

Book I : HYMNS

** MOTHER SONGS **



balanced

(13) Woman-Man-One

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THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING A WOMAN : this warmth of Sisterhood.

The sheer luxury of displaying colours, of adorning in light fabrics, or solemn gowns, or working gear; of expressing free joy at gifts of flowers, or paints, or tools. The open permission to weep in movies and after great arias, scream at rock concerts, cry in private griefs. The frivolous moments with sisters, when we can laugh ~ yes, giggle, delighted with some private girls' humour which seldom hurts at others. We can hug and support each other, cry or laugh together. The frank love we can offer all our friends, women and men, in our cycles of shared events ~ parties, celebrations, sorrows, ceremonies, visits ~ to keep bringing people together again, maintain their shared knowing of each other's lives.

The right to grieve openly when at last it is time for the old family dog to be put to sleep; and to sit outside that night on the back steps, and howl; like a dog.



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The *latitude* of being modern Woman: the right to be admired for also exhibiting Manhood. To know that it is good, and useful, to be strong as well as stately, athletic as well as graceful. To farm the land, or drive a truck, or mend a broken water-pipe, or pull up a new-made calf from the gaping flank of a cow in trouble; and to stand up before derision, and choose solitary defiance rather than a provisioned protection. To rise to the heights of moral armament when roused in defence of our children, ourselves, or our old people, or friends or family, or those who are weak or defenceless: to act out a maternal and sisterhood ferocity which matches and can transcend assault.

This singular ferocity and blind courage is drawn from our own woman's depths of Manhood: the Man who is in our spectrum, to come to our aid. Most women come to know him well, over the threats and challenges of a lifetime; our own familiar Masculine enables us to understand much about men.

I love to reach out, to touch this Man in me, feel the tingle of his high energy, his adventure, his fascination for speed and strength and risk and power, his passion to protect.

His potency:

*which can draw or drive him to ultimate self-dissolution
in a lone act of sacrifice ~*

*To howl, crash through the barrier
which guards the great Secret:*

(into oblivion, or to Transformation?) --

The white-hot ejaculation of violent death.

I could do that.



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The painful *self-imposed strictures* of being a human male: the permission only to roar, not to weep; to prevail, never to submit or relinquish; to annexe rather than to share. The locked compound of historic male aggression ~ proper, functional, necessary male aggression ~ without view of or access to the open fields of the womanhood that is deep within all men. The fierce and armoured, mutually suspicious, ambush-ready mateship of men: each barricaded by the critical searching stare of the others, ready to strike or jeer at any glimpse of woman-hood.



This is the terrible penalty of becoming ~ of choosing to become ~ an exclusive acolyte of Power : as have vast numbers of men become, in our long history.

Man without his own Womanhood. A sword without a sheath ~ glinting, dangerous, burdensome. Men disabled by the obligation to carry it in hand, parry threats, cover their backs, clash for space in which to swing it. Their two good hands seldom truly free to build the structures of their own and their family lives. Always menaced by their mates, and their enemies. Exhausted by their overwhelming obligations to menace back, and to simultaneously provide for and protect their families.

Man refusing acknowledgement of his womanly aspect ~ indeed, driving it off under withering fire of contempt, abuse, insult, and often assault. Violently lobotomising his own mind.

And thereby forcibly denying himself the relief and balance of sitting in the sun, quiet laughter, joy in beauty, the deep satisfaction of tears: and the mysterious inward power that derives from daily small acts of service, and the gradual dissolution of ego.

Man without his Womanhood : a juggernaut of undirected action, of repeated acts of dominion: thereby repressing his own innate knowledge of Compassion, or Forgiveness, or Provision, or Honour, or Love of Life.

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And Woman without her Manhood, too, is lobotomised: into an unfocussed, helpless, suffering incubator of life, useless dreamer ~ powerless to enact or sustain the life of which she fantasises.

Woman without Manhood becomes a cushion of shapeless vulnerability and dragging dependence, an endless victim of life's blows : or feebly leeches status and mansion from his money : incapable of forming her hearth and her union, of living her productivity or her duties: or of forging any path of co-operative independence.

Woman without her Manhood is easily become an accessory and collaborator in Men's womanless Machismo : the comforter, the flag-waver, jewel-bimbo, camp-follower, the wailing lover; the side-liner exhorting sacrifice, or jeering his failure; joining her weak cries with the despoilers, flattering their vanity to ever-greater destructions and self-devastations. She falls fearful and craven before their gods of war and vengeance, abandoning her own priestly calling : which is to defend the honour of her inspired bounty-Mother.

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Aggression is not evil. Man is not evil. Strength, and the drive to use it to prevail, is a necessary male Self-knowledge: in an imperfect world requiring incessant effort to structure and shield against hurtful forces of nature.

Passivity is not virtue. Woman is not virtue. Receptiveness, and the willingness not to retaliate, is a necessary female Self-knowledge: in an imperfect world requiring the capacity to shape oneself softly to avoid mortal injury.

*This then is Maturity:
The breadth of Self-knowledge to discern in oneself,
and to embrace,
the Woman who resides within the Man,
and the Man who resides within the Woman.*

*Thus is Woman fortified, and becomes forthright.
Thus is Man softened, and undertakes self-restraint.*

*Then, only, are they worthy to become parents, and guardians,
of a new generation.*



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