

301 - 1855 Balsam St.,
Vancouver.

Thursday night, Aug. 23. '73

Dear Heather, Sunshine:

There are more questions in your beautiful letter than I can answer right now, and there are some left over from your earlier letter still unanswered, but please, patience.

I sense a bit of healthy turmoil, over your old associations, as I did once before over your situation in Victoria; maybe about who it is that you, yourself, are. You say you are overcoming hesitancy in telling people who you really are. Tell me. It will maybe be a way for you to tell it straight to yourself. If I had been there I would have held and cuddled you to help relieve the sorrow you were feeling, and would have listened as you talked it out. I don't think very many people have really found their selves.

This trend of thought came out of your letter too, because I realize that I haven't been showing you my self, scarred and stained as it is, but a carefully managed bundle of impressions that are really too good to be true. I won't pursue that right now, but it is a thing I do all the time, and do well. But what it means is that I have never really loved anybody, because that requires giving it all, scars and stains as well as shiny spots, I to thou, unedited and whole. That I have always been afraid to do.

You have seen me at a good time in my life. The outwelling of excitement and insight is a new thing, partly coming from the breakthroughs to Edenshaw, but partly a long overdue freeing of the ways of showing love. By coincidence, several things have come together at once, at a good time and in good circumstances. (You, not least.) You saw me in the stimulated state that produced Perscom 2: high voltage and high sensitivity. (I have come a million miles since Perscom 2; it was groping and confused.) It was a state I was in for about 6 months, an excitement I couldn't suppress, as I learned little bits more. The last three weeks, however, have been a much more intense time. I conveyed a bit of that to you in my last letter, but the payoff has been even greater since then. Yesterday, I think, was the last big breakthrough (sounds like a broken record?), when I reached a rather astonishing conclusion about the northern Northwest Coast, which Edenshaw led me to. And in the process I too grew up inside; I had to in order to understand what Edenshaw was getting at, and I realized that I had to in order to be a full man. That isn't very clear. At any rate, it was some kind of profound and complicated experience. Put it this way: scientists who have made bold leaps have often done it in a turmoil of anguish, intuition, and elation - it was something like that. And people who have religious experiences, like Salish dancers with their spirit sickness and their initiation, go through a similar turmoil and resolution. Mine was milder, but I think much the same.

Friday morning.

And people who are in psychotherapy, if they are lucky, experience at some point a surge of new insight and integration, and they are "well". And people growing up, finding their selves, tend to go through crisis points of turmoil and resolution, a kind of being "born again". It was something like that. It works that way with small things as well as big things.

I still cannot put into perspective all the things that I have learned. Yesterday I went by myself to Point Roberts to let it settle, on a beautiful day and in a beautiful mood of calmness. My mind chose to bring out and think about the male principle that is in all of us, and the female principle that is in all of us, and how I should now express them both in my conduct of life (I do not mean sex; maleness is the inner spark of life, femaleness is the outer glory of form). I went hunting crabs, and saw symbolic significance in the fact that I only saw (and caught, and ate) two males, but almost 60 females, at this ripe ending of summer. Today on the phone I tried to tell my mother what I have been doing. To my surprise and joy, she seems to understand better than anybody else here. In my heightened state of psychic sensitivity, I sense symbolic meaning in that too.

I have learned that the deepest and truest thinking goes on unconsciously inside my brain. That deep level can hold and manipulate more permutations and combinations than the conscious mind is capable of at any one time; it signals the results into consciousness in "hunches" and "intuitions". Honour and love your intuitions, Heather, because they are glimmers of your highest comprehensions. That deep level also lights the screen of consciousness in dreams, but in dreams the coding is different, so that unless you know the key the message seems senseless. The value of these dream thoughts is that they contain a quantum of emotion as well as cognition, which gives them deeper meaning. The other morning I had a sequence of two dreams (two points establish a line, a line is a continuum with ends, the mind follows it to both ends), both of which had the common element of fear; the second gave such a jolt of fear that it woke me up; then in that sensitive state of partial consciousness I used ^{by} intuition and logic to analyze the meaning. Now I see what fear is at the deepest level of human symbolism (fear of death, in the sense of the absence of "father", which is the same as the absence of "self", which is the ultimate form of "loneliness"). I see that because of the circumstances of my infant-hood, my fear is super-charged, and it has made me constantly afraid to grow up, to find myself, to really love anybody.

I have learned that to really be whole, so that my analogic mind can stretch the full length and depth of thought, I have to find the most profound symbols that man has created, or modern counterparts of them (Yin-yang, the Holy Trinity, the atom, the fourth dimension, the unity of life, matter and energy, God, the "secret of life"). Until I let my inner life force press out to the ends of every continuum of thought that I can conceive, until I think through in my own mind the greatest human dilemmas, I cannot assume a shape for my self which is in harmony, as it has to be if I am to be an Edenshaw-like medium for the expression and glorification of life. I found some of those cosmic symbols in Haida art, and I have begun to seek back in our own culture beyond the terrible wreckage of science and technology to a time when man was whole, and one with the Universe. Two points make a line,... I now have two modes of thought in my head: mine and Edenshaw's....

I have found a hero and teacher to emulate if I can. Edenshaw was a full person, fully charged with the inner male life force of striving and aspiration, and astonishingly skilled with the female life force of "shaping" or giving form. My inner force has been partly blocked by fear, my ability to "shape" has been stunted by lack of purpose, practice, and vision.

I have found that I have been short-changing the Haida in my presentation of their way of life. "Totem poles are just social metaphors, they have nothing to do with religion": how tragically wrong that is. The totem poles and other things are full to bursting with cosmic symbolism, divine human thought. If we could devise symbols of such power for ourselves, we would be whole people too. I now understand Haida life much better, because I am partly able to see it in its own terms. I now understand mankind much better, because I have had a glimpse of his oldest and most profound thoughts, and have had my mind attuned slightly to that older and more fundamental mode of thought (which we arrogantly call the "savage" mind). I now understand my self better, because I know where to search for the fundamental human harmonies I need to be whole. I have a teacher. And in you I have a friend and companion. I hold out my hand; maybe you will hold it for part of the way.

Heather, this just sort of flowed out, and got away from me, in a sense. It was the only thing I could do in the present circumstances.

Wilson