

Sally 12/34 (.. Ex)

Sally Unger

1415-A LILI HA ST., APT. 16
HONOLULU HAWAII 96817

OCTOBER 29, 1965

Dear Sensei,

Thank you for your note on the back of the Wind Bell. In answer to your question, I believe I'm in a better condition than when I last saw you. In reference to this, I want to thank you again for your forbearance and patience. Even knowing from personal experience what it is like to be in such a state of mind, I'm not sure that I would have the stamina to listen to someone talk at length to me about the type of thing I talked to you about, at length.

What has "saved" me from the swamp of hatred I was sinking in, is, very unsurprisingly, a swamp of love. I'm in love with a(nother) man. I have come to the conclusion that while there may be a very thin hair-line between the passions of love and hate, as long as I stay on the love-side of the line things are much better. I realize that the goal of Buddhism is neither love nor hate (on the level I'm experiencing them, at least), but then I never was a Buddhist; I just imagined I was. I'd "like" to be. But like isn't is. I have very recently learned this, along with a few hundred other things; most people, I suppose, have learned such basic things by the age of seven, but I have a very thick skull and am a very slow learner.

There has been a radical change in my "reason," in this case, for loving this particular man. In the past, when I loved someone, it was because he was superior in some way: Good, or Strong, or Spiritual, or something like that. Of course this superiority existed strictly in my own mind, and when the man turned out to be an ordinary, imperfect, rather dimwitted human being in one way or another, my love turned to hate (no middle way for me!): he failed me. I think I am cured of making gods of men (inside my head).

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This man, besides having a ~~superb~~ sense of humor (I have come to value a sense of humor rather than any "virtue" in any form), is Mad--in the artistic, poetic sense of the word Mad; he has the type of madness (very rarely found, by the way) that will save us (if anything will save us, at this late date) from all the accomplishments of the "sane" people who are busy manufacturing hydrogen bombs, etc. Besides that, he has irresistible human imperfections; I feel on a very firm basis loving someone for his obvious imperfections than, as in my past practice, his imagined superiorities. He is the type of person who will go to the beach thinking he has his bathing suit on under his trousers (he told us about this), and when he gets to the beach finds that he has left his bathing suit at home. It is for this kind of thing that I love him. Not that I have any illusions (only unreasonable hopes) that this love will lead to anything as "sane" as marriage or even a reciprocal feeling on his part towards me (there is, after all, my KARMA to contend with); but it is saving me from drowning in hate, which is quite enough for me for the present.

I hope all of you in San Francisco are well. Please give my best regards to everybody. I am having a collection of some of my writing printed; I should be mailing it out by the end of December or January. If Jean Ross is wondering when she's going to get that poetry I promised her, please tell her I didn't forget. Of course you, too, are on my mailing list. Thank you again for your note.

Sincerely,

Sally