

who his father was, and oddly enough his father, now dead, was a heroin addict. That “feeling” was the lifelong symptom of heroin in the blood. The psyche, kept in the shadows, abducted by the family secret, lives out the answer to that which it seeks.

## Love Projects

What is that terrible feeling? You’re going along with your life, feeling spirited, uplifted, feeling good about yourself, and then you meet them. They’re a little different. They don’t hold your interest for very long, but you hold theirs. Their attraction is flattering and their attention endearing to you. Maybe they’re not what you’re looking for, but they have been looking for you. You feel a little empathic. They’re odd and really need someone to care for them. Maybe you can help them out. You get hooked by their potential, their brilliance, and their inner beauty — by the light only you can see. They need somebody to love them — and you volunteer. Before you know it you have a “love project” on your hands, a project that seems to occupy your time and energy, not leaving much for anyone or anything else.

When you’re with them it’s as if you cross a threshold and enter another world, their wounded world. As time goes on they demand more from you. You are not doing it right or quite fulfilling their needs, and, by the way, you are to have no needs. You can be in the best of moods, but when you see them, within seconds flat they bring you down. It’s like a blow to the belly. You lose your joy and feel a pang in the heart. Something drops out and you deflate. They are killjoys, “soul muggers,” who produce the feeling of soul loss. Dimensions of yourself are smothered and desecrated by sarcasm: “yeah but,” “that’s not so great,” and the ubiquitous “whatever.” It is as if you are the hot air balloon, and your supposed lover is nothing more than a sandbag that brings you down. You stoke the fire, which lifts, and they drag you down. They are not interested in your best interest. With deep sighs and labored breaths, they can barely say, “I am happy for you.” They would rather talk about how unhappy they are and how unhappy you make them. Your family, your friends, even your pets can’t stand to be around them. And you have

## COURTSHIP, THE LOST ART

faith and hope that your love will transform them and the light you see will beholden to all...

Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Hope is a form of denial, denying what is occurring in order to postulate what you want to have occur. You can lose yourself to hope and faith. You forget what is happening to you because you only see what the other needs. Hope can be a deadening force that perpetuates self harm. It is wrought with "if onlys." "If there is something wrong, it must be me." "What can I do to make it better?" "I hope I can change this, I hope they will get it." "If only I could..." Hope reinforces unhealthy situations, which can become a life of entrapment and soul loss.

Love projects stick to your shoe like a wad of gum, like taffy: you get caught in it and it gets all over you, leaving you with a big mess. Love projects are problems that get worse the more you struggle against them. They are mean. They bully. They thrive on put-down teasing. They are people who have no control over themselves, so they gain a sense of power by controlling you. Your spiritual connection is denied. They do not validate. They withdraw and abandon for no apparent reason. They are secretive and have a secret life. They are keen on self-neglect. They draw from you in the name of love, and you feel drained. You think it's love, and aimlessly exist in a trance state. You find yourself out of balance, disoriented, with no sense of self, losing your confidence, and doubting your perceptions. These are symptoms of soul loss and self-depredation. Love projects use their intelligence as a weapon to blame, manipulate, and confuse. Lost in the merge, you internalize their shame and humiliation. Their moods are volatile and intimidating. Their answers are short and aggressive. Any question is an automatic invitation to war. They need you, they love you, and they won't let you go, while simultaneously you repulse and disgust them. And before you know it you have become one of their haunting ghosts.