried about you."

Suddenly serious, he hurried to explain, "I got lost. The police brought me here. Wow! Did you see all the action?"

Silently disapproving, the policeman made me sign some papers and then he watched us walk away.

Bodhi opened the car door and helped me in. I sat for a moment, leaning against Bodhi, holding Choo and Love in my arms, so glad my son was safely with me again. Bodhi waited.

"Where are we going?" I questioned.

"Where do you want to go?" he asked in return.

"With you."

"I'll follow you wherever time will take me..." "Then let's go home," Bodhi said.

The Seven Sacred Pools

When we left the park, we turned toward Hana, driving by lush, waving grasses that receded into emerald-green, temple-shaped hills. As we drove through the small country town, we passed a few wooden cottages, a church, and a store, then returned to the rainforest. Curving around the winding roads, over narrow stone bridges, and by beautifully handcrafted lava walls, we caught glimpses of plantation bungalows, tropical gardens, waterfalls, and wave-washed coves. By mid-afternoon, we arrived at the Seven Sacred Pools.

The information posted on the bulletin board said that the pools and the surrounding area had once supported a large Hawaiian village. Their favorite trees - mango, golden papaya, medicinal noni and sacred kukui - still grew in profusion.

"Should we walk up or down?" I asked as we stood on the bridge, the midway point between the upper and lower pools.

"Let's start at the bottom and work our way up to the source," Leo said with confidence as he lifted Love on his shoulders and carefully headed down the path. I followed, stepping cautiously over muddy, slippery leaves.

A short time later, we reached the bottom pool, immersed ourselves in the flowing water, then lay on the hot rocks to rest and dry in the sun.

"My friends on the island like to believe that the seven pools represent the seven chakras, our spiritual centers," I said. "When I was a child I used to stare at the drawings of chakras in my mother's yoga books and try to figure out what they meant."

"I know what you mean. Books can only take you so far, but since I've talked with yogis in India, I have a better idea of what the books are talking about."

"You've been to India? Oh, how wonderful! I'd love to go there one day," I enthused. "When I was very young, my mother was always reading yoga and Buddhist and mystical books. I'd pick them up whenever I had a chance and look at the pictures, trying to understand what they were saying. She also took me along whenever she went to lectures and meetings. She made a point to meet every spiritual teacher who came to town. I guess it's in my blood."

Turned on, I let it all pour out.

"My husband separated me from all the things I loved by ridiculing them, and I let it happen. I loved him. I wanted to please him, so I let everything I loved pass out of my life."

I shook myself, splashed my face with water, and continued. "Thankfully, that's in the past. The amazing thing is that ever since I left him, and especially this summer in Los Angeles and on Maui, I've been experiencing blissful states of grace and mystical visions. Each experience was like a direct communion. Sometimes I get the feeling that God is all around me, teaching me, showing me, guiding

me. Some of the experiences happened naturally in nature; others were on LSD or peyote, but drug highs are not my thing. I've always wanted to be a disciple of a living teacher, someone I can love with all my heart, someone who will guide me and teach me the mysteries of life. Someone who can show me how to live and how to die."

"You're looking for a teacher?" he asked intensely.

"Yes, and no. I don't know how or where to look, and I'm not free because of the children. They say that the teacher appears when you're ready, so I try to prepare, but I don't know what to do and my life is such a mess. Sometimes I doubt that a holy man would want to have someone like me for a disciple. Then again, I don't seem to have a choice. I have this longing that just won't go away."

Leo walked over to the edge of the pool and stood on a rock, looking down at the surging waves that met the water as it fell into the sea.

"Don't jump in," I warned. "Sharks feed where a stream enters the ocean."

"That's good to know, isn't it?" he said as he turned and smiled. "I was just thinking that if the Seven Sacred Pools represented the seven chakras, this pool would be the root chakra, the earth chakra, wouldn't it? The yogis say the earth chakra represents the safety and health of the physical body and all the things in the world that support health, good fortune and abundance, but more essentially, it comes down to our primary needs. What do you need to keep alive -water, air, food, shelter, clothing. Earth is about the basic necessities, the physical needs of life."

I pulled my hair away from my face and hunched down to escape the force of the wind sweeping up from the sea. "Most of the world never gets beyond the struggle for basic necessities," I mused.

"I saw that in India. Even though they have all that spiritual wisdom, you see people enduring the most appalling conditions. Then you see a sadhu, yogi, or saint living in enlightened poverty and you realize consciousness is everything."

As I listened and tried to connect my problematic, personal life to my soul life, I felt very small and very large at the same time. My limited human self was expanding to contain infinite truths and my soul self was emanating the longing to build a bridge between these vastly different points of view.

"I don't really understand what 'chakra' means," I said. "When I was growing up, I used to look through my mother's books and stare at the drawings of the flower-petal chakras along the spine of a yogi's body, and wonder what they felt like. The yogis write about them in such a detached, intellectual way that I could never understand what they were talking about."

"I know what you mean. You have to experience something to really understand it," Leo said as he leapt off his rock and came over and sat down beside me. After I met and talked with the yogis, I have a better idea what the authors of those books are trying to tell us."

"What would a chakra feel like? That's what I want to know," I mused.

Leo thought for a moment, then replied. "It helps me to get a sense of the living energy of the chakras if I relate them to the evolution of human life. Think about how people struggle for their

basic necessities and how they fear not having enough. Ironically, even when they have enough, they fear losing it. We fear whatever threatens our existence, whether it's hunger, thirst, illness, old age, loss, or death. So it's obvious, isn't it? Fear is the emotion or passion of the earth chakra. And the earth chakra even has a color. It's red, not dirt-brown or grass-green but red, the color of blood. From there, the colors rise upward in rainbow order - red for earth, orange for water, yellow for fire, green for air, blue for ether, indigo for the third eye in the middle of the brow, and violet for the crown chakra on top of the head."

"A rainbow path. How beautiful! And how practical, too. What you said helps me to understand what the chakras mean in terms of daily life. I know I live on the edge of fear all the time," I admitted. "And not just when I'm threatened. So my earth element must be way out of balance."

"Most of us live on the edge of fear. That's the earth chakra, plain and simple. We try to make ourselves feel safe by surrounding ourselves with material things, but that kind of security only goes so far. True freedom from fear is a spiritual state."

Sitting on a rock, hugging my knees with nervous excitement, momentarily immune to the beauty around me, I remembered how fear had ruled my life.

"Not having fear must feel like a spiritual state," I said, trying to imagine what that would be like.

"It would be wonderful," Leo agreed. "We're so used to feeling fear, we can't even imagine life without it."

"I think we should learn from children. Look at Love. She is helpless, innocent, and totally trusting. Even though we pretend to be grownup, aren't we just as helpless? She's always so happy, so interested in exploring everything. She doesn't seem to know fear."

"Not yet, anyway." Leo looked at Love and said, "There are not many people who keep that child-like quality throughout their lives."

My thoughts kept running. Fear kept me silent when I should have spoken. It made me unable to give and receive love, to let go or to change. When I tried to imagine what it would be like to live without anxiety, an image of joy leapt in my mind like a dolphin.

"If I didn't have fear, I could be myself!" I shouted, wanting more than anything to be free of the fear that held me in bondage.

"That's it! It's either fear or creativity, and the greatest creativity is to be yourself," he agreed with a jump into the sky that landed him on the rough lava and nearly tipped him off the edge and into the water.

"Being your true self would be so cool," I commented, enjoying the flow of ideas. "You feel all kinds of wonderful things inside you, but you just don't know how to let them out. Didn't someone say that self realization leads to God realization?"

"Yes, I think we've got it," Leo sang like a *Pygmalion* actor as he set Love on his shoulders. "I think we've got it! Yes, we've got it!"

Looking down at me, Leo added, "The Hindus believe that each chakra has a positive state. For the earth chakra that happens to be good health, abundance, security and money, or we could say, just plain good luck. The Hindus wrapped up all that into an

elephant deity called Ganesh. You see his picture and statues all over India."

"An elephant. Wow! That's earthy, all right. An elephant is huge and heavy. Gravity - that's earth for sure!" I said excitedly, amazed at the commonsense wisdom emerging from our playful, exploring conversation.

"Yes, earth is all things heavy, contracted, and structural," Leo agreed. "It's the energy that organizes everything."

"Like bones, teeth and hair, and nails," I said, and then we laughed as if a cosmic joke had birthed between us.

"Come on," he invited as he headed up the path. "Let's follow the orange ray of the rainbow to the water chakra pool and see where that leads us."

We ascended through the damp, thick vegetation and eased carefully over slippery rocks to the edge of the second pool that became the water chakra pool in our eyes.

"Let's play a game. I'm not going to say anything. Just close your eyes and feel and hear and think about water and see what you come up with," Leo suggested with a merry look.

He lifted Love off his shoulders and carried her into the middle of the pool. She shrieked with happiness as he dipped her toes in and out of the water, then pulled her back and forth while she kicked and splashed.

I lay carefully down on a rock near the edge of the pool and relaxed. When I closed my eyes I heard more clearly the bubbling, rippling, flowing stream sounds mingling with the more distant roar of the sea. I dangled my feet in the cool, rushing current and welcomed the waterfall spray misting my face. As I harmonized different experiences of water within myself, images of water took over my mind-stream - baths, ocean waves, boiling kettles, washing machines, hot springs, rain, clouds, frozen ponds, thinly iced puddles, frost patterns on winter windows, sea foam, glasses of water, snow, icicles, mud, tea, lakes, and tears.

Excited, I burst out, "Water is always changing, just like feelings. It has so many moods. It flows like this stream or rages during oceanic storms. It forms crystals like ice, snow, hail, or frost. It wears down rocks over centuries and carries sand and silt to the sea. Ocean waves crush shells and coral into sand. Ice even breaks boulders open."

Delighted with my discoveries, Leo joined in.

"Water is steam and mist. It rises into clouds, then rains down again. It follows gravity and sinks down into the earth. It's deep, silent, and dark on the bottom of the ocean, but it moves in powerful waves on the surface."

"Emotions are like that, aren't they, Leo? You can feel empty like a desert one day, then fall in love the next, and be lost in a jungle of feeling."

"That's it. When emotions depend on outer things they're changeable. But when you rise to the heart center in the air chakra, you live love, regardless of what's happening, because love becomes your state of being."

"I can imagine that, but I still can't imagine living from my brow or crown chakra. How can I get there if I don't have any sense of what they are?"

Leo smiled mysteriously. "Let's see if we can figure that out by the time we get to the highest pools."

Staring into the subtle patterns of the rushing water, soothed by the rhythmic sounds, I imagined love flowing like a fountain from the center of my being.

Leo rambled on, his voice merging with the sounds of the water. "If the earth is about survival of the physical body and its needs, then the water is about the exchange that happens between people through attraction, all the way from sex to birthing to family and friends. And everyone is born through the water element. Sexual fluids create life within the watery womb and after we're born, we suckle breast milk in our mother's arms."

As he spoke, I could feel the complex blend of watery desires, sexuality, and emotions, and how those energies drive us from desire and courtship into marriage, parenting, family, and community. What a dance!

Leo continued, "The yogis said that the prominent passion of the water element was lust, and that all desire was intertwined with attachment. I'm still trying to figure out what that means. I can understand it with my head, but I have no experience of what it would be like to live without desire or a sense of possessiveness for what you love."

"I know what you mean," I answered. "We're hopelessly, imperfectly human and the information is coming from saintly people who have transcended human weakness and desire. I just wish they could explain it better," I complained, frustrated at my inability to believe I could ever be like that.

"Explaining isn't necessarily the answer," Leo consoled me. "The yogis and saints have experienced these truths, and they try to inspire us to do the same. We'll find the real answers when we're ready to travel the path within ourselves, but we have to be interested enough to do it, and we have to be willing to leave all this behind," he said as he gestured at the beauty all around us.

"Why would we have to leave all this?" I asked, confused. "I've just found this Garden of Love. Why would I have to leave it?"

"The inner path takes time, energy, devotion, and sacrifice. If I were a yogi I wouldn't be here today," he explained, "And I wouldn't be smuggling."

"Why does truth have to be so black and white? Why can't we have both?" I wondered, "or at least have spirituality and a normal life?"

"That's what I'm trying to do," he sighed as he stared into the moving water, "but I'm not sure it's working. And," he grimaced, "To quickly change the subject, will you look at all this water hurrying downward into the ocean. We're made of mostly water, you know. Look at us, we look solid, we feel solid, but we're mostly water."

I laughed, "I've just learned to feel the earth and now you're telling me I'm all water?"

"I know, it's strange isn't it? Think of all the fluids in the body and how they affect our lives. Men and women come together through the most primal need for love, touch and companionship, but at the same time as they are home and baby making, most people are also dealing with the difficulties of human relationships."

"Most people? Don't you mean all people?" I teased. "Do you know anyone who isn't struggling with relationships? I know there are a lot of people out there who have more stable lives than I do and happier families, but they're not really happy and they're not free of suffering."

"We all have our share of suffering. We're trying to be comfortable in a world that was never meant to be comfortable. We're just passing through, pretending the door of death doesn't exist," Leo mused.

Captivated by the patterns of light and the musical pulse of the water's passage, feeling mesmerized, I tried to understand what he was saying and relate it to my own life experience.

"So you're saying the water chakra caused the problems in my marriage?"

"In part. Your husband's lust for free sex made him chase after many women, but fire-chakra power struggles had a lot to do with your marriage problems, too. He was selfish. He did what he wanted, regardless of the effect it had on you and the children, and worst of all, he tried to force his ideas on you."

"I couldn't create a life with Taz," I said, feeling the sadness well up inside me, "because he was always destroying everything."

"But you didn't give in to him. You had your own beliefs and you resisted the temptations he put in front of you. You were able to break away and live from your own truth."

Intensely aware of the earth energy of the rock I was sitting on and the water flowing by, I lifted my eyes to the sun and the sky. As Leo talked, I visualized how the chakras, the elements of life, and their corresponding emotions were dancing within me as well as outside in the world.

"I'm getting a sense of how my feelings change, but they're all mixed up. I never feel just one thing at a time," I said as I lounged on my rock, my hands playing in the powerful current.

Leo put his arms around me. "Yeah, we move from passion to desire to emotion to reaction, toward pleasure and away from pain, trying to find a comfort zone," he teased, "unless you're really mixed up and you think pain is pleasure. Seriously though, once the elemental emotions are in balance, it's supposed to be easier to live love in daily life."

Once again, I glimpsed how the elemental emotions affected me. For sure, fear took over every time I got near Taz. I could never be myself around him, but I couldn't escape him either because the attachment to my son and my dreams of a happy family life kept pulling me back. Even my wish to have my dreams come true imprisoned me in a power struggle with Taz. I denied the resentment and frustration that had not been expressed for years. And then a volcanic blast of anger set me free. After my blissful fantasy love affair with Bodhi, I returned to grief. Clearly, passions fueled the tangles of my life.

"Leo, I can see how emotions make me do things, but how can I rise above them? How can I be stronger than my passions?"

"That is the question, my dear. Can we feel our feelings but not be ruled by them? All the psychiatrists and psychologists say that if we repress or project our feelings onto others, they act out unconsciously in our life dramas and tragedies. Then we're really in trouble."

Looking into the rippling dark water, imagining Taz's face emerging as a mirror to my own, I shuddered at the raw truth of Leo's words.

"So Taz was a reflection of my own unconsciousness?" I said with some resistance.

"Like the Jung shadow theory - if we don't bring our unconscious shadow into the light, we see it reflected in front of us. I go for that. I just have to work out the greed aspect and then I'll be fine," he joked. A moment later, more serious, he added. "I have to admit that I want the world more than I want the spirit, and yet, I also want it all."

"You can't go in two directions at once," I whispered, as though I were speaking to myself. "You have to choose one or the other."

"You have to go with what's strongest," he countered. "You have to be yourself."

"We can't be our passions. They're too changeable. Our true self must be beyond them," I said.

"That's true. My problem is that I enjoy the passions and I love change. I'm not ready to leave either of them behind. They say that when you still your mind you experience peace," Leo said quietly, his voice melting like water into my stream of consciousness. "But I enjoy the movement."

"I want peace," I said with certainty.

"I want it too. I can see the path beckoning, but I still find the rest of life juicier. I keep putting off the spiritual life."

Just then, Love slipped out of my lap and toddled over to Leo. He wrapped his arms around her and held her close to him.

"It's wonderful to see how softly and sweetly you hold Love. Taz never cuddled our children in that way. He was always fighting us off, except for my son. He's so afraid I'll do what his mother did to him that he won't let me raise my son."

"Mothers," Leo replied, sidestepping my personal issues, "are a big deal in the water element. First of all, women have more of the water element naturally because they need to be more sensitive and loving. But men can express their feminine sides as well, you know," he added with a smile.

"We're more emotional because our feelings are closer to the surface," I contributed, aware that Leo and I were painting a mind picture, one stroke at a time. Even though I couldn't visualize the whole image, each step of the truth brought me toward a change in perception that I felt would alter my life.

"Yes," he agreed. "Men definitely have more fire, but I remember the yogis saying that we all have both masculine and feminine energies within us and that part of the spiritual journey is to learn to balance those energies within. Have you seen the drawings of the ancient symbol, the caduceus? You often see it in doctors' offices, you know, the two serpents twining up the spine? One serpent is the feminine and one is the masculine, and they meet in each chakra, where the challenge to balance the energies is more pronounced, because of the challenge of the emotional passion."

"So, you're saying I have masculine energy inside me?" I questioned in disbelief. "But I've always been the most feminine person." I put my feet into the cool, rushing water as I tried to digest the concept. Then it started to make sense. "Maybe I had to have a

dominating husband so I could develop my masculinity until I could become strong enough to stand up to him."

"Listen to you," Leo said. "Once you start thinking and talking about things, it's amazing how much you already know."

I received his praise with an open heart. "Yes," I agreed. "It's true. I can let my mind follow its own path to the answer."

"Forget about following the mind," Leo laughed. "Let's follow the yellow brick road," he sang for a moment as we set off up the path. "Maybe the answer lies in the fire chakra."

"Can't we change it to the golden flower path?" I teased. "I'm into flowers, and the path of the golden flowers seems like a pretty beautiful path."

"That's what we'll call it - the path of the golden chakra flowers. I like that," he said, leaning over to kiss my cheek.

As I followed Leo, painful memories of my power struggles with Taz surfaced, and I was glad when he continued his explanations.

"When man discovered fire, it brought people together. It kept them warm. It protected them. It helped create homes, families, and communities. Unfortunately, whenever people come together, power struggles also ignite sparks that burst into roaring flames of war and destruction. There's always someone who wants to win, lead, dominate, or control everyone else, someone who wants to be right. Most of us have had someone like that in our life. As hard as their lessons are, they represent a reality we have to learn to deal with. Once we've learned how to be strong without running over people, there's a whole world of unconditional love. In that world, no one needs to dominate. Each person respects the other, even when they work together toward a common goal."

"Where would that be?" I asked with a wry grimace. "I've never found it. I had to fight to defend myself from my parents, my siblings, and Taz, and even with neighbors and so-called friends. The only time I experience 'free love' is with my children."

"In the fire chakra level, someone always wants to be right, someone always wants to win. My dad was like that."

"So were Taz's parents. He never got respect or love when he was growing up, so how could he give it to anyone else?" I contributed.

"He couldn't. Some people can experience the worst of life and still find it in them to give love to others, and some can't.

"What makes the difference in people?" I asked.

"Therein lies the mystery, my dear, the mystery of where love comes from," Leo said enigmatically.

"Why does love have to be a mystery," I complained.

"Can't answer that, my dear, so I'll just ramble on here. I was afraid of my father. I couldn't do what I wanted until he went broke. Now I get to be my outrageous self, and he can't threaten to disown me. There's nothing left to inherit."

Leo's laugh of freedom rang over the rushing water. He was making the most of the loss of his family fortune. I wanted to turn my family disaster into a victory, too, but how was I going to do that?

"What's positive fire? Let's get specific," I asked, excited by the opportunity to learn more.

"You have to get beyond the power struggles to experience the joy and laughter that comes along with cosmic humor. That's about as positive as you can get. Just look around. So many people are using up their lives fighting and struggling, and yet they take nothing with them when they die. When you catch a glimpse of the potential of your own life, you'll see it makes sense to withdraw from conflict, put all you've got into your own life, and see if you can help anyone else along the way. You know the phrase, 'a change of heart'? It's like that. One day you see that conflict is a waste of time and you're genuinely not interested in participating. You have better things to do than trying to prove you're right."

"Wow," I said, standing up and jumping onto another rock, needing movement to express the excitement aroused by our conversation. "It's that simple and yet we get caught up in the struggles like they're the only thing going."

It was Leo's turn to laugh at me.

"But how do you let go when someone you love is trying to push you around or take advantage of you or hurt you?" I asked, remembering how I had clung to Taz.

"You use the energy and power of fire for transformation so that you can enter the realm of the heart, where compassion reigns. I'm sure you know what that's like. I'm fed up. I can't take it anymore. I'm going to let go, break free, and change things no matter what the cost'."

"Yeah, I know that place only too well," I agreed, the image of the sewing machine floating through my mind. "Let's walk the green ray of the rainbow path into the heart chakra," I invited, enjoying our game. "Since we've moved from earth to water to fire, I guess it must be air's turn."

"Yes, it is," he affirmed. "Air element, here we come."

He held his hand out to me and said, "Shall we?" with full-on British manners.

We scrambled up to the next pool, sat down on the rocks, and immersed our feet into the cooling water. When I closed my eyes, I heard heartbeat rhythms pulsing in the stream, ba-boom, ba-boom. Entering into the rhythm, my mind calmed down. Everything slowed until, heartbeat by heartbeat, I felt that I was living love. More than anything, I wanted to stay in the love and never be separated from it again.

"Okay. What do you think is the secret of the heart center?" Leo asked, tickling me out of my trance.

"Is there a secret?" I giggled, pushing him away.

"There must be, because so few of us know how to live from the heart," he said wistfully.

"Maybe we all have to find out for ourselves," I offered as I drew heart-shaped patterns on the water with my feet. "What do you think the secret is?"

Surprising me once again, Leo sang a nursery-school song and Love clapped along with him.

*"Love is like a magic penny,
Hold it tight and you won't have any,
Learn to spend it and you'll have so many,
They will roll all over the floor."*

I teased him by repeating what he'd said to me a few minutes before, "Maybe you know more than you think. Can't you apply that to your fortune hunting?"

"I wish I could. Seriously though, what takes us away from love is greed and speed. That's the Alice in Wonderland syndrome. You know the 'I'm late, I'm late for a very important date', song of the white rabbit. The faster people go and the more they try to get all the things they think they want and need, the more they feel they don't have enough, and the faster they go."

Laughing, I chanted, "There isn't enough time. There isn't enough money. There isn't enough love."

"You have to focus on what you have instead of what you don't have," Leo confirmed. "I can say that easily, but doing it is another matter."

"Yes. If we could stop the selfishness and the fear long enough to stay in the present moment. If only our love were stronger than our desire, we'd have a good chance to stay in the love that shines like the sun - the love that shines equally on everything."

"If I felt all those things, then maybe I wouldn't be looking and searching for something," Leo said as he put his arms around me.

Nestling against his chest, I heard his heart beating.

"Let's stay in this love forever," I said.

Heartbeat by heartbeat, I let myself feel the love without the fear.

After a while, Leo got up and as we walked up the path from the heartbeat love pool toward the mystery of the ether pool.

I couldn't keep back the question that had been bugging me for years, "What about this longing I feel all the time? What does it mean? What do I want?"

"Hah! That's great. The right question at the right time. I asked the yogis the same question, and they said that longing was the emotion associated with the ether element in the throat chakra. Like all the other chakras, ether contains so-called positive and negative aspects. When longing flows into daily life, it gets wound up with fear, attachment, anger, and greed. It becomes desire for temporary, worldly, material things, or it turns into grief whenever something is taken away. True longing wants only to return to union with what is eternal and divine."

"So this hunger is there because I want to return to where I came from?" I asked.

"Ahhh, so many questions. You've got me working hard to answer them. Let me see what I can do with this one," Leo said, putting his head in his hands as if he was about to enter deep thought.

Impatient for his answer, I wriggled inside like an excited child. Leo was the first person I'd been able to talk to about the questions that haunted me.

"Okay, the yogis said that ether was emptiness that was full of potential," he stated seriously.

"If ether is empty, how can it be full?" I asked, confused by the paradox.

"The answer can only be that it's not really empty, and its not really full, my dear child," he responded, play-acting like a

sanctimonious priest. "The elements flow out of ether into the world and to ether they return."

"How does emptiness contain earth, water, fire, and air?" I asked with disbelief, giggling at his expression and his accent. That concept seemed impossible to comprehend.

Leo looked at me with wry amusement. "You seem to be able to contain opposites, so why shouldn't ether be able to do the same?"

"Hmmm," I mused. "I see what you mean. Please go on."

"Think of ether as an ocean of sound and light containing endless wave frequencies or patterns that manifest in the physical realm," he said with the gestures and mannerisms of a yogi with an Indian accent.

"Okay, okay, I'm beginning to get the idea. Empty, yet full of possibilities," I relented, trying to get used to the idea.

Meanwhile Leo continued his academic pontifications.

"Myths refer to ether as the goddess of the rainbow. Her name is Iris, like the iris of the eye, because that's where primary colors flow into prismatic physical reality."

"When I was a child, I used to dance to the *Somewhere Over The Rainbow* song," I interjected spontaneously, remembering how happy I used to be when I was dancing. "I'm used to skipping along a rainbow."

"Ah, a budding rainbow goddess? Cool. Very cool," he praised humorously, then returned to his academic tone. "*Over the rainbow* means back to the mystery of ether. Ether has other qualities also, such as beauty and grace. Because it contains the energies of all the elements, it gives you discrimination, the knowing that helps you become aware of the effect that choices might make upon you and your life before you make them. When we live from a compassionate heart, we achieve a natural spirituality. We want to make the world a better place and fulfill our life purpose."

"So many people want that, but so few accomplish it. How do we do it? I am always asking that question."

We both sighed at the same time as we looked down toward the ocean and the lowering sun.

"Shouldn't we ascend to the third eye?" I asked "It's getting late."

We scrambled up the path, then sat on a rock that overlooked the water falling into the ether pool below us. Gently fatigued, we listened to the bubbling tabla rhythms of the flowing stream, and continued our conversation.

"I've felt the third eye on peyote and acid, but I don't understand how I can have an eye in my forehead," I said.

"I only know that the yogis say that the third eye is a place of concentration, the threshold that opens into the inner life after you have developed the strength to withstand the five passions of the lower chakras."

"But how do we do that? If I knew how to tame the passions, I'd do it," I said with an edge of desperation in my voice. "Why does God make it so hard for us?"

Suddenly I felt tired and grumpy. As if Love was mirroring my despair, she started wailing.

"Come here, honeybee," I said as I took her in my arms mirroring her cry, "Waaa, waaa, waaa."

Love started giggling at my poor imitation of her, and Leo laughed uproariously. That made me even madder.

"Waaaaa. Waaaaa. I'm fed up. I want out or maybe I should say, I want in," I cried, laughing at my own humor.

"Well, my dear, if I were God, I'd welcome you with open arms," Leo said with such charm that I snuggled into his embrace.

"I can't think anymore. I just want to be," I whimpered like a baby. "I don't understand anything."

"That's a good sign. Come on, let's go to the last pool."

I held onto his belt as he hiked upward, letting him pull me up to the seventh pool.

"The drawings of the crown chakra make it look as if we have flowers growing on the top of our heads," I grinned, enjoying the humor that passed between us. "I loved to touch the soft spot on the top of my babies' heads and feel it pulse. I used to wonder whether it had something to do with the crown chakra. What's a flower on the top of your head supposed to mean, anyway?"

"I think the artists are trying to say that it would be great if we had a mind that was like a garden of perfumed flowers," Leo teased.

"I know you're making fun of me, but the truth is, that is what I want. I want to get rid of all these sad, fearful thoughts and restless desires and fill my mind with beautiful flowers, but what would flower thoughts be like?" I asked.

"My first flower would be 'Thank you'," Leo said as he picked up a hibiscus and threw it in the pool."

I picked another flower and threw it in the stream, "And mine would be 'All you need is love'."

"What about, 'What can I do to help someone today?'"

"Or, 'What can I do to help myself today?'"

Leo threw another flower as he said, "Contentment."

I screamed, "Courage!"

"That's the idea," Leo laughed as we threw flower after flower into the crown chakra pool. Love helped us, tottering from flower to flower, throwing them, then clapping her hands and laughing with glee. The flowers collected by the rocks at the edge of the pool and then, with one rush, they flew over the waterfall.

"And down the flower thoughts go, through all the chakras and throughout the body," I cried. "Soon everything will be a perfumed garden."

Exhilarated by our imaginative play, we lay back on the rocks, Love between us, savoring the perfection.

After a while, my curiosity surfaced and I murmured, "What else did the yogis say about the crown chakra?"

"Mmm. Back to questions, are we?" he teased. "Happy to oblige, my dear. Let's see. The crown chakra is like a seed that is waiting to flower on the top of your head where your mind and soul meet. The journey of life offers us the opportunity to flower into the divine. But, in order to connect with our souls, we have to still our minds and empty ourselves of everything that makes us feel separated from the Lord. We have to long only for God and be willing to receive whatever He gives as love. To top it off, when we

leave our body, we have to have given more than we have taken from this world."

What he said seemed so impossible that I lifted my arms in helplessness. "Oh, is that all? How can I achieve any of these things when I already have so many problems?"

"They say problems automatically go away when we focus on the Lord," he consoled me with a gentle smile.

"I do focus on the Lord. I'm always thinking about Him. Maybe He is solving my problems and I just don't know it. I need a daily spiritual practice, something that will help me clean out my mind. I need a teacher who will help me."

Frustration was growing, so I closed my eyes and imagined the chakras directing my destiny. I felt the longing pulling the elements upward to dissolve into the etheric throat chakra. The third eye in my forehead beamed like a lighthouse of concentration, and my crown chakra gathered to open and flower. Then it all seemed too much. Sure, I wanted spiritual truth, but I also wanted to live a simple, happy daily life.

"I'm so tired of my mind. I want to stop my desires. I want to meditate. I want all this, but I also need human love," I complained.

"We all need love. Even the spiritual journey is about love," he reassured me, stroking my hair as if I were his child. "You will find your spiritual path. You're probably on it right now. With such strong longing, you will find your way."

Seeking relief, I stood near the waterfall spray, appreciating the cooling angel-mist that felt like minute droplets of moist light caressing me.

Leo bowed formally and took my hand in his. Together we watched shafts of golden light underline a procession of billowing clouds as the vermilion sun settled into the sea.

"Every cloud has a golden lining," I said with a smile as we headed down the path to the parking lot.

When we got to the bridge, I reached for Leo's hand and pulled him to a halt. "We mustn't forget what we're here for Leo. Let's make a promise."

Standing there, under the darkening tropical sky, we vowed to remember our spiritual journey. We placed our right hands on each other's hearts and spoke our promises out loud, weaving an alchemy of joyful laughter and profound intent.

Leo drove through the warm, scented, star-filled night, maneuvering the hundreds of curves like a race driver. Love slept in my lap, satisfied and sweetly tired. I leaned my head on Leo's shoulder, savoring the love and the bittersweet desire that wanted this fullness to go on forever.

"Let's go to Lahaina tomorrow," Leo invited as we pulled up to the Zendo.

"Oh, yes," I agreed, thankful we would spend another day together.

That night I dreamed that the energies of my chakras had awakened. Exquisite petaling wheels of light spun and radiated within me. Each element offered a difficult challenge and a special gift to help me on my journey. Even though I still didn't understand the mystery of life, I had gathered a few more clues.