

## Ancient Dialogues

William Stewart

Love, goddess, oldest of the gods, older than the father, born in the turbulent foam of the sea, Aphrodite. Her child, playful, mischievous, irresistible, the passion, the impulse to another, even he conquered. To create, to bring into being, to join, the bringer of madness, to live with, to live without, to kill for, to die for, sadness in its lack, joy in its presence, fulfilled, made whole, torn asunder, cloven in two, in many, in one, in another; as a child one begins, growing one continues. Forced upon, diving into, driven by, suffered and suffering, brutalised and exalted, fallen and risen. Her breath defies us, compels us, defines us: without it, what are we? If is all we need, is that not terrifying? Would you have it, for it to be taken? It is not yours to control, but to chose, if even that, as its tides come and go, defying reason, embracing passion, kindling unreason, being found by it.

From the gods two gifts, one of fire and one of toil; the first to nurture, the second beguiled, seduced, deceived by beauty and desire, suffering unleashed upon the world. Toil, work, suffering, perverse gifts of the gods? Abandoned hope... and yet, what are we without this? was it our weakness, or our strength, that lifted that lid?

And then a God came and love was gone as angry men denied, repressed, shattered and banned, cloaking her with the chains of denial. Yet, even He, all-powerful, had succumbed, for "He so loved"...

She is here, a beguiling smile innocent as the most sullied day, unconquerable, she lays within our hearts, defines us, emerges within us, drives us into a new-born day, into life, for all its suffering, for all its joy. It is us, terrible, magnificent, flawed, loving.

She is our heart, neither to be obeyed or denied, compelled by our own desires. Our path in all its multitudinous sufferings and joys, our rights and wrongs beckons. It is us, it is us. We know not 'cept in the doing, in the becoming of who we will be, there is none to judge, good from bad. Shall we not learn compassion, and in loving find our victory?

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