

Excerpt from the novel "WHY SHE LEFT US"

(written as part of an entry in Betsy's Diary)

There is no reason for it either. It's unfathomable, inexplicable that this love should have come over me as it has; and just as I expected, I am unable to deal with it and have now begun to wonder if I should seek to cast it off as an undesirable invasion of the safety and serenity that have always clothed my existence up until now. I know nothing of such matters. I am completely naïve and inexperienced as to the ways a woman adopts in her efforts to please the man she loves. This feeling I have within me may very well never even have the chance to blossom forth, as I am sure my sheer ineptitude and awkwardness will doom it to failure.

Oh, dear Lord, what am I to do? I have spent this entire day thinking about him, fantasizing what it will be like when he returns – if he returns! But nothing material has resulted from any of this. I am alone in this house right now, just as I was alone all day long, although a number of familiar faces were around me from time to time. I am still alone, and I long for the unexpected, knowing that I am doomed in so wishing something to happen that will, no doubt, never happen at all.

He will not come back. This longing inside of me will never be appeased. It will simply remain there, stagnant and distressing and unsettling – yet, at the same time, so sweet and uplifting that it frightens me. When I woke early this morning and realized that I had actually fallen in love with him, I had such an extreme desire to do some good on this earth. I sprang out of bed, threw on some rags, and went outside to do the gardening that Wayne was to have done. I would have painted the whole house, too, except that he had taken everything with him in his van when he left our house yesterday, and I didn't have enough money to go to the hardware store. And since it was Saturday, I couldn't gain access to the money I have in my account.

So, I just went out there on my hands and knees and did all the gardening that needed to be done. I even relished doing it, too, because I kept saying to myself: If Wayne does come back and finds that I've done all of the gardening for him, maybe he'll smile at me. God, he might even look right at me. Then I would see the color of his eyes and the glow of his emotions and the piercing and blinding light of his soul. Maybe he'll come back here unexpectedly and find me here on my hands and knees. And maybe he'll then put his strong, pure hands under my elbows and lift me up from the ground and tell me that I have found favor in his sight. In his sight, yes, because he'll be looking directly into my eyes as he tells me this. And then I'll laugh and tell him that I'm doing all of this for him and that, in doing it for him, it affords me the greatest possible joy. And then it'll be his turn to laugh, and he'll suggest that we do the

rest of the gardening together, and the two of us will sink to our hands and knees and dip our hands into the dirt. Together.

Later on, I fancied, I would step into the garden against the side of the house while Wayne wasn't looking. In that garden grow the most gentle and delicate white roses I have ever seen. There is one in particular that is scarcely more than a bud, but it is pure and unblemished and, as yet, untouched by human hands. That is the rose I would pluck, while he wasn't looking, and it is that rose that I would offer him, quietly and gently, without having to say a single word to him because my soul, not my lips, would be speaking to him as I extended the pure, white rose and watched him take it from me and place it between the curls of his blond hair. And it would stay there for the next few days so that I could always see it there and be reminded of the beautiful intimacy of that moment.

We both would be silent, too, if by chance we were to find a fresh, clear fountain of distilled water in an imaginary park very far from here – a park that exists only in one's dreams. We would dip our hands into the fountain and cleanse them of all of the soil from the garden. Then, still without saying a word, I would dip my whole body into that holy fountain so that all my past sins would be wiped away; and in that one instant, I could stand before him in total purity, I myself a pure, white rose freshly plucked, and I would extend my heart to him and watch silently as he took it and pressed it against his own, and our two hearts would be joined forever.

I would like to kiss the earth at this time; and if it were humanly possible, I would kiss the sun. There is so much that is beautiful, so much that is heart-stopping in its gorgeous simplicity, so much that I want to share with this man. If God would only let me have the opportunity to do this! If only I could see him again! Just once! I want to open so many doors for him. I want him to be able to see the light of Heaven, to breathe its untainted scent into his lungs, and to hear the divine music that is now in my soul – the music that is known only to angels. I want to give him my hands so that he can press them between his own, my face so that he can hold it against his chest, my heart so that he can consecrate it with his love, and my soul so that he can unite it with his own. These are the fantasies and dreams that form the substance of my longing – a longing which my rational mind tells me can never be pacified. Not in the real world we are all forced to inhabit.