

WHAT WOMEN REALLY LOVE BESIDES MEN

WORK

Work can be a golden shield.

BY SANDRA HOCHMAN

Love. Love. Love.

That's what the songs were all about when I went to boarding school. I would hear love praised on the radio, extolled in movies, pushed to death in literature. There was Romantic Love. Love of Husband. Love of Children. Then we grew a little older, we American girls, and discovered there was love of Self. To me, that was what writing was: discovering the self.

To discover myself I did not turn to a guru. The very essence of knowing everything was there right inside of me. It was as if a guru, or wiseperson, lived in my subconscious. All that I had to do was unlock what I really knew. In a sense I began to lead two lives. Let me tell you about them.

The first life, what was called reality, was the very ordinary, but often exciting, sometimes frustrating, things-as-they-are world. That was a world of bells, getting up, getting washed, going to breakfast, eating, cleaning my room, morning meetings (a tradition at my school where each student had a chance to read poetry) and then classes. The real world was mathematics, speaking up, history, classes and knowledge. The real world was the cold air, the seasons, the snow, the plants. The real world was lunch. Rest periods. Athletics on the hockey field. Studying. Friends. Boys. Games. Teams. The news of the world. The loneliness of missing out on *something*. What? I never knew. But it was all real as the red of an apple.

The other world was the world I created in my mind. A world that questioned. That had language and word play. In this *other* world I had the music of my own words and rhythms. There I could put down what I really thought. What I was afraid to speak. I didn't have to be polite. It was a world of my own, centered on feeling good and feeling good. I could let everything out. Everything bottled inside of me. That was my own

world. The world of cabbages that could be clocks. The world of sensual moments and upside-down things where blessings and bruises were all mixed up. A brain world. Insane world. My world. I understood then that *create* meant to have a sort of power over yourself. Was this work? No, it was joy. The extreme satisfaction as good as having a tooth fixed. It was having the truth fixed. There mommy and daddy were whatever you wanted them to be. There, in my own private world of words, things came out as marvelously as fairy tales.

In the real world *reality* was not supposed to be marvelous.

In my own word I could create marvels out of realities. I could see inside of things. Behind things. I suppose I began to have the first taste not of Eve's apple, but of symbolic action. I could use symbols to express a secret language. (Poems!) I had control. No one could wipe me off the blackboard.

What I began to do as a young girl—write poems, plays, novellas, stories—has become my work. Is there a moment or two that I wonder why I do all this? Yes. And often the reason is this: I have to. There is something inside of me that gains an enormous pleasure out of making worlds out of words. Making people. Making musical sounds. Expressing memory. Creating satire. Most of all: making what is un-real real. The politics of the imagination. Cutting out suits with imaginary scissors. Where

there was nothing, a moment later is something to live in. A poem. Or story. Something that can be sent out to the world. Communicate with others without anyone's permission. There is no authority in the kingdom of the writer. No "getting there" or "not getting there." Only getting it out to create something else.

To write is to live alone. To write is to work.

It is also to love what you have to say. In a sense it is talking to yourself. Often I am asked, "Who do you write for?" The answer is myself. I don't write for consumers. For a market. Although where there is one I am very delighted and even surprised. Because it is hard to think of oneself as writing "By command." You command yourself.

Often when I feel like hell I will turn to my work.

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FOOD

I love food because it is my friend. A man may walk out, a refrigerator never.

BY BETTE-JANE RAPHAEL

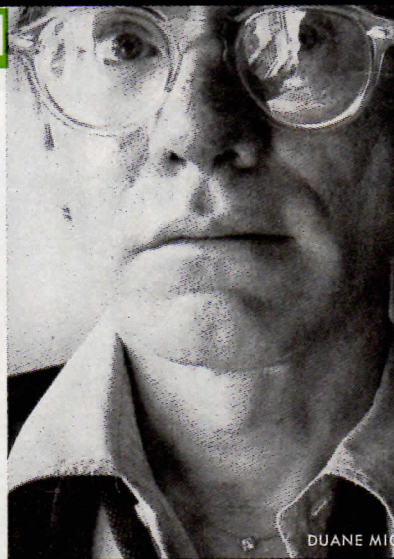
I love food for a very good reason. It may not love me back, but it doesn't disappoint me, wound me, patronize me, lie to me, cheat me, threaten me, anger me, or break my heart. For while there are plenty of rotten apples around to spoil the barrel of life, I've never yet opened a new bag of potato chips and found a soggy one inside.

I love food because it is my friend, one that doesn't leave town for the weekend. If I feel lonely, a salami sandwich is never too busy to spend time with me. If I feel mean or ugly, soup never complains. A man may walk out, a refrigerator never.

In return for this loyalty, I give food my full allegiance. That means, for one thing, that I hold no ethnic prejudices: Progresso, Goya, Hebrew National and Kraft all get my patronage. Politically,

andy warhol

Andy Warhol loves a diamond on a chain. Look closely at Mr. Warhol's clavicle to see one of the Elsa Peretti of Tiffany Diamonds by the Yard. Which Mr. Warhol loves because, he says, "Diamonds are a boy's best friend." Would he really wear the necklace? "Well yeah, if the diamond were bigger." Asked what place he loves, he says, "Godiva's chocolate factory."



too, I am neutral: I ate Chomos no matter how high oil prices rose and Szechuan long before China was admitted to the U.N. My mouth is the great leveler; I love chicken whether it's prepared by Craig Claiborne or Colonel Sanders.

My own health takes a back seat when it comes to food: Red Dye #2, Cyclamates, DES, even Maraschino cherries hold no terror for me. Since my

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Food

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love of food is ironically coupled with a total inability to cook, I am at the mercy of every canning company busy ducking FDA regulations. Although I prefer fresh, I eat canned mushrooms, thereby flirting regularly with death, and the only time I ever actually tried to kill myself was with a can of Bon Vivant vichyssoise.

Loving food, I naturally, by extension, love restaurants also. In the generic term restaurants, I include diners, stands, cafes, inns, bistros, cafeterias and meal-o-mats. These are my favorite places, so I find that I make all my important decisions, cement all my friendships and start all my love affairs over food. Meals, then, are my landmarks.

And, as the most important things in life happen to the accompaniment of food, so, I hope, will its final event. When I die, may it be from an unwashed grape.

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