

## *Our Inflatable Goddess*

*Painted cakes do not satisfy hunger.* - - Indian proverb

From the time we are born, men and women are inundated with inflatable anti-gravity fantasy images of what our bodies ought to look like if we are to be sexy. As young men many of us entered puberty via the portals of Playboy, Penthouse, and Hustler magazines. The objects of our lust and our subsequent expectations were completely unrealistic. Today many young men enter puberty through the portal of Internet pornography. Sexuality need not always be "sacred" but the mind of a young person can be easily influenced. Could anything be *less* representative of sacred sexuality than pornography? As adults, Internet pornography is not nearly as damaging to us as it might be to someone in the midst of puberty. For a young man to imprint Internet pornography as his primary sexual paradigm is a travesty, especially if he *believes that it represents reality*. It is a travesty not only for him, but also for any potential partners. It can thwart possibilities for deep intimacy later in his life. If we should ever aspire to become a really *bad* lover, all we need do is imitate what we see in pornographic videos.

*My reactions to porno films are as follows: After the first ten minutes, I want to go home and screw. After the first twenty minutes, I never want to screw again as long as I live.* - - Erica Jong

Of course men are attracted to beautiful young bodies. Young women are often beautiful and, Nature, in all Her wisdom, has made sure that men are attracted to beautiful bodies of reproductive age. But we forget that no matter how gorgeous she is, somewhere, right now, there is a guy who is really glad that she is not in his life. If we mistake our illusions for reality we may become that guy, and learn his lessons the hard way. Just because she is beautiful, that doesn't mean that we should mistake our physical attraction for something *deep* or *meaningful*. We need to look deeper, longer, and harder before committing to a Siren's call. If we expect TeeVee-style "perfection" in our lover's body, or in our own, then we are in for a world of hurt, frustration, and disappointment.

The media takes full advantage of our ability to self-dupe. In the same way that the aggressive and protective instincts of our young men are hijacked into meaningless foreign wars by multinational corporate psychopaths, so our own glandular inclinations are subverted and used against us so that some soulless ad executive somewhere can sell us cheap trash. Television, films, and inane checkout counter magazines present popular models and film stars as cultural icons. This form of self-inflicted cultural propaganda would have made Nazi Minister of Propaganda, Josef Goebbels, proud. These media images are force-fed like gavage upon any of us who are unwilling to spend our lives in a cave. They hold tremendous power over us. Through magazines, television, and the Internet, we allow people into the deepest and most vulnerable parts of our psyches that we would never dream of inviting into our homes. Young people's minds, both boys and girls, are imprinted and indoctrinated with impossible standards, standards that no human being could ever hope to achieve. That these cartoons hold such power over our self-esteem, particularly for women, but also for us as men is a collective tragedy. We have created a cultural wasteland, devoid of meaning, significance, or context. We are fed an

MTV/CNN "cotton candy" that tastes sweet but is without substance or nutrition. We nurse on empty karmic calories from this TeeVee nipple. When we have swallowed enough of this foolishness over a long enough period of time, our system collapses and we get "diabetes": We are unable to obtain basic nutrition or sustenance from our lives.

*Future generations will look back on TV as the lead in the water pipes that slowly drove the Romans mad.* - - Kurt Vonnegut

The cruel irony is that even the models in our magazines don't look like that. They have been made up, airbrushed, lipo-suctioned, collagen enhanced, and reupholstered. If, by some miracle, we were actually able to obtain this physical "perfection", it could only last a few years at best, after which time we would be discarded to some cultural landfill or late-night infomercial.

Our society has taken the most sacred aspects of our partnering, our sexuality, and made a mockery of them. The media has infected our bedrooms with their corporate "bottom-line" viruses and their commercial TeeVee advertisement pornography. These corporations have desecrated our Sacred Temple, and they have done it for *money*. As Terrence McKenna once said "Culture is not your friend".

*We can take back our paradigms.* The greedy and robotic need not define our bliss. We take back our paradigms by consecrating our lives, by honorably worshipping our partners and being worthy of that worship in return. We take back our paradigms by insisting that our lives have *meaning*. We take back our paradigms by living our lives as works of art. We take back our paradigms by finding our balls, looking to our deepest values, and refusing to compromise. We take back our paradigms by showing our children how we love. We take back our paradigms by refusing to be seduced by temporary distractions or nutritionless encounters. This society has taken all the nourishment out of our food; *we will not allow it to leech it out of our lovemaking. We will not allow our temple to be desecrated.*

The truth is that we cannot know, nor can we judge, the pleasure of which someone else is capable by looking at his or her body. "Sexy" is different than "beautiful", and "beautiful" can mean a thousand different things.

As men and women we can find joy in our bodies the way they carry us today. Of course we want to look as good as we can and be as healthy as we are capable, but we need to use reasonable standards for ourselves. We are not, nor do we need to be, movie stars, with thousands of people chasing after us. We cannot allow these cartoon images to dilute the nourishment we experience from intimacy. *We need not come to our unions in shame.* We can join with our partners without regret. We can use our erotic energy as healing energy. We can be who we are, exploring bliss with a partner who experiences our body as the pure manifestation of our spirit.