

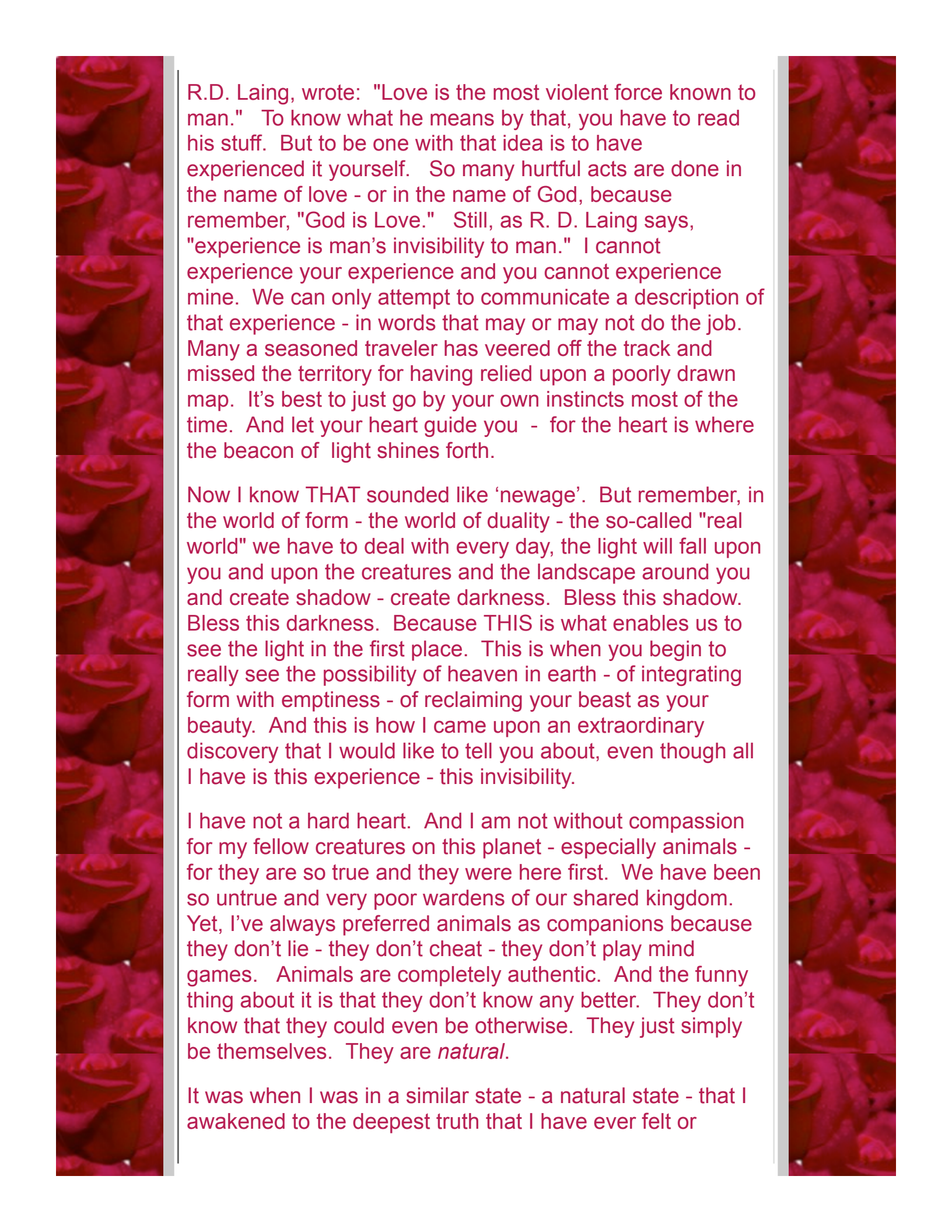
# Love Is What We're Made Of -- Literally !

by Judy Kennedy\*

Before I run the risk of sounding like a nut or just some other contemporary mystic steeped in 'newage', let me qualify that statement. I'm not a middle-aged hippie and I'm not on drugs. I don't subscribe to Louise Hay dogma and I avoid "harmony hut" circles like crazy. I identify with characters like Wednesday in the movie *Adams' Family Values* and Catwoman in *Batman Returns*. I don't think it is helpful or appropriate to squelch "negative" feelings with positive affirmations or "good" deeds. I don't even believe in good or evil. My favorite comedian is George Carlin, and I enjoy listening to his irreverency Howard Stern. Two of my favorite authors are radical feminist Mary Daly and Noam Chomsky - people who mince no words and just tell it like it is. All these individuals talk about a lot of things - but there's one controversial subject I've not heard any of them take on yet, at least not in depth - and that's LOVE.

Like most little girls growing up in the 50s and 60s, I cut my teeth on Cinderella and similar stories. The over-idealized romanticism connected with becoming one with the "other" was soon seen for the crock of poo poo that it was and subsequently replaced with an impetus toward intimacy with the Self and seeking union with the Divine. I would try to reassure myself, "Love doesn't die. It's just that the lesson it's teaching you is changing." That's some comfort for a broken heart. At least it will keep your head above water. Still, I went through a period of detesting love stories. It was three years before I finally broke down and saw *Titanic*. And only then it was because I was laid up sick on the couch, and someone told me it was about a strong woman and a not so macho man. I always relished tragic love stories, because to me, they were more realistic.

One of my early heroes, radical existentialist psychiatrist,

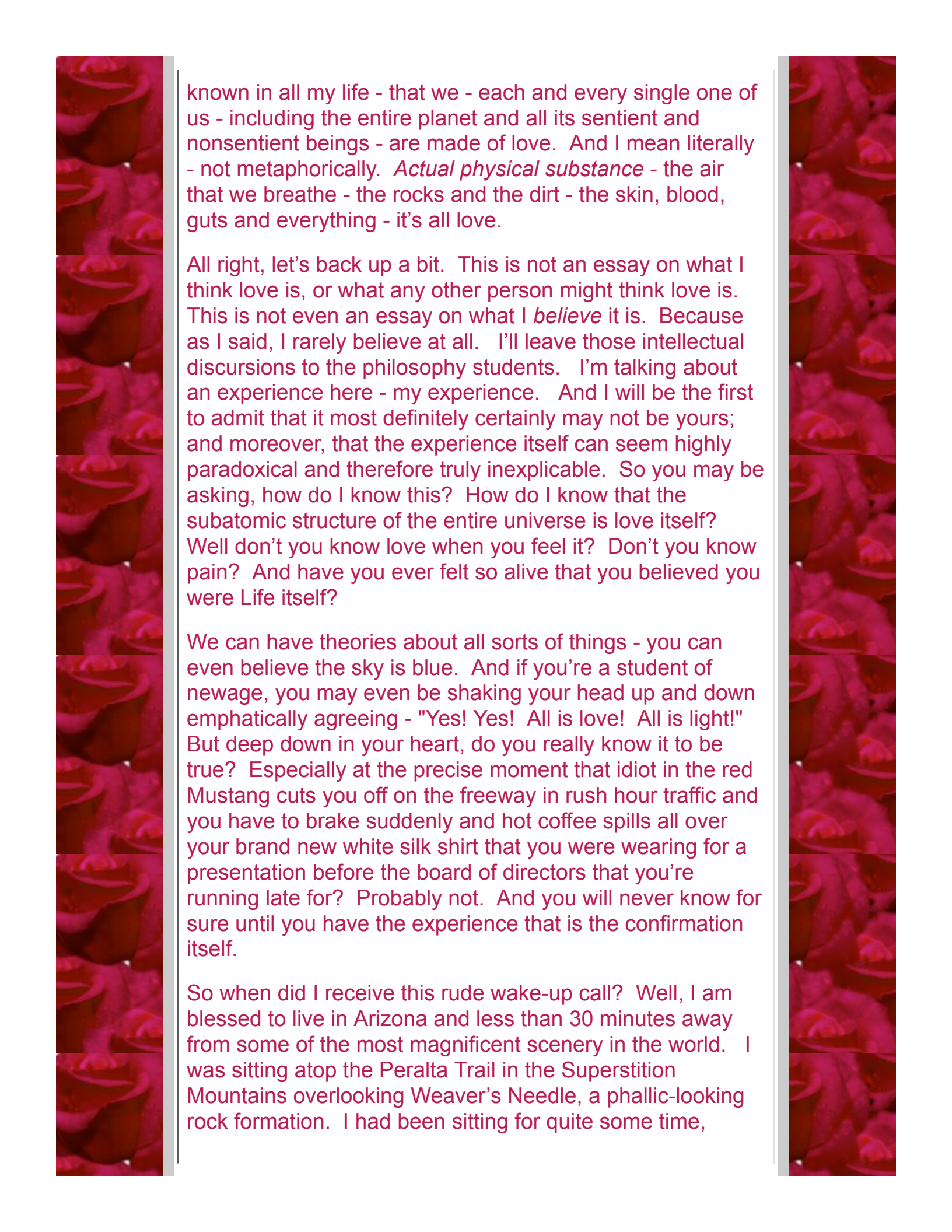
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R.D. Laing, wrote: "Love is the most violent force known to man." To know what he means by that, you have to read his stuff. But to be one with that idea is to have experienced it yourself. So many hurtful acts are done in the name of love - or in the name of God, because remember, "God is Love." Still, as R. D. Laing says, "experience is man's invisibility to man." I cannot experience your experience and you cannot experience mine. We can only attempt to communicate a description of that experience - in words that may or may not do the job. Many a seasoned traveler has veered off the track and missed the territory for having relied upon a poorly drawn map. It's best to just go by your own instincts most of the time. And let your heart guide you - for the heart is where the beacon of light shines forth.

Now I know THAT sounded like 'newage'. But remember, in the world of form - the world of duality - the so-called "real world" we have to deal with every day, the light will fall upon you and upon the creatures and the landscape around you and create shadow - create darkness. Bless this shadow. Bless this darkness. Because THIS is what enables us to see the light in the first place. This is when you begin to really see the possibility of heaven in earth - of integrating form with emptiness - of reclaiming your beast as your beauty. And this is how I came upon an extraordinary discovery that I would like to tell you about, even though all I have is this experience - this invisibility.

I have not a hard heart. And I am not without compassion for my fellow creatures on this planet - especially animals - for they are so true and they were here first. We have been so untrue and very poor wardens of our shared kingdom. Yet, I've always preferred animals as companions because they don't lie - they don't cheat - they don't play mind games. Animals are completely authentic. And the funny thing about it is that they don't know any better. They don't know that they could even be otherwise. They just simply be themselves. They are *natural*.

It was when I was in a similar state - a natural state - that I awakened to the deepest truth that I have ever felt or

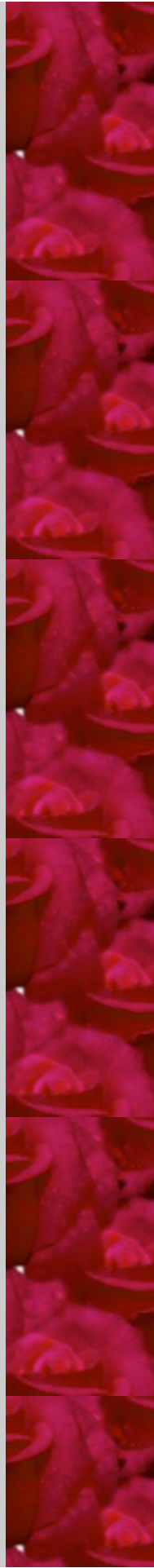
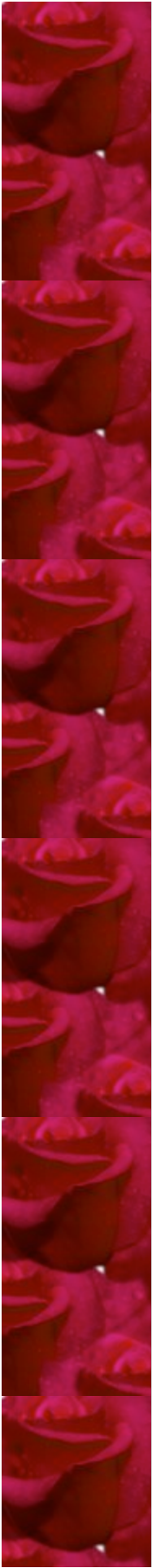
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known in all my life - that we - each and every single one of us - including the entire planet and all its sentient and nonsentient beings - are made of love. And I mean literally - not metaphorically. *Actual physical substance* - the air that we breathe - the rocks and the dirt - the skin, blood, guts and everything - it's all love.

All right, let's back up a bit. This is not an essay on what I think love is, or what any other person might think love is. This is not even an essay on what I *believe* it is. Because as I said, I rarely believe at all. I'll leave those intellectual discursions to the philosophy students. I'm talking about an experience here - my experience. And I will be the first to admit that it most definitely certainly may not be yours; and moreover, that the experience itself can seem highly paradoxical and therefore truly inexplicable. So you may be asking, how do I know this? How do I know that the subatomic structure of the entire universe is love itself? Well don't you know love when you feel it? Don't you know pain? And have you ever felt so alive that you believed you were Life itself?

We can have theories about all sorts of things - you can even believe the sky is blue. And if you're a student of newage, you may even be shaking your head up and down emphatically agreeing - "Yes! Yes! All is love! All is light!" But deep down in your heart, do you really know it to be true? Especially at the precise moment that idiot in the red Mustang cuts you off on the freeway in rush hour traffic and you have to brake suddenly and hot coffee spills all over your brand new white silk shirt that you were wearing for a presentation before the board of directors that you're running late for? Probably not. And you will never know for sure until you have the experience that is the confirmation itself.

So when did I receive this rude wake-up call? Well, I am blessed to live in Arizona and less than 30 minutes away from some of the most magnificent scenery in the world. I was sitting atop the Peralta Trail in the Superstition Mountains overlooking Weaver's Needle, a phallic-looking rock formation. I had been sitting for quite some time,




practicing a sky gazing form of meditation that Tibetan Buddhists call Dzogchen. However, I'm not Buddhist. (As Lama Surya Das says, "Why be Buddhist when you can be a Buddha?" But that's another subject.) In the past, when I felt I needed some kind of identity - let alone spiritual identity - I was Celtic Christian and/or pagan. A nature mystic. Was born that way. And perhaps that's what was really going on. (Another Suryaism: People should not be allowed to meditate out in nature - they should let nature meditate them!) And that's exactly what it felt like. A total dissolution without loss of self-consciousness - a total merging with one's surroundings - an indescribable awareness of awareness itself - the universe as your physical body - and the wind, your life-breath - and that everything and everyone at the root source - is naturally perfect - just the way it is. *Pure beingness. Pure love.* And that there is nothing more precious than that moment.

This actually wasn't the first time I'd had this experience. But it was the first time that I'd identified it as love. It was the first time I truly grasped the meaning of Catherine Ingram's words, "*Living as radiant presence - living as love itself.*"

Most of us feel that love is something that comes and goes in our lives, and that those who manage to hold on to it are rather fortunate. And I used to say, "If you can fall in love, you can fall out of it. So what kind of love is that?" It's a sad story we tell ourselves over and over - that love itself is somehow separate from us - that it's a kind of rare, precious jewel or magical elixir of which the power to withhold or bestow we give away to others. And life seemingly conforms to our expectations. But you cannot give away what you are - at least not to the extent that it is totally lost or gone. It may seem lost - it may seem dead and buried - and it's that pain, that loss, that living nightmare that wakes you up to the present reality that it's not. It may take a while, but it eventually happens.

We must embrace the story though before we relinquish it. For all stories have purpose. Even the scary ones. Without story, there would be no meaning. And without meaning, there would be no life. See, I view it backwards. Life derives from meaning, not the other



way around. Because Life IS meaning. What the hell it's meaning, I'm not sure, but it is! And that's what it feels like. You feel like you're in love with everything. But you're not "in" love. You ARE love. Nothing touches it yet it touches everything. It is so basic yet never the same. When you have sex, are all your orgasms the same? Is it ever the exact same way twice? Of course not. But is it always indescribable? Hell yes!

It's true that in one sense, when you "fall in love" - a part of you is recognizing the divinity within the other. But when that divine being no longer acts like a god or what we think that gods ought to act like, we dismiss them. They fall from grace and we fall "out" of love. But when you realize that you are love - and that everything around you is made of love too - you realize that you are never separate from it, and that root essence realization sustains you through everything. But it's more than sustaining. It is *who you are - what you are*. And you never forget it.

It's reminds me of what the character Ricky Fitts tries to explain in the film *American Beauty*. Once you taste this present awareness - this *Radiant Is* - you see the beauty of the divine expression in all things great and small. You know that you are not alone and that the universe is truly your friend. All fear disappears and you fall into a depth of appreciation unlike anything you've experienced before. Appearances no longer get you down because you see them for what they really are. It's an unending, unceasing fountain of never-ending joy. You have awakened to your true Self. What you choose do with it is up to you. That's an entirely different story. A completely original movie. Just remember - you, and only you, write the script. And as the song is sung:

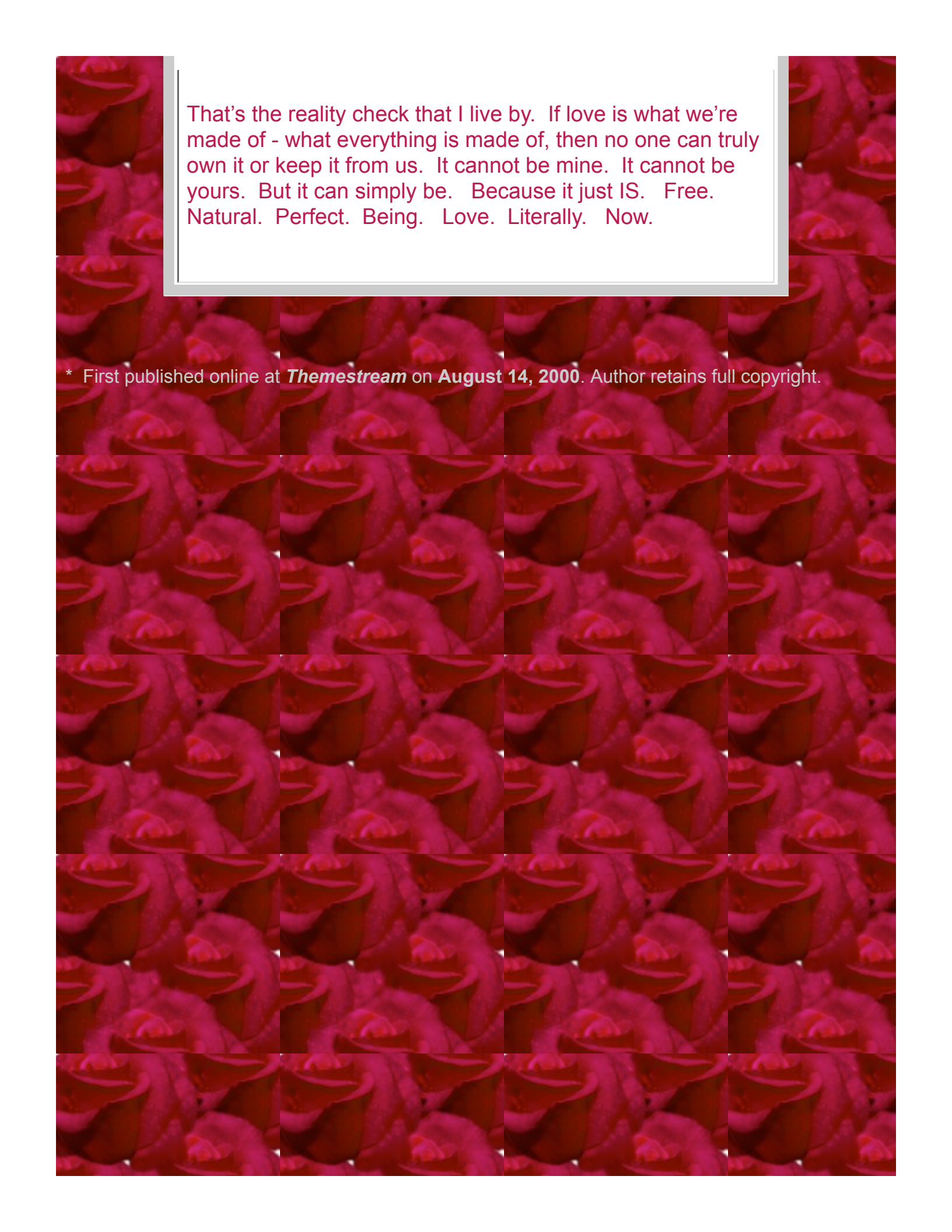
**Love is a rose and you better  
not pick it.**

**It only grows when it's on the  
vine.**

**Hand full of thorns and you  
know you've missed it.**

**Lose your love when you say  
the word mine.**





That's the reality check that I live by. If love is what we're made of - what everything is made of, then no one can truly own it or keep it from us. It cannot be mine. It cannot be yours. But it can simply be. Because it just IS. Free. Natural. Perfect. Being. Love. Literally. Now.

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