



The Nineteenth issue of a weekly, or thereabouts (job, life, love, etc., permitting), letter substitute from:

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"Stupid Little Grin"

I was particularly glad to get a wide, and diverse, range of views, thoughts and opinions on my piece about love. I would have loved to responded to them immediately but the situation being what it was I was loathe to jump in too quick. Here, with more comments from other readers and some re-excerpted comments from TW 17, is my considered reply. In other words, consider this my reply. Please feel free to comment further - hey, as I said at the fanzine panel, it's more than just a communication thing...

From: peverel@aol.com (Steve Jeffrey) Ever Fallen in Love with Someone?? ?[complete well known phrase or saying; that'll sort out the Buzzcocks fans] Oh to be a teenager or adolescent again.. Err, No Thanks very much. Jeez, it was all so intense back then. It's a nice change to be able to listen to a good gloomy record, like John Martyn's Grace and Danger or The Cure's Faith, without it becoming too intensely personal. (hmm, that rather effectively dates the last time I was 'in lurve' - as we say in these parts, pards). ((- Why? What is the problem? Deeply emotional, intense and demanding. Sounds like something that can be extremely fun, rewarding and worth investing in. I fact it sounds like love. -))

From: UAOBRIEN@uci.edu (Ulrika A. O'Brien) "Look, another TommyWorld. Damn if this doesn't work all of a sudden. About true love, well, well. This is free advice (or free opinion, or free pronouncements -- your choice), so value accordingly, but frankly the modern Western notion of Romantic Love is, in my opinion, deeply myth laden, hopelessly muddled, full of stupid misconceptions, and generally a terrible hurdle in the way of actually loving people. It's crap, in short. Or possibly a metaphor that people keep taking literally. Anyway, it sounds a bit like you may have been saddled with some of that baggage (saddle bags!) yourself.

Maybe things really are different for you, but in my experience that big all consuming, deep burning, locked in the now magical sunsets goshwow flutter flutter feeling isn't so much a measure of how deep or intense the love is but of how (comparatively) new the

relationship is. It's what the alt.poly folk call New Relationship Energy, and usually clocks out after two or three years, tops. I am inclined to suspect that mistaking New Relationship Energy for True Love, and the decline of New Relationship Energy for death of love, is a major player in a lot of needless relationship misery. Yes, NRE is addictive, seductive, and a really nice vacation from the daily grind, and I do understand pining for that thrill, but I hope you're not really expecting to hold any possible new relationship up to the level of fluttery overblown romanticism you could achieve when you were nineteen. If your nineteen was anything like mine, anyhow. Hell, people think it's cool to be nihilistic yuppies and get tattoos on their foreheads when they're nineteen. Not necessarily a state of mental pliancy to be nostalgic for.

So if you ask me (I know, you didn't), don't worry about the headology of relationships too much, just be as honest and vulnerable as you can stand, love as many people as your heart can fit, and fall in love with what you do with your time and fill your time with things you feel passionate about. Love will catch up with you a few minutes after you gave up looking. ((- Well at least some of that, the last paragraph especially, I can agree with. Polyamory - or however it is spelt - I've seen working, and I've heard great things about it. But fuck me - how? I can't get it. Yes, this may be my problem (one of many) but how do people love two people at the same time? I mean, live with one at one point and another at a different time as if it is two relationships? Er, NO. That doesn't work. Being in love, MY definition, is about loyalty, devotion, pure and utter selfishness in having one person in your life and yes, sometimes, at the expense of others. If you love someone, you don't love another person as well. That is absolutely NOT what it is about folks. I think the polyamory stuff is not love but a way of living.

As for the NRE stuff - I agree in principle but Margaret Bergquist can put it a hell'uva lot better than me. She's always been able to. -))

From: mbergqui@amnesty.iol.ie (Margaret Bergquist) "Several people replied to your love issue saying various things like that the all-consuming passion, mushy, head over heels thing lives only at the beginning of a relationship and once you've been there for a while it dies down to something I suppose resembling normalcy, boredom, that kind of thing. I think someone even said something like you just can't be head over heels in love with someone when you're taking out the trash or doing the laundry or cleaning up after (him or her) in the bathroom. Not so. I mean, isn't that the point? That what you REALLY want is to have that head over heels, mushy gushy feeling still around when you're taking out the rubbish etc? That's what I want. I've had it a few times thank God, and so I know it's out there. And I WANT it.

((- I've almost been there - the sensible life stuff - had all that and frankly, it was not enough. I know this stinks of an almighty hubris, ("Not enough" Goddamn yes, I want more from my life) I don't expect it to be handed to me, I know I will have to work for it and make sacrifices but hell yes, I want more. One of those things is to feel the way I used to feel about life. About people and about love.

For a long time I felt as if I was going through the motions, the same people at work each day with the the same shitty problems - very real to them, I know, and important because of that, but I didn't want to get continually dragged into their lives. The same people at The Monico every other Thursday with, essentially the same conversation. A great conversation, funny and wonderful at times and there is great comfort in being able to drop out for a few hours and feel safe in the company of friends. But. I wanted more. More friends that I could do this with. More places where this could happen.

More than that. I want to be in love. I wanted to be in love with one person, who I could completely love, trust, honour and even obey (okay, not obey, that sorta slipped out...) each and every day. I want to wake up with her and know she is smiling and fall asleep with her that same day and knowing that she is still smiling. I want to be smiling with her, the cause and and the cure of that Stupid Grin.

I want to be so involved in someone's life that I start to think that maybe one and one might make another one - even though I'm loathe to invade a persons home life again. I want to be loved not for what I write, not for what people perceive me as being from a couple of weekends each year, not for what I say on the phone. I want to be loved because you have spent time with me. You know that that I'm stubborn son of a bitch, cranky and given to moods, drink a bit too much and may, at the drop off a hat, just fall off the planet for a few days and not tell anyone. I want to be loved for that, for me, not for what other people considered "Romantic Love."

But. I want that as well.

I want to be sappy and alive in Kleenex-ville. I want to buy silly gifts and send postcards and letters for no other reason that just to say I'm thinking about you and I love you. I want to send EMail at 5am when I'm just in from work, tired and feeling lousy but to let you know that, as I lay down to sleep, I'm thinking of you, loving you and will sleep well because of it, with a Stupid Little Grin on my face.

That's not too much to ask. Just a little love... -))

From: ian@soren.demon.co.uk (Ian Sorensen) "Hi Tom, Thanks for the continuing stream of TommyWorlds. They may not be the real world but they seem more fun than you deserve. I'd like to sow a little bit of fatherly caution in the fertile soil of you Catholic guilt: don't you think it's all going just a bit too well? Shouldn't you be suffering a bit more? And what about the future? When are you going to settle down and get married, have children, wreck "their" lives? Hee hee. ((- Gobshite still insists on calling me Tom. "I love kids, but I couldn't eat a whole one." If it's all going right, then I'm in for the duration. When it goes wrong - hell let it, at the moment I'm just happy to be here. -))

From: d.farr@interserv.com (Daniel Farr) "The talk about "Love and Bullets" only serves to remind me of my own mortality, I'm probably slightly closer to it than you - though these days one never really can be sure. Love is something that I've worked on long and hard, and maybe only in the past few years really came to know what it meant. It's a relationship - stupid. It's all the mundane things that you do in life, like the dishes, and laundry, and watching the tube together because there's no one you'd rather be doing it with. It's feeling settled. All that sex stuff is great - still is and it's even still exciting, but heh, there is more!" ((- Now that is the idea. There is always more to Love than sex. And sometimes, there is a lot more to sex, and that is when you know that you're probably in love. But into each issue of TW a little Randy must fall: -))

From: rbyers@u.washington.edu (Randy Byers) "Anyway, best line from Kenneth Branagh's otherwise forgettable "Peter's Friends": "I've never fallen in love, but I've stepped in it a few times." Sorry, Tommy, once you turn thirty you will no longer be capable of falling head over heels in love. You will only be capable of mature, clear-headed, rational, adult love. That gives you how many days to fall hard? Hurry! Randy "Luv Stinks" Byers." ((- Three days later, just in time, I fell in love. And on a more serious note again.... -))

From: eusl01@srv0.law.ed.ac.uk (Lilian Edwards) "Lurve. OK, the good stuff. Implement shift of style... It just seems pretty obvious to me that you're still hung up on the whole Catholic whore/madonna thing. You write a piece about love and it's about holding hands with your school sweetheart - not a breath of sex there. "Walking hand in hand was the epitome of life." Sweet, but not really a description of mature love. Why do you think that seemed more intense than later sexual relationships? Is this really what you want to go back to? You pine over Nyree but you told me that after you broke up you didn't even fancy her anymore. (of course that may not have been strictly accurate...) When someone does come on to you who's interested in sex as well as romance, like the lifeguard, or Bridget, or Margaret, you lose interest pretty damn sharpish.. If one can get your interest in the first place, if you catch my drift...

Yeah this is a bit glib but it's just how it looks from 2000 miles away. For all I know all your psycho-sexual thingies are well in order and standing to attention (actually I'm quite curious about that last...) I guess I sort of gave up writing to you because you got so goddamn coy about everything. (For example, m'lud - in latest epistle, "new woman, sortof, in my life." What does this goddamn mean??!!) Ach. I have no tolerance for small talk. No doubt why I'm in fandom.

((- Well, Lilian, to the point as ever. I know my feelings have been completely fucked in the past, you know that as well. I'm not entirely sure why, though there are a couple of thousand dollars worth of therapy in there I'm sure. For a long time I had a problem with sex, maybe one of the reasons that my relationship with Nyree ended. Oh, there was the nose bleed thing, but that was more psycho-reactive than causal, I know. For a long time I thought it was the fear of intimacy, of getting close to another woman,

enough to have sex, and fearing the falling in love again. For a long time I thought it was just an emotionally fucked up thing that I would have to get my shit together and deal with. For a long time, I just didn't know.

Of course then you came along and told me what was what - wise up and move on. That led me to thinking less and acting more. Things have been getting continually better since then. I chose to accept advances for what they were. I chose to get involved and not worry. I began to enjoy sex again on a level that I hadn't for a long while. I am doing rather than being. I still have reservations - well, not so you'd notice, but they are there. I'm working through the whole Madonna sex thing - but, to be honest, it is a really shitty book.

Being coy. Well, how do you spread the word that you are Desperately, madly in love (Infatuated? At that stage, maybe...) with someone, and even they don't know it? How do you go about telling people why you haven't been writing in ages, without breaking confidences or revealing things that shouldn't be revealed? How do you go about being honest and truthful with people if you don't know what to tell them? Tell them nothing and not speak to anyone - I don't think so. I wasn't being coy (with the negative connotations you ascribe to that word) I was being careful but wanting to tell you, as a friend, that something wonderful may have happened.

And when Lesley Reece came to stay with me for a week - something wonderful did, and is, happening. -))