

**How are we conditioned as human beings?
What is it that forms us through our early years
and makes us who we are?
How much do we bring into our own lives?
How much is impact from our families?
And how much is society's influence?
Do we have a destiny we cannot escape?
Or can we decide to break with it in search
of who we truly are?**

conditioning

Being in love

When I found my old diaries and started reading them, I realized that I have always been in love.

I started my first diary when I was ten years old, and it was addressed to the boy I loved at that age. I was begging for him to hold me and for me to be his wife. I have no idea where this romantic notion of love being a prince on a white horse coming to my rescue came from. There was no Internet in my childhood, we only had a TV with one boring channel, and I had just barely started to read, a passion that later would have me lying around with romantic novels. I may have seen some of the usual Disney films, Snow White, Cinderella, and Sleeping Beauty, so those are the female heroines I remember. But in my diary, I go into the details of how I rode my bicycle past his house hoping to see him, how I wanted to kiss him, all this alongside careful descriptions of what I had for dinner. This faithful love at a distance goes on page after page for several months. Then suddenly it stops. A new boy comes into the picture.

Reading these books so many years later, I am astounded as I meet this young girl. I am grateful to have a document this full describing my early years in life as I first stumbled upon love and how to grasp it. The writing evolves around the age of thirteen to fourteen years then follows years with a long stream of boys coming into my life, one after another, many with names I no longer recognize. Moments of the greatest happiness because he looks at me, or we are on the same bus. Moments of despair when he turns his back to me.

On a napkin early 80's

It's getting late
A couple of beers went down
But still I think about
The hurt you caused
What are friends for
Naïve maybe
Or just to good
I still believe
In good things
And I still get hurt
Where is the paradise
I dream of?
Do you have to reach
the stars
to find the good people
Is this my place
do I belong here
There is so much I want
To say
But it is difficult to
Put words to it
Why are people cruel
Why can't we live in
Peace
Where did the purple skies
And rainbows go
The joy, happiness
and laughter?
Where do I belong
Where is my paradise
Far, far away

Then a new boy enters, and it starts all over again.

Feelings becoming deeper and deeper as we start to kiss, and it becomes really hard to digest when sex enters the scene. But the pattern is the same, falling in love, being in love in an overwhelming, all-consuming way, followed by an all-consuming unhappiness. Boy after boy, all carefully described. In parallel were descriptions of the girls, the kind of friendships where we shared everything and spent most of our time together, falling in love with the same boys, having arguments over who had the right to love them. An enormous stream of people in and out of the pages, in and out of my life.

It testifies to how early I understood love, or rather, wanted to understand love by exploring it. More than anything, it a testament to how full of life I was. In love with life, in love with people around me, crazy engaged in reflecting and understanding this life. A force of life, a force of love. With extreme joy and despair.

Throughout those pages is also a stream of shame. Shame of feeling so much and kissing so much. Like that expression of life force is shameful. Too much, too overwhelming. And after having raised two sons, I can easily see how all that life and love were too much for those boys. They would not have been able to handle it and would have shied away. It became demanding this search for love, for being totally absorbed by love.

It fills me sadness to read these pages, to see how much love that person being me had in her, and how much she went looking for being loved instead. She thought that she was only worth something if one of those boys loved her. And when she, as a sixteen-year-old girl, met that boy who loved her, she put all other things in her aside because she thought that being loved was her goal in life. At sixteen,

Why should I miss
someone to love
I love life itself
with all my passion
and desires
Why should love
be locked up in one room
when it can contain it all
the sun, the laughter
the seagulls playing
soft memories and kisses
There is so much still left
So much to give
So much to suck in

she turned all her energy towards fulfilling that love, she let her friends drift away and her ambitions in school take second place. One of the strongest places in the writing is when she realizes that by giving all of herself, he had grown tired of her and her possessiveness. That she had lost it all by not allowing herself to be herself. And how the two of them became closer than ever by being honest about themselves. Honest that they cannot let that love bubble take them away from the world they live in. What she does not realize at this age is, that she is letting herself be defined by the love other give her, by thinking she needs this love to be fulfilled. When, at the same time, she is so clearly full of love in herself. She becomes ashamed of her own feelings, her love of live, because it is not met by others.

When she later realizes, she writes these words:

Happiness is to love, happiness is to just be here, to live this life with all these beautiful people. I am thankful for my life, thankful I was born; to love and live that's what we were born for. What is life without love, without this feeling of happiness, this deep joy? It fills my heart, intoxicates me. I feel only like sitting here and being joyful. How wonderful it is to love so deeply.

What is also streaming from the pages is a wish to be unconventional, to break out of the conventions and expectations society has for her. She already knows that what she is fighting with is society's expectations to her. Society's expectation of what it means to be a girl and how a girl should behave. A girl may be allowed to express love, but in a gentle, caring way, not as an explosion of life force.

This deep exploration of love flows into early poetry, never published, but so nicely set up in a book called "Poetry towards to love." Again, so full of pure love and its struggles, the dreaming romantic version of love.